AOSIS

Mission moves

Cultivating communities of the Gospel

edited by

Malan Nel

MISSION MOVES

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES OF THE GOSPEL

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EDITOR
Malan Nel

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Peer Review Declaration

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Research Justification

This scholarly book is the final result of a research project born out of my 2013 application for NRF rating. I then phrased the planned research as *team research on the relationship between worship and preaching and the development of missional congregations.* Nine Practical Theologians accepted the invitation to conduct empirical and literature research on the following research problem and -questions: *What would be the relationship (if any) between preaching (and the liturgy of which it is a part) and the development of missional congregations? And secondly, what kind of preaching and preacher would best serve (even facilitate) such a process of missional congregational development in preaching and worship?* Once the team members accepted the invitation to participate, we arrived at a consensus on the approach to this research project. We agreed that as Practical Theologians we want to conduct empirical research on the living text as it is in congregations and draw upon the rich literature research within our field – the so-called more normative text within our academic subject field. For the empirical context, the team discerned 43 congregations in the three mainline Afrikaans speaking denominations in the Reformed tradition in South Africa. These congregations were discerned carefully. The team itself consists of Practical Theologians from the three denominations in the Reformed tradition in South Africa. They are scholars with access to good information concerning the congregations in the three denominations. We opted for congregations where we as researchers observed and discerned that a healthy example of a faithful missional congregation is developing. This took some time. After the 43 pastors of these congregations had signed the consent (with the required privacy clause) to participate, qualitative half-structured interviews were conducted in 2019. The results of this research are indeed original. Each one of the 10 authors participated in these empirical qualitative interviews. Our goal was to cover the different geographical regions in South Africa. The congregations also represented a sample of suburban, larger and smaller towns in the country. The results of the interviews were transcribed and analysed using ATLAS. Ti. The team discerned the most important concepts flowing from these interviews and analyses. The 10 discerned concepts were assigned to team members who had specialised in the academic field implied by the concepts concerned. In this way, the 10 authors contributed to this publication within their fields of specialisation. The bibliographies of each chapter are a testimony of the academic expertise behind the specific chapter. Every quote is duly accounted for and the authors concerned recognised and accredited.

Following the requirements of the Department of Higher Education and Training, this book contains original content not published before, and no part of the work was plagiarised. This book is indeed a book written by scholars for scholars.

Malan Nel, Department of Practical Theology and Mission Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa.

The theological backdrop to the cover image

'De gelovige, die door de Geest gedreven wordt, gelijkt op een zeilboot, die dat wat hem voortbeweegt niet zelf schept maar krijgt. Maar wanneer die zeilboot zich een motorboot zou dromen en menen dat hij het zelf doet, dan verdwaalt hij in de leugen....Blijven in dit beeld kunnen we nu zeggen, dat veel levens, die zwaar in het water liggen, een zeil omhoog houden, dat niet groter is dan een zakdoek.'

'The believer, who is driven by the Spirit, resembles a sailboat, who does not and cannot create what moves him but gets/receives it. But if that sailboat dreamed of being a motorboat and thought he was doing it himself, that boat got lost in a lie.... Staying in this image, we can now say that many lives, which are heavy in the water, hold up a sail that is no bigger than a handkerchief.' – (Bavinck, J.H., 1963, *Ik geloof in de Heilige Geest*, pp. 94, 107, *Voorhoeve, Den Haag; freely translated from the original Dutch by Malan Nel*)

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List of Abbreviations

CQ   Cultural Quotient
DRC   Dutch Reformed Church
IoT   Internet of Things
NEAR   Narrative, Ethics, Association, and Rituals
NRCA   Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa
RCA   Reformed Church in Africa
RTC   Reformed Theological College
TAU   Teaching Advancement at Universities
URC   Uniting Reformed Church
URCSA   Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

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Notes on Contributors

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After completion of his theological studies in 1989, Ferdi P. Kruger has ministered five congregations as full-time ordained minister. The interest in missional local congregations has been cultivated by ministry itself as well as by his participation in various deputies within his denomination. During full-time ministry, the academic endeavour was stimulated by a process of writing research articles, and the appointment as contract researcher at the Faculty of Theology in 2007 opened doors to also teach on a part-time basis. He started his academic career on a full-time basis in 2014 and soon started to specialise on the triangular interrelationship between attitudes, cognition and remembrance. Ferdi P. Kruger is currently a professor at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. He is also the research director of the Unit for Reformational Theology and the Development of the South African Society. The discipline in which he still endeavours to make a contribution is within Homiletics and Liturgics.

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Malan Nel did all his degree work at the University of Pretoria where he enrolled for a BSc degree in 1955. At the end of his first year, his calling into the full-time ordained ministry made him change course. After ordination, he served two local churches (in one as student pastor) and as Director for Youth Ministry in the Synod of KwaZulu-Natal and later the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church. His academic and teaching career started in 1980 as a member of the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria. He finished his doctorate in 1981 with a thesis on youth evangelism. In 1988, he accepted an appointment at the then Vista University. Here he founded the Centre for Contextual Ministry in 1992. The Centre relocated to the University of Pretoria in 2002, and he served as Director until 2012. The main purpose of the Centre is to train Christian leaders for their ministry in church and society. Since his official retirement as Director of the Centre, Prof. Nel is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria. Prof. Nel specialises in Congregational Studies, Youth Ministry, Christian Education and Evangelism. He was and still is deeply involved in consulting congregations in becoming missional in being and doing. He has a deep love for preaching and teaching and has published a book on the impact of personality on preaching. His last official research (current) is on the role of preaching in developing missional congregations.

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Preface

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This book was born out of a sincere desire to serve local congregations. I submitted a proposal for such a team research project some years ago. In all of my previous research concerning what was called for so many years *Gemeindeaufbau,* I discovered that worship and preaching on its own will not get the job done. Building up, developing and cultivating faithful, Kingdom-seeking congregations is about everything we are and everything we do. Ministry in its totality is required. But, and this is a determining *but* in the premise of this book, without worship and preaching such cultivation for missionally faithful congregations will not happen either.

And my 'dream' became a reality. Nine Practical Theologians accepted the invitation and challenge. Together we embarked first of all on an empirical journey. And in this book, we embark on a descriptive theological journey exploring the relationship worship, preaching and the cultivation of missionally faithful congregations. This book is about the outcome of this research as reported in Chapter 1.

A sincere desire to serve local congregations, I have stated? What do we mean?

We *confess* as a team that local congregations are critically important in missional thinking. We *confess* that for God, it is about his world, his creation. But even though we confess that the church and every local congregation are, but, in between realities, we also confess that it pleases God to continually reform his church to be and become what he has created them to be: seekers of his Kingdom and his righteousness. Even though we confess the relativity of the church, we also confess the relevance of the church and every local congregation. In a sense, we believe that it is only when we confess our relativity that we begin to understand our relevance. However, tragically the church and local congregations may have failed or are failing – God is not giving up on his church. He calls us, the church, to conversion every single day. Congregations are only relevant when it is clear in who 'we' are and in what 'we' do that it is about the Kingdom of God and not about the kingdom of the church. This is the direct reason for the subtitle of the book: cultivating communities of the gospel – meaning the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

We *confess* that worship and preaching, as a part of the liturgy, are supposed to be in the heart of the becoming of local congregations. We can almost not imagine that deep change will start anywhere else than where we are 'before the Lord' in worship. Is not worship the ultimate of having found ourselves back as created human beings? Being met by the Living One makes us bow down and call out: *'Rabboni!'* (which means 'Teacher') (Jn 20:16 NIV)*.* Worshipping calls forth preaching and teaching.

We *confess* that being missional is being contextual. Local congregations gain missional credibility by being contextually relevant. We learned from our qualitative research that contexts are complex and often a frightening challenge. Context more often than not challenges and even complicates the cultivation of a new missional ethos. Some contexts might even allow and live with missional projects of help and hope-giving without a willingness to change into an inclusive and hospitable community where the outsider is as welcome as the insider.

We *confess* that servant leadership might be more important than what we would like to admit in a church environment. From the interviews, we got the hunch that the reason for this might be the issue of trust and example. However, many leaders (pastors, preachers and teachers) point away from themselves to Christ; Christ's followers want to know that the one pointing is sincere. In previous research, I have discovered that this goes hand-in-hand with a long tenure. Trust develops over time. People 'check us out' before they 'check-in' and commit to what leaders might be calling for.

We *confess* that leaders themselves and congregations as such need to be trained in cultural intelligence. To be changed into an inclusive thinker and an inclusive faith community does not come easy. We so often just do not have the tools and the intelligence. Our context so often was monocultural to the point that we developed a we–them mentality. This hampers in so many ways the cultivation of a multicultural way of being and thinking. Reading the New Testament uncovers this struggle within us. What happened to and within the author of the letter to the Ephesians to begin to praise God that even the outsiders, the non-Jews, are now a part of the congregation and in Christ a new humanity (cf. Eph 1–2)?

We *confess* mission moves!

Herewith, we indicate:

• that God is behind, or rather in mission: God moves in mission
• that because God moves in mission, mission as such also moves – all around us

- that on the grounds of the above, the world, and we, yes, even the church are also moved, to make our mission moves – whether ecclesial, homiletical, liturgical, ethical, socio-political, etc.[1]

We have decided to use footnotes to make the content more accessible for the thousands of non-ordained theologians who may not be that interested in the sources should we have used the Harvard system of referencing.

Our prayer is that the chapters in this book will encourage many cojourners in faith communities around the world to explore and reform, becoming even more so what God has intended us to be: His sent people in his world.

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1. With recognition to Johan Cilliers who suggested the title Mission Moves and supplied the motivation.

Framing our understanding of missional

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Remember the truth that was once spoken:
To love another person is to see the face of God.
– Les Miserables: Epilogue (Finale)

Christ has no body now on earth but yours;
No hands but yours; no feet but yours;
Yours are the eyes through which
Christ's compassion is to look out into the world
Yours are the feet with which
He is to go about doing good;
Yours are the hands with which
He is to bless us now.

– Gittins[1]

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1. Gittins (2008:69).

■ Kingdom-seeking

This chapter serves two purposes. Firstly, it gives background to the research behind this publication, and secondly, it will introduce the reader to the research team's understanding of missionality. The theological reflection on the different concepts derived from the empirical interviews in the next nine chapters will work with this understanding as a broad framework of what we mean by developing *missional* congregations.

Worship and preaching as part of the worship service are central to the life of every faith community. Not many in full-time church ministry would probably doubt this. John Witvliet[2] formulates this truism as follows:

> At the center of many discussions about change in churches today is the topic of worship. This is not surprising, for worship is at the center of congregational life [...] Worship is also central on a much deeper level. Worship is the locus of what several Christian traditions identify as the nourishing center of congregational life: preaching, common prayer, and the celebration of the ordinances or sacraments... Worship is central, most significantly, for theological reasons. Worship both reflects and shapes a community's faith. It expresses a congregation's view of God and enacts a congregation's relationship with God and each other.[3]

Nessan makes this important remark in the second edition of his book *Beyond Maintenance to Mission*:

> In this revised and expanded edition, worship is articulated even more clearly as the center of congregational life. The most important element for renewing congregational life involves reimagining what God is seeking to accomplish when the congregation gathers to worship.[4]

Add to this that often the worship service is the first point of contact for any visitor and/or a newcomer to the congregation, even when such services are offered online as during the pandemic in 2020. What happens in the worship service and how it happens can also be the last contact of any visitor and/or a new entrant. In my many years of ministry, academically, and within and as a consultant in congregations, the question that has remained with me is: what is the connection between worship and preaching in the development of missional congregations?

It is this question that has led to this project and book. What should be added however, is that this research has brought me to the conviction that worship is different when a missionally minded faith community worships. I agree with Schoon that 'the communal worship experience both gives and receives distinctive shape from how the people of God engage with each

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2. Witvliet (2008:viii).

3. Cf. Lysaught (2007:24–42) and her poignant remark with reference to divine worship and liturgy saying: 'All the Way to Heaven is Heaven' (Lysaught 2007:31).

4. Nessan (2010:xiii).

other and the world around them'[5] Or as Tizon referred to it as the 'absolutely integral relationship between loving God (worship) and loving neighbor (mission)'.[6] He later calls it an 'interdependent unity':[7]

> Worship depends on mission, and mission depends on worship. If we try to love God (worship) while neglecting justice then God's words through the prophets Amos (5:21–23), Micah (6:6–8), and Isaiah (1:11–17) indict us… To be clear: Worship inspires, motivates, and empowers mission. The church's love for God propels it outward to demonstrate love for neighbor.[8]

As I confess the abovementioned truth concerning the importance of worship in relation to mission, I also confess that, in the words of John Witvliet:

> Congregations are the cradle of Christian faith, the communities in which children of all ages are supported, encouraged, and formed for lives of service. Congregations are the habitat in which the practices of the Christian life can flourish…As living organisms, congregations are by definition in a constant state of change [...] The fast paste of change in contemporary culture, with its bias towards, not against, change only makes the challenge of negotiating change all the more pressing for congregations.[9]

It is almost sad that so many pastors and members share an open negativity towards 'the church'. Following this trend now for some time, I am convinced that the reasons are so often disappointments, even and often painful negative experiences, with the institution – whether a congregation, a presbytery or even a denominational structure like a Synod. White refers to this as:

> [*A*] general spirit of apathy and indifference towards the institutional church[10] [...] Alongside this apathy there is, among a smaller but steadily growing number of people, an active dissatisfaction with and even hostility to the church.[11]

We sometimes lack the emotional intelligence to discern between a specific 'institutional form' of church and church itself as disciples who, struggling so (and often failing), follow the Christ in this world. The authors of this book hope that we live and deal with this distinction. We may even say with Nikolajsen, in his discussion of Newbigin, that while the 'church is still full of

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5. Schoon (2018:12).

6. Tizon (2012:25).

7. Tizon (2012).

8. Tizon (2012:27).

9. Witvliet (2006:ix). Cf. also the vital contribution in this regard by Henau (2005:13–38) on what one may call the impossibility of belonging to Jesus and not be part of what he calls a 'bringing together movement' [*verzamelbeweging*]. In his (Henau 2005:16) words: '*Samenvattend kunnen wij stellen dat Jezus door zijn verkondiging van het aanbrekende godsrijk, door zijn oproep tot navolging en door de verzamelbeweging die Hij op die manier op gang bracht, aan de oorsprong ligt van wat wij kerk noemen, namelijk een gemeenschap van mensen die op een allesomvattende wijze naar Jezus van Nazareth als de Christus verwijzen*'.

10. The observation was recently made by a younger pastor that this is true even more so for younger pastors.

11. White (2009:9); cf. for what he calls 'a complex web of reasons' (White 2009:9–12).

the seeds of its own corruption' and does for sure not 'fully establish God's kingdom' – the church exists, because of the work of the Spirit, and because the 'Kingdom of God has broken into this world [...] a sign, instrument and foretaste of this kingdom'.[12] I believe that all of us support what McKnight states as the three principles concerning the importance of what he calls the local church:

> So here's my claim after that romp through the church of my youth: *Everything I have learned about the Christian life I have learned from my church*. I will make this a bigger principle: *a local church determines what the Christian life looks like for the people in that church*. Now I'll make it even bigger still: *we all learn the Christian life from how our local church shapes us.* These three principles are a way of saying that local churches matter far more than we often know.[13]

■ This research project

■ Background

I already planned this project in 2013. I then phrased it as *team research on the relationship of worship and preaching and the development of missional congregations.*[14] At the end of the 4th year of my rating as a researcher with the National Research Foundation in South Africa (2018), I approached seven colleagues working in the field of Practical Theology in South Africa (six of them in teaching) to undertake this research with me. I submitted a condensed research proposal with my request to them. All seven of them were kind enough to accept the invitation. This is the same group of colleagues (except for one)[15] who are the co-authors of this publication. Without them, I would not want to conduct this research and probably would not have done it.

□ What lies behind this?

Those who may have read my book *I Am the Difference*[16] will know that my research problem then was that preaching probably always means something to someone who has listened to it. But, what kind of preaching and preacher helps, facilitates, motivates, prepares a 'congregation' to

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12. Nikolajsen (2015:58); Newbigin (1987:12); cf. also Schuster (2009:64).

13. McKnight (2014:11; [*emphasis in original*]).

14. It was part of my 2013 application for a research grant and as part of the rating by the National Research Foundation. At that time, I was an extraordinary professor in the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria. Within the six years of planning that an applicant must submit as part of the application, it was part of my Year 5 and Year 6 plan.

15. Two of his former PhD students agreed to participate in his place: Dr. Nicolaas Matthee and Dr. Daléne Flynn.

16. Nel (2001, 2017) (2nd edn.), published in Afrikaans under the title: *Ek is die verskil*.

collectively embark on a journey, having a clear missional purpose – which this faith community has discerned to be God's purpose for them in their context.

Since that publication, I was able to continue to work on my theory, formulated in 1994,[17] that building up missional congregations is always, and simultaneously, *consolidating* and *missionary* in nature (with credit to Johnny Roberts, a scholar in the letter to the Ephesians[18] and who used the two terms in an unpublished lecture on Ephesians 4). The words of Jesus also point to the fact: 'He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach'.[19] In the revised and updated version of the 1994 publication, *Identity Driven Churches. Who are we and where are we going?*[20] I maintained this theory with greater certainty than before. Facilitating and leading a congregational analysis in more than 140 congregations between the two publications, I was more than convinced of this truth. I am convinced that missionality and developing a missional congregation always include what Roberts called consolidation. I remember a day when the Pauline scholar, the late Andrie B. du Toit, was with me in a lecture where I was trying to argue this case for the simultaneous nature of consolidation and being missional, using the following wording in a slide:

> Building up a local congregation is always
> consolidating and missional
> simultaneously[21]

As we walked out of the lecture, he said to me:

> Malan, when redoing the slide, put arrows that point both ways on both sides of the 'and' to stress the simultaneity. There is no way to separate these two realities or truths in the New Testament.[22]

In this case, the wording in the slide would look like:

> Building up a local congregation is always
> consolidating<—>and<—>missional
> simultaneously[23]

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17. Published in Afrikaans under the title *Gemeentebou* (The Afrikaans for the well-known German concept: '*Gemeindeaufbau*').

18. Cf. his commentary on the letter, published in Afrikaans: Roberts (1990).

19. Mark 3:14 (NIV).

20. Nel et al. (2015). First published in Afrikaans (Nel 1994).

21. Wording from a slide used in an unpublished lecture.

22. Andrie B. du Toit pers. comm., exact date unknown.

23. Wording from a slide used in an unpublished lecture.

To refer to Nessan again:

> Moreover, good maintenance is itself an expression of a kind of mission, particularly among congregational members…Instead the title aims to move congregational leaders to build upon the foundation of a well-maintained congregation into a vital missionary outreach. How do we move 'beyond' maintenance to mission in accord with the coming of God's kingdom?[24]

In a Festschrift for a colleague Julian C. Müller, I reflected on contributions by homeliticians in the United States on what kind of preaching and preacher are intentionally working on the abovementioned. In the article,[25] I tried to explain some key concepts I learned from these authors in this regard: 'Preaching with integrity; Preaching, listening and learning; Preaching and seeking meaning; Preaching and vision; Preaching and public involvement'.

☐ This project

In the article referred to earlier, I already stated that I would like to look at this phenomenon empirically within South Africa as well. This was the main purpose of this team research. When I approached the now members of the research team, I formulated the problem as follows: What would be the relationship (if any) between preaching (and the liturgy of which it is a part) and the development of missional congregations? And secondly, what kind of preaching and preacher would best serve (even facilitate) such a process of missional congregational development in preaching and worship?[26]

The team is working on this research problem. It was the core driver behind the formulation of the questions used in the empirical, qualitative, fully structured interviews.

☐ The empirical approach

Each member of the team undertook to identify a few congregations where we as researchers observed intentional ministry to develop a missional identity. The councils of these congregations were officially approached by me for permission to interview their pastor. Details of the research questions and purpose were given in the letter. The same permission was obtained from the pastors of the 43 identified congregations. These consent letters are in safekeeping with me.

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24. Nessan (2010:xiii–xiv).

25. Nel (2014).

26. The research shared by Schoon (2018) works with a similar but not identical problem. When we formulated our research problem, we were not aware of his project on the North American side of the Atlantic Ocean. He formulates his research question: 'How might a missional approach to worship contribute to cultivating an evangelistic character among God's people' (Schoon 2018:1).

Within The Reformed Churches of South Africa and the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NRCA), 10 congregations each were selected. Within the Dutch Reformed Church,[27] a total of 23 congregations were selected: 5 in the Western Cape, 5 in the Free State and 13 in the 4 Northern Synods.[28] The team realised that there are many more congregations, throughout the country, where such interviews could have been conducted. The churches identified were not selected randomly. Each researcher had personal knowledge of the congregation and their intentional focus on developing missional faithfulness.

Several questions were considered and eventually finalised by the team. The questions are attached as Appendix 1. The interviews were recorded, and each one was transcribed separately. This document comprises 514 pages and amounts to 192 363 words.[29]

Dr. Nicolaas Matthee analysed the data using the Atlas.ti program. In his words:

> The analysis consisted of two coding phases: the first was open coding where the overarching themes were identified in the text and this was followed by axial (branching) coding where each theme was explored in more detail. These branches were then used in the second round as the primary themes and further supplemented with a second reading. There was also a second phase which consisted of a network analysis, here the distilled themes of the previous rounds were presented as a large network and the relationship and connection between the different themes were explored to further refine.[30]

The full analysis was shared with the team members and together we decided who will work on which cluster of concepts. This decision was informed by discerned and proven academic work in a field.

☐ The empirical outcome

As the purpose of this chapter is more than just a report on the project, the full list of questions asked and the concepts that came out in the analysis of the interviews are attached as Appendix 1 at the end of this publication.

■ Purpose of the book

The purpose the team agreed upon is twofold:

- A Practical Theological reflection on the concept(s) that the chapter deals with, considering the empirical information presented in the data analysis.

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27. The Afrikaans names of the three denominations are in order as above: Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk.

28. For a map of South Africa visit: https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/za_provinces_map2.htm.

29. This document is for safekeeping in my possession as part of the Ethical commitment and agreement.

30. Unpublished document, with me for safekeeping. Dr Matthee has a PhD in Practical Theology from UP. An abbreviated document with the discerned concepts is attached as Appendix 2.

- Attention to what is called the pragmatic or strategic task in Practical Theology.[31] This is sometimes called 'deep change'. Osmer refers in this regard to, what he calls, transformational leadership: 'leading an organization through a process of "deep change" in its identity, mission, culture and operating procedures'.[32]

■ Expectations and hopes

Practical Theologians, similar to us with a heart and passion for the church of Christ, hope that this research will help pastors and congregations transform from deep within, from within the heart of worship and preaching into contextually relevant faith communities. Whoever worships the God who has sent us, whoever hears the God who speaks to us, lives and works differently. We, as people of faith in Jesus the Christ, say thank you differently. We say thank you by living in a way where it is clear that we understand ourselves as being sent (our 'sentness',[33] our missionality) in terms of passion for the Kingdom of God and his justice in every corner of our world – in our case South Africa:

> Mission is not something that is added on to the life of church but that constitutes the life of the church. Likewise, mission is not something that is optional for the church; rather, where there is the church, there is necessarily mission. This is what it means for the church's very being to consist in its 'sentness' or its missional character.[34]

■ Ecclesiology as being missional

In the paragraphs that follow, I will briefly explore three dimensions of what we understand to be missional. I will not focus on the process of developing missional congregations as I have done so extensively in other publications.[35] I will also not go into the essence and importance of worship, preaching, leadership and context as this is covered elsewhere in this book. A single remark as to a deep personal conviction – such missional thinking and missional being only comes when leaders are credible and trusted. In the last chapter of

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31. Osmer (2008:11, 178) and Heitink (1999:201–219).

32. Osmer (2008:178). He refers to Quinn (1996:201). Cf. also Nel et al. (2015:240, n. 956).

33. Cf. Hammond and Cronshaw (2014) for their book under this title. In the unnumbered page with notes 'In praises of *Sentness*'. The well-known Mike Breen wrote: 'The word *missional* is in danger of becoming a vacuous trend in 21st-century evangelicalism, claiming to be new wine but packaged and consumed in the same old programmatic wineskins. This is why we need *Sentness*'.

34. Johnson (2015:69).

35. Doohan (2007:70–73). Cf. especially Nel (2009a, 2009b) and Nel et al. (2015).

this book, I argue a case for what I call missional integrity. A confession from my side is in place here:

> Personal, relational, institutional, and vocational integrity reinforce quality of life and lasting leadership [...] Leadership is a spiritual journey to the depths of one's inner convictions, where, alone, one hears a call that no one else hears [...] Persons who are really in touch with themselves make the best leaders. They evidence dignity in their service of others and appear to others as having healthy self-esteem, socially satisfied, and fulfilled. They are known for their abiding sense of excellence, inner directedness, integrity, and commitment [...] Trust is the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together. When a trusting environment exists, followers confidently rely on the authenticity of their leaders. However, a trusting environment also becomes the foundation for mutual respect, confident risk-taking, partnership, and collaboration. In a trusting environment both leaders and followers know that each respects the competence of the other, grants them freedom to act and even make mistakes, identifies the blind spots throughout the organization, and will always highlights the positive wherever it is to be found.[36]

My purpose is also certainly not to argue a case for missionality. This was done, and done well, over and over by so many other scholars.[37] I do, however, want to purposefully, though briefly, reflect on Barth's ecclesiology and then focus on election as a 'motive' for being and becoming missional.

■ Missional theology

It is often observed that 'Christian vocation and mission typically have been underdeveloped in systematic and dogmatic theology'.[38] Guder refers to this as 'a theological lacuna that characterises virtually all systematic theologies in the West until Barth made mission the pervasive theme of his *Church Dogmatics*'.[39] This changed during the 20th century, with the decisive shift coming in the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*.[40] What Bosch already wrote in 1991 is now almost generally accepted: '*The church is seen as essentially missionary*: [...] Its mission is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for the sake of its mission'.[41] The book that has put this theme central in the discussion was the 1998 publication under the title *Missional Church: A Theological Vision for the Sending of the*

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36. Cf. Nel et al. (2015:79–83) for a discussion on the long-term nature of developing missional congregations.

37. I only refer the reader to three well-documented sources: Newbigin (1978, 1995); Bosch (1991, 2011); Guder (2015); cf. also Roxburgh's (2011:49–56) chapter on 'How It All Came to Be: A *Brief History of the Missional Conversation*'.

38. Johnson (2015:68).

39. Guder (2007:252); cf. also Guder (2015:1–19) under the heading: 'From Mission and Theology to Missional Theology'. It was his inaugural address at Princeton Theological Seminary in 2002 (also published Guder 2003:36–54).

40. Cf. Bosch (2011:372); Johnson (2015:69).

41. Bosch (2011:381; [*emphasis in original*]).

Church in North America. As Guder wrote concerning this publication, the six researchers within the Gospel and Culture Network wanted the research to be 'a catalyst for discussion of the challenge posed by Lesslie Newbigin'.[42] Newbigin posed that 'a church that is not "the church in mission" is no church at all'.[43]

This is true for both church and theology. Feldtkelter wrote: '*Entsprechend der Einsicht dass Kirche entweder missionarisch ist oder sie ist nicht Kirche, gilt auch für die Theologie: entweder ist sie missionarische Theologie, oder sie ist nicht Theologie*'.[44]

Bosch already referred to work done by Aagaard who called Barth the most decisive Protestant missiologist in this generation. Bosch then wrote: 'In light of Barth's magnificent and consistent missionary ecclesiology there may indeed be some justification for such a claim'.[45]

Barth develops his ecclesiology as part of his work *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*.[46] In a brief but in-depth discussion of Barth's ecclesiology, Johnson helps us understand the deep relationship between reconciliation as 'finished' in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in gathering, building up and sending of the community:

> The church is described in terms of humanity as justified; the outworking of this is the Holy Spirit and the gathering of the Christian community [...] To summarize, in the flow of Barth's ecclesiological development, each act of reconciliation leads to an understanding of the Spirit-initiated community. The doctrine of justification leads to the doctrine of the gathering of the community, the doctrine of sanctification leads to the doctrine of the upbuilding of the community and the doctrine of vocation leads to the doctrine of the sending of the community. The community is composed of individuals, and the individuals are understood in light of their place in the community.[47]

If space had allowed, I would have loved to share in far more detail an understanding by Barth of the role of the Christian community in ordinary life – or as Barth calls it 'the sheer fact of its existence as the people of God

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42. Guder (2015:xii).

43. Newbigin (1995:2). Cf. also Sarisky (2014:257–270) for a discussion of this understanding by Newbigin.

44. Feldtkelter (2008:37). Cf. also Nel et al. (2015:11).

45. Bosch (2011:373). No reference for the remark by Aagaard.

46. Barth CD IV.

47. Johnson (2015:72,73); Cf. also Table 1.1 (Johnson 2015:71). Johnson consistently used the concept 'community' for Barth's understanding of the congregation. Cf. Footnote 15 in Johnson (2015:74). Also of great importance is his reminder: 'We should note here, as Barth does, that the sending of the church is not a repetition of Christ or a continuation of Christ; the church is not a *Christus prolongatus.* Christ sending does not cease as the church is sent, nor does Christ's sending disappear into the church's sending. Christ is sent into the world, and the church is sent to follow him on this way' (Johnson 2015:81, fn. 36; Barth (CD IV/3.2:768).

in world occurrence'.[48] I will do better justice to Barth's understanding with relation to missional ecclesiology by quoting, rather at length, the summary by Johnson:

> In Barth's understanding the church exists for the world. It cannot exist otherwise because the church exists as the body of Christ and this as a predicate of Christ. As Christ exists for the world, so the church cannot exist in any other way than for the world...
>
> To summarize this exposition of Barth and the questions he raises, I want to offer you four assertions that arise from his ecclesiology and orient our homiletical thinking towards a missional perspective.
>
> (1) A Christian witness is fundamentally the task of the community, and the special calling of an individual or group can be understood only in the context of the task given to the whole community, then the witness of the preacher should be understood as a discrete element of the whole witness of the community.
>
> (2) To put the same point in a different way: because witness is the fundamental task of the Christian community and the task is executed in a variety of forms, with preaching being one form, then it is imperative to discern the distinctive nature of preaching as differentiated from and in relation to the other forms of witness.
>
> (3) Because the unifying element in the multiplicity of the community's witness is the content of its witness, then it is also imperative to identify the essential content of preaching.
>
> (4) Because the community necessarily exists for the world, then preaching must in some way turn the community towards the world for whom it exists.[49]

■ Being missional: The why?

Being missional has been motivated in many ways. I want to focus on a confession that, within the reformed tradition, plays a very central role: *election.* Willimon motivates the reason for his 2015 publication as having reread Barth's doctrine on the election.[50] He writes this concerning the:

> [O]ddity of a God who would call the likes of me to preach. Election is God's act whereby our lives are wrenched out of our control and we are commandeered to witness, thereby enabling the joy of talking about something more important than ourselves, our families, or our churches.[51]

Willimon's reason for connecting with the confession of the election is mine too. Let me explain by linking up with his motivation. In Willimon's words, 'It is not insignificant that Barth wrote on election in 1940–1941,[52] the apex of

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48. Barth CD IV/3.2, 684. 'World occurrence' as translation for '*Weltgeschehen*'. Johnson (2015:74, fn. 16) means that 'the flow of human events' may be a good/better translation.

49. Johnson (2015:104,105).

50. Willimon (2015:ix). Willimon refers to a remark by Hauerwas (2013:244) saying that 'Barth's *Church Dogmatics* is best read as a training manual for Christian speech'. Cf. also Dreyer (2018:1) for his remark 'Barth regarded the doctrine of election as the heart of the gospel'.

51. Willimon (2015:ix).

52. 'More Jews were murdered in 1942 than in any year of the *Hitlerzeit*' (Willimon 2015:9).

Hitler's power. When the sky turned dark, and it was very dark in the Third Reich *Hitlerzeit* of the early 1940s:

> Barth believed that all our comfort and all our defiance depends on our understanding anew that [...] God bound himself to [*humanity*], and specifically to sinful [*humanity*] [...] God determines himself free for fellowship with this [*humanity*] and thereby determines [*humanity*] to be in fellowship with him and with all whom [*God*] loves [...].[53]

'Thus is Barth's doctrine of election a comfort in the face of the pitiful and often deadly human efforts at self-determination that are at root of the bloody twentieth century'[54]

A not so well-known anecdote about Bonhoeffer and Barth[55] touched me when I read it for the first time. I summarise: Bonhoeffer visited Barth in 1942. He received from Barth the proofs of the unpublished *The Doctrine of Election*. As Willimon writes: 'The last part of Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*, written just before his arrest by the Nazis, shows Bonhoeffer's indebtedness to these pages'. During Advent of 1943, Bonhoeffer asked a friend something good to read over Christmas. 'In response, Bonhoeffer received more of Barth's work on election smuggled into jail – emergency theology composed for "evil times" as Barth said in the preface':[56]

> Not long before he was hung, Bonhoeffer praised Barth's doctrine of election as set, 'Over against religious subjectivism, Barth here radically stresses the sovereignty of God...' but in a way that human beings 'did not become puppets, but emerged with spontaneity, as self-acting agents'.[57]

Are we living in such difficult times again? Certainly not in any way even close to what is called above as *Hitlerzeit.* But challenging indeed. Not only in terms of populism, nationalism and some other 'isms' like racism and sexism, but also in terms of religious subjectivism. We need to be reminded, when we motivate for radical missionality in local congregations, that:

> God bound himself to [*humanity*], and specifically to sinful [*humanity*] [...] God determines himself free for fellowship with this [*humanity*] and thereby determines [*humanity*] to be in fellowship with him and with all whom [*God*] loves.[58]

Add to this the fact that we need to rediscover that election is so much more than a comfort in our salvation. No one doubts that, but this understanding

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53. Busch (2008:17). Cf. Willimon (2015:9). For Busch's (Barths' student) statement that Barth's doctrine of election is 'the highlight of the *Church Dogmatics*' see Busch (2008:17) and cf. also McCormack (2000:92–110); cf. also endnote 17 (Willimon 2015:166).

54. Willimon (2015:9).

55. Quoted from Pangritz (2000:62–63). Cf. Willimon (2015:9).

56. Pangritz (2000:62–63).

57. Pangritz (2000:119) and Willimon (2015:9).

58. Busch (2008:17).

takes away from the 'real' meaning and purpose of election.[59] To explore this in more depth, I would like to draw three more theologians into this discussion: Newbigin, Hunsberger and Nikolajsen. Hunsberger was the first to point out the role of election in the theology of someone who (together with Bosch) so deeply influenced missional thinking and what flew out of that thinking and continuing research. With the recognition of the work of Hunsberger, Nikolajsen writes that Newbigin's 'understanding of election [...] makes up the center of his ecclesiology'.[60] He does so with reference to Hunsberger's research who conducted an in-depth analysis of Newbigin's theology and devoted a chapter to what he calls: 'The Missionary Significance of the Doctrine of Election: Newbigin's Unique Perspective'.[61] Nikolajsen agrees with Hunsberger that 'election is a dominant and consistent idea in Newbigin's theology'.[62]

What is so significant about *election*?

Firstly, an observation – Willimon thinks that:

> Newbigin's groundbreaking work on mission and evangelism, *The Open Secret*, was inspired by his reading of Barth's CD/II, 2, upon his return to England from India in 1974 [...] and that this verse (Acts 1:8) is the basis for the great missionary, theologian Bishop Leslie Newbigin's claim that *the doctrine of election is the foundation for Christian mission.*[63]

Space does not permit to try to explain something of what is called Barth's emphasis on election as the revelation of God's identity and Newbigin's focus on election:

> [*A*]s the unique divine method through which the ultimate purposes of God are carried forward through Gods' utilization of Israel and the church. The church is necessary because it knows what the world does not yet know: God has reconciled the world to God.[64]

Secondly, the election is far more *commission* than decree or *decision*. It is this misunderstanding that probably makes 'many Missiologists see election as a negative, even dangerous idea [...] Newbigin stresses that *election is not only the gospel's singular content but also God's unique method*'.[65]

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59. For a short and well-written 'summary' of Barth's understanding of election I refer the reader to the chapter *Karel Barth and Election* in Willimon (2015:25–49, Endnotes 169–173).

60. Nikolajsen (2015:33).

61. Hunsberger (1998:82–112).

62. Footnote 57 (Nikolajsen 2015:33).

63. Willimon (2015:58); cf. again Nikolajsen (2015:33–41) for his discussion on the role of election in Newbigin's ecclesiology and missiology.

64. Willimon (2015:58).

65. Willimon (2015:59). Cf. also footnote 8 in Willimon (2015:175).

Thirdly, we are elected to serve:

> Newbigin follows Barth in his opposition to a merely instrumental view of election. *Election is not only for service but also to sign, to signal, to witness, and to be a genuine, corporate, visible foretaste of what the Kingdom of God looks like*. The church is 'not merely the instrument of the apostolic mission, it is also the end and purpose'.[66] Election is an invitation not merely to a new concept of God but rather to participatory membership in the ongoing people of God. By God's sovereign call the church is launched in mission. The church is a showcase of God's revelation in which the lowly and sinners are chosen as a sign of what God does now and of what God will do in the future. Election and revelation are corollaries. Israel and the church are chosen as illustrations of God's glory. We can never talk about election in a way that is abstracted from the actual life of the elect community and its relationship with people around it. Nor can the church speak of election except in terms of a gracious invitation that extends beyond the church for all to join the church in living out the joy and the responsibility of election – now. This community has begun to taste, even if only foretaste, the reality of the kingdom. The church is the hermeneutic of its message. Christians believe that God purposes the salvation of all, but the purpose will not be accomplished in a way that ignores or bypasses the historical events named *Israel* and *church* by which salvation is in fact visibly, institutionally revealed.[67]

Fourthly, this service is a special assignment and function of being church. Pannenberg already wrote in 1977: 'Chosenness means to be assigned a function'.[68] This service will be explained in more detail later in this publication. What needs to be said here already is what Hunsberger refers to (explaining Newbigin) as non-negotiable for us being church: 'He maintains that "the purpose of the election [of Israel] is service, and when the service is withheld the election loses its meaning, and therefore fails"'.[69] With reference to Blauw, Hunsberger continues his understanding of Newbigin's use of election as a motive for mission. The church is much more subject than object in the divine election and 'therefore election is not primarily a privilege but a responsibility'.[70]

Lastly, the election is for the service of witness. In a paragraph on 'the new individualism', Newbigin wrote that in the Bible:

> [*W*]here an individual is confronted with the calling of God, the question at issue is never just his own destiny; it is God's purpose for his people and through them for mankind [...] it is for the fulfilment of his role in God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

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66. Hunsberger (1998:106) and Newbigin (1953:169).

67. Willimon (2015:59-60; [*emphasis in original*]).

68. Pannenberg (1977:49).

69. Hunsberger (1998:90-91); cf. also Rowley (1950:52).

70. Blauw (1962:23); Hunsberger (1998:91). Of interest is Blauw's reference to work conducted by Senior and Stuhlmueller (1983:94) and Seebass (1977:74, 82–83) and the Hebrew term *bachar* indicating that the two essential features of its Old Testament usage are that (1) it means 'a careful choice', and (2) it 'implies a *special purpose or mission*'; cf. Hunsberger (1998:91).

It is his calling to responsible participation in the events which are the key to world history.[71]

Hunsberger continues and helps us understand a non-negotiable 'ingredient' of this service:

The slogan, 'elect for service', which has come to be used so generally, is assumed to settle the issue of purpose for God's choice. But it only begs the question. What sort of service? And to what end? [...] According to Newbigin, the purpose of election is that those chosen will be bearers of the blessings of salvation, which is transmitted from persons of one 'people' to persons of other 'peoples'. The purpose, therefore, is to 'bear the witness of the Spirit'. By this very means of transmission of the news of Jesus Christ, the salvation it announces takes place in the reconciliation of persons as they are becoming reconciled to God, thus establishing 'wholeness'.[72]

It is at this point that Newbigin's indebtedness to Barth is again obvious. Bringing Johnson back into our discussion, saying:

For Barth, witness is not a way of preaching, but preaching is a way of witness. Barth argues that every activity in which the church is engaged is an act of witness. Moreover, each act of witness participates in the common task of the community and of every Christian, and every form of witness is united to the other forms by its common content and purpose: to confess Jesus Christ. Homiletically, when witness is a supercategory that includes every activity of the church, preaching is thus set in an interconnected relationship to those activities.[73] In Barth's understanding the church exists for the world. It cannot exist otherwise because the church exists as the body of Christ and this as a predicate of Christ. As Christ exists for the world, so the church cannot exist in any other way than for the world.[74]

Osmer once refers to election as 'calling to service and witness, not primarily the reception of special blessings, benefits, and privileges'.[75]

■ Conclusion

The research team agreed in broad terms to the following understanding of what then the missional essence of being church would mean.[76] Before I quote the scholars with whom we connected in our theological frame of

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71. Newbigin (1966:44); Hunsberger (1998:92–93) refers to this publication as published in 1964. It was actually published in 1966.

72. Hunsberger (1998:97).

73. Johnson (2015:103).

74. Johnson (2015:104; [*emphasis in original*]) with reference to Barth CD IV/3.2:899–901. Cf. Long's ground-breaking book (2005) on *The Witness of Preaching* for an in-depth homiletical reflection on preaching and witnessing.

75. Osmer (2012:49).

76. See also my article: Nel (2014).

mind, let me close the above section with a quote from Newbigin in *The Open Secret*:

> The forgiveness of sins is what makes possible the gift of God's peace. The simplest and most comprehensive way of stating the content of the commission to the church is therefore to be found in Jesus' initial word: 'Peace be with you'. Peace, shalom, the all-embracing blessing of Yahweh – this is what the presence of the kingdom is. The church is a movement launched into the life of the world to bear in its own life God's gift of peace for the life of the world. It is sent, therefore, not only to proclaim the kingdom but to bear in its own life the presence of the kingdom.[77]

In our initial agreement of understanding, I submitted to the research team three quotations to align in some way our understanding of being a missional church[78] – as this is such a central theme in this research project: what is the relationship, even essential contribution of worship and preaching in the process of cultivating missional congregations towards being parables of the Kingdom.[79] The quotations follow.

Firstly, Zscheile describes it as:

> At the heart of the missional church conversation lies a challenge: to recover and deepen the church's Christian identity in a post-Christendom world in light of the Triune God's mission in all of creation […] What is 'missional': The missional church conversation started with a recognition that the church's relationship to its surrounding culture in the West had changed: the era of functional Christendom or a church culture was over, and the primary source of the church's identity and vocation could no longer rest on social centrality. By 'missional church' I mean a church whose identity lies in its participation in the Triune God's mission in all of creation. In the view of missional ecclesiology, it is God's mission that has a church, not the church that has a mission. Missional church views church as definitive of what the church is as a product of and participant in God's mission.[80]

Secondly, Anthony Gittins writes:

> Missional is an adjective; applied to Christianity or to individual Christians it describes a lifestyle that is specifically and intentionally exocentric rather than endocentric, boundary-breaking rather than boundary maintaining […] Missional Christianity is Beyond Belief [*with reference to a dogmatistic approach*]. We identify ourselves in terms of our embodiment or incarnation…Missional Christianity implies an ongoing process: Missional Christianity is a lived experience rather than a fixed attitude or patterns of set behaviour.[81]

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77. Newbigin (1978:54; cf.1995:48–49). Both Hunsberger (1998:106) and Willimon (2015:60) quoted part of this paragraph too.

78. Cf. Schoon (2018:17–20) for a similar attempt.

79. Cf. Johnson (2015:94, fn. 71) for his discussion of a possible translation of a phrase (*Gleichnis*) used by Barth in the German text and may be translated by 'parable'.

80. Zscheile (2012:1, 5–6). With the last sentence Zscheile refers to Tim Dearborn cited in the Archbishops' Council 2004, Mission shaped church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context. Church House. London.

81. Gittens (2008:46, 47, 48).

Regarding the Roman Catholic worship service that ends with 'Ite! Missa est': Go on your way now; you are sent forth' and regarding 1 Corinthians 4; 15 and 2 Corinthians 9:12, Gittins writes:

> This notion of eucharist as grace and thanksgiving (and the requirement that it extend or be shared as widely as possible) should surely be at the heart of every Christian life, just as it was the leitmotif, the defining characteristic of the life of Jesus.[82]

It becomes our life, as his quote from St Teresa of Ávila confirms:

> Christ has no body now on earth but yours;
> No hands but yours; no feet but yours;
> Yours are the eyes through which
> Christ's compassion is to look out into the world
> Yours are the feet with which
> He is to go about doing good;
> Yours are the hands with which
> He is to bless us now.[83]

Thirdly, in his extensive research and writings on the subject in the missional conversation, Van Gelder writes:

> The missional church conversation brings together two streams of understanding God's work in the world. First, God has a mission within all creation – the *Missio Dei*. Second, God brought redemption to bear on all of life within creation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – the Kingdom of God [...] A missional understanding of God's work in the world from this perspective is framed as follows: God is seeking to bring his kingdom, the redemptive reign of God in Christ, to bear on every dimension of life within all the world so that the larger creation purposes of God can be fulfilled – the *Missio Dei*. This missional understanding has the world as its primary horizon and the church is placed at the center of the activity in relating the Kingdom of God to the *Missio Dei*. The church's self-understanding as being missional is grounded in the work of the Spirit of God, who calls the church into existence as a gathered community, equips and prepares it, and sends it into the world to participate fully in God's mission.[84]

In our minds, *Developing Missional Congregations* refers to an understanding of:

- The congregation as send by God: the *missio ecclesia* gives expression to the *Missio Dei*.
- The congregation as people on the way, following the Christ, busy rediscovering their God-given identity, rejoicing in this given identity and living out this identity.
- The congregation as purposefully/intentionally becoming who they already are in Christ, seeking, even more faithfully, the Kingdom, the will of God and his righteousness.

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82. Gittens (2008:69).

83. Gittens (2008:69).

84. Van Gelder (2007:85).

- The congregation as participating in his own upbuilding both in caring for one another (consolidation as discussed above) and adding ('bybou' [Roberts]) of the stones not yet in the wall, built-in on the cornerstone Jesus, the Christ.
- The congregation as deeply rooted in context, contextually committed to relevant help and hope-giving.
- The congregation in training, equipped (*katartidzein*) utilising all the ministries to faithfully fulfil its purpose in context.

Within this understanding, we have conducted our research reflected in this publication – attempting to determine what role worship and preaching play in the process of developing such congregations. We try to find words for what God already did so completely and fully in Christ:

> This self-giving that stands at the center of God's revelation in Jesus Christ implies that our task as theologians and preachers is to find the words and images – already existing in our culture and language – that express the gospel so that it can be heard as good news spoken specifically to those who hear.[85]

May this research help us rethink, reimagine and, in hope, participate in the power of the Spirit in what God is planning for his chosen people.[86]

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85. Jacobson and Kelly (2009:35).

86. For the Chapter 1 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

Missio Dei between soil and soul? Liturgical Perspectives

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■ Introduction

Creation celebrates God, and God celebrates creation. The church, being part of creation, exists for exactly the same reason, in the same double sense of the expression – to celebrate (the great deeds of) God and to underline God's celebration of, and joy in, creation. Liturgy – the ways in which the church celebrates – aids the church in worshipping this God of creation and to join in God's enjoyment of this creation. In this sense, it is more than just 'the order of things'.

Celebration sometimes needs to pause, to be interrupted, by lament. When creation (and the church) no longer celebrates God, and when God consequently is saddened by creation, lament is needed. When creation, in all its forms, is threatened and destroyed, contrary to the creational intent of God, the church cannot be doing 'business as usual'. The church can only understand celebration and lament if she is connected to the pulse of God's joy, throbbing in creation, and if she experiences the pain of de-creation.

The role of liturgy, inclusive of preaching, is to sensitise those partaking in it to the joys and sorrows of God, the Creator, and, in this sense, to be 'sent out' to (re)kindle the divine laughter and to help dry the tears from the eyes of the broken and downtrodden. Liturgy comes to our aid, granting the language (or rather musical score) to sing along with those who celebrate, and the grammar to groan with the Spirit, in unity with those who lament.[1]

■ Creation and/or salvation?

From the earlier discussion, it should already be clear that liturgy grants a space where creation and salvation are not viewed as separate events or entities, but rather as two sides of the same coin of God's investment in us. The relationship between creation and salvation probably poses one of the most fundamental challenges, and indeed historical divides, within Christian theology. A prominent eco-theologian like Ernst Conradie even maintains that 'the theme of the relationship between creation and salvation cuts to the very core of any theological position, approach or movement'.[2]

We cannot, and indeed need not, enter here into this highly complex debate on the relationship between creation and salvation. Of interest for this chapter, though, is how the understanding of this relationship has affected our interpretation of '*Missio Dei*', in particular within the context of the reformed tradition in South Africa. Could this tension be lurking behind the theological and liturgical *ratio* for at least how we are not only describing but also enacting what has been called 'the missional church' within our context?

Could it be said, for instance, that our dominant understanding of *Missio Dei* is soteriological in nature? That relatively little space is given to the fact that creation as such could indeed also be seen as *Missio Dei* and that creation itself stems from *Missio Dei*, for *Missio Dei*?[3] Perhaps this emphasis on soteriology could be traced back to how Calvin has been interpreted within the Dutch Reformed tradition in South Africa. It has been noted by some scholars that this interpretation, while being solid in soteriological content, indeed lacks a *mature theology of creation*.[4]

Perhaps the lack of a mature theology of creation could furthermore be attributed to a dominant and often exclusive theological focus on *ecclesiology* in ministerial training; the countering of a natural theology associated with

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1. Cf. Romans 8:26–27.

2. Conradie (2011:4).

3. Cf. Bohren (1962:6ff.).

4. See Conradie (2010:357–369) and cf. Cilliers (2011:279–299).

apartheid with a strong contrasting emphasis on *Scripture*; and a narrow *pietistic notion of salvation* as personal sanctification.[5]

As far as the latter is concerned, it is well known that the Dutch Reformed Church always had a certain pietistic component in its theological make-up, dating back to the times and undeniable influence of the Scottish ministry in South Africa, the most prominent figure being Andrew Murray. The notion of 'pietism' is about as complex as the relationship between creation and salvation, but there do seem to be some connections, for instance, between an overemphasis of soteriology (to the detriment of creation) and pietism with its interest in the inner experiences and ultimate salvation of the 'soul'. Pietism has been described by Vincent Brümmer as the expression of a relationship with God, not unlike a 'love-affair', contrasted to a more orthodox approach, which could be seen as 'something like a theory'.[6]

It is, however, important to note that the Scottish influence in South Africa had many faces, also distinguishing it from what is often classically understood under the term 'pietism'. Although there was the puritan dimension in the Scottish tradition, that in effect led to an ethical vacuum as far as social and ecological issues were concerned, one could also state with Murray Coetzee that it was, in fact, this Scottish tradition, with its assertion that all people are equal, that influenced Beyers Naudé, together with his understanding of the so-called Utrecht School, to become more and more critical of the Apartheid ideology.[7]

■ *Missio quod creaturae Dei?*

In this chapter, I would argue that the distinction between creation and salvation often seems forced and, in this sense, indeed detrimental to our understanding of *Missio Dei*. Similar to the relationship between creation and salvation, also the notion of pietism, the idea of '*Missio Dei*' is also complex and multi-layered. We can only speak about this with bated breath...

Therefore, three very brief, 'Trinitarian' comments follow.

Firstly, whatever our interpretation of the 'missional' paradigm might be, it is, in my opinion, important to be reminded that the 'mission' of God, that is, *Missio Dei*, did not start with the coming of Christ. It is not, in the first instance, a crisis response to the fall of humanity. It started with creation when God sent out God's Word to create all that is or would be. We could speak about God's mission *as* creation and creation *as* God's mission, but

5. See Conradie (2011:277–279).

6. Cf. Brümmer (2013:12ff.).

7. Cf. Coetzee (2013:1–15).

perhaps say it even stronger: God's mission *is* creation; and creation *is* God's mission (*missio quod creaturae Dei*).

This sent-out-word-in-creation did, however, not cease coming once all that is was created; it rather continues, keeping all that is from disintegrating into chaos or reverting to nothing. Martin Luther once wrote movingly about this continuous coming of the Word of God as follows:

> God the Father began and accomplished creation through His Word, and He also sustains it through the same Word. He abides in His handiwork [...] How long could the sun, the moon and the whole sky continue to move as it has had done so for many thousands of years, how long would the sun have been able to rise and set at its fixed time and place year after year – if God, who made it, did not sustain it daily? If God withdrew His hand, would home and hearth and all things not soon fall apart in a heap? All the power and wisdom of all the angels and men would not have been able to sustain the creation for one moment. The sun would not have shone in the sky for long, no child would be born, no grain of wheat, grass or anything else would sprout from the earth or be renewed, if God did not keep it.

> If the Creator withdrew His hand for a moment, everything would soon break apart and perish. Therefore we confess: I believe in God the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth [...] If God, who created us, also not sustained us, then we would have died and perished long ago, even in the cradle and in birth.[8]

Is this not a beautiful description of '*Missio Dei*'? God's Word is not only about salvation; it is also about creation; in fact, it starts – and continues – with creation, with the soil we stand on. Therefore, any attempt to understand *Missio Dei* only, or even primarily in terms of soteriology, more often than not ends up with a type of ecclesial 'outreach' to save the world (which of course need not be wrong; see the discussion further on), but an outreach that bypasses creation as the basis on which all of God's mission(s) take place – as if this creation has fallen 'out of' God's hands. On the contrary, creation comes into being through the mission of God's Word so that God's Word can continue its mission.

In Psalm 147, verses 15–18, we hear the following:

> God sends his orders to the world
> > how swiftly his word flies!
> He sends the snow like white wool;
> > he scatters frost upon the ground like ashes.
> He hurls the hail like stones.
> > Who can stand against his freezing cold?
> Then, at his command, it all melts.
> > He sends his winds, and the ice thaws.[9]

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8. Translated from Luther (1883:558ff.).

9. New Living Translation.

God's Word here is aimed at things like snow, frost, hail, ice, etc. More than that, God's Word call these (very earthly) realities into existence. Indeed, this creation *is* God's mission, and God's mission is this creation. One could say that any effort to reduce God's mission to 'spiritual' or 'heavenly' issues misses the missional point. *Any 'missional' effort to separate soil and soul sadly suffers from a lack of creational substance.*

Secondly, the coming of Jesus did not change or contradict this creational mission of God. On the contrary, it underlines or rather fulfils it. Jesus comes as the word-in-flesh. His mission is God's mission – for the sake of creation, inclusive of flesh, of bodies, of humanity, of soil and soul. God's creational mission calls the world into being; Christ now becomes part of this being, part of this creational mission of God.

The incarnation could be called a 'supernatural' event, that is, an event 'above and beyond' nature; but it could also be called a 'natural' event – Jesus being born as a baby, a real baby. This baby is not 'above and beyond' nature, not supra-natural, but rather 'with and within' nature, rather intra-natural. Again, who states this more eloquently than Martin Luther?:

> Jesus was not a ghost but lived amongst people. He had eyes, ears, a mouth, nose, breast, body, hands and feet just like you and I. He drank milk from his mother, He ate and drank with us; was angry, prayed, experienced sorrow and cried.[10]

Could we deduce from this that '*Missio Dei*' is all about being and becoming human? That we are not human in order to become Christians, rather Christians in order to become human.[11] Or, to say it in other words, Jesus comes for the sake of the underside of humanity to restore humanity. He comes for the sake of the broken, for vulnerable humanity – up to the point of death. His mission – God's mission – is because of, and on behalf of, the downtrodden, those who find themselves on the fringes of life; those who experience 'God-forsakenness', who cry out: My God, my God, why...? '*Missio Dei*' is about the sufferings of 'ordinary' people; therefore, it is so extraordinary. It is extraordinarily ordinary.

But this coming of Jesus as *Missio Dei* is not only for the sake of human beings, but all of creation. I take my cue here from a famous Roman Catholic monk who was way ahead of his times in the debate about science and faith and in particular about the relationship between evolution and creation.[12] His name was *Teilhard de Chardin*.[13] He speaks about the Cosmic Christ – following the thought of the Apostle Paul – and underlines the fact that all of creation is

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10. Translated from Milk (n.d.:62).

11. See Van Ruler (1973:67–84).

12. See Cilliers (2014).

13. Obviously, I cannot do justice to the richness of his theological and philosophical thought here. For his thoughts on the relationship between evolution, science cf. De Chardin (1977).

underway, also through evolution, to the ultimate fulfilment under the Omega, Christ.[14] All of reality is converging towards this *pleroma*, this fullness and this final unification of all things under Christ.

This movement finds its culmination in the final triumph over all destructive powers. At present, however, there are still counter-powers, resisting this movement towards the fulfilment. These counter-powers do not converge, but rather fragment. All counter-powers that destroy or negate or pollute creation go against the grain of God's creational, missional word. More than that, these counter-powers, or counter-words, represent counter-movements, away from the unification under Christ, back towards the chaos,[15] towards the non-creation, the no-thing. In effect, it endeavours to turn God's creational, missional word completely around. It intends de-mission and de-creation.

Thirdly, the coming of the Spirit – Pentecost – also does not change or nullify this creational mission of God. On the contrary, like the Christ-Word, it underlines and fulfils it. The Spirit is not poured out on something supernatural, or does not intend the supernatural, rather the 'natural' – the Spirit is poured out on all *flesh*.[16] 'Spirit' here does not indicate a type of 'spirituality' that hovers above and beyond humanity, or contradicts our bodily existence. It rather sanctifies our bodies, indeed sanctifies life, or better reminds us of the sanctity granted us on the grounds of our being-created-by-God.

Jesus had one body. The Spirit amplifies and 'expands' this body. The Spirit embodies the missional reaffirmation that we have, or rather, are bodies – by being poured out on all bodies. The Spirit effects an 'enormous expansion' of the mission of Jesus, according to Arnold Van Ruler.[17] This enormous expansion cannot be orchestrated or contained by the church; it is aimed at the ends of the world (and cosmos) and the end of time (and eternity).

This expansion implies an inescapable risk for the mission of God and the God of this mission. It embodies the danger – dare I say gamble? – that God undertook and undertakes to send God's Word (intra-natural) into all flesh. The Spirit now speaks, like Jesus did, in human words, created by human vocal cords. The Spirit now speaks in a *poly*phonic manner, with a variety of (human) voices, and in a *pluri*form array of spaces and places. This means that it can be misunderstood and misused, as proven by history. And yet, God wanted to dwell, and indeed does dwell, intra-naturally, amid, inside, humanity. The Spirit underlines, and advocates, once again that soil and soul cannot be separated.

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14. Cilliers (2014). Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:28 and Colossians 3:11.

15. See Cilliers (2014).

16. Cf. Acts 2:1–11.

17. See Van Ruler (1973:18–22).

In short, the *Missio Dei,* of Creator, Jesus, and Spirit, is about (the reality of) life, nothing more and nothing less. The New Heaven does not exclude the New Earth – on the contrary, we cannot be saved without the Earth. Earth is (re)sanctified; humanity is (re)created and our bodies are re*surrected*.

∎ *Missio Interruptio?*

So, where does this leave the church?

Again, three brief points – this time 'ecclesial' in nature.

Firstly, we must reiterate that the notion of *Missio Dei* does not belong to the church; neither is it a function of the church. The church is a function – one of many (*poly*phonic and *pluri*form) expressions of the *Missio Dei. Missio Dei* did not start with the church, nor does it end with the church. *Missio Dei* is all around us, everywhere where humanity is to be found, where bodies are suffering, where people hover on the fringes of life and where vulnerability cries out in God-forsakenness: My God, my God, why...?

This means, inter alia, that the Spirit does not belong to the church, rather that the church belongs to the Spirit. Creation, of which the church is a part, also belongs to the Spirit – with all of its variety and richness. The Spirit also speaks and moves outside of, and without, the church. The church is a vehicle of the Spirit, but the church would overestimate itself grossly if it imagined itself to be the only vehicle.

Indeed, *Missio Dei* takes place where the snow falls like white wool, where frost is scattered on the ground like ashes, where the wind thaws the ice, and yes, where the hail falls like stones – and not only where people 'give their heart' to Jesus.

This implies, *secondly*, that our language about *Missio Dei* should be less polished, less precise and assured, and more broken up and more interrupted – by awe and silence. That our missional programmes and agendas should be open to the possibility to be fragmented by missional hail, falling like stones. We *are* not so much 'missional', or a 'missional' church, as we are (continuously being) missionalised – by the *Missio Dei.*[18] *Missio Dei* is not so much the result of our inspiration, as it is the result of our being interrupted. The only difference between 'us' and the 'world' is that we should know about our sinfulness. We are indeed only beggars, telling other beggars where we found bread.[19]

Perhaps we could even speak of *Missio Interruptio* – a mission that continuously interrupts our status quos, whether they are social, political or ecclesial. We – the

18. It is interesting to note that the word 'missionalised' does not actually exist, perhaps because we never use it in the subjective sense?

19. Following the words of Luther, allegedly written down two days before his death. See Milk (n.d.:67).

church – do not stand outside of this missional interruption, and we do not own, orchestrate or control this missional interruption. *Missio Interruptio* is a two-edged sword: it not only denotes the interruption *by* God's mission but also the interruption *of* our mission(s). Perhaps this is what our missions are in dire need of – to be interrupted by God's mission. We need a *mission interruption*, indeed a break, a breach and perhaps even a shattering of our missions. We need a *mission intermission.* We need this intermission before we speak with bated breath and before we tell other beggars where we, being beggars ourselves, found bread.

Why? So that we can be redirected and returned to life, to the world and to the creation that God cherished so much that God did not only call it into being but to continuously uphold it through God's Word of creational compassion.

Interruption has been called the shortest definition of religion.[20]

Importantly, 'religion' here is not being the agent of interruption but being the subject of interruption. This interruption, furthermore, is not simply for the sake of creating irritation, rather for the sake of (re)sanctifying creation.

I use the notion of 'interruption' deliberately. Interruption indeed represents a category that stands at the very heart of the Christian faith.[21] This notion could be understood on different levels, for instance, as the *cultural interruption* of Christian identity, that is, as the fact that Christian traditions are constantly being challenged by culture (and could consequently either adapt to, or oppose, or re-contextualise themselves in the light of these challenges; see also the discussion further on). It could be seen as the *interruption by the so-called other* – the marginalised, the powerless, the weak and the vulnerable, that is, those for whom Christ became a human – an interruption that carries within itself the possibility of questioning of, and confrontation and conflict with the bourgeoisie of, our 'closed narratives'. Ultimately, it could be viewed as the theological understanding of interruption as an *act of God that interrupts* our closed narratives, acted out in our closed spaces.

Thirdly, the reality of the *poly*phonic and *pluri*form character of the embodied Spirit should not lead towards a legitimisation of, or acquiescence in, the disunity of the church. The church should speak with one voice, in particular concerning the one, creational, missional Word of God. As long ago as 1958, Christoph Blumhardt had the following, chilling words to say about the disunity of the church:

> There still lies a long struggle ahead to create a receptivity for the Gospel in this world, and the church denominations are the biggest hindrance in this regard […].[22]

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20. Cf. the insightful articles by Boeve (2012:4–9, cf. Boeve 2012:18–25);

21. Boeve (2012:4–9, 18–25); see Cilliers (2014).

22. Translated from Blumhardt (1958:46).

Why could he say this? Because, in his opinion, the churches of his times were not united within the *Missio Dei*, rather they were busy with their confessional agendas and struggles. Could confessionalism and denominationalism indeed counteract the *Missio Dei*, taking us back into chaos and making *us* part of the counter movements to God's creational Word, as Teilhard de Chardin postulated?[23] As I said, it is a chilling thought.

The church has, for instance, been notoriously slow to speak with one voice about creational realities like ecology and the pollution of the earth. An exception to the rule was when someone like Archbishop Thabo Makgoba wrote a moving letter on 14 November 2013 on behalf of the Anglican Church, addressed to the South African authorities, criticising the short-sighted process behind the seemingly rushed drive to get fracking in the Karoo going – referring to the toxic damage that could be done to the fragile water table of the Karoo Basin.[24]

This prompted the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) and the Reformed Church in Africa in a rare show of unity to speak 'on behalf of approximately 2.4 million Christians in the reformed tradition, with congregations throughout South Africa, of which many are in rural areas', when they drafted a combined letter, dated 07 November 2013, addressed to The Director General: Mineral Resources. The letter expressed strong convictions about the need for a 'precautionary principle' – a phrase used by many ethicists, also outside the so-called mainline churches.[25]

Yes, we should speak about the *Missio Dei* of Creator, Son and Spirit with bated breath, and yet, we are part of this *Missio Dei*, and we do have something to say, and we should say it. This being-part-of, and having-something-to-say, also finds expression in the liturgy.

■ *Missio Leiturgica?*

Missio Dei does not belong to the church, neither does liturgy. Although liturgy takes place in the church, *the liturgy of life* is more important than the liturgy of the church, as the Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner said.[26] In every part of daily life, we experience Christ's dying and rising, because the mystery of God continues to unfold in our world. According to Rahner, the 'liturgy of the world' is made up of these joys and sorrows of the suffering

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23. Cf. De Chardin (1977:45ff., 187ff.).

24. This letter was not officially published. See the discussion in Cilliers (2019:173).

25. This letter was not officially published. See the discussion in (Cilliers 2019:173).

26. See Skelley (1991:13ff.).

and rising of Christ, and this liturgy of the world needs to be brought to and connected to the liturgy of the church. Without this liturgy of the world, there cannot be a liturgy of the church, because Christ died, and was raised from the dead, for the sake of this world. Therefore, we also bring our dyings and risings to the church, to be assured that they are in fact united with Christ's own.

The church indeed exists, 'for the life of the world' – according to the title of the classic book by Alexander Schmemann.[27] Schmemann exposes the secular idea of a sacred-profane, religious-secular dichotomy that stands in stark contrast to the nerve centre of the Christian view of life as one that belongs wholly to God. What the liturgy does is to offer neither a kind of solace from the 'real world' nor a self-help scheme that dishes out remedies for life's problems. Rather, liturgy represents vivid and concrete expressions of the whole life that has now been redeemed by Christ and given back to us for communion, in the liturgy. Through Christ's life, death and resurrection, the whole of life – food, nature, work, family and life, soil and soul – is given back to us, not to be devalued as being of lesser 'spirituality', but as God's gracious gifts to us.

From this notion of 'liturgy of the world', and 'life of the world', seen through the lens of the '*Missio Dei*' as described above, I again make three brief comments, this time on a 'missional liturgy'.

Firstly, our liturgies should be holistic – incorporating the whole of life, as created by God, for which Christ died, and within which the Spirit has been poured out. *Salvation should be celebrated within the spaces and times of creation, and not in opposition to, or alienated from, these spaces and times.*

In this regard, our bodies play an important role. We do not have bodies; we are bodies. Certain senses or capabilities cannot be crystallised as being the primary or most basic.[28] It is not feasible to abstract a core (for instance, cognitive, or verbal, or manual, or optical) and elevate this as being the apex of humanity or the sole interpretative medium. We are bodies, with all of our senses and capabilities being part of a complex whole. God is revealed to us through all of our senses, for the simple reason that we are *bodies*. For the Apostle Paul, the body (*soma*) simply expresses the character of created humankind – that is, as embodied existence. Dunn concludes: 'It is precisely as embodied, and by means of this embodiment, that the person participates in creation and functions as part of creation'.[29]

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27. See Schmemann (2004:11ff.).

28. What follows is an excerpt from Cilliers (2009:50–64).

29. Dunn (1998:61).

It is in this regard that we should – once again – be taught by the wisdom of our African context.[30] Generally speaking, expression via the body takes place more spontaneously in African worship services than is normally the case in Western liturgies. Africans have an almost natural or instinctive bodily awareness, particularly also in a communal context. In the so-called Independent African Churches, the DRC in Africa and some congregations of the URCSA, the African culture (spirituality) of bodily and sensory expression is clearly illustrated in the liturgy. Music with rhythmical musical instruments, dance and bodily movements all form part of the pulsating expression of faith.

Here, the body, that is, the most concrete link to our earthly existence, plays a fundamental role in situating the worshippers in their creational context and indeed in celebrating this reality. Does this not offer a rich, liturgical paradigm – that could be played out (embodied) in a variety of contextual ways?

Secondly, this celebration of salvation within the spaces and times of creation should not be functionalised to serve agendas outside of, or beyond, this creational context. *Liturgy is, in the first instance, about the celebration of soulful soil, as much as it is about the celebration of soilful soul.*[31]

As soon as we want to 'add on' to this celebration, we end up with (yet another) ecclesial or religious slogan. An 'add-on' almost always opens up the space for superficial, popularised additions. *Missio Dei* is, however, not an 'add-on', not an 'addition', but an integration (or re-integration) – into the (re) creational compassion of God.

To put this in other words, liturgy should not focus on 'function' and it is functional precisely for this reason.[32] This tension between functionality and non-functionality is expressed poignantly by Marva Dawn:

> To worship the Lord is – in the world's eyes – a waste of time. It is, indeed, a royal waste of time, but a waste nonetheless. By engaging in it, we don't accomplish anything useful in our society's terms. Worship ought not to be construed in a utilitarian way. Its purpose is not to gain numbers nor for our churches to be seen as successful. Rather, the entire reason for our worship is that God deserves it […] Worship is a royal waste of time that spirals into passion for living as Christians

30. Excerpted from Cilliers (2009).

31. In African anthropology, there is no such thing as a 'soul' that is something separate from the body. Body simply is soul, and soul is body. Therefore, African worship services, with their emphasis on body, can also be essentially described as 'soulful'. Indeed, 'soul' is a primary aesthetic criterion for the way that persons participate (bodily) in worship (cf. McGann 2002:7). Also, it is again interesting to note that the word 'soilful' does not actually exist. But, why on earth (!) could something be called soulful and not soilful? Perhaps, this is because we view soil as of lesser value than soul.

32. See also Cilliers (2014:1–15).

and back into more passionate worship. It is totally irrelevant, not efficient, not powerful, not spectacular, not productive, sometimes not even satisfying to us. It is also the only hope for changing the world.[33]

The notion of a non-functionalised liturgy was strongly emphasised by people like Romano Guardini and Hugo Rahner, two important exponents of the liturgical movement during the 20th century.[34] According to Romano Guardini, liturgy is primarily a *game*, an apparently aimless exercise – in any case, measured by functionalistic standards:

> Grave and earnest people, who make the knowledge of truth their whole aim, see moral problems in everything, and seek for a definitive purpose everywhere, tend to experience a peculiar difficulty where the liturgy is concerned [...] They must learn not to be continually yearning to do something, to attack something, to accomplish something useful, but to play the divinely ordained game of the liturgy in liberty and beauty and holy joy before God.[35]

Saying this, Guardini in no way denies that liturgy also has other dimensions and that it can and should pursue certain pastoral, didactical and ethical 'goals'.[36] On the contrary, according to him, the church should build up the *Opus Dei* not only for the pleasure of beautiful symbols, church language and stately gestures, but also for the sake of satisfying our desperate spiritual need. If we were untrue to the latter purpose, we are untrue to the Gospel itself. But, our desperate spiritual need is about celebrating the gifts of life, in all its dimensions, granted by God.

The distinction between liturgical 'being' and liturgical 'function', if overemphasised, represents a false alternative. To 'be', that is, to celebrate before, and in the presence of God (*Coram Deo*) need not, indeed should not, contradict to 'do', to follow Christ in obedience to God. *Coram Deo* is not something separate from *Missio Dei*; on the contrary, *Coram Deo* and *Missio Dei* are flipsides of the same coin.

In being before God (*Coram Deo*), the church is relativised, and in exactly this sense, it (continuously) finds its relevance. This strange, 'relativised relevance' underlines the fact that the church does not 'own' *Missio Dei*, but is continuously overtaken by God's grace, in such a manner that the church becomes relevant. In this sense, the church offers an alternative, where notions like competence and function and success and performance are not only

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33. Dawn (1999:1, 17).

34. See Cilliers (2014). Cf. their major works in this regard: Guardini (1997) and Rahner (1965).

35. Guardini (1997:61, 71–72). According to Ralph Sauer (1996:56), play is part of feasting, a play that does not have any specific aim, but rests in itself – it is aim in itself. Liturgy as aimless play is a depiction of God who rests in God self, and is meaning as such.

36. See Cilliers (2014).

excluded but also do not form the basis of being or the crux of celebration. In short, *Missio Dei without Coram Deo is not Missio Dei; and Coram Deo without Missio Dei is not Coram Deo, but rather functionalised 'programmes' on both accounts.*

Thirdly, if our bodies are important, and if we celebrate salvation within the spaces and times granted by creation, we cannot but take all of life, in particular all the structures or movements that threaten this life, seriously.[37] *We celebrate as a protest against all that is against the grounds for our celebration, i.e., God's (re)creational compassion.* We celebrate as a public act of protest, and we protest as a public act of celebration. This is, inter alia, what *Missio Dei* is all about – celebrating, and so contextualising, this compassion of God for, and within, the whole of life.

It is interesting to note that when the renowned South African missiologist, David Bosch, posed the question as to what mission means in South Africa, he was in line with the original intention of the movement, namely, to translate the Gospel in terms of contextual issues, but then indeed strongly (re) indigenised and (re)contextualised. In his *magnum opus,* he wrote, for instance, movingly on 'mission as contextualisation', 'mission as quest for justice' and 'mission as liberation'.[38] One could perhaps state that his whole theology hinges on the commitment to transform the plight of the poor and marginalised, taking his cues from orthopraxis, not orthodoxy.[39] As a matter of fact, a whole book has been written on and dedicated to this *praxis* of Bosch's missiology, which is said to be 'unmistakeably and consciously contextual' and addresses issues like racism, nationalism, economics and gender.[40]

It is therefore indeed a legitimate question whether the missional paradigm, recently 'rediscovered' in other parts of the world, could be transplanted to South Africa, 'lock, stock and barrel without any further ado', according to the missiologist Willem Saayman.[41] He pertinently asks:

> If we choose for *missional*, we choose at the moment unavoidably for emerging churches in postmodern contexts. How useful is such a choice for the theological discourse in the Third World in general and Africa in particular? [...] We will have to re-indigenise or re-contextualise the concept to make it really useful.[42]

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37. What follows is an excerpt from Cilliers (2018:1–14).

38. Cf. Bosch (1995:400ff., 420ff., 432ff.).

39. Bosch (1995:424).

40. Bosch (2011:167–173). In Kritzinger and Saayman (2011).

41. Saayman (2010:5–16).

42. Saayman (2010:15, 16).

■ Conclusion

I agree. This is our challenge indeed, if being 'missional' is to be true to the *Missio Dei*, in South Africa. We cannot merely create (orthodox) theories about '*Missio Dei*'; nor can we sidestep the *missio quod creaturae Dei* with otherworldly, pietistic theologies or liturgies; nor can we flag it as the latest ecclesial slogan, imported from a different context, from a different part of the world. Is this perhaps not the point where our missions should be interrupted by the *Missio Interruptio*, perhaps the opportune moment for a *mission intermission*?

Perhaps now is the time to rediscover the fact that issues like poverty and privilege, racism, human dignity and equality, patriarchal domination, gender-based violence, epistemological hierarchies, structural violence, unjust economical structures, geographical histories, corruption, joblessness, education, health, housing, distribution of water, ecology, pollution and many more contextual, South African challenges should be on the agenda – challenges that are linked to life, here.

That is, we must love this soil, and all the souls living here, as much as the God who gave up God's Body for it all.[43]

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43. For the Chapter 2 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

The role and function of testimony as narratively embodied in the liturgy

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■ Introduction

Testimony is a central part of Christian and congregational life and should not be understood as simply being a random or unplanned event, but as an integral element in the ritual liturgical bricolage of worship. In this chapter, we argue that testimony, as the public telling of a religious experience, can be understood to have a ritual liturgical function. This ritual liturgical function is based on a narrative understanding, and by its very nature as a performative act of speech and performed in the context of the worship service, it serves the *Missio Dei*. To understand the function of testimony as a ritual liturgical element, we turn to the work of Paul Ricoeur and his mimetic theory.

We acknowledge that testimony as an element of the worship service can have many functions and meanings and that the perspective explored in this chapter is but one among many. Regardless, testimony understood within a mimetic framework is a useful lens to understand the relationship between testimony as a language construct and testimony as a call to action in service of the *Missio Dei*.

■ Testimony as narrative

During the initial research that would eventually inform the content of the chapters of this publication, 43 religious leaders representing congregations from all over South Africa were interviewed. The interviews included four high-level questions regarding the missional identity and character of the congregation and her expressions of worship. After a qualitative analysis of the interview data, two aspects emerged, which are important for this chapter:

1. The semantic framework in which a congregation worships is crucial in the understanding, development and embodiment of its missional character. In other words, the story of the congregation, the story of the preacher and liturgist, and the story of the *Missio Dei* intersect each other to shape the unique missional character of the congregation in question. If the semantic framework of worship reflects a language of fear, exclusivity and elitism, these aspects are embodied in the way the congregation participates in the *Missio Dei*. The same is true when the semantic framework of worship is built on other constructs of language.
2. One element of the semantic framework is that of the role of testimony in the liturgy. This includes testimony both as a story told based on the experience of a person with God or a person's life story and how it bears witness to the redemptive activity of God in his or her creation.

Considering these elements that emerged from a diverse set of congregations, this chapter understands testimony as having a narrative function in the liturgy. When we understand these narratives through a mimetic lens, the capacity of the story as an agent of transformation becomes evident. The narrative of testimony is ritualised in the act of recounting and telling the story, and this is an important part of the semantic framework of the worship service and eventual transformation of the missional character of the congregation.

■ Mimesis 1 – Prefiguration

Testimony as ritual liturgical element is the telling of a story, usually relating to a religious experience or an expression of faith. This religious experience can relate to many things but popularly refers to a person coming to faith or the retelling of a moment of relevance in the context of a person's

experience of God. The role of Mimesis 1 shows how the narrative of religious experience, in this case of testimony, is rooted in life.[1] This is an important aspect of testimony as the story is rooted in the life of the person experiencing the events.

According to Ricoeur,[2] this leaves us with a paradox, stories are recounted, and life is lived. Ricoeur engages this paradox with the concept of narrative identity. Narrative identity is the fusion of two types of narrative arising during the process of prefiguration, that of the historical narrative and that of the fictional narrative:

- **Historical narrative –** as in the way in which the past is represented. This relates to the event or events in question that give weight to the testimony. It is important to note that testimony as a historical narrative can only ever be a representation of past experience. Therefore, and in the case of testimony, the historical narrative is always subjective, and all talk of objectivity invalidates the larger narrative identity.
- **Fictional narrative –** with the historical narrative as the past represented, the fictional narrative is represented in the interpretation of the past. Ricoeur states: '[S]elf-knowledge is an interpretation; self-interpretation, in its turn, find in narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged mediation; this mediation draws on history as much as it does on fiction, turning the story of a life into a fictional story or a historical fiction'.[3]

It is evident that during Mimesis 1 and the process of prefiguration, the narrative identity forms the basis for the eventual narrative found in the performance of testimony in the worship service. In the context of testimony, this is always based on the interplay between the historical and fictional narrative.

Ricoeur continues with this argument by stating that there are three points of anchorage[4] or points of support that narrative can find in the living experience:

- The first point of anchorage means that we are familiar with the semantics of action and can, therefore, understand the very concept of *action* as more than simply physical movement and psychophysiological behaviour.[5] In other words, prefiguration is possible because of our familiarity and understanding of the parts of a narrative that is related to human acting. In Ricoeur's first point of anchorage, the familiarity of human acting and

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1. Verhesschen (2003:449–465).

2. Ricoeur (2003:25).

3. Ricoeur (1990b:188).

4. See Ricoeur (1990a:56–65).

5. Ricoeur (2003:28).

narrative plot is important and he summarises it by saying: 'In this respect, our familiarity with the conceptual network of human acting is of the same order as the familiarity we have with the plots of stories that are known to us; it is the same phronetic understanding which presides over the understanding of action (and of passion) and over that of narrative'.[6]

- The second point of anchorage for narrative in the living experience is found in the symbolic resources of the practical field. From this perspective, it is understood that human action can be narrated because it is symbolically mediated. Ricoeur explores this idea by making an important statement when he says that human action is only recountable[7] because it is encoded or articulated by signs, rules and norms. These symbols that articulate the action help us understand the primary meaning of the action and, as Ricoeur mentions, give initial readability to action.

- The third and final point of anchorage is found in what Ricoeur refers to as the 'pre-narrative quality of human experience'[8] or the pre-narrative structure of temporal experience. Because of this point of anchorage, we can understand life as a story that is perpetually coming into existence, and therefore, life is an activity in search of a narrative. To illustrate this point, Ricoeur refers to the phrases we commonly utter such as 'stories that happen to us; stories in which we are caught up; the story of life'.[9]

Considering Mimesis 1 and the process of prefiguration, we can understand the initial steps of the narrative of a testimony. The narrative of testimony is a fusion of both historical and fictional (human experience) elements, where we can understand and interpret the human action as it is revealed in symbols, rules and norms and is recounted as a story of life. In this case, a story of life with God.

■ Mimesis 2 – Configuration

In Mimesis 2, we move from the process of prefiguration to the configuration of 'emplotment'.[10] Mimesis 2 fulfils a mediating function between the

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6. Ricoeur (2003:28).

7. Interestingly, Ricoeur uses the word 'recounted' in his 2003 work while using the word 'narrated' in the original Time and Narrative in 1990 to illustrate the second point of anchorage for narrative in the living experience. In the context of this chapter and its focus on testimony, the concept of 'recounted' is fitting as it illustrates the process of remembering and therefore recalling the action as it is symbolically encoded in the actor's memory.

8. Ricoeur (2003:29) and Ricoeur (1990a:59).

9. Ricoeur (2003:29).

10. Can be understood as 'drawing together disparate past events into a meaningful whole, by establishing causal and meaningful connections between them' (Rhodes 2016), and 'the plot serves to make one story out of multiple instances or, if you prefer, transforms the many incidents into one story' (Ricoeur 2003:21).

pre-understanding and post-understanding of the order of action.[11] In the context of the narrative that forms the basis of testimony, Mimesis 2 organises or configures the events and actions of Mimesis 1 into a plot, which in turn enables Mimesis 3, therefore mediating between the two. Understood plainly, the initial plethora of human experience and the symbolically encoded human actions are organised and configured to form a story, which can be told and recounted.

Ricoeur[12] explores three ways in which the configured plot mediates:

• Firstly, it is a mediation between the individual events or incidents and a story taken as a whole. After prefiguration, we are left with a diversity of events that are not yet part of a whole. During Mimesis 2, these events are transformed into a story. A story has a plot, and therefore, the events that make up the story must contribute to the development of the plot. In terms of the development of the plot, Ricoeur makes an important statement by saying that an event 'gets its definition from its contribution to the development of the plot'[13] and continues to say that 'a story, too, must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organise them into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the thought of this story'.

• Secondly, it mediates between heterogeneous elements and the story as a whole. According to Ricoeur, these heterogeneous elements can include elements such as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances and unexpected results. In the first instance of mediation, we see the development, structuring and configuration of the plot. Here in the second instance of mediation, the focus shifts to a deeper level of development, one where the plot is built by pulling together complex and seemingly foreign elements into the whole. This aspect of mediation is particularly important in the context of testimony, as these religious narratives have complex symbolic worlds.

• Thirdly, it mediates by virtue of its temporal characteristics. In other words, the plot mediates between the chronological and non-chronological temporal dimensions. By mediating between these two temporal dimensions, the narrative can be followed. The narrative is lost in its individual events and incidents without this crucial element. Ricoeur summarises by saying [emplotment] reveals itself to the listener or the reader in the story's capacity to be followed. To follow a story is to move forward in the midst of contingencies and peripeteia under the guidance of an expectation that finds its fulfilment in the conclusion of the story. This

11. Ricoeur (1990a:65).

12. Ricoeur (1990a:65–67).

13. Ricoeur (1990a:65).

conclusion is not logically implied by some previous premises. It gives the story an end point, which, in turn, furnishes the point of view from which the story can be perceived as forming a whole. To understand the story is to understand how and why successive episodes led to this conclusion, which, far from being foreseeable, must finally be acceptable, as congruent with the episodes brought together by the story.[14]

Returning to the context of testimony as a narrative, the initial events and incidents of human experience in Mimesis 1 have now been configured into a story and narrative that brings them together in a plot that can be followed by a reader or listener. The narrative as a configured plot is the content of the testimony and therefore the story, which is told as part of the worship service. At this stage, it is evident that testimony as a ritual liturgical element is not simply a random rambling of human experience, but a complex construct of events and incidents brought together in a narrative. This, however, is not the end point or conclusion of the narrative and testimony as a ritual liturgical element, and Mimesis 3 illustrates how testimony can serve the *Missio Dei* in its capacity to refigure.

Mimesis 3 – Refiguration

The final part of Ricoeur's Mimetic theory is found in Mimesis 3 or the process of 'refiguration'. To understand the concept of 'refiguration' and why it is important in the context of testimony, we need to understand how Ricoeur sees the interaction between the narrative and the listener or reader. He says:

> Generalizing beyond Aristotle, I shall say that Mimesis, marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader; the intersection, therefore, of the world configured by the poem and world wherein real action occurs and unfolds its specific temporality.[15]

Putting aside the problematic around the interpretation of a 'real world', this statement and the understanding that underlies it is crucial in understanding the potential of testimony to bring about change in the listener or reader of the narrative.

Verhesschen[16] illuminates the point even further by saying that it is essentially Ricoeur's thesis that the process of configuration is not completed in the text, but in the reader. Therefore, the transformational capacity of testimony as narrative lies where the horizons of the world of text and the world of the reader or listener meet. Of course, one cannot assume that this fusion of horizons will lead to the desired refiguration in the reader or listener as there is no way in which all the possible interactions between the two worlds can be

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14. Ricoeur (1990a:67).

15. Ricoeur (1990a:72).

16. Verhesschen (2003:454).

determined. Verhesschen[17] condenses the thoughts of Ricoeur and explains two possible invitations that occur because of the fusion of the world of the text and the world of the reader or listener, revelation and transformation:

- A story can be a revelation in as far as it calls the attention of the reader or listener to everyday experiences that they did not notice before. As Verhesschen notes, this is essentially an invitation to see the world differently. This is an important aspect in the context of testimony and its relation to the *Missio Dei*, as a significant part of the *Missio Dei* is to see the world differently based on the mission of the church;
- Narratives consist of both historical and fictional stories based on prefigurative events and incidents and can therefore never be objective. Following this line of thought, the presentation in a narrative is not ethically neutral and can, therefore, contain an invitation to the reader or listener to act differently. Verhesschen[18] notes that this is what Ricoeur calls the transformative power of narrative.

Mimesis 3 and its function as 'refiguration' is fundamental to the understanding of testimony as a ritual liturgical element of the worship service that serves as an invitation to see the world differently and act on the *Missio Dei*. However, 'refiguration' only makes sense in the context of Mimesis 1 and 2 and the complexity of the construction of the narrative.

◼ From word to deed

Up to this point, we have dedicated our attention to understand the literary aspect of testimony. We explored how the narrative of testimony is constructed based on the Mimetic Theory of Paul Ricoeur, and we have established that this narrative can invite others to act by transforming the way they see the world. We also know that in the context of the *Missio Dei*, words and deeds work together and that the transformative capacity of testimony is tested in the occurrence of deeds. In the second half of this chapter, we explore the importance of the hermeneutic of the deed.

To move from words to deeds, a process of change is necessary within the congregation. The congregation needs to move from the present state to a desired state (Figure 3.1).

One can use the analogy of the Israelites, as seen in Figure 3.2.

It is a known fact that one cannot motivate another person.[19] You can, however, inspire somebody to action and that is what we want to do here.

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17. Verhesschen (2003:454–455).

18. Verhesschen (2003:454–455).

19. Drucker (1999, 2005:9).
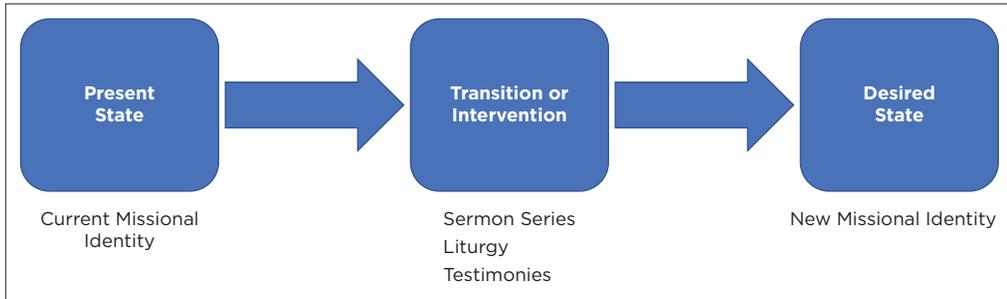
FIGURE 3.1: Movement of the congregation from present state to desired state.
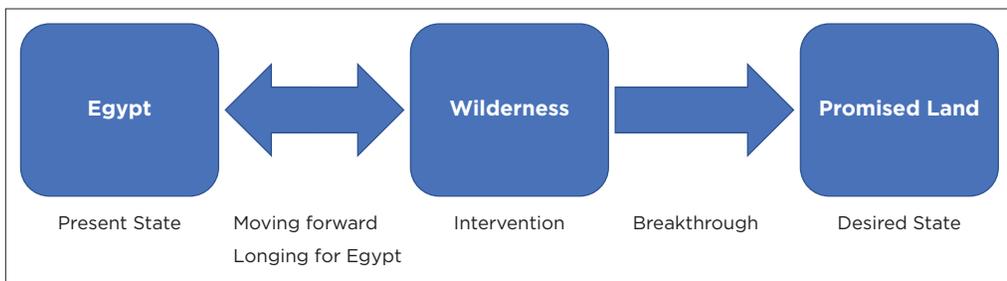
FIGURE 3.2: Movement of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land.

We also acknowledge the fact that human beings have a free will. We, therefore, do not want to manipulate people with our communication. Nel[20] talks about agogy as intentional motivation, and then, he goes on to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Agogy and intrinsic motivation correspond with what we would like to call inspiration. Extrinsic motivation corresponds with manipulation. All three are directed towards reformation and change but follow very different paths to get there. We do suggest change for the betterment of society and working towards a new missional identity.

Borgenson describes witnessing as:

[*A*] potential model to lend philosophical clarity to intersubjectivity, and sociality, or self-other relationships, in the world beyond more unifying essentialisms – in the sense that a unified ontology reduces everything to sameness. In such understandings, the other is not conceptualized as dominated, erased, or in other ways finally appropriated, or thematized, in relation to the self; or for that matter in relation to the organization [congregation]. Witnessing engages co-creatively, unfettered by

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20. Nel et al. (2015:210–211).

a sedimented self-interest, and in turn, co-illuminates that which otherwise would be utterly hidden or absent.[21]

A person's experience of the divine and witnessing thereof is very personal and subjective. It does, however, offer the opportunity 'for insight into the processes by which fully intersubjective relations may alter the common one-sided, self-centered perspectives at work in the world'.[22] This intervention should by no means be forced onto others. Levinas[23] warns against meaning that lies in a false totality. One should be very cautious not to exalt ideas or experiences even if it is an 'experience with the Divine'. It can easily happen that when an idea or person does not fit into the desired whole, he or she is figuratively or literally erased by the one who 'knows' or has 'experienced' the Divine. Even in our objective to co-create in pursuit of new missional identity formation, we should acknowledge that we could never fully know the Divine. He remains a mystery, and we can only respond, attend and remain willing to hear and share beyond our conceptions.

Different models of communication can be used to facilitate transition or intervention. These communicative action theories will contribute to critical hermeneutics with movement as a goal. The whole person needs to be addressed, thus cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotions) and attitude (character).[24]

■ Models of communication

■ Role modelling

Marturia (testimony) is one way of reproducing the experiential circumstances of the real event. This is indirect role modelling. The process of role modelling looks as follows (see also Figure 3.3):[25]

> We must acknowledge [...] that the most important, indeed the only, thing we have to offer [...] is ourselves. Everything else they can read in a book.[26]

We should be constantly aware of the impact of what we are modelling. This impact can be positive or negative. Our goal with role modelling is to make the implicit explicit.[27]

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21. Borgenson (2010:84).

22. Borgenson (2010:85).

23. Salverson (2006:147).

24. Pieterse, Janse Van Rensburg and Greyling (2004:103).

25. Cruess, Cruess and Steinert (2008:719).

26. Tosteson (1979:690).

27. Cruess et al. (2008:721).
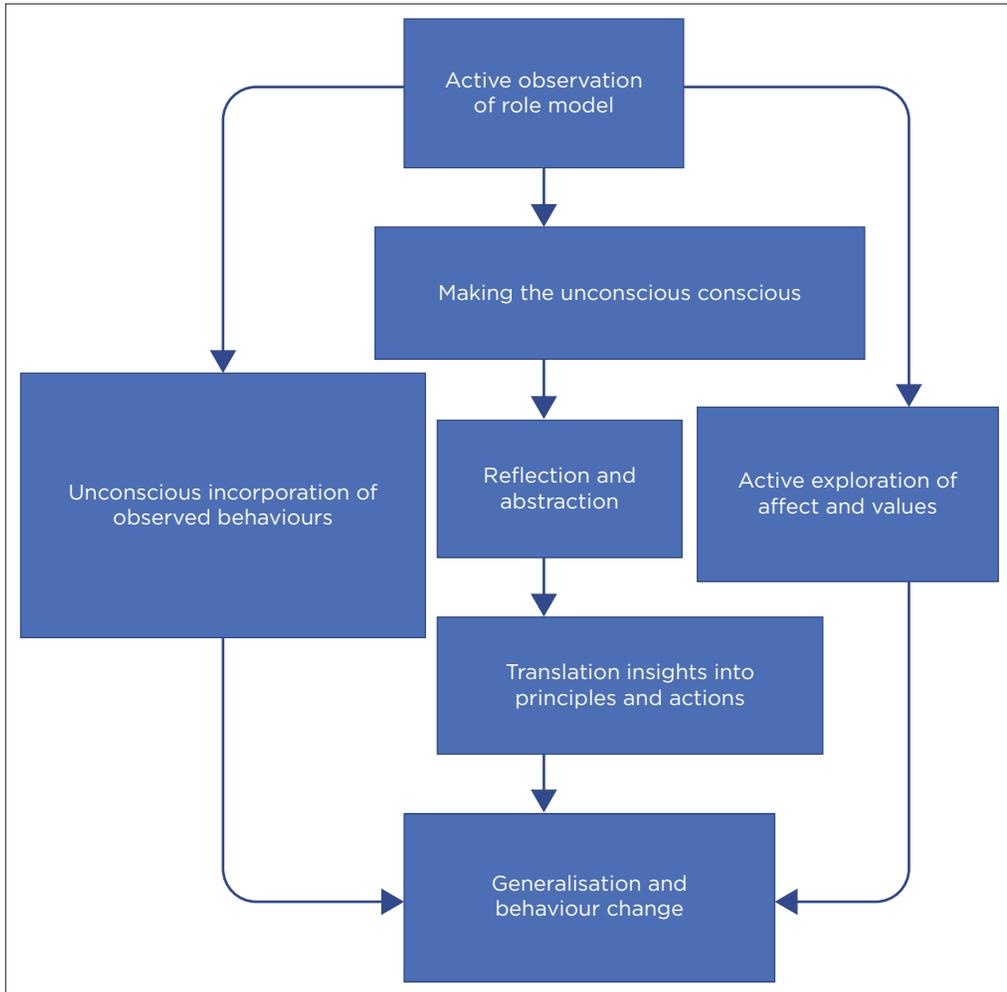
FIGURE 3.3: The process of role modelling.

◼ Appreciative coaching model

This model (see Figure 3.4) is based on an appreciative approach drawing from strength-based and ontological coaching methods.[28] Appreciative inquiry focuses 'on the notion that human systems, individuals, teams, organizations, and communities grow and change in the direction of what they study'.[29]

28. Orem, Binkert and Clancy (2007:xvii).

29. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:6).
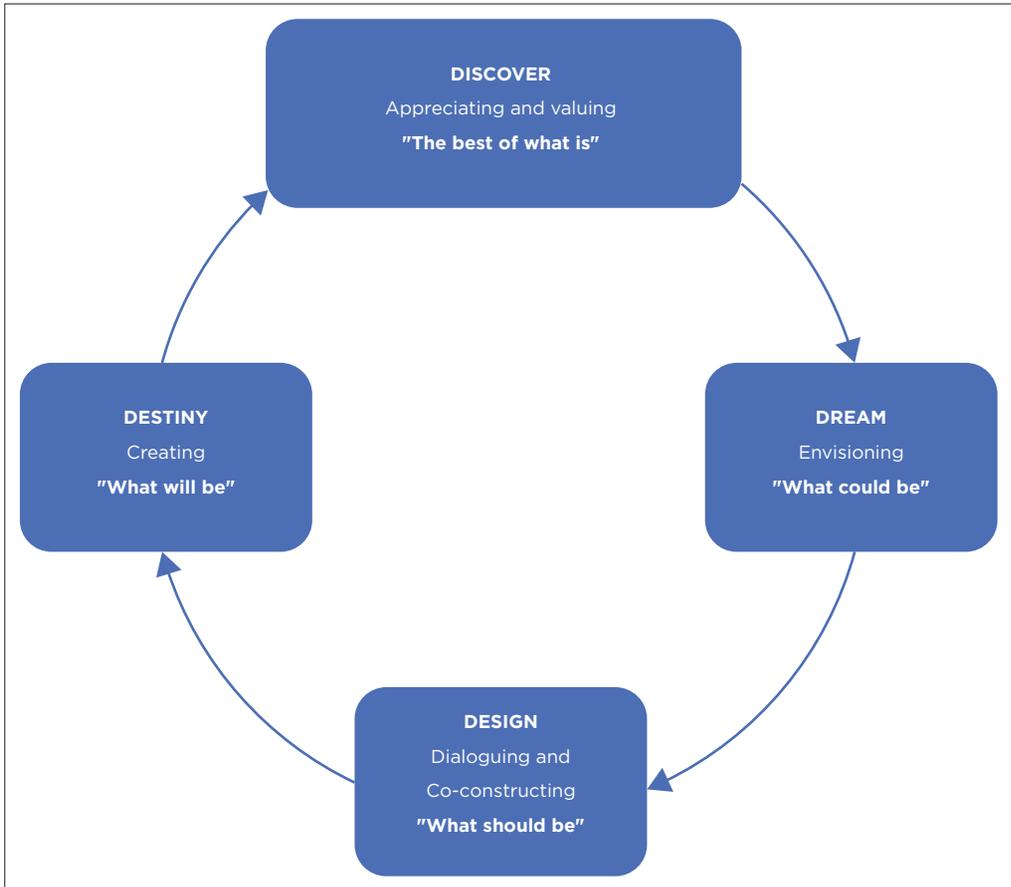
FIGURE 3.4: The appreciative coaching model.

This model can be used as a framework for testimony during the service, and it can be used to shape the sermon or the liturgy. The model put practical compassion at the forefront of the different phases in the model. 'It believes that change is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation'.[30] The ideal is to use 'inquiry and dialogue to shift attention and action away from problem analysis'[31] (in this case, for example, 'why are we not living or finding our missional identity?' – or any negative focus on what is not working in the congregation) to worthy ideals and productive possibilities for the future. 'Research showed that Appreciative Inquiry releases information and commitment that together create energy for positive change'.[32] The storytelling

30. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:1–2, 4) and Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008:43).

31. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:1–2, 4) and Cooperrider et al. (2008:43).

32. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:1–2, 4) and Cooperrider et al. (2008:43).

that flows from the carefully chosen, positive questions contributes to moving the congregation in the direction of forming a new identity.[33]

In the *Discovery phase*, one will look at the present state (the current missional identity) of the congregation. Typical questions to ask will be[34]:

- What are your three greatest missional accomplishments to date?
- What made these accomplishments stand out for you?
- What have you incorporated from your accomplishments into your current actions?
- How could you use what you have learned from these accomplishments to assist you in making future changes?
- What are the five most positive things in your or the congregation's life?
- What would you or the congregation like to contribute to the world or community?

In this phase, one wants 'to stimulate participants' excitement and delight as they share their values, experience and history' within the congregation as well as their dreams for the future. It is based on personal experience and the narrative that flows from the questions. It is important to draw on the best learnings from the past.[35]

In the *Dream phase*, one will look at the 'what could be?' What is the ideal scenario, the desired outcome? This is where a new dream or a vision will start. It is important to envision a clear picture of a desired future that the congregation is willing to work towards. Typical questions to ask include:[36]

- How do you envision yourself or congregation as a great missional congregation?
- What vision do you have for yourself or congregation in the next few years?
- Imagine you wake up after being asleep for five years. What will the congregation look like? What will the world outside the congregation look like?
- How is the congregation contributing to this new world?
- What specific changes or results are expected?
- What are you doing that makes a difference?
- What legacy would you like to leave behind?
- What will be different because of this?

This phase builds upon the positive core established during the discovery phase. It encourages the congregation to talk and dream about what might be

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33. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:1–2, 4) and Cooperrider et al. (2008:43).

34. Orem et al. (2007:3).

35. Cooperrider et al. (2008:104, 107).

36. Orem et al. (2007:89) and Cooperrider et al. (2008:132, 135).

a better congregation and a better world. It is grounded in the congregation's history, and it seeks to expand the congregation's potential. It wants to challenge the status quo as well as create synergy and excitement. What is shared during this phase should not be judged, critiqued or analysed. The focus here is not on solving a problem. It is on dreaming together, discovering broad themes or life-giving forces that will contribute to the congregation's desired state. It wants congregants to begin to envision a congregation that embodies the *Missio Dei*.[37]

The next phase is *Design,* and it looks at 'what might or should be?' This phase supports the forward movement. Typical questions are:[38]

- In what ways are you already living the dream?
- What would make the dream come alive for you?
- What in your dream really calls to you and makes you yearn for its fulfilment?
- What three big accomplishments would make you feel as though you have come close to your dream?
- Who are your fellow travellers? (It is important to value the diversity of people and ideas).
- What have you already started putting in place?
- What are small actions that you would like turned into new habits?

In this phase, you design what you want. It is about establishing the 'new', based on what the congregation wants instead of what they do not want. Good-news stories are used to craft possibility statements to bridge 'what gives life', the vision of a better community, a powerful purpose with the congregation's aspiration of 'what might be'. These statements are written in the present tense.[39]

The last phase is *Destiny*. This phase asks the question 'what will be?' or 'what shall we do?' Questions to ask during this phase are:[40]

- How are you already living your dream?
- Reflect on where you began and where you are today. What is the same or different?
- What makes you proud?
- What do you want to see or do more to get closer to your dream?
- What still needs conscious attention to be sure that it becomes a natural part of your DNA?
- What commitments do you make to yourself?

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37. Cooperrider et al. (2008:130–131).

38. Orem et al. (2007:161–162).

39. Cooperrider et al. (2008:162, 174).

40. Orem et al. (2007:182–183).

The goal of this phase is to realise the other three phases. One of its objectives is to align the possibility statements of the destiny phase with the actual congregation. Collective and personal actions are a natural outflow from the questions asked during this phase. Out of the congregation's positive core, it is possible to establish a network-like structure to empower one another to connect, cooperate and co-create. This is not just about adapting to challenges and solving problems, it is about innovation, imagining new possibilities, finding new ways to look at the world and creating a sense of meaning.[41]

■ Liturgies and liturgical space

The definition of liturgy is 'the work of the people'. Is this still true of our Sunday liturgy or has it 'become the work of specialists who define what, when and how people are supposed to do things'?[42]

Our liturgies form, shape and portray our identities.[43] It is, therefore, necessary to rethink where we start the formation of our liturgies. Liturgical space is where we enter on a Sunday morning. It is liminal, in between, messy, holy, dangerous, already but not yet. It is here where we would like intervention, transformation and change to happen.[44] *Marturia* (testimony) is the liturgy of deeds brought into the Sunday liturgy. Is there a possibility that we will understand the *Missio Dei* better or differently if we practice our Sunday liturgy from the outside in? If we start there where God is already at work, at the margins, the outskirts? There where it hurts, where the despised live, where the average congregant does not normally come, where none of us live and are scared to drive by. What will our liturgy look like if we use these places to figure out:

> [*H*]ow to pray and worship God, how to interpret the Bible and say yes and no, what songs are to be sung, what to ask to be forgiven for, what to eat and at whose table, how to use water for Baptism, and how to be sent forth into the world?[45]

As seen above the ideal is that the intervention of *marturia* will bring about some form of change. This change will translate into deeds that will go out into the world and influence the liturgies of the community. Can our liturgies counter consumerism, individualism, interior-ism and other –isms? One cannot understand a play by just reading it, it needs to be performed. In the same way, Christianity was not meant to be a system of beliefs.[46] Jesus' disciples

41. Cooperrider et al. (2008:200, 204).

42. Carvalhaes (2017:466–467).

43. Smith (2009:86).

44. Flynn (2015:223–225) and Long (2001:vii–x).

45. Carvalhaes (2017:474).

46. Smith (2009:88–129, 134).

were not called Christians but 'people of the Way'. They had to learn to practice, to live and to walk this new way (counter-liturgies), which meant they also had to unlearn old ways (liturgies).[47] In our liturgical space, we want to approach the Scriptures 'as a site of divine action, as a means of grace, as a conduit of the Spirit's transformative power, as part of a pedagogy' of change instead of a 'storehouse of facts'. From this, we might want to rethink what comes first. It might be deeds before words (thinking and believing).[48]

■ Conclusion

Based on a qualitative analysis of the 43 interviews mentioned at the start of this chapter, it is evident that religious leaders in worshipping communities identify testimony as an important part of that community's unique missional identity. In conclusion, we can say that testimony and the stories told about religious experiences reveal the way in which mission moves in a certain community. Therefore, the explicit incorporation of testimony as part of the liturgy does not aim to functionalise either the liturgy or the *Missio Dei.* It serves only to call people into a renewed awareness of the intertwined nature of the story of God and the story of God's people, by the beautiful act of telling stories.

We are created in God's image (*imago Dei*), called to worship, called to be a community, called to witness and called to perform God's mission (*Missio Dei*).[49]

47. McClaren (2007:283–284).

48. Smith (2009:135, 216).

49. For the Chapter 3 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

The persuasive influence of the sermon-series approach in developing missional congregations

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■ Introduction

Interest in preaching that intrusively connects with culture in a post-everything world subjected to so many landscapes of attitudes figures frequently in homiletical research.[1] Realisation that preaching has to mediate something special within the immediate context of the liturgy that is aimed at strengthening faith or even transmitting faith that reaches out to daily life is also prevalent.[2]

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1. Malström (2016:572–573), Dorsett (2012:115–117), Ott and Strauss (2010:261–266), Beale (2008:295–296) and Eswine (2008:11–13).

2. See Miller-McLemore (2012:4–6), Eswine (2008:11–12) as well as Johnson (2001:13–14).

In a similar vein, Nel and Schoeman[3] reflect on the idea of missional churches as well as the reclaiming of the intrinsic implications of the biblical concept of discipleship for everyone in a local church. The authors' concern is that however impossible it may sound, the following of Christ and learning from him about how life is to be lived could become inconvenient for listeners at critical moments, especially if they are focused on their own needs. Contrary to the one-sided focus on one's own needs at the expense of people captured in worlds filled with cries for help, it is crucial to realise that preaching has to generate insight for listeners to understand that their lives touch other peoples' lives in everyday living. This emphasis supposes a missional outlook on life but it is often viewed critically and is not always a well-received matter in local congregations.

In light of this, it is important to reflect on listeners' responsibility to God's mission in this world, also within a particular community. Purposeful development of a faith community is inevitably aimed at creating an awareness for caring relations within the community in which listeners find themselves. For the development of a missional congregation, preachers are called to help listeners to practically engage in relationships and not to shy away from sensitive societal issues within their communities. Eswine's[4] notion of preachers who function like rangers and assist listeners in navigating the terrain of reality is importantly related to this idea (2008:26). In this process, the preaching of the Gospel (as a map) mediates the idea of where the congregation currently finds itself in terms of their participation in God's mission, and deep down within this reflective act, reality is introduced to listeners.

Consider in this respect the fact that Florence[5] refers to the insight of Paul Ricoeur who underlines the idea that Christianity itself exists of communication that is described as hermeneutics of testimony. One has to suppose that listeners to sermons have the responsibility to react to what they have heard. Each sermon then further propels God's people forward, sending them forth to convey this message.[6] Consequently, there has to be some kind of response at the end of the sermon. More concretely formulated, appropriation of the living word is generally the result of incremental preaching. Hence, a successful strategy for listeners to make the message their own is more often than not the result of many sermons rather than a few. In accomplishing the idea of preaching that should pinpoint the response to the passage within daily life, it

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3. Nel and Schoeman (2019:3); See Nel and Schoeman (2019:2–3) for their emphasis on discipleship in the functioning of missional churches.

4. Eswine (2008:26).

5. See Florence's (2008:67–69) demarcation on Paul Ricoeur's view on the hermeneutics of testimony.

6. Goheen (2001:178) connects a sermon with its conveying purpose.

has to be taken into account that preaching is part of a comprehensive shaping process, also called a nurturing process or formation process.[7]

The idea that surfaces here is that the sermon may reach a formal end but God's plan of grace in Christ continues further still.[8] Calvin[9] conceives of the preaching of the Gospel as a means of grace because it is the path along which God is pleased to operate in order to save people. Calvin[10] boldly states, '*Take away the preaching of the Gospel, and no faith will remain*'. This means that faith is born of hearing because the outward preaching is the instrument by which God draws listeners to faith. Faith is therefore intimately linked with the act of preaching. Calvin conceives of the relationship between preaching and faith as similar to that between a mother and birth, for the preaching is the mother who conceives and brings forth and faith is the daughter who ought to be mindful of her origin. Such is the connection between the people's faith and the minister's preaching.[11]

We have to admit that preaching of the Gospel that relates to listeners' faith lives, after all, leaves nothing in their lives untouched. Therefore, the idea of preaching that simultaneously functions within worship as well as in the world, on street-corners, prisons, within hospitals and in public assemblies, cannot be underestimated.[12] This is why Heitink[13] could emphasise that the church as a community of believers (witnesses) mediates Christ to the world. It is not desirable to perform mediation from a height but it should rather be performed in the everyday course of life. Therefore, a relational approach to sharing the narrative of the Gospel could be regarded as effective. The idea of telling what you are aware of offers the possibility of inviting people to tell their own stories. This idea of sharing could offer intriguing opportunities to encourage more interaction. Two powerful acts, namely, the act of the proclamation (telling) of God's Kingdom and the act of living according to the values of this kingdom, are, after all, the propellants in the sharing of the Gospel.[14]

Therefore, ministers are called on to provide direction in the edifying process that results in a purposeful ministry plan for development. Within this plan, preaching of the Gospel will always enjoy a decisive place. The underlying

7. Gibson (2012:17018).

8. See Gibson (2012:95) for his discussion on sermons that do not reach an end-point.

9. Beach (1999:110) refers to Calvin's view on preaching and its relationship with grace.

10. See Beach's (1999:111) reference to Calvin on the importance of preaching.

11. Beach (1999:111–112).

12. Long (2005:51).

13. Heitink (2007:293–294).

14. See Homrichhausen's (1999:22) intriguing emphasis on the importance of sharing the Gospel.

challenge within the minds of concerned preachers in their responsibility for development has to do with the recognition that no quick fix is available in developing a missional church. In the strict sense of the word, there is not even a recipe-book available with an inherent so-called three-point plan which carries a one-size-fits-all on how to become missional. Preaching among other influential acts of equipping the congregation is however influential in mapping the development process which will surely produce fruits over some time. Engagement with God's Word, which unfolds based on systematic exposure to it with the outcome that listeners practically apply it to daily life, is an important building block towards such development.[15]

In line with these ideas, the development of missional congregations through the act of preaching and especially through the act of the sermon-series approach (in a sequential manner) will now be delineated further. There exists a particular reason why sermons in sequence or series format are extremely meaningful. Within a qualitative analysis conducted in the present project, consisting of four questions with further sub-sections, a distinctive response was achieved. The question centred on the role of worship services and the role of preaching in developing a missional identity. The majority of the respondents, mostly church leaders and preachers, overwhelmingly indicated of the value of conducting a sermon series in edifying listeners. It is the author's concern, however, that it is not always clear what an understanding of the concept of a sermon series entails. The research question according to which this chapter will unfold could, therefore, be formulated in the following manner: *In which sense of the word could the deployment of sermon-series preaching still be functional in the development of missional congregations?* A qualitative literature study will be utilised to provide perspectives on this matter in view of the work done by Osmer[16] who found that transactional leadership is needed to persuade listeners to cross boundaries that often evoke resistance.

◼ Interpretation of data from the interviews related to the idea of the sermon-series approach

Within a qualitative empirical study conducted, 43 interviews were conducted with respondents. A transcription of the interviews was made, data were analysed, and consequently, certain categories were identified as contours according to which the content of this book project was structured.

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15. Gibson (2012:97).

16. Osmer (2008:194–196) delineates the role of transactional leadership in the transformation of faith communities.

Respondents were encouraged to reflect on the four questions with its sub-questions during the interviews. Question 2 has specifically addressed the matter whether worship services or preaching has an influential impact indeed on the development of a missional identity. Respondents were encouraged to provide practical examples of the principles they have reflected on. All the respondents agreed that preaching should be emphasised as an important instrument to enable listeners to understand their missional identity. A popular and concrete example was also mentioned, namely, the notion of the sermon-series approach in order to help listeners to develop a missional identity. The subsequent sections will now further elaborate on this very idea.

■ Preaching as the *cor ecclesiae* (the heart of the church) in the development of insight of a caring, missional *communitas*

As the pre-eminent means of grace:

> [7]hat is, as the vehicle through which God is pleased to nurture his people throughout their lives and bring them to maturity, preaching has to occupy centre stage in the church's ministry-plan.[17]

Below, the author will presuppose that programme-driven development of the faith community will have a limited outcome. A topical approach to missional churches could also offer a limited outcome. A profound crossing of boundaries in terms of a missional awareness could be best mediated through continuous exposure to the Gospel itself. This idea is based on the vantage point of systematic and purposeful communication that the Gospel offers according to which we acknowledge the fact that the development of a local congregation through preaching should also unfold in a planned manner. Mackenzie[18] raises a valuable argument when he underlines the need for listeners to engage intrinsically with the Bible and emphasises that the lack of familiarity with the Bible itself could strictly speaking also be called a kind of missiological challenge for churches worldwide. The words of Willimon[19] are of value here, namely, that a preacher's primary goal is to determine what God wants to say to his people through the written Word and to assist listeners in discerning the implications of this in everyday life. Marty[20] further assists us in this respect when he refers to Ricoeur's interpretation of the three things that preachers should concretely do with a text to treat the world behind the text,

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17. Beach (1999:111).

18. Mackenzie (2016:16) highlights the role of familiarity with the Bible and the role of preaching in achieving this goal.

19. Willimon (2005:8–9).

20. Marty (2007:101).

treat the world of the text and treat the crossroad/s of the world in front of the text. In other words, the preacher cannot detach listeners from the reality they live in. Brueggemann[21] offers insight around this with special emphasis on the idea that preachers have to communicate the transforming message of reconciliation (II Cor 5:18) in a creative manner that keeps the listener turning around long after the worship service has been completed. Therefore, the intermediary character or boundary-crossing responsibility of the church in society could never be overemphasised.

Bohren[22] touched upon this matter years ago and elucidated the deeper-lying functioning of the act of active listening. Many voices in favour of this renewed interest have gradually emerged since he raised the matter. The meaningfulness of listening rather than of mere hearing has become apparent. Active listening, contrary to mere hearing, could be described as the eating and the re-chewing of the Word for listeners to do with their lives what the Word says. As a result, the notion of sacramentality in relationship with preaching soon became a focal research interest. Van Oort[23] indeed touches on this very matter when he refers to Augustine's much-discussed interpretation of spiritual food and that God's Word is humanity's daily bread. In sermons on the Lord's Prayer, Augustine tells us that the words '*Give us this day our daily bread*' refer to natural bread, to the bread of the Eucharist *and* the Word. Augustine explained that what one explains (*tracto*) to you is also daily bread, just as the scriptural readings you hear daily are daily bread. And the hymns you hear and sing are also daily bread.[24] The Word of God that is preached daily is also bread.[25] For Augustine, according to Kruger, preaching is the breaking of bread:

> When we explain the Scriptures to you we are, as it were, breaking the loaves. What I hand out is not mine. What you eat, I eat. What you live on, I live on. We have together our storeroom in heaven. For that is where the Word (verbum) of God comes from.[26]

Preaching around a purposeful development process as an edifying act is determinative for the nutrition and the growth profile of listeners' lives. The understanding that God's Word functions as food that purposefully sustains people's faith lives cannot be ignored. Embroidering on the idea of the development of believers and of providing food to listeners during the act of

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21. See Walter Brueggemann (1989:9–10) and the discussion on the role of preaching that deals with the message of reconciliation.

22. Bohren (1986:76) touches upon the difference between hearing and active listening.

23. Van Oort (2009:3).

24. Rebillard (1999:33) explains the sacramental essence between singing and eating of bread.

25. Mohrmann (1974:21) quotes Augustine's view on preaching as breaking of bread.

26. Kruger (2020:243).

preaching, the development of believers emerges as an important recognition. The mentioning of the missional which is accounted within this framework of the preaching of the Gospel that has the character of voicing the voice reminds us of the outrageous practice in which a local church can become absorbed by its issues but finds comfort in still having an outreach programme or more to complacently say that they have indeed engaged in missional activities.[27] The undeniable difference between a mere formalistic committing of missional activities and a profound missional ethos should be addressed through preaching without giving the impression that it is something odd.[28]

When it comes to the footprint of believers participating in God's mission, Bosch[29] makes it clear that in mission, the sending agent is God himself, while the church participates in this divine action. Mission is not primarily an activity of a designated committee or even of only a few committed believers within a local church, but it is above all an attribute of God who wants to involve his followers in his mission. Pieterse[30] further delineates the idea that our concern for the world should become visible in an attitude of earnestness and a committed willingness to sincerely care for what is happening in the world in which we are living. Arising from this idea, preaching as communication of the Gospel has to be regarded as a unique propellant in the edification of any local congregation to integrally engage in God's mission for our world.[31] Preaching moreover reflects a church's state of health with the emphasis on preaching: as the church, so the preaching and, as the preaching, so the church-purposeful planning of preaching, therefore, has to prevail.[32]

Based on the centrality of preaching that is designated for or closely interwoven with all the other manifestations of the ministry of the Word such as, inter alia, *marturia*, *leitourgia*, *koinonia and diakonia,* one infers that careful planning of sermons within this interwoven planning is pivotal. However, as sure as the vision is to help the congregation become God's mission to God's world, getting there is a journey full of uncertainties and complexities. The church and people in society have heard stories about each other over the year. Based on the functioning of perceptions, participation in societal matters could sometimes be subjected to suspicion where people may think that the church does have the vocabulary for aspects such as, inter alia, peace, justice and love but that they, however, are not practising the essence of these.

27. Malan Nel (2014:2) is expressing his concern about the difference between being missional and following some aspects related to it.

28. Van Gelder (2007:85).

29. Bosch (1991:390).

30. Pieterse (2001:120) elaborates on the church as a caring community for the world.

31. Nel (2001:4–5) underlines the role of edification in the up-building of a local congregation.

32. Cilliers (2006:19).

One has to acknowledge the fact that the idea of missional has everything to do with being public and becoming aware of the welfare of the community in which a local congregation is functioning, even in the midst of the functioning of antagonist attitudes. Missional churches that primarily seek Kingdom values mediated by preaching and that consequently participate in what God is already doing in their contexts will be recognised by people as faithful and credible.[33]

Preaching deals with the process of providing nutrients for the nutrition of listeners for them to build themselves up (see Eph. 4:16). It could be further illustrated from the Hebrews sermon where a deliberate approach of development through a three-dimensional sermon is utilised. This sermon has to do with persuasion where people gain understanding in their perceptions around the meaning of life. The Hebrews sermon starts with the idea that God has spoken many times and in numerous ways but that, in the last days, he has spoken through his son purposefully and in a planned way. The idea of development manifests decisively within this sermon. In Hebrews 3:1–6, for example, the concept of κατασκευαζω for *development* is utilised to denote the particular focus of formation, inherently containing the meaning of preparation. The development of the faith community in Hebrews implies the meaning of preparation of listeners as well as equipping them for challenges in daily life. The idea of both preparing and furnishing the house of God is at the heart of this concept. If this idea is further connected with Ephesians 4:11–12, it becomes evident that preaching has the aim of equipping listeners for their service [*diakonia*]. In Ephesians 4:11–12, the concept used for development denotes the meaning of putting something back in its place, similar to putting limbs back in their appropriate place in the human body.

Preaching with an increasing awareness for missional presence (embodiment) in society deals with purposeful helping of listeners to recognise their unique place in daily life. Preaching is not delivered to listeners to create fear for daily life or any kind of avoidance of societal realities. To persuade people to engage with others in society through the act of preaching entails helping them gain consensus and to cooperate according to God's will around their attitudes and their lives; therefore, constant exposure to the Gospel is invaluable.[34] Mashau,[35] for example, highlights the fact that churches have to focus on all concrete and available opportunities to proclaim the Gospel along with concern to live out the values of the Word of God so that the phrase, 'He is the Lord', could be confessed. Sermons

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33. Stott (1999:73) explains that concern for the public domain requires an appropriate attitude from local churches. The notion of an act of mediation is intriguing.

34. Grant and Borcherds (2009:3).

35. Mashau (2007:2–3).

offer important scaffolding in the development process to map listeners' responsibility at the intersections of the crossing of the borders of engagement with reality. To do this, profound care for and the proverbial seeking for the peace of the city should resonate with the heart-beat of God's caring for his mission in this world. For this exact reason, Gaarden[36] emphasises that the main aim of preaching is not a mental understanding of familiar words but rather a new understanding of where listeners' own stories could enter into dialogue with the intention of the words of the sermon. Listeners should be able to say '*Amen*' based on what they have perceived. They can then walk out and say, this is my sermon because it is internalised. An exchange of ownership of the sermon has then actually been realised in the active listening process.

Dorsett[37] proceeds to underline the idea that it is simply impossible to regard preaching that is integrated with the development as an add-on with a one-sided focus on mere dos and don'ts. Ott and Strauss[38], therefore, rightly underscore that the development of a congregation towards being missional will eventually be tested in terms of sincere relationships and caring for people in society. Missionally sensitive preaching has to establish a transparent way of looking at encounters with people in which text and context are inextricably related to each other.[39] In being witnesses of the King, Jesus Christ, listeners must be able to testify about what they have heard in sermons every week. The proverbial case of examples that often speak much louder than words offers us something to reflect on. Sermons should, therefore, communicate in such a manner that it excites and encourages listeners to become faithful witnesses of what they have seen and have heard.

The argument that preaching God's Word can be described as the *cor ecclesiae,* being a church that wants to act as faithful witnesses, requires its due regard. Once the principle of the central role of preaching in the development of listeners in their awareness of a missional attitude has been established, one has to scrutinise not only the '*that*' but surely also the '*how*' of the essence of missionally sensitive preaching. The interviews conducted in this research project demonstrate that ministers utilise the planned sermon-series approach to develop a missional attitude. It correlates with the idea that religious language, when it reflects the biblical message, opens up a new horizon for people to see a problem in a new light. It can turn things upside down in an unexpected, surprising way, as in the parables of Jesus for instance. It disorients the listener because it confronts him or her with something

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36. Gaarden (2004:4) highlights the notion of the emergent sermon where the listeners' remembrances and the message of the sermon have interaction in order for them to claim that it now their sermon.

37. Dorsett (2012:116).

38. Ott and Strauss (2010:284).

39. See Flemming (2005:305–307).

paradoxical, something not to be expected, which subsequently functions as a breaking point to orient him or her in a creative way.[40] An interesting contribution to this set of considerations is found in Ramey[41] who says that continuous engagement with the Gospel entails the eating of an appetiser that inevitably cultivates an appetite for the sermon, which eventually nourishes people for the main meal of practicing what has been heard.

■ Revisiting of familiar terminology: *Lectio continua*, sequential preaching and sermon series

■ Understanding preaching that should connect with listeners

Bryson[42] indicates the importance of profound exposition of God's Word that cultivates the directedness of application within the contemporary world. Jeter and Allen[43] build on this, providing direction when they refer to the underlying dynamics of the faith-development theory. Although this theory is certainly not above critique, it offers a perspective on how people think during the six stages of reflecting on faith. The contours of the research of Fowler are helpful and indicate that by the time they reach adulthood, some people apprehend patterns of faith change and others not.[44] Fowler's reach helps us to understand that listeners process and experience certain information differently in one stage of their lives when compared with others. This is why it is often mentioned that one Gospel has many ears. Gibson[45] hits the nail on its head when he postulates that preachers are challenged to purposefully help people (listeners) at each stage to understand the meaning of sermons, especially the message of living as a missional congregation. Sermons could be extremely functional during the transition periods between various stages. Preaching could ignite the spark to help listeners in the developmental process. Preachers, therefore, have to be in continuous contact with listeners and with the community for their sermons to enjoy relevance in the sense that listeners experience that something in it is not

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40. See Paul Ricoeur's (1998:36) as well as (1974:381–467) discussion on the role of creativity in preaching in order to enable listeners to see things anew.

41. Ramey (2010:2–3).

42. Bryson (1995:5–6).

43. Jeter and Allen (2002:51–61) embroiders on the importance of faith development that implies a purposeful idea of ministry.

44. See Jeter and Allen's (2002:51) elaboration on Fowler's view.

45. Gibson (2012:29).

only about other people but also about me. Consider also that Burnett[46] rightly highlights the idea that preachers prepare and deliver sermons from the standpoint of their own development and this could probably cause the homiletical practice to be skewed. It is scary but still possible that either the preacher or the congregation could experience a kind of growth that is not congruent and is not satisfying for people's unique spirituality or their particular phase of faith development.

These findings delineate possible distortions in the sermon-delivery process when there is the assumption that all listeners always find themselves in the same developmental stage of the growth of their faith. Without getting bogged down in technical discussion of these various stages at this stage of the argument, they are briefly as follows: intuitive-projective faith, literal faith, synthetic-conventional faith, individuating-reflective faith, conjunctive faith and a universalising faith. It seems that people within stages 1–4 require a homiletic that aims clearly, that is, adopt a pointed approach. The listener in stage 5 needs to listen to a text communicated on multiple levels that simultaneously give direction to the meaningfulness of application in what they have heard, that is, sermons that follow an integrated approach. At stage 6, listeners are looking for interconnectedness with daily life and deeper compassion for people that are integrally interwoven, that is, an approach addressing as it were the intestines of people.[47] It seems that preachers themselves are not really in a position to determine the beginning and the outcome of the various stages but it is also true that the constructing of sermons could be a determining factor for listeners in the transition between stages.[48] The caveat posed by Osmer[49] of marginalisation in a congregation where some people define the ethos and resist the idea of crossing borders has to be kept in mind. Purposeful preaching will surely enable people to gradually see things differently. This further correlates with his argument that preachers should not be the centre of change and that purposeful training for people to see themselves should be regarded as pivotal. The remaining sections will investigate the possible value of the so-called sermon-series approach in enabling listeners to internalise missional awareness.

■ Sermon series: Clarification of terminology

The preaching of the Gospel is indeed one of the most effective means of equipping the congregation and building listeners up because of the testimony

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46. Burnett (2007:110).

47. See the discussion of Louw (2011:8) as well as Jeter and Allen (2002:61) on the idea of internalization of faith.

48. Quicke (2003:156).

49. Osmer (2008:195–198).

of the Gospel about the energising or penetrating power of the Word (see Ac 20 and Heb 4). A profound listening culture to the Gospel has to be cultivated in the development of a local congregation. The words of Willimon[50] that a preacher's primary goal is to determine what God wants to say to his people through his written Word spring to mind. It was mentioned earlier that respondents strongly indicated the benefit of a sermon series. Now, we should be clear in our clarification about what we are referring to in utilising the concept of sermon series. It seems logical to think about preaching along the lines of a balanced diet that is made up of various food groups (see the metaphor of body). A healthy missional church needs a balanced diet from God's Word.[51] Let us on this basis pause to consider the terminologies *lectio continua*, sequential preaching and sermon series.

☐ *Lectio continua*

The word *lection* denotes reading. It involved a typical approach within synagogue worship where readings from the Law, Prophets and Wisdom literature were utilised. The reading of God's Word was important for the believers.[52] It seems that historically, the urgent need for a growing knowledge and a better understanding of Scripture were the main motivational factors behind this kind of approach.[53] However, as the church year developed over time, the practice of *lectio continua* waned. In the 1st century, the church was already celebrating Easter, which soon became the celebration of Easter and Pentecost which, in turn, soon became the celebration of Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Epiphany 3.[54] By the 4th century, these festivals and commemorations required their readings and thus interrupted the essence of *lectio continua*. The use of the *lectio continua* was, however, always in stark contrast with the idea of *lectio selecta.* Over time, the Reformers' basic concern became that the Bible should be read in a sequenced manner that it might be understood in context and so that no section or genre of Scripture might be omitted.[55]

The *lectio continua* approach offers congregations the opportunity to engage fully with the diverse ways in which God speaks through Scripture via various genres or literary forms. By allowing congregations to immerse themselves in whole biblical books, the *lectio continua* approach encourages listeners to think in terms of books and not simply single passages. While the

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50. Willimon (2005:9).

51. Gibson (2012:31)

52. Cf. Gibson (2012:32).

53. Mackenzie (2016:169).

54. See Johnson (2001:2–3).

55. Cf. Burnett (2007:111).

very act of preaching through a single biblical book raises issues of literary context, *lectio continua* also offers an opportunity for preachers to draw attention to the immediate literary contexts of a text. Preaching through a biblical book will still, of course, provide an opportunity to encounter and to hear God, but *lectio continua* allows this to take place amidst a contextual engagement with the biblical text.

Viewed from a historical viewpoint, this kind of approach becomes popular in the way Zwingli and Calvin preached. Zwingli, for example, firmly believed that the Word had to renew the church and society and therefore had to be explicated and applied, which gave rise to his *lectio continua* approach. The words of Karl Barth, who explained that the preacher's task is to cause the testimony presented in the text to be heard, are audible here.[56] According to Barth,[57] preaching is good if it brings to life in this present age the testimony of the prophets and the apostles. A sermon-series approach that deals with books in the Gospel could provide dynamic opportunities to engage with the Gospel itself. To preach through a book from the Bible in a systematic manner has the benefit of providing balance, but aspects such as, inter alia, concrete experiences within a congregation, the calendar and the Christian year should influence the length and the duration of this approach.

☐ Sequential preaching

People utilise the concepts of sermon series and sequential preaching interchangeably. In some instances, they are trying to describe the same phenomenon, but it remains important to distinguish between utilised concepts to be able to enjoy clarity around suitable terminology. The sequential approach is, for example, closely related to the practice of *lectio continua* but differs from it mainly because sequential preaching does not necessarily imply a truly sequential manner in which books from the Bible are addressed. Sequential preaching is related to the idea of expository preaching but does not necessarily equate to that. The main reason is that sequential preaching can be either expository or topical. One option in this approach will include picking a book from the Bible and preaching either the whole chapter or a portion of it. A second option would be to choose a topic or a theme and then select a series of messages that develops the theme.[58]

Lowry[59] debates this matter from a homiletical viewpoint and contends that because a sermon is an event in time, a process, and not a collection of

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56. Cf. Dae Ryeong Kim (2000).

57. See Peterson's (2006:23) reference to the view of Karl Barth on preaching that brings things to life.

58. Bryson (1995:13–15).

59. Lowry (1980:25).

parts, *sequence* rather than *structure* should be emphasised. He outlines the different stages that imply in sequential form the following: upsetting the equilibrium, analysing the discrepancy, disclosing the clue to a possible resolution, experiencing the gospel and anticipating the consequences.[60] What will arrest their times, says Lowry,[61] is not ideational content but a story.[62] Sequential preaching certainly allows preachers to integrate more aspects of the bigger development plan that further allows the opportunity to engage with the idea that sermons should rather not be scattered and unrelated to each other. The idea of randomly selecting topics or passages to illuminate topics could pose difficulties especially when preachers reflect on sensitive matters.[63]

☐ Sermon series or series preaching

Missional preaching via the planned sermon-series approach prepares God's people for their work in the world.[64] Stetzer[65] helps us see that planned preaching is indeed pivotal in enabling listeners to launch into the work that God has called believers to do. Connecting this kind of practice to the mission of the church is challenging mainly because this emphasis could suddenly unsettle people within the safety of their comfort zones.[66] The emphasis on the details from a particular text that requires engagement in living out the message of the text is challenging. Unilateral reporting on societal trends could further stimulate the cognisance that the church should be protected from changes in society. Preachers are above all aware of the attitudes of outspoken people within a local congregation about being missional.

Planned preaching according to a purposeful series preaching approach could be extremely helpful in a nuanced building-up process of listeners, mainly because sufficient time is offered for the text to speak in such a creative manner that the opportunities for application in daily life could become clear.[67] Therefore, it will be a sequence of sermons in a series that will provide new perspectives rather than preachers running away from local congregations and not taking listeners along in this process.

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60. Cf. Janse Van Rensburg (2003:81–82).

61. Lowry (1980:25).

62. Cf. Tucker (2005:1–9).

63. Cf. Gibson (2012:89).

64. Ogden's (2007:22) reference to people's work in the world is intriguing.

65. Stetzer and Putman's (2006:75) emphasis on planned preaching is challenging in ministry.

66. Cf. Hull (2006:12).

67. Cf. McLaren (2004:35).

The benefit of planned preaching within a sermon-series approach is that it could also promote meaningful worship services where liturgical elements during the worship could dovetail even more organically with the sermon.[68] As indicated, however, it is important to consider here that the sermon-series approach is closely related to the idea of *lectio continua,* but it is also not necessarily the same. According to Gibson,[69] series preaching could sometimes cultivate a practice of topical preaching, which is often highly dependent on the needs and problems of people. The role of the preacher in selecting topics and passages could also become a driven agenda from the preacher's side that would then distort within the communicative triangular relation between the text, preacher and listener.[70] Therefore, the development of a sermon series that is not closely related to the text, when pondering the concepts of *lectio continua* and sequential preaching, could cultivate a practice where preachers ride their hobbyhorses and aspects that are of interest to them.[71] It could cultivate a practice of preachers that operate against listeners and could cause resistance.

Whether one is utilising the concept of *lectio continua,* sequential preaching or sermon series, it should be clear what exactly is meant by terminology that is utilised. Within my understanding of this, a solid separation between terminologies is not possible. I would rather argue that the *lectio continua* approach aimed at helping listeners to engage with the Word in terms of scrutinising larger sections of a book should be presented sequentially while a proper way for deep engagement is to continuously develop a planned sermon series. The idea of missional preaching in series form, however, offers the possibility to link preaching with other aspects in the development of the congregation. The next section attempts to outline the motivation for the choice in favour of the sermon-series approach in sequential form.

■ Homiletical perspectives: The value of sequential preaching in developing missional congregations

Bellefeuille[72] touches on a problematic issue when he states that churches sometimes struggle alarmingly with concerns about numbers, growth and budget figures that should balance rather than God's vision for the local

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68. Cf. White (2011:113).

69. Gibson (2012:41–42).

70. Brueggemann's (2010:36) visualisation of the triangular relationship between text, preacher and listeners.

71. Cf. Gibson (2012:43).

72. Bellefeuille's (2018:7) discussion of cognitive errors is intriguing, because it is a stumbling block in the way of sharing the Gospel.

church and authentic sharing of the Gospel. The decline in numbers of people in churches with a further demand by a consumerist attitude also raises concerns for local churches in their development plan. Those '*inside*' the local church are in agreement that something should be done but are often in conflict among themselves about the contours of that future growth and the challenges that '*other*' people outside of the church pose to the *status quo*. The idea that the local is called to be a vibrant community of disciples or witnesses rather than merely club members committed to a life together in Christ for the sake of the world poses complicated challenges for ministry. The particular context of a local congregation based on underlying attitudes that had been formed over the years is not always the easiest aspect to address in a uniform plan. A tension field emerges which is challenging for preachers in determining what kind of burning issues should be addressed within their preaching. Concerns about which aspects they should rather avoid to experience peace and order within the congregation are a further stumbling block. In this section, the argument aims to indicate that preaching in its essence has to do with the *viva vox evangelii* (living voice of God) that should be heard by all people in this world, and therefore, preaching in its essence has the intention that all people should hear.

The concept of the missional in front of the word preaching (within the notion of missional preaching) is not an adjective but rather an indication of the scope of preaching. The two aspects cannot be separated from each other. Therefore, missional preaching is not an indication of a new trend in preaching which is proposed by a new generation of scholars. Rather, the clear way in which the Gospel itself already speaks about God's mission has to be communicated in a planned manner.[73] Missional preaching can, after all, so easily unnerve people in the pews if they sit there with internalised convictions about the cultivated culture of the past in their hearts and minds.[74]

■ Preaching that develops a local congregation to being missional

The emphasis of Cradock[75] who describes preaching as witnessing or telling other people about what you have heard and have seen is helpful in this reflection. Preaching as witnessing is an inherently purposeful process of assisting listeners to acquire an appropriate kind of language to be witnesses themselves. The deeper-lying challenge of preaching week after week to a local congregation centres on the process of enabling witnesses, by stirring

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73. Cf. Johnson (2015:121).

74. Cf. White (2011:88).

75. Cradock (1985:13).

up sufficient curiosity, for them to decide to come and see the way ahead for themselves time and again. To stir up curiosity, it is important to show cognisance of the complexity of active listening. To preach week after week to listeners who have heard the message numerous times sounds like a homiletical nightmare but the uniqueness of preaching is that its power revolves around the peculiar functioning of the known aspects. Matthew 13:52 delineates the idea of treasury [τοῦ θησαυροῦ] in the description of preaching. To preach entails bringing old and new things to the fore for listeners to hear and see that the homeowner is offering old and new things with the sole purpose of discovering new things in the familiar things and to find creative applications in what they are already (old things) aware of, that is, old things. To be more specific, active listening has to do with hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding to messages.[76] The act of listening to preaching that takes place regularly in fact offers illuminating glimpses into existence with the potential to stir someone's memory of God's treasury.[77]

2 Corinthians 5:18–20 further emphasises the theological foundation of offering things from God's treasury through preaching which mentions the message of reconciliation that is entrusted to believers. The notion of being ambassadors for Christ is striking. The idea of representing God in this world is striking when the passage employs the metaphor of the ambassador. Preachers are, after all, speaking God's words on behalf of God. Preaching aimed at developing a congregation's missional identity walks the precarious line between spending enough time in the text to allow it to speak for itself and consequently showing how the text can be and must be lived out by the people hearing the message.[78] The contribution of the preacher should, however, not be ignored in this regard. As the inner life of the preacher adheres more closely to the heart of God and the mission of God, the preacher's sermons necessarily will become more missional.[79] One, therefore, has to conclude that the mission of preaching is nothing else than the mission of God.[80] In other words, as preachers handle the text, they deal with God's purposes and his plans for bringing his reign and rule into this world which makes the sermon inherently missional.[81]

Preaching, viewed through the lens of missional identity, entails the fact that the sermon constitutes the marching orders for the people of God,

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76. Tyagi (2013:2) on active listening versus mere hearing.

77. Cf. Arthurs (2017:5–6).

78. Cf. White (2011:111).

79. Cf. McLaren (2004:33).

80. Newbigin (2011:12).

81. White (2011:112).

propelling them into the world with the attitude of testifying and living according to what God asks of them. The sermon not only delivers the mandate to go into the world but should inevitably prepare people for identifying how to concretely live out the mandate. Applied to a South African context that is struggling with the manifestation of phenomena such as, inter alia, corruption, hate speech, service delivery, mass-protests, poverty and many other burning issues, missional preaching supposes an effective focus on the development of the congregation to actualise responsibility to become concerned about societal issues. Missional preaching does not allow the practice of entertaining a blind spot for what listeners experience in their unique context. Missional preaching is, after all, concerned with the well-being of people in society and is interested in connecting the good news of the Gospel with new perspectives on how to live ethically in reality. Preaching cannot deviate from an ethical outlook, mainly because preaching without the lenses of ethics will eventually become myopic. The issue at stake is that, if the church exists for God's mission, encounters should revolve around preparation for that mission. If we are a sent people, then preaching in our gathering should serve the purpose of equipping the people of God for further and deeper engagement of our cooperative mission with God and in the world.[82]

■ Sermon-series preaching: Constructively developing a missional congregation

Newbigin[83] airs the important idea that preaching of the Word cannot be understood in isolation from concrete life and the work of the congregation in the midst of society. The sermon-series approach could interact with various layers of reality from the angle of what the Gospel says about these issues. People in society are, after all, part of one reality, namely, the presence of the reign of God in Jesus Christ, which should, therefore, be actualised in his people. The point has been stressed above that missional preaching has to point to the world and towards concrete action in daily life. Sermon-series preaching offers the kind of proclamation designed to guide a congregation in the development of the fulfilment of its mission. Based on this understanding, one primary purpose of a sermon is to provide direction to listeners, that is, from where they are now to where the imperatives of the Gospel call them to be. In short, the sermon is constructed to help God's future materialise in the lives of its listeners.[84] Sermon-series preaching is a call to be moved forward by God's unfinished agenda in this world in a planned manner, in the fashion of influencing people little by little.

82. Cf. Ellis (2009:4).

83. Newbigin (2011:23).

84. Cf. Hull (2008:98).

Instead of delivering standalone sermons, sermon series offer elaboration around the realisation of webbed sermons that are tightly interwoven with the constellation of the ministry plan for the congregation itself.[85] Sequential preaching functions like a laser, not a floodlight, because laser beams have the ability to penetrate deeply, going beneath the surface. The sermon-series preaching approach indubitably invokes possibilities of integrating a focus on a balance between doxological, communal, missional and other dimensions of the development plan. This approach could be applied in a multipurpose manner without interrupting the traditional church calendar. It furthermore prevents preachers from a practice where their likes and dislikes become overly important; this prevention promotes the idea of the living voice of God's Word speaking. The effect of sermon-series preaching is to encourage and strengthen listeners spiritually in a purposeful manner to respond to the message proclaimed by the preacher.

The sermon-series approach most importantly provides an opportunity for preachers to allow the text to frame the meaning of the chosen passage from Scripture around God's action in people's lives. The multitude of literary forms induce a creative angle and require a creative rhetoric to communicate the meaning of a book in its coherency. The benefit of this approach is certainly that it will enable listeners to engage with the meaning of a book rather than single verses and separate chapters of the book.[86] The most important benefit of the sermon-series approach is that it enables preachers to remain focused on the meaning of a passage within the context of the book. A responsible preacher will be committed to provide healthy food in a planned manner for the congregation eventually to develop themselves in the ways explicated above. White[87] identifies five important hermeneutical questions (Box 4.1) in the development of the congregation's missional identity, whose personal experience has shown to be valuable in assisting preachers to purposefully plan their sermon series.

The interaction between the message about Christ and concrete action that lies within the heart of missional preaching is emergent in these calls to instruction. In planning a sermon series, a Bible book or passages from Scripture could be utilised to develop listeners to recognise the importance of the fact that what they have heard should be applied to daily life. In this approach, the difference between helping people to become recruiters rather than conveying God's narrative should be kept in mind. Missional preaching that equips listeners to share their experience of the Gospel with people is indeed dependant on a constructive, sequential approach.

85. Cf. White (2011:113).

86. Cf. Mackenzie (2016:22).

87. White's (2011:121) hermeneutical questions in the development of a missional identity are something concrete to reflect on.

BOX 4.1: Five important hermeneutical questions in the development of the congregation's missional identity.

- **Where is God in this text or Bible book?** (Precisely, where does this passage connect to the life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ?)

- **How can people meet him in this message?** (How can I help the congregation truly experience God through this passage within the context of the book, enabling them to love him more deeply with heart, soul, mind and strength?)

- **How is God shaping our character?** (How does God, through this passage, seek to shape the character of this local community so that, individually and corporately, we reflect his image more clearly in society?)

- **How can I personally proclaim the kingdom?** (What is the alternative reality that this passage speaks to and how can I winsomely announce it to listeners in order to live and tell it to people in society?)

- **What do I want them to do?** (Where do we want God's people to go in the foreseeable future in response to the appeal of this message and what practical means do I need to provide them to get there?)

▪ Conclusion

In this research, the question that was raised was whether the deployment of sermon-series preaching could be functional in the development of missional congregations. 'Missional' is not a mere add-on to the essence of being church. Preaching as a manifestation of persuasive communication is closely interwoven with the faith life of listeners. Preaching and liturgy should connect listeners with daily life. The sermon-series approach has distinct benefits when it comes to the process of persuasion. The Gospel is preached to hear the living voice that invites listeners to participate in God's mission. Purposeful preaching on a Bible book or sections of books wherein understanding for a text within its context could be achieved provides the opportunity for the Word to speak, rather than the preacher. The critical metaphor of nutrition and providing food to listeners in the sermon-series format is self-descriptive, elucidating the importance of preaching that has to develop and map the practical implications of caring for society. This kind of approach certainly deals with the idea that the development of a missional character is a continuous journey of interaction between the indicative and imperative aspects of being a church within a concrete context.[88]

88. For the Chapter 4 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

Traces of missional leadership? An empirical probe among Reformed ministers

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■ Introduction

Missional theology, missional ecclesiology and missional leadership have already become part of the everyday vocabulary of many pastors and some members of the DRC. For the past 15 years, theologians and pastors have been using the missional language to describe something about their understanding of the *Missio Dei*, God's mission to the world. Considerable research has been conducted in this regard, and many books and articles have already been written on this topic. However, not much research has yet been conducted regarding what this missional theology looks like in action; in other words, what shape it takes in the everyday practice of congregations.

This was one of the starting points or pre-understanding behind the research of this volume, namely, to determine what worship and preaching look like in the development of missional congregations and the daily life of congregations. In this contribution, however, I focus on one aspect of this task and that is on the leadership for missional congregations.

■ Problem statement and research question

Since the adoption of the *Framework document on the missional nature and calling of the Dutch Reformed Church* by the General Synod of the DRC of 2013,[1] there has been a strong emphasis on the idea that members must move outside the congregation to meet the needs of society and to become involved with those at the margins of society. The development towards a missional ecclesiology follows several years after the Partnership for Missional Churches had prepared the ground for congregations for this fruitful development. As early as 2004, a number of congregations in South Africa formed the so-called Partnership for Missional Churches, and it formed part of a response to a feeling of ecclesiological and congregational urgency to be involved with the different needs of society.[2]

The question that naturally arises is why this sudden interest in developing a missional church and missional congregations. According to Niemandt,[3] part of the answer can be found in rediscovering the importance of being a missional church via the influence of ecumenical bodies. Therefore, during the 2010 Edinburgh Conference, the basic belief that was developed was that the church is missional in its deepest essence and should be seen as a mission that stems from God's calling and mission.[4]

According to the *Framework document on the missional nature and calling of the Dutch Reformed Church* (henceforth 'the *Framework document*'), it is important to understand the conversation against the background of reflection on the history and identity of the DRC. The identity of the DRC is determined by its Reformed character and history. In Reformed theology, the building blocks of the Reformation were repeatedly used to reinterpret the core issues in the doctrine and life of the church.

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1. This important policy document was developed after over 15 years of study and research. The first document was a document of 20 theses prepared by Coenie Burger and Malan Nel for the 2002 meeting of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church.

2. Nell (2019:144).

3. Niemandt (2012:2).

4. Kim and Anderson (2011:180).

One of the ways to understand Reformed identity is through the four *solas*:[5]

- Opposite the tradition as enshrined in doctrinal pronouncements and ecclesiastical control over the interpretation of the gospel, and opposite natural knowledge of God, stands *sola scriptura* [only Scripture].
- Opposite mediation by the priesthood stands *solus Christus* [only Christ].
- Opposite any natural ground on which God would save us stands *sola gratia* [grace alone].
- Against any form of good works to make one acceptable to God stands *sola fide* [faith alone].

The church is a missional church that must always take its context into account and must constantly rethink its ministry in light of a changing and dynamic context. The World Council of Churches puts it strikingly:

> The church, as God's people, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, is dynamic and changing in the process where the church participates in the mission of God.[6]

The research of this project under the leadership of Malan Nel could be seen as part of this ongoing task in discerning the missional nature of the church and the different forms of ministry in the changing and dynamic context. He did, however, also include researchers and congregations from the other two denominations that form part of the Reformed family in South Africa, namely, the Reformed Church [Gereformeerde Kerk] and the NRCA [Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk in Afrika]. The central research question of the project was formulated in the following twofold way:

- Firstly, what would be the relationship (if any) between preaching and the liturgy, of which it is a part, and developing missional congregations.
- Secondly, what kind of preaching (and preacher) will best facilitate such a process of developing a missional congregation?

At this stage, it is important to understand that the research for this contribution falls under the second part of this research question. In other words, the research concentrated on the preacher who facilitates the process of developing a missional congregation.

■ Methodology

As this research focused on the perspectives and experiences of individuals, a choice for a qualitative methodology for this study was made. Qualitative research explores answers to questions by studying people within a given

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5. These statements must always be understood as a reaction to views with which the reformers did not have peace.

6. General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (2013:201).

social environment. True to the qualitative approach, this research linked empirical data and theoretical perspectives.[7] The method of research was mainly based on an empirical investigation, which was supplemented by a literature study on the focus points that emerged from the empirical investigation.[8]

The research question as described in the previous section was transformed into a semi-structured interview schedule that was used as part of the qualitative research conducted by a number of researchers who interviewed a purposive sample of 43 respondents from the three different denominations. In this contribution, attention will only be paid to the first questions of the semi-structured interview schedule. The first question in the questionnaire was about the missional identity of congregations and consisted of three sub-questions formulated as follows:

- Tell us what is special and unique about the *missional identity* of the congregation.
- How does the missional identity of the congregation consider the *coming of God's Kingdom*?
- How does the *environment and larger context* affect the congregation's missional identity?

Research question

In light of the broader research question of the project, the specific research question for this contribution can be formulated as follows: What can one learn through qualitative empirical research of the understanding of missional leadership among a selected group of ministers of three Reformed churches in South Africa? To link it to the title of the contribution, it was in other words an attempt to find some traces of missional leadership in the interview data of a group of ministers who all, in one way or another, set out on the missional journey.

Data analysis

Personal interviews were conducted with 43 ministers from three different denominations. The choice was made for the grounded theory qualitative method of data analysis, as described by Kathy Charmaz,[9] to analyse the contributions of the respondents. The grounded theory method consists of systematic, yet flexible, guidelines for the collection and analysis of qualitative data and aims to construct theories from the data. This approach consists of

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7. Creswell and Poth (2018:90–95).

8. Creswell and Poth (2018:90–95).

9. Charmaz (2006, 2014).

TABLE 5.1: Networks.

Missional identity	Coming Kingdom	Environment and context
Worldview and values (23)	*Coram Deo* (14)	Social context (34)
Spirituality (22)	Already not yet (11)	Discernment (11)
Activities (21)	Daily activities of faith (9)	Institutions (8)
Demography (15)	Alternative community (6)	Demography (8)
Social context (10)	Hospitality (6)	Partnerships (6)
History and heritage (9)	Involvement community (6)	Projects (3)
Symbols and rituals (8)	Love and obedience (5)	Service (3)
Articles and buildings (5)	Equality (5)	Ecology (2)

three phases: (1) the inductive phase, through which initial categories are distinguished and an open-coding analytical model is developed; (2) the deductive phase, during which selective data are selected for analysis, based on the hypotheses developed during the open coding phase; and (3) theoretical coding and the construction of a praxis theory with regard to the research focus.[10]

As part of the inductive phase, the following initial categories were distinguished from the codes through open coding. They were all ranked according to the number of times they appeared in the data set. In Atlas.ti,[11] these categories are alternatively referred to as networks, see the categories or networks in Table 5.1.

■ Theoretical and theological perspectives

From Table 5.1, it is clear that there are a number of theoretical constructs that call for further theological clarification. These constructs could be described as missional identity, the concept of the coming Kingdom, and the role and influence of the environment and context.

■ Missional identity

Easum[12] describes missional congregations as congregations that are on the move, and he emphasises the importance of understanding it this way when he writes: 'Christianity is depicted as a movement away from the centers of religious institutional, professional life into the fringes of the mission field'. Easum[13] gives the following description of missional congregations:

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10. Charmaz (2014:1–2) and Pieterse (2013:175–195).

11. While ATLAS.ti is a tool primarily used for performing qualitative data analysis, where researchers apply codes to collections of unstructured text, it provides functionality for identifying and visualizing content that can be used for basic text analysis. https://www.google.com/search?q=atlas.ti

12. Easum (2001:10).

13. Easum (2010:25).

- These are congregations that are aware of the environment in which they live and work and accept that not everyone around them is Christian and ask the question: *Where are we?*
- These are congregations that allow themselves to be formed through prayer and the Word and are therefore formed as individuals and as a church of God by God's Spirit and ask the question: *To whom do we belong?*
- These are congregations that can recognise God's actions around them as well as in the wider world and can provide answers to the open question: *What is God doing?*
- These are congregations that can listen and discern God's calling and give an answer to the question: *How does God send us?*
- These are congregations that are signs of the future that God has in mind for the church and that can answer the question: *How do we as a church currently live according to the pattern of what God has in mind for the future?*

In light of the above, it is clear that mission should be understood as something that flows from the Trinitarian God, and the accompanying ecclesiology is that God the Father sends the church to the world through the Son and the Spirit. The *Missio Dei,* therefore, includes not only the work of God but also the work of the church as an instrument in God's hand. According to Balia and Kim,[14] the mission of the church is seen here as its search for a spiritual framework that affirms human life and pursues mutual respect and equality in its work on the path to inner repentance, as well as a just society and the survival of God's creation.

When it comes to missional *identity*,[15] it becomes even more interesting. The identities of the local congregations play an important role in their self-understanding and with it in their understanding of the development of this identity in the direction of the *Missio Dei*. Hendriks[16] spends an entire chapter in his book *Studying congregations in Africa* on the identity of congregations. In this regard, Hendriks[17] writes that 'the question a congregation should constantly ask is: "Who am I and what is my purpose in life?"' He discusses the following aspects that all contribute towards the identity of the congregation: demography, the placing of the congregation in the social context, history, heritage, worldview, manufactured articles and buildings, activities, symbols, rituals and their story.

According to Hendriks, there are a number of reasons why we want to analyse a congregation's identity and culture:

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14. Balia and Kim (2010:25).

15. Cf. Nel et al. (2015).

16. Hendriks (2004).

17. Hendriks (2004:105).

One must inform new members, and especially new clergy, about a congregation. It is extremely important, especially for a new pastor, to be familiar with the stories, idiom, ways and expectations, roles and personalities, insiders and outsiders of a new congregation [...] An identity analysis may help a congregation and a church to confront difficult theological issues. Minority groups feel threatened and tend to cling to their church of congregation as though it were the last refuge for maintaining their own tradition and identity [...] As such, an analysis of the identity and culture of a congregation can lead to a very serious process of discernment. Where this happens, new life eventually springs forth. [18]

According to Zscheile,[19] the whole conversation about the identity of congregations gained new impetus with the recognition that the relationship of the church and congregations with the surrounding culture has changed dramatically over the past decades. Further on in this chapter, I pay more attention to the impact of the surrounding culture on congregations. The era of a so-called church culture or what we might call 'functional Christianity' is a thing of the past, and therefore, the church could no longer claim the centre of society, as had been the case for thousands of years. Therefore, it became a great challenge for the church to rediscover and renew its Christian identity in a post-Christian world in light of the Triune God's mission to the world.

■ The coming Kingdom

The second sub-question that was posed to the purposive sample of ministers from the Reformed congregations was related to their understanding of the coming Kingdom of God. When one reflects on the existence of congregations, one cannot help but start with the belief that it is part of God's plan with his people. Therefore, one could say that the church is God's possession and is defined by the fact that it belongs to God. God's plan, namely, the coming of God's kingdom, is still on track, and part of this plan is the church. In this regard, it is also important to realise that the congregation does not take over God's plan; it remains God's plan, but God, as it were, calls congregations into life as showcases of his new creation. The congregation is, in this regard, the 'continuation of God's plan for the unfolding of the Kingdom come and coming'.[20]

The question that is often asked in this regard is whether we use the organised church (and with it by implication the congregations) or the Kingdom of God as a point of orientation. Or, perhaps the solution lies in a third possibility: a possibility in which both can play a role? In the literature, it is clear that the kingship of Christ and his kingdom takes on more forms than

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18. Hendriks (2004:29).

19. Zscheile (2012:5–6).

20. Nel et al. (2015:43–44). Cf. also Chapter 10 of this publication for more on this dimension.

the church and its congregations. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the role of the church and congregations in society and the role of the kingdom, which includes the church, but also runs broader. In other words, the organised church is not the kingdom, but part of the kingdom, and yet, the church is involved in the full extent of the kingdom. By fulfilling its calling to society, the church is engaged in its particular service in the full space of the kingdom.[21]

It is also interesting and important to look at how the *Framework document* describes the understanding of the Kingdom. According to the document, there is a call for an expansion of our ecclesiology by understanding it within the framework of the Kingdom of God. Reformed people have always had an eye for the kingdom to be bigger than the church. God is not a division head. He rules over the cosmos. Even though the reality of the broken world is present throughout, there are also signs of the providence and care of God visible everywhere. Believers have the calling to erect signs of the kingdom in all walks of life, wherever they live and work, and to live from the rule of God.[22]

According to the document, the church can, therefore, be regarded as a sign, the first fruit and instrument of God's kingdom. The church should reflect something of the nature of God's kingdom and God's love – it is the showcase of God's kingdom. The church, where believers live in communion with God and with one another, is sometimes referred to as a sacrament, as a 'foretaste' of God's kingdom on earth. While the church proclaims the message of God's new dispensation, it is also present in the midst of everyday life as an instrument in the service of the new dispensation. In the kingdom where God's rule is acknowledged and lived out, where God is followed as Leader, the church lives out the end goal of its existence and calling. For the believer, it makes true life possible, a life where the destructive influence of sin does not have the last word, but where God is controlled by his Spirit and where law and justice, peace and joy apply.

In this understanding of the relationship between the church and God's kingdom, two views are rejected, namely, that it is a church-shaped kingdom and that the kingdom is complete in the world so that the church is not needed (world-shaped kingdom). That is why we prefer to talk about a church that is shaped by the ideals of the kingdom (kingdom-shaped church). The life of the church is read from the perspective of God's kingdom, which is already partly present in the world and church but will completely break through with Christ's return.[23]

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21. Jonker (1978:12).

22. General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (2013:204–205).

23. General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (2013:204–205).

◼ The environment and context

When thinking and reflecting on the environment and the larger context in which congregations and the leaders of congregations find themselves, it is important to spend time on discernment. The church cannot discern its calling without being constantly aware of God at work in the world and in every context. Our joy lies in discovering where and how God is at work. This means that the world is not a problem that needs to be solved, but the mystery of God that needs to be discovered over and over again. Discernment is actually the very first act of the mission of the church – the mission to discern where the Triune God is at work and to join in. The emphasis is therefore on listening, discernment and participation in God's loving presence, rather than on prescriptive ministry models.[24]

The incarnation of Christ emphasises the fact that the church is always focused on the world and on the way to the world, and this underlines how important it is to understand the context. For the church and its message, good exegesis of the Bible has always been vital. However, there is another exegetical skill that is just as important: the skill of understanding the context (and culture) within which the church is religiously distinct. Creation is not complete but on the way to God's future. The 'tense expectation', 'promise of hope' and 'birth pains' (Rm 8:19–21) that characterise the world are aspects of its goodness.[25]

Every context is full of possibilities and surprises. No part of the world is not part of God's kingdom; no existing institution, practice, system or structure is an eternal divine ordinance. Christians may dare to talk about the painful truth of their context because they know it is not the last word. Not only did Christ overcome sin, but he also planted the future of God's world in the present. Christ draws, like a magnet – through his life-giving, renewing Spirit, and in, through and next to the church – the whole world to its final destination. The world still has a future. To see the world (our context) as it is means to trust that sin has no last say. To see the world as created, redeemed and on the way to perfection is to live in it with hope and expectation. In addition to knowing that the good creation is still on its way to its final destination, believers also know that the *Missio Dei* cannot be stopped – that there is always hope for the world. Where it is confessed, there is the church of Jesus Christ.[26]

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24. See General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (2013) and Saayman (2000:2).

25. Vanhoozer et al. (2007:15).

26. Keifert and Rooms (2014:14–15).

■ Interpretation of the data

■ Missional identity

I can refer to the following excerpts from the data that provide insight into the way the respondents understood the missional identity of their respective congregations. Most of the respondents reflected on worldview and values (33), spirituality (32) and the different activities (23), with examples from each of the three:[27]

- 'Our vision is: "We want to glorify God by fearlessly being Jesus' hands and feet under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" […] and we linked five values to it and we said the values are Scriptural, inspiring, life-changing preaching, passionate worship, a safe haven that includes equipment and empowerment, and then to go out and to send by God.' (Respondent 29, male, DRC)
- 'So, just to learn the language […] it's beautiful to hear how the leadership started to understand something about *Missio Dei* spirituality. A God who sends, a sending God […] and what helps with that is of course the faith habits we started developing in the small groups […] and then now especially with the leadership making use of *Lectio Divina*.' (Respondent 27, male, DRC)
- 'The interesting thing is, because we do not have poverty within our borders, we must deliberately expose people to the fact […] we have to go and look beyond geographical boundaries. So, the twin congregation we have in the Uniting Presbytery helps us tremendously with that. We deliberately have things we do together, like the soup kitchen now this time of year.'[28] (Respondent 28, female, DRC)

The other five coding networks consisted of demography (15), social context (10), history and heritage (9), symbols and rituals (8) and articles, buildings and finances (8). One finds in the data almost all of the different aspects concerning the identity of a congregation that Hendriks[29] mentions. One also recognises what Zscheile[30] refers to when he says that conversation about the identity of congregations gained new impetus with the recognition that the church and congregations' relationship with the surrounding culture has changed dramatically over the past decades.

27. The interviews were originally done in Afrikaans. The translations into English have been done by me.

28. See Figure 5A-1 (at the end of this chapter) as an example of network (M-3) Activities.

29. Hendriks (2004:29).

30. Zscheile (2012:5–6).

◼ The coming of God's kingdom

I can refer to the following excerpts from the data that provide insight into the way the respondents understood the coming of the kingdom. Most of the respondents reflected on a life *Coram Deo* (14), the already and not yet of the kingdom (11) and the fact that the working of the kingdom can be seen in our daily activities of faith (9), with examples of each of the three:

> 'Inwardly, we really try to care [for] and equip each other, but as sent ones to the outside world, we try every day to live *Coram Deo* before the Lord, in his presence.' (Respondent 1, male, DRC)

> 'God is already working in the world and in his kingdom, and we are trying to work with God in this kingdom to live out this alternative way of thinking and living and doing and believing visibly, knowing we are not yet fully there.' (Respondent 22, male, HC)

> 'Where we are, there is God's kingdom and where we are, we want to be a neighbour to the community around us and the guys who cross our path.'[31] (Respondent 16, male, HC)

Some respondents also referred to the kingdom as an alternative community (6), as a place of hospitality (6) and as involvement in the community (6). A smaller number of respondents referred to love and obedience (5) and equality (5) as important values when reflecting on the Kingdom of God. It is of cause a fact that because a large number of respondents did not refer to the last two, it does not mean that they are not very important aspects of the kingdom and a theology of the kingdom. One striking excerpt from the data illustrates the point from network (K-6) hospitality, by Respondent 1:

> We also work with a hospitality ministry. We really have a passion for hospitality, to draw people to the congregation in that way, by caring for them and helping them to enter the Kingdom of God. And to say to the congregation, the community of faith is wider than just us who are sitting around here every day. (Respondent 1, male, DRC)

Once again one finds some of the theoretical constructs discussed earlier reflected in the data. It is especially interesting to see that the understanding of God's kingdom in relation to the *Coram Deo* and the living in the presence of God are so interlinked with the daily activities, the already and not yet of the kingdom and love and obedience. That is also why I concur with the *Framework document*[32] and prefer to talk about a church that is shaped by the ideals of the kingdom (kingdom-shaped church). The life of the church is therefore read from the perspective of God's kingdom, which is already partly present in the world and church, but will completely breakthrough with Christ's return.

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31. See Figure 5A-2 (at the end of this chapter) as an example of network (K-1) Coram Deo.

32. General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (2013:204–205).

■ The environment and larger context

With the environment and larger context, we reach the final construct, and I can refer to the following excerpts from the data that provide insight into the way the respondents understood the way context has an impact on the understanding of missional identity and the coming of God's kingdom. Most of the respondents reflected on the social context (34), discernment (11), institutions (8) and demography (8). See some excerpts from the data on each of the networks:

> 'It was a very homogeneous culture, but, in the meantime, under the feet, the culture was shifting. I became aware that we are in a very heterogeneous town and we need to start noticing that. Some married people are married to an English man or an English woman in the church, but no attention is paid to the fact.' (Respondent 25, male, DRC)

> 'NEAR can be expanded as N for narrative, which is the dominant narrative in your immediate environment, with a lot of variety of sub-aspects; E stands for ethics, which defines the people in your community as success; A stands for association, in other words, what are the primary organisations or institutions in the lives of these people that determine their identity; and R stands for rituals, [...] the core practices in which our people are involved and which form their identity.' (Respondent 5, male, DRC)

> 'It is the micro context that we were grateful for; another part of the micro context is that there was also a big orphanage in our congregation that [...] gradually black children came in, and they only came to church on Sunday, so our people have grown into it. There had never been problems, never ever.' (Respondent 15, male, DRC)

> 'So, meanwhile, the demographics have started to change completely. If white, Afrikaans people move out, then black people move in. As a result, the entire city is now 60% black people. And it made us seriously think about our role in the kingdom. Because we can no longer just cater for white, Afrikaans people in a community that looks like this.'[33] (Respondent 13, male, DRC)

The one thing that stood out in the data on the environment and context is the fact that among almost all of the ministers who were interviewed, one sensed a deep awareness of the cultural shifts that were taking place under their feet. It is like a refrain, from homogenous white Afrikaner culture to multiculturality. To cater for this shift, much discernment is needed. Interesting is the response regarding the use of the NEAR (narrative, ethics, association, and rituals) strategy for discernment (narrative, ethics, association and ritual). In the discussion in the next session, I return to the challenge for the church in South Africa and the need for the church's leadership to take seriously into consideration the different cultures within the formation of a new, more inclusive, identity and community.

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33. See Figure 5A-3 (at the end of this chapter) as an example of network (O-2) discernment.

■ Construction of a missional leadership praxis theory

In this last phase of theoretical coding, I want to construct a missional leadership praxis theory.[34] The Christian faith is deeply embedded in a tradition of passing on and leading by example, in other words employing Scriptural and oral sources, but also through the mediation of people who inspire, set an example and have the courage to lead.[35] It is important to understand that a person's theological tradition will of course have a great influence on his or her understanding of both 'missional' and 'leadership'.

In the literature, one finds ample definitions of missional leadership. I refer to examples from three different denominational traditions. Niemandt[36] writes from a Reformed perspective: 'My proposition is to define missional leadership as "the transformation of people and institutions to participate, through meaningful relations and in the power of the Spirit, in God's mission"'. He states:

> Transformation is a vehicle for personal and institutional growth. Missional leadership is transformative leadership. It ignites and drives change, starting with the inner transformation of the leader, and it leads to the transformation of the church as well as the context where the church finds itself.[37]

> Doornenbal[38] defines 'missional leadership' from a Baptist perspective as follows:

> [...] the conversational processes of envisioning, cultural and spiritual formation, and structuring within a Christian community that enable individual participants, groups, and the community as a whole to respond to challenging situations and engage in transformative changes that are necessary to become, or remain, oriented to God's mission in the local context.

Writing from a distinctly Lutheran perspective, Elton is interested in what dynamics within a congregational system are vital to enable missional leadership. He defines 'missional leadership' as follows:

> [P]ersons who understand their calling as disciples of Jesus Christ, who see themselves as equipped by God with certain gifts to be shared with the larger body of Christ, and who believe they are empowered by the Spirit to engage the world through participating in the creative and redemptive mission of God. [39]

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34. Charmaz (2014:1–2).

35. Heitink (2007:297).

36. Niemandt (2016:86).

37. Niemandt (2016:87).

38. Doornenbal (2012:200).

39. Elton (2007:10).

If one can summarise, it looks as though the authors agree that missional leadership is shared leadership and that it is a social process situated in the relationship among people involving both agency and roles. One also finds agreement on the fact that leadership can be described in terms of shared interdependency. Missional leadership from this perspective is therefore seen as an aspect of the community, rather than some kind of possession of the leader. There is also agreement that missional leadership requires the communication and development of a vision for the organisation. The authors further agree that missional leadership is contextual and provisional. In Scripture, one finds that leaders led in different ways based on the challenges of their time. This 'sensitivity to the context'[40] was, however, impaired during the Christendom era but is now rediscovered in many churches where time and circumstances are considered and related to God's dynamic relationship with the world. Because of this 'contextual awareness, missional leadership manifests in many different forms'.[41]

I do, however, concur with Åkerlund when he writes:

> The continuing conversation on missional leadership should address more thoroughly the implications of the *Missio Dei* for leadership in the wider society. What does it mean that God is active in the world in terms of leadership? This is obviously not a question posed to missional leadership scholars alone, but it certainly is a question they need to address as leadership based on God's mission should not be restricted to the community of the redeemed. [42]

In line with Åkerlund's emphasis on the wider community and that God's mission cannot be limited to the community of believers, it is important to develop a multicultural understanding of being a church and of missional leadership.

In the report on the data analysis in the previous sections and in many conversations on the formation of missional identity in the South African context, the concept of multiculturalism is prominent.[43] The challenge for the church and its leadership in South Africa is precisely to consider different cultures within the formation of a new, more inclusive identity and community. McGaughey[44] warns against the misunderstanding of this concept as determining which cultural elements are correct and acceptable, or not. At the heart of multiculturalism lies the desire, in our search for our shared

40. Åkerlund (2016)

41. Åkerlund (2016).

42. Akerlund (2016:28).

43. De Klerk (2013:55).

44. McGaughey (1999:73).

identity, to determine the value that different cultural elements can contribute to the identity of the church.

Multicultural communities consist of different cultural groups that share specific geographical spaces with one another. The different groups in this space have contact with one another, but they are often ignorant about the differences and similarities between them. This often leads to prejudice and intolerance.[45] In post-apartheid South Africa, we find that segregation no longer exists in the legal systems of the country, but that does not mean that it has stopped to exist in practice. The result is that we developed into a multicultural society where we live and work together without necessarily having developed an understanding of one another's circumstances, which may help us on the path to tolerance and transformation.[46]

What we need, however, is to move away from a superficial knowledge of differences and similarities in experiences to the sharing of experiences, therefore a movement from multicultural to intercultural understanding. It is through these shared experiences and new understanding and insight that emerge from it that we learn to no longer simply share spaces with one another, but also experiences. Where this happens, we can talk about intercultural communities. The prefix 'inter' suggests activities and movements between groups that also deal with the transfer and receipt of information and where communication takes place. Intercultural communities create a sense of belonging for all members of the community and groups that are moving in the direction of the transformation of relationships.[47] In this regard, one should also take note of the new book by Granberg-Michaelson.[48] He writes in a chapter with the title 'Embracing the colour of the future' about the importance of planting new churches. He makes the following remark: 'We discovered that no plan to do so would succeed unless it was racially inclusive, reflected in the new diversity of new congregations'.[49]

According to Van der Westhuizen et al.,[50] 'multicultural' therefore refers to communities where there is room for different cultural activities to engage side by side. It also creates spaces where different cultures can jointly develop cultural activities and in which they can participate jointly at times. Intercultural activities include different intercultural practices in which communities find a

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45. Saramento (2014:606).

46. Van der Westhuizen, Greuel and Thesnaar (2018:16). Cf. also Chapter 9 of this publication for a discussion of 'intercultural intelligence'.

47. Saramento (2014:603).

48. Granberg-Michaelson (2018).

49. Granberg-Michaelson (2018:22).

50. Van der Westhuizen et al. (2015:6).

way to develop a shared identity. When one focuses specifically on the South African multicultural society, communities are challenged because of the diverse nature of our society and because of the legacy of apartheid to work towards intercultural communities. According to Steyn,[51] the difference in socio-economic capabilities and the demographics of the population contribute to the ongoing struggle to support people to find ways to live and work together with the conviction that together we can better meet the challenges.

An excellent example of how the post-apartheid transformation, for example, in the DRC in terms of racial integration is taking place can be found in the recent book by Marthe Hesselmans titled *Racial integration in the church of apartheid: A unity only God wants*.[52] The DRC, which formed the religious pillars from 1948 to 1994 for the apartheid government, is today seeking the reunification of communities in one multicultural institution. Communities of faith that have been separated for years are looking for processes to reunite. However, many are sceptical about this process, but according to Hesselmans, a closer exploration reveals unexpected stories of reconciliation. South Africans are deeply aware that they need one another to survive; faith and religious communities offer, according to her, a common ground. It shows the potential but also restrictions of faith communities to unravel entrenched national and racial affiliations.

I want to end this section with a quote from Kritzinger on ministerial formation preparing students for missional leadership:

> What we need as an underlying ethos for everything we do in ministerial formation, is a spirituality of inclusion, reaching out to people who are different, thinking them into our lives as part of our world; a way of life that does not say (or even think), 'the coloureds have a gangsterism problem', 'the Afrikaners have a racism problem', or 'the poor black communities have a xenophobic problem', etc. Instead, it will say, 'we have a gangsterism problem in some of our townships', 'we have a racism problem in some of our communities', etc.[53]

With a better understanding of missional leadership and multiculturality and multicultural congregations, I want to conclude with some deviant voices from the data and also some critique on the notions of missional church and missional leadership from the literature.

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51. Steyn (2011:7).

52. Hesselmans (2018).

53. Kritzinger (2012:41).

■ Critique on missional church and missional leadership

An interesting aspect that came to the fore in working through the data set was that not all the respondents agreed that the use of missional language was something new or unique.[54]

One excerpt from the data proves the point:

> 'I may have to start by saying, I do not work with the word "missional" or "missional identity". I think this is something that is very fashionable in the church at this stage. I think missional is not something new. I think it's been around for years – people have given different names to it, so if you hear me speak, you do not hear me speak from a corner that I am sitting in a congregation and thinking how we should be missional now. For me, it is rather a question, and I think the question you also ask a farmer is, how should our church be and what does it mean to be a church within the context in which we find ourselves?' (Respondent 24, female, DRC)

In the literature, one finds similar critical voices. Snyman[55] is of the opinion that missional church is the flag under which the DRC currently sails. In this regard, he is critical of the concept when he points to the fact that the church is not just missional; it is a narrowing of what the church should be, and it must be doubted whether 'being missional' is the full essence of the church and the life of faith. According to him, an exaggerated emphasis on missional language can easily lead us to forget that it is God who acts. Diversity is the hallmark of our time, and the church can therefore not sail under just one flag in a time of diversity. On the contrary, the Bible is a book full of diversity and God deals with his people in a variety of ways, in the church and the world. The church is more than just a missional church. The church is at least one, holy and Catholic, where the Word and sacrament are taken seriously in meaningful worship services. Snyman further states that it is a bit in the DNA of the DRC to emphasise one issue (one-sidedly) and then go on with it for several years. Think of the Youth-to-Youth Action of 1974, the Membership Equipment Programme of the church, the congregational building theology of the eighties, the emphasis on unity in the nineties and now we have the missional church as the flag under which the church must fly.

A further critique relates to historicity and contextuality. Vosloo[56] reacts to the *Framework document* and argues that it states that the church learned from history that one can only be the church of God through discipleship and sacrifice, which is a strong statement in his opinion. However, he finds it

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54. See Figure 5A-4 (at the end of this chapter) for a network on critique.

55. Snyman (2019:10).

56. Vosloo (2015).

disappointing that a sense of the history, which he articulates as a historical consciousness, is absent in the largest part of the document. He further points to the fact that much of the missional movement is without reference to the ambivalent history associated with the term 'mission' in our country and the ambiguous role of 'mission' and 'missionaries' in South Africa's painful socio-political past, not in the least in light of the theological justification of segregation and apartheid. He states[57]:

> My point is rather that the mission history of the DRC [...] deserves to be acknowledged and taken into account if the DRC wants to reflect on the missional nature and calling of the church 'through learning from history' and 'within the South African context'.

Barnard makes the following comments on the missional movement within the Dutch context in the same year that the *Framework document* of the DRC was formulated:

> After eight years we have discovered that nothing has come of these ideals. The Protestant Church in the Netherlands consists of spectacularly waning communities [...] Particularly in the years that the church claimed a new missional identity, she did not even come close to retain her dwindling numbers. The missional project has failed, or we should give a different meaning to the word 'missional' [...] Against the backdrop of the waning church, missional language and pretences have become laughable. We are playing in a tragicomedy ... Let us agree: from now on we will no longer be 'missional'. We call a halt to the missional activism. We rather return to the inner chamber. The inky night. The void. The great silence. The judgment of God. There, not visible to any outsider, we bend over the Scriptures and search whether we may not again, perhaps softly, hear the foolish voice of the Gospel [...] Then we will have little to say. Perhaps stutter: 'You know, we belong to an executed criminal, crudely hung up on a piece of wood'. That is it. Let us simply be. Our God works in secret. That is his mission.[58]

It is clear from the literature that there are indeed critical voices that should be taken into consideration in our use of missional language and even more so when one starts to reflect on missional worship, missional preaching and missional leadership.

◼ Conclusion

In this contribution, I started by stating the research question as follows: What can one learn through qualitative empirical research of the understanding of missional leadership among a selected group of ministers of three Reformed churches in South Africa? After explaining the methodology used in the contribution, I started with a first round of data analysis in which three categories were identified: missional identity, coming of kingdom and environment and context, with a further eight networks described under

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57. Vosloo (2015:3).

58. Barnard (2013:13).

each category. This initial analysis was followed by a theoretical discussion of the different concepts. What followed was an interpretation of the data using different excerpts from the data set combined with a discussion of the literature. My conclusion is that one can indeed find traces of missional leadership in most of the interviews with the ministers. In the final phase, I undertook to construct a missional leadership praxis theory in which I integrated the three basic concepts, but also pointed to the fact that multiculturality is the big challenge that missional leadership is facing in our current context. The contribution ended with attention to some critique on missional language with evidence from literature, which is well worth paying attention to going forward.[59]

■ Appendix
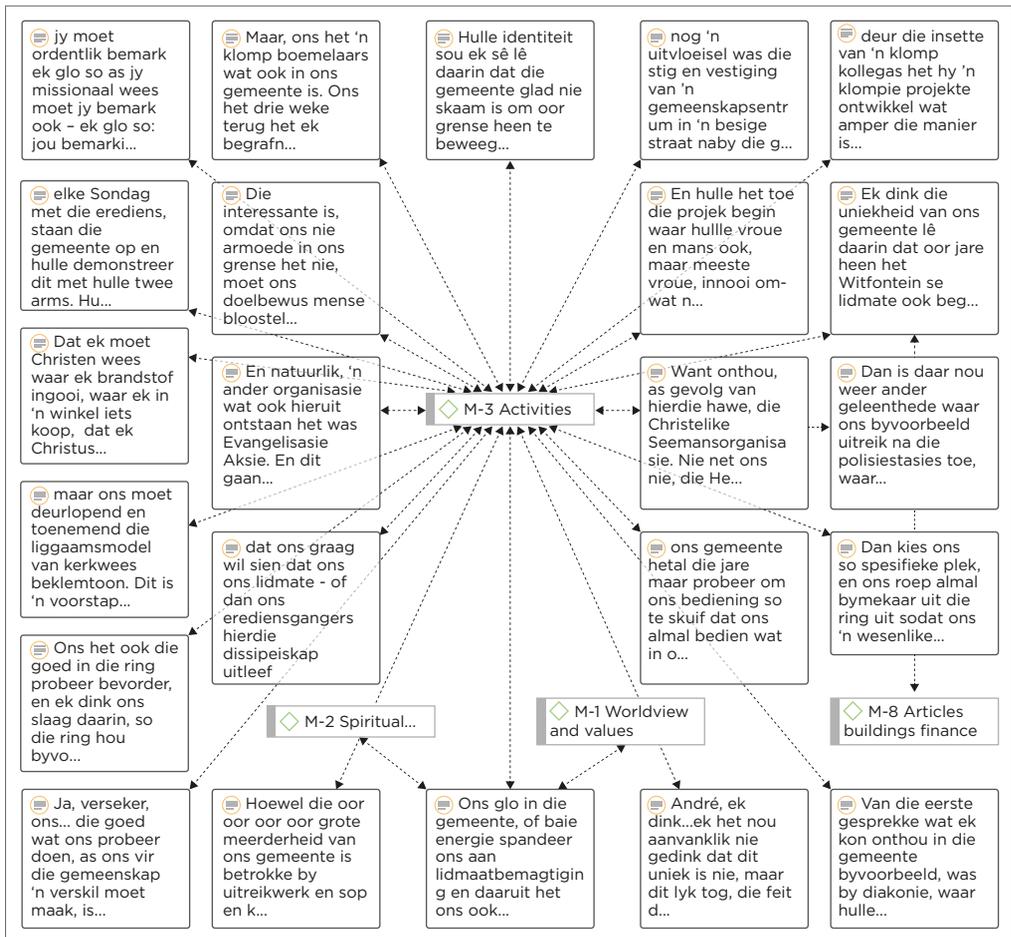
FIGURE 5A-1: M-3 Activities.

59. For the Chapter 5 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.
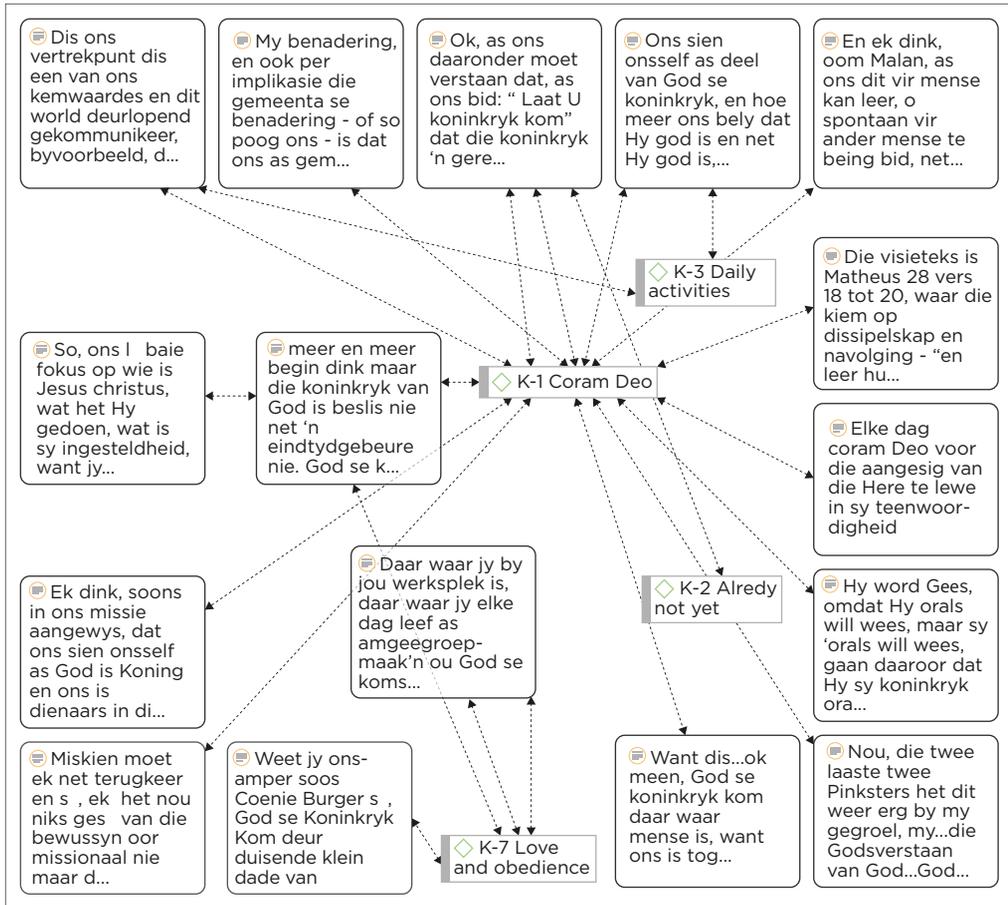
FIGURE 5A-2: K-1 Coram Deo.
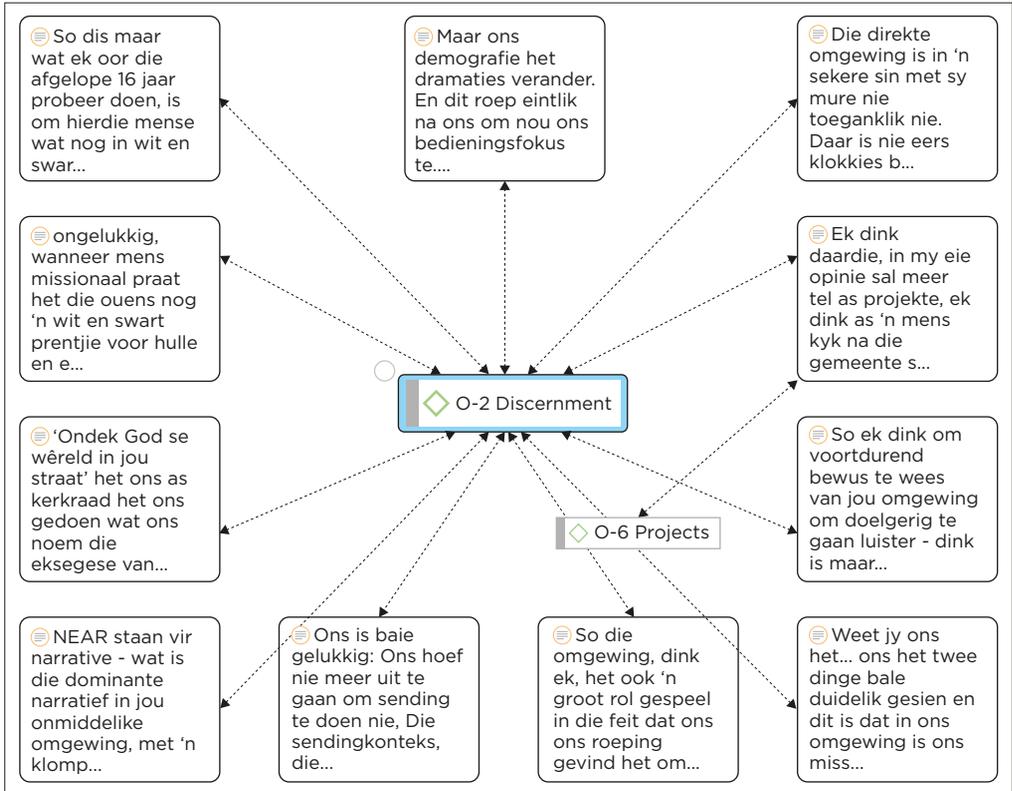
FIGURE 5A-3: O-2 Discernment.
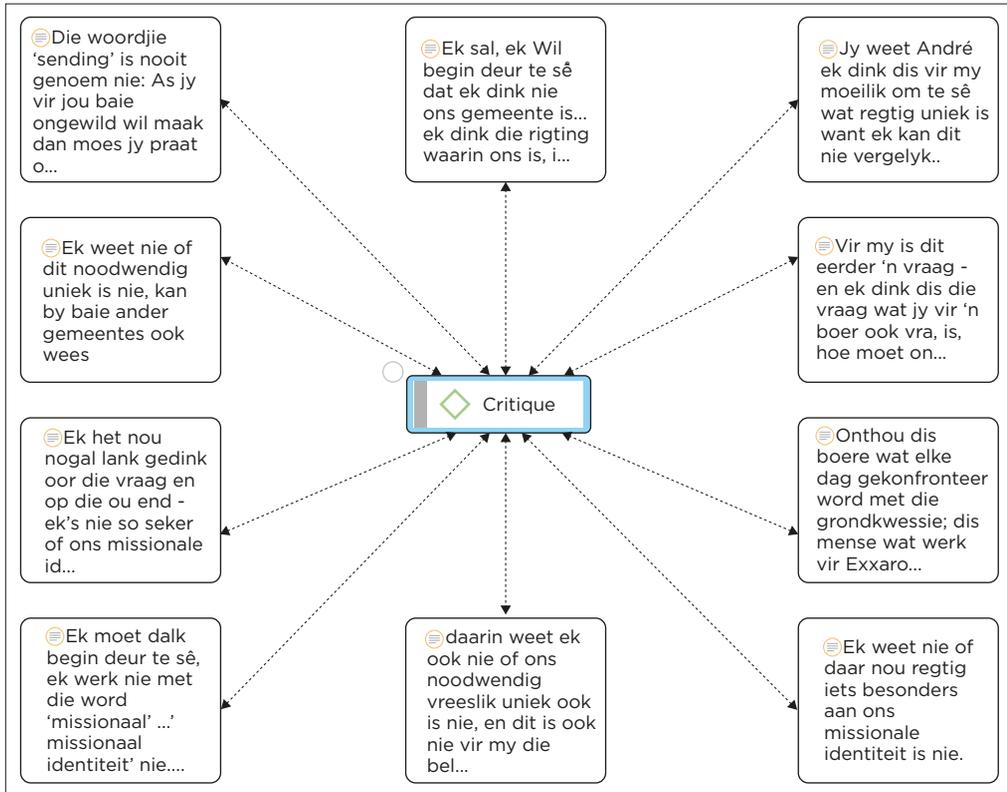
FIGURE 5A-4: Critique.

Congregational worship: Missional identity formation and the preaching of our (m)other tongue

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■ Introduction

Worship is embedded within a congregational context and has, therefore, a particular address.[1] The missional identity of a congregation compels it to listen to the Word and context in such a way that transformative practices are facilitated. This chapter focuses on the challenges that a changing

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1. See Schoeman (2019).

South African context poses for congregational worship. In this chapter, we will engage the empirical data set in four movements:

1. Acute and meticulous contextual analysis within the struggle for congregational identity.
2. Mission language that positions the formation of congregational identity at a fixed point, location and centre.
3. A critical evaluation of the empirical data towards the (m)other tongue as an alternative focal image for missional homiletics.
4. A sermon within the framework of the (m)other tongue as hermeneutic 'foundation'.[2]

■ The struggle for identity

Theologians in congregational studies have proposed that congregations that focus on processes akin to management for the benefit of the longevity of the congregation are isolated from the greater realities, creating for themselves enclaves against the outside world.[3] Other congregations, the understanding goes, are involved in society both as an epistemological translation between context and congregation and in the outflow of self-understanding as participation in the community.[4] In this chapter, we want to move away from the polarity between isolation and involvement, proposing instead that more complexity is at work with regard to the relationship congregation and context.

We propose that a congregation's relationship with the greater context is dependent on the struggle for congregational identity.[5] Any *a priori* claim that all DRC congregations are identical is wholly unfounded. Instead, the collective struggle for congregational identity opens new ways of understanding how congregations interact with and within the context. In this line of thought, the struggle is not seen as something pitiful or unwanted but rather as the pursuit of well-being within the world:

> [S]truggle begins wherever we are; in whatever we do: then we become part of those millions [...] sleeping not to dream but dreaming to change the world.[6]

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2. Foundation is intentionally written as 'foundation'. This serves as a reminder that any so-called foundational idea is temporal and open for change.

3. See Van Gelder (2007:126), Ammerman (1999:339), Osmer (2008:176), and Cilliers and Nell (2011:5).

4. Van Gelder (2007:135, 139), Osmer (2008:177–178), Koopman (2008:254), and Swart (2008:108).

5. See Nel et al. (2015:29–35). The congregational identity, one the one side, has a focus on the confession of the congregation in answering the question on their relation with the Triune God. The congregation, on the other side, needs to discover or find her own identity within a certain context. The focus in this section is on the formation of the congregational identity within her context.

6. Wa Thiong'o (1986:108).

Struggle forms the first light for dreaming of newness entering the world, including innovation in congregational identity. Furthermore, as Miroslav Volf so adequately illustrates, identity formation is a complicated endeavour that is neither static nor without the need for boundaries.[7] To propose that a congregation is either isolated from or engaging with the context does injustice to this reality and stereotypes the congregation as arrested in time.[8] As much as the exclusion of other identities is destructive to the self and others,[9] so too can opposing identities be understood as complementary to each, even needing one another as intertwined in the formation of identity.[10]

Thus, our proposal for struggle as a central[11] image of the relationship between congregation and context underscores the fluidity of identity. With this in mind, we look at the empirical data for a description of the influence of the environment and greater context on the congregation's missional identity.

■ The empirical description

The main research focus of the research project is to explore the relationship between the worship service and the development of a missional congregation. A qualitative research design was chosen to answer the main research question because a qualitative design as a methodology is concerned with understanding the processes and contexts that underlie social behaviour, focusing on meaning and interpretations with the emphasis on the quality and depth of the information that is obtained.[12]

Individual interviews were used as the data-gathering technique because an interview is a conversation with a participant with the aim to see through the eyes of the participant by obtaining descriptive data.[13] As explained in Chapter 1, four primary semi-structured questions[14] were used in the interviews for the whole project, but the focus in this chapter is on the question about the missional identity of the congregation, concerning the question about

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7. Volf (2002:14–15).

8. See Drichel (2008:589).

9. Volf (2002:15) and (Césaire 1972:41).

10. Valle (2015:30).

11. See Drichel's (2008:604–605) usage of c/entre with the 'slash functioning as a silent reminder [...] that this centre is decentred, both split and double'.

12. Nieuwenhuis (2009b:51).

13. Nieuwenhuis (2009c:87).

14. See Appendix 1 for the four questions.

how the environment and greater context influences the congregation's missional identity.[15]

The project used purposeful sampling as a technique. The aim was to select congregations with a missional identity which are constructively involved in the community. The whole project comprised semi-structured interviews with 43 ministers of congregations that met the sampling criteria.[16] The focus in this chapter is on the five interviews that were conducted with DRC ministers in the Free State.[17]

The data from the individual interviews were transcribed and coded.[18] A process of inductive coding was used by reading through the data; let codes emerge from the data; attaching labels to the data; and then identifying themes or categories.[19] The following three themes were identified from the responses to question 1.3:[20]

- *Language* is an extremely prominent theme. The changing language context of many areas in South Africa seems to present many challenges to congregations. Rural congregations experience language differences mostly because of the Afrikaans speaking membership and 'others' who do not understand Afrikaans and feel excluded. There was also a second dimension to the language response where congregations feel that the members need to learn a missional language to remain relevant in a changing context.
- *Demographical changes* are closely related to the theme of language. Major sub-themes in demography include the variety of races and religions, cultural and generational differences and political affiliation.
- The *marginalised* in the community influence the missional identity of congregations; how they respond to the need in the community is driven by the marginalised character in the area. If there are many sick people, the congregation responds with a clinic, many homeless people and the congregation responds with soup kitchens and clothes.

Figure 6.1 illustrates the three themes.

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15. Original Afrikaans: '*Vraag 1.3: Hoe beïnvloed die omgewing en groter konteks die gemeente se missionale identiteit?*'

16. Ethical clearance from UP.

17. Two rural congregations (FS1 and FS2); a bigger town congregation (FS3) and two urban congregations (FS4 and FS5).

18. AtlasTi was used for the coding.

19. Nieuwenhuis (2009a:107–110).

20. In our delimitation of question 1.3, we explicitly locate importance in the interaction between missional identity and context within the greater research of this research project.
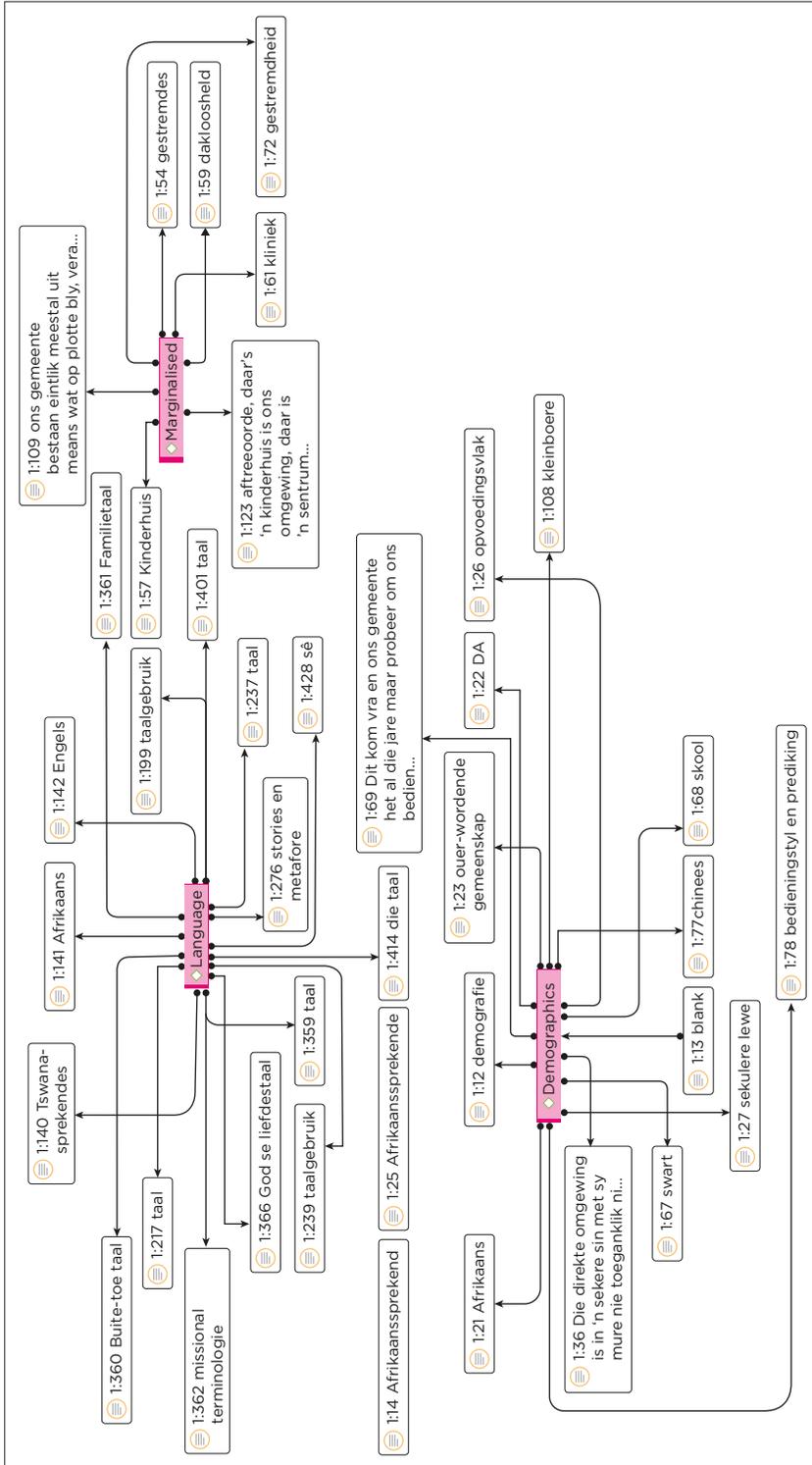
FIGURE 6.1: The three themes identified from interview responses.

◼ This empirical research has shown that congregational leadership is acutely aware of the multilingual realities of the context

All five of the congregations in the Free State have indicated their awareness of the myriad languages which are spoken based on the situation in which they find themselves. However, depending on the contextual realities, language places different expectations and challenges at the face of the congregation (Table 6.1).

Two interesting caveats are evident from these three perspectives. Firstly, even within the varied ways of structurally dealing with the contextual realities of multilingualism, congregations within the scope of this study are able to address these realities keenly. Secondly, there seems to be no one correct way of meeting the challenges of multilingual reality. But there are instead multiple possible solutions and manners of forming identities within this situation.

TABLE 6.1: Congregants' awareness of the myriad languages spoken in various situations.

Quote	Analysis
[This suburb] is still a rather homogenous suburb – very Afrikaans. If you look at the names of the streets, they are all still named after folk games. It is not like other parts [of town]. (FS5, our translation).[346]	This congregation is aware of the multilingual context but is not confronted by it.
A couple of years ago we tried to add an English service. The feedback from the black people was that we are trying to institute apartheid in a different way, where an English service is for the black people, and an Afrikaans service is for the white people. (FS3, our translation).[347]	This congregation has been confronted by language on two fronts: Firstly, the necessity to expand the languages used for ministry, and secondly, the unintended opposition because such expansion will create separation between people – which is unwanted for some.
[We have] a [Afrikaans] formal service, family service, and a service at the retirement village [...] and then we have a Sotho service and a Chinese service. (FS4, our translation).[348]	This congregation is confronted with a multilingual context and has determined its services in coordination with the lingual diversity.

....

21. Original Afrikaans: '[*Die woonbuurt*] *self is nog 'n redelike homogene woonbuurt: Baie Afrikaans – as jy na die straatname kyk is alles nog volkspele name. Ja nie baie nie soos in die ander dele nie'.*

22. Original Afrikaans: '*Ons het al pogings aangewend 'n klompie jare terug om 'n Engelse diens te hou en die terugvoer wat ons gekry het van die swartmense af is ag julle wil net apartheid op 'n ander manier aanhou, want nou maak julle 'n Engelse diens en die swart mense moet Engelse diens toe kom en die wit mense moet Afrikaanse diens toe kom, so dis nie 'n geïntegreerde gemeente nie, dit werk nie vir hulle so nie'.*

348. Original Afrikaans: ''*n Formele diens, 'n gesinsdiens, 'n diens by die aftree-oord ... en dan het ons 'n Sothodiens en 'n Chinese diens*'.

◼ Congregations of the DRC in the Free State have both been influenced by demographic transformation and shifted their missional identity to accommodate the demographic changes

Two things are essential in the empirical data (Table 6.2). Firstly, the congregations of the Free State that have been studied have not seen demographic changes as a stumbling block to their mission or identity within the community. Instead, they have identified demographic change as challenges to rise to the occasion. Secondly, how the congregations studied have struggled for identity within this context is plural. In the three quotes, identity formation within demographic changes has included projects of involvement, displacement of negative consciousness towards evangelism and cooperation between polarised groups. We are convinced that many more centres of identity formation through engagement with demographic shifts are possible and do take place within congregations from different contexts. Once more, the empirical data show a pluralist of possible engagements[28] with changing demographics, each valid and credible as the collective struggle for identity.

TABLE 6.2: Influence of demographic transformation and the resultant shift in missional identity.

Quote	Analysis
The environment influences our style of ministry greatly or rather what we attempt to do. Thus, we try to get involved in the community and build partnerships with communities. (FS4, our translation)[349]	There is a direct correlation between demographic shifts and community involvement projects by the congregation.
I experience the average Afrikaner as being angry... I say; the context is terrible at the moment, but it is an opportunity to witness and people buy into it. (FS2, our translation)[350]	The lived experience of anger for Afrikaans people is identified and displaced with a counter identity of opportunity for witness to faith amidst the demographic challenges.
Twenty years' work to build bridges so [racially different groups] can say to one another: 'But we would rather walk together than fight each other'. (FS1, our translation)[351]	Within the demographic shifts, differing racial groups have learned and endeavoured to work with each other as part of the mission and identity of the congregations.[352]

24. Original Afrikaans: '[D]*ie omgewing beïnvloed nogal baie ons bedieningsstyl of wat ons wil graag poog, so ons probeer maar om by gemeenskappe betrokke te raak en vennootskappe met gemeenskappe te bou'.*

25. Original Afrikaans: *'Ek beleef ons deursnee Afrikaners as half kwaad... Ek doen nogal baie daarmee om die konteks, te sê, die konteks is sleg op die oomblik, maar dis 'n geleentheid om te getuig, en die ouens koop dit nogal'.*

26. Original Afrikaans: *'Twintig jaar se werk wat ingesit is het die brûe gebou dat hulle vir mekaar sê, maar ons stap eerder die pad saam as wat ons teen mekaar veg'.*

27. It should be noted that the interviewee is a minister of two congregations, a Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) congregation and a Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) congregation. Although both congregations are Afrikaans, racial differences exist.

28. See Wa Thiong'o (1993:26–27). Wa Thiong'o is confident that moving the centre from a universal *correct* centre to 'a pluralism of centres; themselves being equally legitimate locations of human imagination' is more

◼ A third essential consideration of the context by congregational leaders comes to the fore in the congregation's contact with the marginalised[29]

Through the empirical data, it is clear that these five congregations are acutely aware of the marginalised in their communities and structure their identity in such a way as to make sense of the challenges and opportunities such contextual realities provide (see Table 6.3).

When it comes to the marginalised, it is clear that the congregations deeply understand their missional identity as altruistic, attempting in various ways to better the well-being of the marginalised. However, the marginalised are seen as subjects of mission and never agents of mission. There is a strong impulse of *othering* the marginalised, although not without exception. To a large

TABLE 6.3: A third essential consideration of the context by congregational leaders, from the congregation's contact with the marginalised.

Quote	Analysis
[The Kingdom of God] is not something that will happen one day. But, there where you look at the poor when you reach out to people in need, where you are involved in society, you create the Kingdom of God. (FS1, our translation)[355]	The congregation perceives the marginalised as *others* to themselves. Regardless of this othering, the congregation is genuinely and altruistically empathetic towards the plight of the marginalised and strives to better the condition.
[The adjacent neighbourhood] has 90% unemployment. We became involved in their kindergartens, informal kindergartens. Some of our members, retired teachers, are helping there. We have become involved with the schools. (FS5, our translation)[356]	Although this congregation is not directly confronted with the marginalised, they have found opportunities to become involved through investing in the future of the children of the marginalised. The rhetoric of othering is present, albeit subtle.
Then I heard that this person's car broke down and she must be at work tomorrow. I offered to take her to work. And that person was so grateful. And a relationship developed. (FS3, our translation)[357]	In this situation, the rhetoric of othering is minimal. Because of the possibilities in the rhetoric, a relationship could develop.

representative of how people and communities absorb the world around them. He goes on to emphasise the importance of asking 'how one centre relate[s] to other centres' rather than the colonial project of proposing one centre as universally correct.

29. *Marginalised* is used as an overarching identifier of people in vulnerable positions of poverty, unemployment and disenfranchisement.

30. Original Afrikaans: '[*Die koninkryk van God is*] *nie iets wat eendag gebeur nie, maar daar waar jy kyk na die armes, na wanneer jy uitreik na mense in nood, daar waar jy in jou gemeenskap betrokke is, daar create jy die koninkryk van God*'.

31. Original Afrikaans: '*Die werkloosheid is 90%. So ons kon* [*by die aangrensende buurt*] *betrokke raak by hulle kleuterskole, informele kleuterskole. Van ons lidmate, oud-onderwysers wat daar help, ons het by die skool betrokke geraak*'.

32. Original Afrikaans: '*Toe hoor ek nou die mens se kar het gebreek en sy moet môre by die werk wees en toe bied ek aan om haar werk toe te vat. En daardie persoon was so dankbaar laat hierdie lidmaat haar na die werk toe gevat het en terug gevat het. En daar het 'n verhouding ontstaan*'.

extent, identity is formed within the conceptual framework that mission is done 'by the privileged to the marginalized'.[33]

In this section, we are proposing that congregations read their contexts with acute and accurate awareness

Through the acute awareness of contextual change, congregations engage in the struggle for a new identity. This is an open and negotiable space where many possibilities come to the fore, each legitimate as engagement within and with their context. The importance of this cannot be underestimated and should be admired. When it comes to the marginalised, however, pluralistic manners of relating are absent, and identity is formed around the idea that the congregation is the privileged subject with mission flowing towards the marginalised. This indicates a subtle formation of identity around the congregation's agency and ability to better the well-being of others, while the agency of the marginalised is undermined or non-existent.[34] The uniform thinking around the marginalised does not take anything away from the keen ability of congregations to read and react to the context.

This does, however, bring us to a second question: How is language used in preaching to aid in the formation of identity?

Missional language for a fixed identity

In the empirical data set with regard to the question about characteristics of preaching which contribute to the development of the faith community's missional consciousness,[35] language as mediation of missional identity played a prominent role. In this section, we will look at two aspects of missional language: firstly, contemplation on missional theology (missional language) as contested space, and secondly, preaching of missional language in DRC congregations in the Free State as an endeavour of locating a fixed identity in a contingent context.

33. Keum (2013:15). Keum critiques this understanding of mission and proposes an alternative where mission begins at the margins and is underscored by an alternative epistemology and imagination, 'counteract[ing] injustice in life, church, and mission'.

34. See Akper (2013) and Maluleke and Nadar (2004) Both of these articles verbalise the problems with undermining agency of others and propose perspectives on agency which empower rather than negate.

35. Original Afrikaans: '*Vraag 2.2: Wat is kenmerkend van die erediens en veral die prediking se bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van 'n korporatiewe en gemeentelike missionale bewussyn*?'

■ Missional language as contested space

Missional theologians have long held the opinion that there is a multitude of focal images that could be considered mission. In David Bosch's seminal work, *Transforming Mission*, he proposes 13 elements for an ecumenical paradigm of mission.[36] In more recent contemplation on mission, Schreiter and Jørgensen suggested reconciliation as the overarching paradigm for mission which both goes beyond and incorporates previous paradigms of mission.[37] Other paradigms have gone beyond the boundaries of the institutionalised church to claim that mission emerges from the margins and may even stand in opposition to the church:

> Mission from the margins seeks to counteract injustices in life, church, and mission. It seeks to be an alternative missional movement against the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalized.[38]

From a contemporary South African perspective, Moses Maponya and Eugene Baron propose that mission lies in public witness as a prophetic vision for the whole of society. 'Church members should become better citizens, carers of the environment, economically intelligent, health-conscious and politically intelligent'.[39]

In line with our premise that identity is fluid, we want to propose that the complexity of missional theology opens a space for the negotiation of what mission is for each context. In Homi Bhabha's thought on space as contested, he proposed the terminology of *Third Space* and claims:

> And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.[40]

Thus, mission as a language which creates imaginative space should be explored within the contextual realities, with the possibility of moving beyond our lived experience, towards the unknown of becoming something other than ourselves. Further, as Simone Drichel correctly shows: it is through the keen awareness of temporality that ontology and identity are disrupted,[41] thus not only contested space, but also contested time, context and Kairos.

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36. Bosch (2011:359–504).

37. Schreiter and Jørgensen (2013:3).

38. Keum (2013:15).

39. Maponya and Baron (2020:9).

40. Bhabha (1994:39).

41. Drichel (2008:589).

This being said, how does the congregational leadership understand preaching as missional language within a contingent context?

Missional preaching as locating a fixed identity

The empirical data demonstrate three sources of missional identity formation through preaching for the congregational consciousness – missional identity through (1) thematic preaching, (2) historic congregational identity and (3) interpretation of biblical texts.[42]

Thematic preaching as missional identity formation

In this congregation, missional identity and consciousness find its onus at the positionality and decisions of the leadership (see Table 6.4).[43] The leadership shoulders the responsibility of identifying mission for the congregation, while preaching's purpose becomes to advance the leadership's understanding of mission through thematic preaching. Particular concerns must be uttered. The leadership corps may use this platform to enforce their own agendas or vision, which may either be beneficial or detrimental to mission. Furthermore, the biblical text takes a subordinate position to thematic preaching.[44] Once more, the temporality of identity lies with the leadership. Depending on the efficacy of the leadership, both mission and congregational identity may be lodged in

TABLE 6.4: Leadership discussion of Thematic preaching as missional identity formation.

Quote	Analysis
I think it is characteristic that we work thematically. As a church council we ask what must be said next and this creates a corporative consciousness... In other words, I think the fact that we spoke about human dignity, that we talk about our calling, that we talk about these things the whole time, creates a corporate... creates a communal consciousness. (FS1, our translation).[369]	Preaching plays the role of underscoring and promoting a particular understanding of mission as determined by the leadership within the context. To foster a missional identity in line with the defined identity, thematic sermons are preached.

42. Original Afrikaans: '*Ek dink die feit dat ons tematies werk – dis kenmerkend. Ek dink die feit dat ons saam ook vra as Kerkrade, wat moet volgende gesê word? Dit skep ook 'n korporatiewe bewussyn... So met ander woorde, ek dink die feit dat ons oor menswaardigheid gepraat het, dat ons oor roeping praat, dat ons oor hierdie goed maar die heel tyd met mekaar praat skep 'n korporati ... skep 'n gemeenskaplike bewussyn*'.

43. 'Leaders recognise the importance of transformation through the formation of habits and practices, as well as in worship' (Niemandt 2019:74).

44. Along this line of thinking, the voice of the Bible is muted and contextual realities may eradicate God from the pulpit. For a more thorough contemplation on preaching which is entrenched in the situation to the peril of the text see Cilliers (1996, 1998, 2004, 2006, 2012, 2013).

a fixed identity that ignores both how identity is formed and mission as contested space.

◾ Historic congregational identity as missional preaching

Here the proposition is suggested that the historical identity of the congregation brings forth missional preaching as intertwined in the established identity of diversity and outward ministry (Table 6.5). Identity is fixed and underscored in preaching at two locations. Firstly, in the myth of what the congregation was in the past. Preaching is held captive to this myth and must confirm the historical myth. Secondly, diversity is an essential concept for the congregation as a missional understanding. Although diversity as identity has noble intentions, it is problematic when referring to racial, cultural and lingual differences.

Simone Drichel opines that any representation of people as a-temporal and unchangeable keeps them tied to the past.[46] Furthermore, the stereotyping of groups and people reproduces colonial understandings of other people which are untrue and withholds them from 'an assumed universal human nature'.[47] *Diversity* then becomes a subtle way in which divisions are set forth and underscored.[48]

TABLE 6.5: Discussion of the nature of the congregation.

Quote	Analysis
Furthermore, I believe the nature of the congregation has long been established as a diverse congregation, with outward ministry. This is indeed a missional characteristic which will be carried forth in the preaching. (FS4 our translation).[370]	In this congregation, diversity and outward ministry are seen as essential themes of mission. The supposition is that the language of preaching will, through the established identity of the congregation, be missional.

....

45. Original Afrikaans: '*Ek glo ook vanweë die aard van die gemeente – die diversiteit van die gemeente en omdat die buitebediening al so lank gevestig is hierso is dit uiteraard ook 'n missionale karakter van – prediking sal ook 'n missionale karakter dra*'.

46. Drichel (2008:593).

47. Drichel (2008:593).

48. See Vellem (2017:5). Vuyani Vellem proposes that the same racial structures underlie the democratic dispensation and the myth of the Rainbow Nation: '[T]he democratic dispensation in South Africa is a "sympathetic" pact in response to black pain in the light of the decolonial turn. It is sympathetic because the core values of racism still exist'.

◼ Interpretation of biblical text as the fixed location of identity

In this instance, missional identity is reported to be formed by the specific biblical text (Table 6.6). However, the biblical text needs to be interpreted, and therefore, missional identity formation through the biblical text lies in hermeneutics. For us, the crux lies not in what the biblical text says, but in the hermeneutics of interpreting the text.[50] Unfortunately, we cannot gather enough information from the above quote to pinpoint hermeneutic keys for interpreting the text, other than the supposition that God sends. From a different perspective, when a concise hermeneutic key is absent, one's positionality will become the *de facto* hermeneutic key, and self-understanding will become a religious identity. This is why Rasiah Sugirtharajah is uncomfortable with historical-critical hermeneutics, claiming that it is unable to detach itself from 'religious motive[s] and confessional interest[s]'.[51]

◼ (M)other tongue: Space and time

> Mission is always dialogical, requiring openness to the other, emptying oneself as Christ emptied himself.
>
> – Ruth Meyers[52]

Earlier in this chapter, we alluded to two essential aspects for preaching within a framework of pluralism in missional theology and fluid identity: space and time. We want to propose that preaching could only be rightly an 'openness

TABLE 6.6: Discussion of the formation of missional identity.

Quote	Analysis
And what I find, if you take a specific pericope and you delph into it, you hear new things. But, again, if it is the Word of the sending God, it will always speak to you. But, He will also still send you, and that expectation must be in the worship service. What does God want to say to me? But where does He want me to go with this pericope? (FS2, our translation).[374]	The language of preaching is deeply entrenched in the specific biblical text, with the caveat that the text will speak of God as the sending God. And that the sending God will have a mission for the believer.

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49. Original Afrikaans: '*En ek vind, as jy 'n afgebakende perikoop vat en jy gaan diep in hom in, hoor jy nuwe goed. Maar as dit nou weer die Woord van die sturende God is, sal dit jou altyd vir jou iets binnekant sê. Maar sal Hy jou ook altyd stuur, en daai verwagting moet net altyd in die erediens wees. Wat wil God vir my sê? Maar waarheen wil Hy hê moet ek met hierdie perikoop gaan?*'

50. See Smit (2006:111–181).

51. Sugirtharajah (2012:23–24).

52. Meyers (2014:79).

to the other'[53] if we attempt[54] to preach in our (m)other[55] tongue as the intersection of space and time in the imagination of preaching.

◼ On space

I reiterate: God enters, transcends and fluidises our spaces.

– Johan Cilliers[56]

For Johan Cilliers, preaching is only possible within the hermeneutic and imaginative space which is brought into existence as '*transcended and fluidised space*'.[57] The existence of this space is by God's grace, but also and at the same time, by preaching, which is 'pregnant with possibilities to reimagine and rediscover meaning and life'.[58] Preaching in this space moves beyond the confines of our stunted realities and impeding identities, towards newness entering the world and the Spirit 're-sterr[ing] to form new, creative chaos'.[59]

But this imaginative space is contested. As much as Cilliers looks at this space in a positive light, towards the beauty of God's presence[60] and the Spirit's creation of 'a space for grace',[61] so too can this imaginative space become a space of stereotype, discrimination and exclusion. Building on the insight of Homi Bhabha, we propose that when the imagination of preaching is something 'already known', as rigid certainty of who God is, was and will be, that preaching becomes 'something that must be anxiously repeated'.[62] This imagination reverts new possibilities of the imaginative space towards 'religious activism'[63] and nationalist 'enclaves'.[64]

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53. Meyers (2014:79).

54. See Barth (1991:44–45). In Barth's understanding, preaching is always an attempt and the human endeavour to *try* and say what scripture witnesses.

55. We use the brackets to indicate a close relation between the most intimate (mother) and the most strange (other). This indication hybrid identities and locates preaching within newness of space and time.

56. Cilliers (2016:31).

57. Cilliers (2016:31; [*emphasis in original*]).

58. Cilliers (2016:31).

59. Cilliers (2016:32).

60. Cilliers (2016:44).

61. Cilliers (2016:51).

62. Bhabha (1994:66).

63. See Cilliers (1996:98).

64. See Cilliers and Nell (2011).

Instead, the imaginative space should be understood with the caveat that preaching becomes our (m)other tongue when we explore the imaginative space to the extent of 'elud[ing] the politics of polarity and emerg[ing] as the others of our selves'.[65]

On time

[*Timing grace*] entails reading and interpreting the time(s) right, expecting the advent of an event within a specific moment in time. Timely preachers know and acknowledge the *Kairos* when it comes. More than that: these preachers help to kindle the *Kairos*.

– Johan Cilliers[66]

In Johan Cilliers' thoughts about time, event is the focal image. Event proposes that preaching as timing is not for the solidifying of truth, but rather the advent, in the moment of time, of a word of grace. Moreover, this timing of grace is linked, in the specific, to imagination on the identity of God:

Once preaching and in particular, God-images are changed into safe and secure certainties, or institutionalised enclosures or enclaves of the 'truth', and no longer is understood and experienced as events of encounter, it becomes time (!) [*sic*] for timely preachers to step in.[67]

Thus, Cilliers calls for the encounter with God to be open to a timely imagination of who God is. Furthermore, the biblical text cannot be made hostage to history, but is 'a timing text'.[68] With this Cilliers means that the biblical text has 'a dynamics of its own'[69] and preachers are called 'not to repeat the text, but to time the text'.[70] It is in this timing of the biblical text that newness enters, 'question[ing] that which has become self-evident, or that which now stands in doubt'.[71]

Exactly at this understanding of preaching as an event in time, the ontology of the self, the other, and the other is disrupted and open for negotiation, and hybridity becomes the c/entre.[72]

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65. Bhabha (1994:39).

66. Cilliers (2019:24).

67. Cilliers (2019:25).

68. Cilliers (2019:186).

69. Cilliers (2019:187).

70. Cilliers (2019:189).

71. Cilliers (2019:188).

72. Drichel (2008:589).

If hybridity is heresy, then to blaspheme is to dream. To dream not of the past or present, nor the continuous present; it is not the nostalgic dream of tradition, nor the Utopian dream of modern progress; it is the dream of translation as 'survival' as Derrida translates the 'time' of Benjamin's concept of the after-life of translation, as sur-vivre, the act of living on borderlines.[73]

■ Sermon: On identity[74]

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, '*Abba*, Father'.

– Romans 8:15 (NIV)

A couple of years ago, I found a copy of the book *Die eerste steen?*[75] by Adam Small. This book was published in 1960, and it is dedicated to 'my people, the Afrikaner'.[76] When I read this sentence, an intriguing dissonance of understanding took place in my mind. For, you see, as a child, I grew up on a farm where people's minds were deeply entrenched in the old ways of South Africa. I was called *kleinbaas*[77] and thought that my people, white people – the Afrikaner, were the only ones who were human. And anyone who fell outside of this grouping was, for me, certainly not Afrikaners, not even human.

But Adam Small, as we all know, would not have fit into my mistaken understanding of Afrikaner. Adam Small is not a white man, but of mixed race. And so, when he writes 'my people, the Afrikaner', he is using an idea of identity which is supposedly restricted to one group of people and dislocating it to other places. He plays with the idea of the identity of *the Afrikaner*, broadening it and focusing it in an alternative way.

And this was beautiful and new to me. In these four words, Adam Small opened my eyes to the possibility that identity could be fluid, open for negotiation and hybrid.

The first words we hear in our scripture reading are, 'For you did not receive the spirit that makes you a slave again to fear'. I want to propose that the most profound fear that we become slaves of, is located in, our identity. From a young age, we are conditioned to see ourselves within a fixed identity. Or as we get older, we create our own identity, which becomes vital to us. And we

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73. Bhabha (1994:226–227).

74. Sermon preached by W. Wessels on the 19th of July 2020. It was recorded electronically and distributed amongst members of DRC Uitsig (Bloemfontein) and URCSA Immanuel (Standerton and Kinross).

75. Afrikaans for *The first stone?*

76. Original Afrikaans: '*My mense, die Afrikaner*'.

77. Afrikaans for *young boss*.

fear losing who we are and who we have made ourselves to be. Our being becomes our enslavement, and we place ourselves in opposition to identities other than ourselves. We create enclaves where we include those we perceive as ourselves. And people who do not look, speak and think as ourselves are actively excluded.

Herein we become active slaves of our own identity. In essence, our whole society is built upon division, dualism and the polarity of identity; good people and bad people; the powerful and the weak; people of this and that social class; man and woman; white and black; and straight and gay.

But, says, the text, you do not have the spirit that makes you slaves. And so, we are not slaves to our identity or the prevailing identity of our times. Our identity, through the Spirit, becomes a non-identity. The Afrikaner, through the Spirit, becomes a non-Afrikaner. The Sotho, through the spirit, non-Sotho. The English, non-English. The autonomous Western man is now non-autonomous. Through the Spirit, we go from slaves to non-slaves.

Our identity and the identity of others are thus subordinate to the non-identity in the spirit. In what Christ has done, there lies our identity, and our worldly identities are nullified in Christ.

And Adam Small sees this. He broadens and blends the identification of the *Afrikaner* as the inclusion of more people. He plays with identity. He opens the possibility that identity *is* and *is even more*, but also *is not*.

Our reading goes on, and newness enters: 'but you received the Spirit of sonship'. We have become so used to being called daughters and sons of God. In the church, we have so often heard the phrase *sons and daughters of God* that we have grown numb to the profound implication of this word: *sonship*.[78] In ancient times the concept of sons of God was restricted to the most powerful in the world, the rulers of the world. In a more thorough reflection on the implication of sonship of the Divine, we should be able to realise just how profound this is. No, even more, this sentence, 'you received… sonship' is an impossible identity. Who can be the daughter of God? No one can.

The identity of children of God is the double negative of identity. The non-non-person.[79] The non-non-Afrikaner. The non-non-westerner. The non-non-Sotho. The double negative is the impossible. But it is precisely in this

78. This sermon explicitly uses sonship as inclusive of all genders, as well as interchanging between sons and daughters. For a more thorough discussion on queering in the biblical usages of gender pronouns, see Punt (2007).

79. The terminology of non-non-person was determined in conversation with Giorgio Agamben's commentary on Romans. 'The division of the law into Jew/non-Jew, in the law/without law, now leaves a remnant on either side, which cannot be defined either as a Jew, or as a non-Jew. He who dwells in the law of the Messiah is the non-non-Jew'. Agamben (2005:51).

impossible identity that we are the sons and daughters of God. The impossible double-negated identity is the gift of the Spirit.

Who can become the sons of God? No one, and yet there is a remnant. Do we become daughters of God through good deeds? No, even our best works and most holy moments cannot make of us children of God.

And yet we receive the impossible as gift and grace. The Spirit of a doubly negated identity. Just as on that first day where the church was birthed, and the Spirit blended the language and culture and identity of the disciples in non-non-identities so all could be children of God.

'And by him we cry, "*Abba*, Father"'. For see, it is in our non-non-being that we can be who we truly are: human. Not something we need to rise to or try and become. But who we are in our innermost beings. But this is the good news. For in our vulnerability and neediness as humans, in our struggle to survive, in our fear for life and livelihood in the current times, we have a Father-Mother, a Mother-Father, who cares for us, holds us in our need, saves us, and gives us hope.

■ Conclusion

Congregational worship is always challenged by its context. Missional congregations, therefore, struggle with their identity. The empirical data from the five DRC congregations identified the following three markers as essential challenges in this struggle:

1. Not everybody speaks the same language, and these language differences complicate listening and talking to one another.
2. The demographic changes in the community are not homogeneous but are very visible.
3. A developing missional identity is challenged by the 'other' and the marginalised in the community. Missional congregations ought to learn to speak our (m)other tongue as a homiletic language that creates new and imaginative spaces for interaction with *the other, the Other* and *the other within themselves*. This is not a fixed but a dynamic process of identity re/formation through hermeneutic processes that go beyond fixed identities and rigid interpretations of biblical texts. This dynamic process will be acutely aware of differing locations of interpretation and the relationship with other centres. If we are worshipping and preaching from our context the congregational identity in Christ should always, in time and space, be re/formed.[80,81]

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80. The slash is used to show that formation of new identity is never complete, but preliminary and uncomfortable slashed, defragmented and decentred.

81. For the Chapter 6 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

Cultivating a prayerful culture of hospitality

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■ Introduction

Peter Drucker is well known for his expression: 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'.[1] It means that applied strategy will be in vain if the culture of an organisation is not receptive to the planned strategy. Nieuwhof remarks as follows:

> Every church has a culture. Yours does. Mine does. If the culture is healthy, amazing things happen. People love being there. People grow. Great leaders come and stay. Your church becomes attractive to the community and more fully accomplishes its mission. But sadly, for many churches, the culture isn't healthy. Culture is invisible but determinative. You can't see it, but it defines so much. A bad culture will consistently undermine an amazing mission, vision, and strategy. [2]

1. Cf. Hyken (2015) and Kobulnicky (2017).

2. Nieuwhof (2016:1).

A bad culture concerning hospitality will consistently undermine any strategy to attract visitors sustainably. It is, therefore, necessary to ascertain oneself about the meaning of culture in this regard. Culture[3] is concerned with a set of meanings, thoughts, attitudes, emotions, values and patterns of life and faith at an abstract level, which permits a person to know how to live. Culture also classifies people in terms of race and ethnicity, the class into which we are born, the number of siblings we have, our birth order, our family's attitude towards belief and faith practices, gender and the way our family talks about other people.[4] Fortman[5] described our relationship with culture as that of a fish with water. If a fish can make some sort of discovery, the last discovery it will make will be the existence of water, because it lives in water.

According to Heitink,[6] the church is undergoing an ongoing interaction with the surrounding culture. She is influencing her environment and is being influenced by her environment. Influencing happens consciously and being influenced mostly unconsciously. Bevans[7] is of the opinion that there must be a theology for every culture because theology stands between culture and religion. 'Theology mediates the meaning and role of religion to a culture'.

A good example of the influence of culture and how to counter it is the following story. When the Dutch missiologist, Dr Paul Visser became pastor in 1998 of the Bethlehem church in Den Haag, it was a dying congregation. In 2007, he visited South Africa and was interviewed by Prof. I.W.C van Wyk of the NRCA for an article in the 'Die Hervormer'.[8] Visser was asked about the culture in connection with religion in the Netherlands.

Visser explained that it was after a period of church hostility and atheism that the Dutch people developed new religious feelings. There was a feeling that one cannot go without God and that he is necessary to give meaning to life. The significance God gave, however, has more to do with their view that he is 'my God' and the guarantee for 'my happiness and success'. According to this view, God is the product of 'my faith' – faith that is not necessarily a product of the Bible or church tradition, but rather a token of 'my need to succeed' and 'my sigh for pleasure'. It was more of a selfish religiosity with faith that serves as an accessory to the life you are busy creating for yourself. The message of the Bible therefore only has meaning in so far it provides a good feeling, especially a feeling of success.

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3. Cf. Loewen (2000:7) and Van Aarde (2005:686).

4. Cf. Osmer and Douglas (2018:31).

5. Fortman (1971:7).

6. Heitink (2007:43).

7. Bevans (2002:11).

8. Visser (2007:3).

He was asked how he and his church board managed to change the situation from standing on the verge of extinction to a big, growing and thriving congregation. Visser replied that there was no new plan or a vision and mission statement. They mainly did two things. They convinced their active members to pray for 1 minute each day. They prayed for half a minute for themselves and half a minute for the unchurched they knew. He also started Bible studies and his aim was mainly to target the young people of the city. He concentrated on all their questions and problems and prepared very well for every occasion. After some more research, he followed up with house visitations to provide further answers on outstanding issues. In short, prayer and a serious dealing with the Bible and issues of faith lead to growth and a passionate congregation.

Visser states that the following must be the heart of church life: prayer, respect for the Bible, faith in the God of the Bible, a new understanding of what sin is, reconciliation and repentance. Pastors must be authentic in their pastoral work, and personal attention and honesty concerning the proclaiming of the gospel are crucial. We must listen patiently to our people concerning their faith issues, proclaim the gospel unshortened and also be prepared to walk a long way with them. The whole community must be served to gain credibility and a good name. A good name will allow for apologetics, more conversation and building of authentic relationships.[9]

The book is preceded by a qualitative analysis that consisted of semi-structured interviews involving 43 respondents from the DRC, the Reformed Church [Gereformeerde Kerk] and the NRCA [Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika]. The analysis shows that hospitality is one of the characteristics that are unique to a missional church. The importance of a healthy hospitality culture in a congregation is obvious, and this chapter underlines the importance of cultivating such a culture. It will need dedication and hard work, a lot of time, and there will even be resistance. The role of hospitality in the Bible and early church, a theology of hospitality and practical guidelines will be provided. The importance of prayer as playing the key role will also be promoted.

■ The Old Testament with the focus on the hospitality of Abraham

A culture of hospitality was an essential part of Israel although the word hospitality does not occur in the Hebrew Bible. Moynagh[10] noted that Israel assimilated foreigners throughout its history. The Israelites were instructed in Leviticus 19:34 to love their alien residents because they were aliens in Egypt.

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9. Visser (2007:3).

10. Moynagh (2012:384).

Resident foreigners were permitted to take part in the Passover.[11] Certain descendants were allowed to join the assembly of Israel. These rights were extended to the Egyptians after three generations, despite Israel's enslavement.[12] Despite the rigorist views of Ezra and Nehemia during the exile, Moynagh made the following remark:

> Against this, however, was the view that Israel's religious identity not only permitted assimilation but in time would require it. This liberal line was most fully developed in the Book of Isaiah. [13]

The story of Abraham and his wife Sarah[14] and the visit of the three 'unknown' visitors is a prototype and example of the culture of hospitality in the Old Testament. Hebrews 13:3 also refers to what happened that day at Mamre. Martin[15] mentioned that the story of Abraham and the three visitors, who turned out to be angels, serves as an exemplar of biblical hospitality. This exemplar is attributed to the status that Abraham has in the biblical tradition, the divine intervention that has been portrayed, and the completeness of the hospitality model that is displayed in the narrative. Good[16] describes Abraham's eagerness to serve the guests and all the to-ing and fro-ing that accompanied his hospitality. The running that took place is fascinating – first, to meet the guests, then to Sarah's tent to ask for cakes, next he ran to the herd to give orders for a calf to be prepared. The story of Abraham at Mamre that day and the culture of hospitality also resonate in the post-biblical tradition:

> Christian icons of Abraham's hospitality often show the location of the table at which the three strangers ate as under a tree, with Abraham and Sarah looking on from either side. The tree as the location for hospitality is for the convenience of the strangers. Post-biblical tradition, however, alters Abraham's location. Instead of running to greet strangers and bringing hospitality to them, Abraham moves his dwelling. According to the (first century BCE) Testament of Abraham, Abraham, the paradigm of hospitality, pitches a tent at the crossroads to welcome more strangers arriving from four different roads. Abraham thus welcomed rich and poor, kings and rulers, crippled and helpless, friends and strangers, neighbours and passers-by. 'All on equal terms thus did the pious, holy, righteous, and hospitable Abraham welcome them'. The Testament of Abraham, like the Midrash on Genesis, Genesis Rabbah 48,9 understands Abraham's behaviour to be typical, not exceptional in that he wanted to serve travellers constantly. Similarly, the first-century writer Philo of Alexandria, describing Genesis 18, says Abraham ran out of his house and begged the strangers who were passing by his home to stay with him because he was so

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11. Exodus 12:48–49.

12. Deuteronomy 23:7–8.

13. Moynagh (2012:384).

14. Genesis 18:1–15.

15. Martin (2014:1–2).

16. Good (2010:198).

eager to extend hospitality to them. Aboth deR. Nathan 7 says that 'Abraham...used to go out and look all around and when he found strangers he would invite them into his house'. In fact, he built a mansion on the road where he would leave food and drink so that anyone who came by would eat and drink and bless God.[17]

Moynagh[18] pointed out some notable outsiders who played a remarkable role in Israel. Names like Jethro, Ruth, Rahab and Achan in Joshua and Naaman. He utilised their stories as a basis for describing the biblical practice of hospitality. Bratcher[19] says that hospitality customs in the biblical world related to two distinct classes of people: the traveller and the resident alien. A foreigner (resident alien) who settled permanently in Israel was protected by the law. Ownership of land was not permitted, but he could participate in communal activities. The traveller, however, was extremely vulnerable. Only the force of the customs of hospitality protected him. Vosloo[20] remarks: 'The opposite of cruelty and hostility is not simply freedom from a cruel and hostile relationship, but hospitality'.

Kassa refers to the story of the inversion of hospitality in Genesis 19 and made the following conclusion:

> The violation of the strangers' right to protection is a serious crime. Inhospitality is not just a denial of food and shelter, it expresses the inhumanness in the heart of the one denying it. Denying a stranger to food and shelter is an indication of gross depravity and wickedness in the heart. The violation of the right to protection is a serious crime against not only the guest but also in a sense the whole of humanity, as it threatens the whole human community. [21]

■ Sharpening the focus with Abraham as an example

It is impossible to represent an Old Testament theology on hospitality in such a short space. Abraham as an exemplar of hospitality helps to sharpen the focus on hospitality in our congregations today. By way of speaking:

• Congregations should pitch their 'hospitality tent' at the crossroads of their community welcoming strangers from four different roads.
• There should be an eagerness, and like Abraham, they should 'run' to meet every opportunity to show hospitality.

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17. Good (2010:198–199). Christian icons on Abrahams hospitality can be viewed at https://www.google.com/search?source=univ&tbm=isch&q=Christian+icons+of+Abraham%27s+hospitality&client=firefox-b-d&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZ9fiwt9bqAhWbRxUIHSXbBh4QsAR6BAgIEAE&biw=1366&bih=591.

18. Moynagh (2012:385–386).

19. Bratcher (2018:1).

20. Vosloo (2003:66).

21. Kassa (2019:1).

- Every stranger should be regarded as an angel[22] in disguise.[23]
- Congregations should develop a culture opposing cruelty and hostility by showing hospitality.

■ The New Testament, with focus on the parable of the feast

Hospitality was no small matter for early Christians. Jesus both gave and received hospitality generously.[24] The New Testament has a term for hospitality, namely, *philonexia* (φιλονεξία), which is a Greek word, a feminine noun meaning love of the stranger. It is a combination of *philos* and *xenos*. The precise word is used in two places, for example, in Hebrews 13:2 (NIV): 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it'. Also in Romans 12:13 (NIV): 'Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality'. The reference to angels in Hebrews 13:2 reminds of the three visitors (angels) with Abraham.[25] The congregation is reminded not to focus only on themselves because they might end up accommodating angels who have been sent to serve them – rather do what Abraham did.

Other texts are also referring to hospitality and only a few will be mentioned. The good Samaritan[26] provides an excellent example of compassion by helping the man, and hospitality by paying for the inn even when the length of stay and the final amount was an uncertainty. Matthew 25:35–36 made a timeless appeal to followers of Christ to practice hospitality with a vision that they shall be willing to invite strangers into their homes while feeding them and give them something to drink and clothe them if necessary. With the sending of the 72,[27] a person of peace[28] is the host who is willing to give shelter to the sent worker. Note that the host and his family are strangers to the message but are still willing to house and feed the messenger of Christ.

The Parable of the Feast provides a striking example of a sudden and dramatic change in the culture of hospitality in a certain pre-industrial city. The parable caused a ripple effect throughout the ages and confronts every Christian community to cultivate an inclusive culture of hospitality. The social-

22. Cf. Hebrew 13:3.

23. Of course, one can refer to a Jesus-in-disguise also according to Matthew 25:31–46.

24. Mittelstadt (2014:131).

25. Genesis 18:2, 16; 19:1, 15-16, cf. Peeler (2016) and Heen (2013).

26. Matthew 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–37.

27. Luke 10:5–7.

28. Cf. Breen and Kallestadt (2006:209–230).

scientific approach[29] serves as the point of departure to understand the underlying culture of hospitality in the parable. This approach helps to understand the socio-historical context of the historical Jesus,[30] the influence of the kingdoms of Ceasar (*pax Romana*), the role of the temple elite and the needs and frustrations of the peasants in the first-century rural context. It also highlights the fact that honour and shame[31] were the most dominant cultural value in that world.

The Parable of the Feast tells about a man who was part of the elite, occupying the walled-off centre of the pre-industrial city. The non-elites[32] lived in the outlying area of the city located between the inner and outer walls of the city, and then, there were the unpure and marginalised[33] who lived outside the city walls. Members of the elite took significant steps to avoid socialising with groups with a lower status because such a person could experience a serious loss of status.[34]

The man decided to hold a feast and invite guests who are also part of the elite occupying the walled-off centre of the city. This man is a wealthy man who can afford a meal for other wealthy elite and he also has a slave in his service. Normally, there were two invites for such a special dinner. The first invitation helped the host establish the possible numbers of the guests to prepare the correct amount of food. Guests who accepted the invitation were obliged to appear. The second invitation was only delivered to those who accepted the first invitation and it happened at the hour of the banquet.

As mentioned above, the most dominant value in the time of the parable was honour and shame; therefore, the host was trying to establish his honour-rating among the inner circle. Van Eck described the process in the following way:

> Since meals were occasions that carried significant social coding and identity formation, the host saw himself as their peer and equal, or hoped that by accepting, his guests – who are part of the elite – will either affirm his current honour-rating or rating he is aspiring to. [35]

Between the first and second invitation, something happened which the host had no control over – gossip! Gossip was the method of oral (nonliterate) cultures to obtain information on all sorts of happenings and persons. It was an

29. Van Eck (2009:1–12, 2016:xv–xxii, 1–18).

30. 27–30 CE.

31. Van Eck (2016:15).

32. Particular families, income groups, guilds, ethnicities and other lines of work.

33. Prostitutes, beggars, tanners and other social outcasts as such as lepers.

34. Cf. Rohrbauch (1991:133–146) and Van Eck (2016:98–99).

35. Van Eck (2016:112).

institutionalised way of informal communication which was part of the daily affairs and interaction between people. Gossip plays an enormous role in the outcome of the parable:

> [A]fter the first invitation, the gossip network of the community kicked in… the invitation extended to many is now discussed (gossiped) in the community with the few of clarification and boundary maintenance and enforcement. The host is morally assessed, and boundary maintenance is taking place. [36]

The second invitation to the guests was catastrophic. No one accepted and the slave's report on the three excuses can also be seen as portraying the underlying feelings of the other invitees who did not attend. The three excuses consist of the first invitee that acquired a piece of land, while the second one bought five yokes of oxen to plow – enough for 50 hectares of land. It seems that the owners of the first two excuses were both wealthy people. The third excuse had been that the invitee had recently got married. All three of them, with the many[37] invited, did not show up for the feast. There are different interpretations of the three excuses, but what matters is what the excuses convey. The host played the honour-rating-social-game according to the rules and did not make it – as a result of gossip:

> Not one of the elite invited was willing to acknowledge him as a patron or put them in a position in which they had to reciprocate. What could he do to save face?[38]

The surprising element of the parable is the host's decision not to play the honour-rating game or balanced reciprocity anymore. Therefore he sends his slave to the streets and alleys of the town to bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. The invitation is still extended to those living inside the city between the inside and outside walls. When there was still room for more, the slave was sent to the unpure and marginalised, those outside the walls that were to be found in the roads and country lanes or hedges. Van Eck remark as follows:

> By this, the host abandons the ever-present competition for acquired honour in the first-century Mediterranean world, replaces balanced reciprocity (*quid pro quo*) with generalized reciprocity (giving without expecting anything back), and declares the purity system which deems some as socially and ritually (culturally) impure null and void. All walls have been broken down, and the world is turned upside down.[39]

In what light does this parable portray Jesus? Van Eck sums it up:

> Like the host in the parable, Jesus regularly associated with the so-called impure and ate with the so-called sinners of his day. Because of this, Jesus was called a glutton and drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Lk 7:34). In the

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36. Van Eck (2016:101); cf. Daniels (2013:3–7).

37. Cf. Luke 14:16b.

38. Van Eck (2016:113, cf. 106–113).

39. Van Eck (2016:114).

eyes of the dominant kingdoms of this time, Rome and the temple, Jesus had no honour because of this eating practice and associations. He was a foolish patron who extended patronage to the wrong people and did not respect the boundaries of society – like the host in the parable.[40]

The Parable of the Feast gives the church al lot to ponder on. Jesus is the host at every worship gathering: 'For where two or three gathers in my name, there am I with them'.[41] But Jesus as the host is not bothered by status-ranking in the inner circle of the elite or by congregations that try everything to keep themselves as homogeneous as possible. The history of the church in South Africa reflects a lot of an exclusive approach that became the handmaid of politics and ideology during the era of apartheid.[42] Post-apartheid South Africa is still ridden with inequality and the gap between the rich and the poor is growing exponentially, especially because of the economic turmoil COVID-19 has created. Stadler[43] reports on the new unemployment figure of 30.1% for the first quarter of 2020. According to Rushe,[44] the unemployment rate in the United States was 14.7% in April 2020 and dipped to 13.3% in May. The extended unemployment rate which included discouraged job seekers also reached a record number of 39.7%. She also mentioned that Cosatu[45] feared according to the extended definition of the unemployment rate, soon a figure of 50%. With Jesus as the host of every worship gathering, we as congregations have the privilege to co-host, not only for those between the 'inner walls' of our community with whom we are comfortable but to everyone the Lord sent to us. Migliore[46] refers to the distinguishing marks of human life in the *ecclesia*, and one of them is the breaking down of the walls separating people from God and each other. Bosch[47] used the term: 'The church as an alternative community' where the distinctions between the 'in-group' and 'out-group'[48] no longer matter and where there is a love of enemies and non-believers, and compassion for others, together with reconciliation. It will be crucial to scale down our subtle search for honour ratings and rather honour every guest who sets foot on our church premises.

40. Van Eck (2016:115–116); cf. Middelstadt (2014:136).

41. Matthew 18:20 (NIV).

42. Oliver (2019:2); cf. Dreyer (2013:1–7).

43. Stadler (2020), *Netwerk 24* on job losses.

44. Rushe (2020).

45. Trade union in South Africa.

46. Migliore (2014:263).

47. Bosch (1982d:29–34); cf. Van Wyngaard (2011:161).

48. Van Wyngaard (2013:7) refers to Bosch using these expressions in Bosch, D.J. 1977a. 'Die nuwe gemeenskap'. Unpublished paper read at Reveil event, 22 January 1977.

In the Parable of the Feast, likes only ate with likes who were from the same social standing, status and honour ratings. The attendance of and reciprocal invitations to each other's meals was a serious business in the first-century Mediterranean world.[49] Chandler[50] writes about the Bible that has a lot of examples about the joy of eating together, about long dinners with good food, good drink and company. Mittelstadt[51] speaks about a theology of the table and describes how Jesus changes his role from guest to host.[52] 'But Jesus "spins the table," he turns his hosts into guests so that they might receive his hospitality'. He also refers to meals such as the one with Martha and Maria,[53] the encounter with Zacchaeus, the tax collector[54] which leads to the table where he witnesses Zacchaeus' remarkable economic reparation to those he had exploited. Then the highlight of the meal: 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost'.[55] Jesus again changes the role from guest to host during the meal with the couple of Emmaus when he took initiative: 'When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them'.[56] The sudden insight they gain out of this reverse act of hospitality inspired them with so much joy and hope that they walk back to Jerusalem that same night.[57]

Tuohy[58] argues that the ubiquitous definition of hospitality is much more than 'welcoming strangers': 'I am proposing that we best welcome food dependant biological creatures by feeding them. That is, strangers need more than a friendly greeting; ultimately they need to eat'.

Mittelstadt remarks as follows:

> Whenever I read from the Third Gospel, I cannot help but picture Jesus as a 'party animal' (give me a break, I teach undergrads!). Luke's Jesus seems just as comfortable in ministry while 'wining and dining' as 'behind the pulpit'.[59]

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49. Van Eck (2016:104–105).

50. Chandler (2018).

51. Mittelstadt (2014:136, 139).

52. Cf. Good (2010:206), who stated that the practise of hospitality is the continual exchange of the roles of stranger, guest and host.

53. Luke 10:38–42.

54. Luke 19:1–10.

55. Luke 19:9–10.

56. Cf. Good (2010:206).

57. Luke 24.

58. Tuohy (2012:iv, 7).

59. Mittelstadt (2014:136).

■ Sharpening the focus with underlying principals from the parable of the feast

According to the language and content of the parable, the following need our consideration:

- Guard against honour-ratings that play a subtle role in each faith community that may be the cause for the 'in-group' (inner city) guarding themselves against the 'out-group' (outer city with marginalised outsiders).
- Cultivate a sincere realisation that congregants should follow the example of the host in the parable with a new focus on the stranger and outsider as possible guests of the congregation.
- In line with the parable, we can argue that Jesus is the 'host'[60] of every worship gathering and that every member of the congregation ought to see themselves as co-hosts.
- Service leaders[61] play an enormous role in each congregation by setting the hospitable example in the way they respond to every visitor.
- We may also see ourselves as the slave who was sent to deliver the invitations and who eventually crosses borders to invite everyone who crossed his way.
- Meals are an important part of a congregation's life, whether normal social gatherings or for example, a soup kitchen feeding the hungry in the community. Invitations must be extended to everyone and at the time of the meal, everybody must eat with everybody, for example when food is provided for the hungry at the church premises, members of the congregation must mingle with the guest and eat with them at the same table. By doing so a 'spinning of the table'[62] might just take place with guests that become hosts by enriching us with their lived through stories of faith.

■ Gossip versus constructive storytelling

The gossiping in the parable harmed the host but resulted in a most surprising event for the non-elite and the people on the outskirts of the city. Jesus referred to gossiping in connection to John the Baptist and himself:

> For John, the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon'. The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' [63]

60. In line with our general appreciation of Jesus as the Head of the congregation who reign through his Spirit and Word. Cf. Nel et al. (2015:144).

61. See Nel et al. (2015:143–159) for a thorough explanation of the term 'service leader'.

62. Cf. Mittelstadt (2014:136,139).

63. Luke 7:33–34 (ESV).

Paul spoke about gossip in 2 Corinthians:

> For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish and that you may find me not as you wish – that perhaps there may be quarrelling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. [64]

The reader of 2 Corinthians 10:1 can easily get suspicious that Paul is reacting on gossip because of his previous visit to the congregation: 'By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you – I, Paul, who am "timid" when face-to-face with you, but "bold" toward you when away'.

In the early church, there were examples of harsh gossip which lead to prosecution. Kreider[65] mentioned Origen's warning in the 240s about the disgrace[66] among the rest of the society and that Christians had to be cautious. A practice, for example, that leads to gossip was the practice[67] that some churches assigned deacons to guard the doors and monitoring people who arrived. Catechumens were allowed to attend the opening part of the worship service but not pagans. Kreider[68] remarks as follows: 'It is not surprising that pagans responded to their exclusion from Christian worship by speculation and gossip'.

The word 'gossip' has a negative connotation and the reader may question the use of the word in the following paragraphs. As mentioned previously, gossip was the way of the Mediterranean people to obtain information on all sorts of happenings and persons, and as such may not always have the negative connotation we have today.[69] In our modern context, the definition of gossip is:

> [C]onversation or reports about other people's private lives that might be unkind, disapproving, or not true. A gossipmonger is someone who enjoys talking about other people and their private lives.[70]

What will be the opposite of gossiping? Maybe an expression like 'constructive conversation' or 'constructive storytelling'. Fisher is viewed as probably the first to coin the term, *Homo narrans,*[71] which means 'storytelling human'. The narrative paradigm sees people as storytellers – 'authors and co-authors who

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64. 2 Corinthians 12:20 (ESV).

65. Kreider (2016:9).

66. Probably because of gossiping.

67. By the third century.

68. Kreider (2016:11).

69. Cf. Daniels (2013:4).

70. Dictionary, Cambridge.org.

71. Fisher (1985:1).

creatively read and evaluate the text of life and literature'.[72] As *Homo narrans*, *Homo sapiens* can gossip or be an agent of constructive storytelling. O'Gorman[73] in his article about hospitality leaders draws the bright and dark side of *Homo narrans* ability of storytelling. On the one hand, he proved that storytelling helps senior leaders in the hospitality industry to disseminate their vision to their employees because stories can truly relate to people, improves productivity, teamwork and understanding, and it can produce good results. On the other hand, stories are reliant on their narrator and dependent on the subjective interpretation of the listener which can undermine organisational success or contaminating the reputation of a leader.

■ Sharpening the focus: *Homo narrans* spreading the news about your hospitality

- Sometimes, however, there are scandals, out of control conflicts,[74] and disharmony in some congregations that happens to be the breeding ground for gossip. Such circumstances have a negative spin-off in the community in terms of attractivity which are sure to be undermined by gossip.
- With constructive storytelling as opposite of gossiping, people (*Homo narrans*) narrate about their experiences at your congregation – the friendly welcome, the deep concern over people's well-being, the earnest conversations with coffee in the hand and the follow-up helping to resolve difficulties that were shared by the guests to concerned congregants.
- Constructive storytelling is about hearing a good story in the congregation and community. People hear about worship services that are inclusive and not exclusive. Studies show that guests will talk about their initial experiences 8–15 times with other people. It is a matter of serving your guests well and multiplies your message.[75]
- With ongoing exposure to the warm hospitality of the congregation, the worship activities, and the faith sharing of the congregants, *Homo narrans* storytelling will naturally evolve into witnessing – witnessing about the living faith of your congregation and their faith in Jesus Christ that evolved because of their exposure to the congregation.

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72. Fisher (1985:13).

73. O'Gorman (2009:17–18).

74. Sweet (2004:116) gave an oneliner description of conflict: 'To say "relationship" is to say "conflict"'.

75. Mancini (2010).

■ The early church and their habitus

There is more to constructive storytelling than the spoken word and the audible result. The remarkable work of Kreider[76] points to the lives of those Christians in the early church that did the talking with their bodies. There was not a single treatise on evangelism; they were rather encouraged by their leaders to develop a habitus that would be experienced as credible by the pagans. The term habitus was first used by the French reflexive sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. He explained:

> [A]s a 'corporeal knowledge', a 'system of dispositions' that we carry in our bodies [...] We learn bodily [...] The most serious social injunctions are addressed not to the intellect but to the body, treated as a 'memory pad'.[77]

Kreider describes it in the following way:

> Habitus is reinforced by the story, the little stories of our family and community as well as the big stories that undergird our culture. Habitus is further formed by example, by our parents, peers, and role models – people who have authority in our life. Above all, habitus is formed by repetition, by the sheer physicality of doing things over and over so that they become habitual, reflexive, and borne in our bodies.[78]

Habitus was of extreme importance:

> The early Christians sensed that their habitus was the most authentic way of communicating their message to outsiders [...] they (the outsiders) would read the lives of the insiders [...] the church in the Roman Empire was growing. This growth was not because 'evangelism was the prerogative and duty of every church member'.[79] Rather, it was primarily because the Christians and their churches lived by a habitus that attracted others. The Christians' focus was not on 'saving' people or recruiting them; it was on living faithfully – in the belief that when people's lives are rehabituated in the way of Jesus, others will want to join them. This happened gradually, one person at a time, largely face-to-face encounters and not least from parents to children.[80]

Constructive storytelling (witnessing) in the form of the Christians' habitus that could be 'read' by anyone played a major role in the early church, and although Kreider does not use the term 'constructive storytelling', his work is teeming with examples of attraction that took place because pagans found the Christians' behaviour unsettling enough to convert to Christianity.

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76. Kreider (2016): The Patient Ferment of the Early Church.

77. Bourdieu (2000:130–135).

78. Kreider (2016:39–40).

79. Green (2002:274).

80. Kreider (2016:95, 129).

■ Sharpening the focus: Habitus/culture and hospitality

What does this section on habitus means for the contemporary church today? The following needs consideration:

- An efficient hospitality ministry nourishes a habitus/culture of hospitality because of the concrete reminders to the entire congregation that guests matter. Focusing on welcoming reminds people that the church exists for those who are not yet a part of it.[81]
- Continuously remind your congregants about the importance of habitus and that the 'outsiders' never stop reading the lives of the 'insiders'. Their reading of the insider's lives happens gradually, one person at a time and largely face-to-face.[82]

■ Hospitality: The dance of Trinitarian love

What better point of departure in a theological reflection on hospitality, than focusing on the Trinity? It was John of Damascus[83] who first used the Greek expressions *perichoresis*, which means 'mutual indwelling' or 'being-in-one-another'. Volf[84] used the expression 'reciprocal interiority'. Migliore describes it as follows:

> The three of the Trinity 'indwell' and pervade each other; they 'encircle' each other, being united, as it were, in an exquisite divine dance; or to use still another metaphor, they 'make room' for each other, are incomparably *hospitable* to each other. That God's life can be described in the light of the gospel with beautiful metaphors of Trinitarian *hospitality* and the dance of Trinitarian love has far-reaching implications. It points to experiences of friendship, caring family relationships, and an inclusive community of free and equal persons... in which relationships of domination are replaced by relationships of honor and respect [...].[85]

Keifert[86] mentioned that Christianity is the only major religion in the world that has the understanding of God as being in communion. Reimer[87] referred to the trinity as a divine cycle that is functional because of a loving relationship and missional existence that go hand-in-hand. He used the icon of the Holy

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81. Mancini (2010).

82. Cf. Kreider (2016:129).

83. 675–749 CE. Cf. Reimer (2019:1); Migliore (2014:82).

84. Volf (1998:209).

85. Migliore (2014:82).

86. Keifert (2017:265).

87. Reimer (2019:2–10).

Trinity from Rublev[88] to describe the *Missio Dei* as *missio trinitatis*, which is the *missio Patri*, *missio Christi* and *missio Spiritus*.

What does it mean for the church in connection to hospitality? Out of their incomparable hospitality, the *missio trinitatis* constitutes among other things, hospitality as a way to provide room for everybody to participate in the divine dance.

A ubiquitous definition of biblical hospitality is welcoming strangers, and it is also reckoned as a Christian virtue.[89] The question is whether the church always positively sees strangers as potential 'dancing partners'? Hamman[90] remarks that in most of us there is a deep ambivalence and hostility towards strangers as we protect ourselves from the potential danger each stranger carries. Strangers and other visitors, however, are searching for a hospitable place where they can be without fear and where *koinonia* can be experienced. Sad to say but sometimes they meet church members that are, to use Leonard Sweet's[91] words: '…more porcupine than teddy bear'.

Hospitality is a basic trait of mature spirituality and is a powerful witness of the life and love of Christ.[92] According to Nouwen,[93] we are privileged *hospes* (guests) who are invited to be receptive of *hostis* (strangers). Hamman[94] defined hospitality: 'As that fundamental human practice of creating an inviting space that welcomes not only family and friends, but strangers and al people, whether disenfranchised of influential'. Chandler's[95] definition of hospitality is to give a loving welcome to those outside your normal circle of friends. It is opening your life and your house to those who believe differently than you do. Nouwen made the following remarks:

> Hospitality overcomes hostility and the loneliness our culture breeds […] we are at risk of living an illusory, a proverbial pie in the sky! Even as compassion seeks healing and restoration, hospitality does not demand change, even if change often occurs. Hospitality has an 'as is', a 'face value' quality: it accepts people for who they are, irrespective of where they are in life, from where they came, or where

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88. View the icon at Wikiart, n.d., *Rublev: The icon of the Holy Trinity,* https://www.wikiart.org/de/andrei-rubljow/dreifaltigkeitsikone-1410. The icon pictures the three men (angels) visiting Abraham and Sarah to announce the birth of their own son. The three angels are believed to be the three persons of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Jesus – the Son and the Holy Spirit.

89. Tuohy (2012:7), Good (2010:197), and Moynagh (2012:388).

90. Hamman (2005:161).

91. Sweet (2004:116).

92. Hamman 2005:161–162).

93. Nouwen (1986:68).

94. Hamman (2005:161).

95. Chandler (2018).

they are going [...] Hospitality accepts the autonomy of an individual and does not attempt to control the other person.[96]

Feital[97] out of the Fresh Expression movement in Nottingham described their journey concerning hospitality. He and his wife decided to open their home for anyone at any time – quite something counter-cultural in the British context where most people, because of their busy lifestyle, rather spend time with friends and family:

> I had to make a continuing decision that people were more important than my diary and therefore I would drop almost anything I was doing every time someone knocked at the door. It was not easy all the time, but it was the price that we had to pay [...] After a year and a half, we had a constant flow of visitors who came for meals, Brazilian Coffee, or just a chat and a laugh, which gradually resulted in conversations about their spiritual journeys or just the English's favourite topic, the weather. If people came while we were having dinner, they joined in, and before too long they were washing up, cleaning, and organizing birthday parties in our house for other people without telling us!

One is tempted to provide a whole list of practical guidelines under the heading: 'The ABC of hospitality during church services'. Fortunately, there are dozens[98] of websites providing wonderful tips and guidelines. It is worthwhile doing it because according to Mancini:

> There will be more guests in one year[99] then you thought and that many of them are going through situations that make them more responsive to God [...] A guest who is attending may represent years of prayer, service, and invitation by a church member. [100]

■ Sharpening the focus with the Trinitarian dance of love

Trinitarian love provides an inexhaustible source of 'music' to do the hospitality-dance:

- The *missio trinitatis* constitutes, among other things, hospitality as a way to provide room for everybody to participate in the divine dance.

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96. Nouwen (1986:68).

97. Feital (2011:109).

98. Mancini (2010:2) is a good example of such a website (www.willmacnini.com): Church Guests: 10 Mind Blowing Facts to Fuel Your Hospitality Ministry.

99. Mancini (2010:2). According to him the amount of guests during a year can be calculated as follows: (Average weekly worship attendance) × (.05) × (52).

100. Mancini (2010:2).

- The 'teddy bears' will naturally take part, and even the 'porcupines' will learn the basic steps although it may be better to let them whirl and twirl behind the scenes – providing the resources for the hospitality service.
- Cultivate a loving habitus of hospitality to overcome the deep ambivalence and hostility towards strangers which more often tends to be subtle but disturbing background music.
- Accept people for who they are, respect their autonomy and do not force them into your little boxes. Guard against being open to them to make them like us.[101]
- Support hospitable-gifted individuals initiating ministries at the margins of society.
- Wepener has an important word on this topic: 'Being open to strangers, to outsiders, to the public square, to our surrounding cultures, requires real listening, real Biblical hospitality which will include both the potential to be blessed by angels and to be raped by scoundrels'.[102]

■ A prayerful culture

According to Van Wyk,[103] the philosophers of religion over the past two ages often targeted prayer as a matter that is not reconcilable with reason and science. Hybels[104] refers to people in the fast lane who are busy making it on their own and who experience prayer as somewhat of an interruption. He elaborates on the theme and says that prayer is alien to our proud human nature and contra to our strife for autonomy and independent living – and yet we are drawn to prayer because we realise 'that the most intimate communion with God comes only through prayer [...] which lead to an intimate relationship with God'.[105]

In his article about the prayer life of Martin Luther, Van Wyk[106] mentioned that Luther's life was a life of prayer and that he often preached and wrote about prayer. For Migliore maturing in prayer is a mark of Christian growth and that prayer is a concrete expression of our love of God. 'For the Christian, God is not some*thing* but some*one* – and primarily someone who is spoken *to*, rather than only spoken *about*'.[107] What better example of the 'some*one*' than

101. Wepener (2008:10).

102. Cf. Theron and Theron (2001:406–415).

103. Van Wyk (2019:1).

104. Cf. Hybels (1998:9).

105. Hybels (1998:10–11).

106. Van Wyk (2019:1).

107. Migliore (2014:252).

Jesus himself who was 'fleshed out' in this world of us. Jesus, according to Borg[108]: '[...] is the decisive revelation of God's passion. We are praying for what God is passionate about. We are praying for God's dream for the world'. Armstrong[109] encourages his readers to embody this passion when doing service evangelism. He states that he believes in the power of prayer and refers to supportive prayer groups during evangelistic efforts and mentions that time and again miraculous things[110] happened. When teams report back he often hears them witnessed: 'We were meant to be where we were tonight'.

For Luther, prayer must meet five requirements[111]: First, each prayer must be prayed knowing God's promise (*promissio Dei*) that it will be heard and answered. Second, that a certain need (*rei necessariae*) will be communicated. Third, faith in the promise (*fides opus Est*) and reliability (*veritas*) of God. Fourth, prayer must be done seriously and in the fifth place, it must be done in the name of Jesus Christ. In connection with the fourth requirement, there must be an urgent expectation (*magnopere desiderante*) and not an attitude of 'let us see what happens'. Such an attitude will be disrespectful to God.

Warren[112] is of the opinion that the problem with many Christians is that they do not know what unbelievers are thinking. The only way to know how they are thinking is to talk to them. Most Christians spend all their time with other Christians. Nel[113] speaks of the church as about a sort of elite club of people who think and feel the same. Christians do not have any non-believing friends.[114] Maybe most Christians are afraid of non-believers and the unchurched because we have stigmatised them as bad people on a rollercoaster to hell. It is, therefore, good for Christians to befriend non-believers to get to know their thinking framework.[115]

Breen and Kallestadt[116] stress the importance of the 'person of peace', we must be on the lookout for. When Jesus commissioned the 72 disciples, he gave them the following directions:

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108. Borg (2011:230).

109. Armstrong (1979:112). Armstrong is well-known for his book '*Service Evangelism*' which is the source for the course 'Faithfull Wittnesses' and which Malan Nel presented for many years all over South Africa.

110. One of the famous expressions of Armstrong (1979:32) when he refers to the fact that even the desire to believe is a gift of God, is: 'You can't get up earlier than God!'.

111. Van Wyk (2019:3–4).

112. Warren (1995:189).

113. Nel et al. (2015:131).

114. Warren (1995:189–190).

115. Cf. Warren (1995:190).

116. Breen and Kallestadt (2006:209–230).

When you enter a house, first say: 'Peace to this house',' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.[117]

A 'person of peace' is one who is prepared to hear the gospel. Our prayer each day should be:

Lord, bring into my path today a 'person of peace', and give me the grace and courage to be a 'person of peace' to this person even in the words I speak. [118]

The plea of Visser[119] to the active members in Den Haag to pray for 1 minute each day, half a minute for themselves and half a minute for the unchurched, sounds a bit ridiculous especially against the background of so many matured Christians who are living a fulfilled prayer life. There is no doubt that a fulfilled prayer life is the ultimate aim that every Christian must strive for. The reality may be more in line with what Hybels described as Christians in the fast lane who are too busy to pray or whatever the reason for their prayerless life might be. Van Wyk[120] who interviewed Visser changes the format of the 1-minute prayer in an article he wrote by saying that room can be made for a 1-minute prayer before the worship service while members may also be encouraged to pray 1-minute a day at home. He argues that missional activity starts with prayer and that nothing can be done without prayer. After a month or so, members can be encouraged to pray for two minutes a day.

A prayerful culture in a missional congregation should be like a hand in a glove. Congregants should be motivated to identify, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a person of peace on whom the 1-minute prayer a day could be focused. This focus should have no 'sell-by date' expiration. Armstrong put it boldly[121]: 'Once you have encountered an outsider, that person is your concern until he or she moves away, joins a church or dies'.

But first, a voice of concern. Guard against a consumer mentality where members of other churches are targeted as 'outsiders' who should be 'evangelised' to become members of 'our' congregation because it is, in our opinion, a much better spiritual home to be in than any other church. Our focus should be on the non-believer, the unchurched or the outsider. Any attempts that focus on existing members of other churches will contribute to the phenomenon of the so-called circulation of the saints.[122]

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117. Luke 10:5–6.

118. Breen and Kallestadt (2006:211).

119. Visser (2007:3).

120. Van Wyk (2014:31, 36).

121. Armstrong (1979:112–113).

122. Cf. Ungerer (2010:95, 307–308).

■ Sharpening the focus on a prayerful culture

• Use one minute every Sunday at the start of a worship service for attendees to pray in silence for a specific person of peace that represents an unbeliever, unchurched or outsider. It will help to cultivate a prayerful culture with a missional focus.
• Encourage attendees to say the same 1-minute prayer every day.
• Cultivate a sense of urgent expectation on this matter.
• Create opportunities for constructive storytelling (witnessing) on this matter during worship services, by social media or other events.[123]
• Encourage congregants to befriend an unbeliever even if it does not lead to a person-of-peace-opportunity.
• Warn congregants not to fall in the circulation-of-the-saints trap.

■ Fourth Industrial Revolution: Accelerated by COVID-19 – And a new normal

Schwab[124] considers the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) because of its scale, scope and complexity as something unlike anything humankind has experienced before. He states the following: 'We are at the beginning of a revolution that is fundamentally changing the way we live, work, and relate to one another'. Ungerer[125] in an article about 4IR and the future church used the term *Homo disruptus*[126] arguing that *Homo disruptus* will be the product of an ever-expanding offer of technology, material goods, the Internet of Things connectivity and availability of multimedia. Apart from all the wonderful possibilities 4IR offers, there will be certain emotional side effects like:

> Fear of losing their network and being forgotten, feelings of inferiority with lower self-esteem, the separation between a cyber-image and the real self in normal life. All these can lead to feelings of being alone, abandon, and disconnected – a life of total misery. How can the church help *Homo digitalis* to experience Christian community where one can experience equality and belonging?[127]

According to Dreyer,[128] the term *Homo digitalis* had been used in a wide variety of contexts in recent times. He expressed his concern by asking if the digital

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123. Cf. Chapter 3 of this publication for more on this.

124. Schwab (2016:1).

125. Ungerer (2019:1).

126. Cf. Ungerer (2019:1); *Homo disruptus* derives from the genus *Homo* and the species *disruptus.* The term *disruptus* is the perfect passive participle of *disrumpō* which in short means disrupt, with other possible meanings to break apart, to burst and to throw into confusion or disorder.

127. Ungerer (2019:5).

128. Dreyer (2019:4).

era is the end of the church as we know it – the final nail in the church's coffin, or does it open up new possibilities of being church.[129] Moynagh[130] refers to concerns about a new solitude because of the relentless connection to the new media and disconnection from particular friendship groups. This is a threat to *koinonia* which may require a step-by-step process of re-introducing people to the very idea of community:

> The first step may be one-to-one relationships, which are gradually joined together in groups of three, four, and eventually larger. As this happens, individuals become familiar with some of the habits of the Christian community – from meeting together and honest conversations to shared prayer and Bible study. Learning about community forms an important part of their journey of faith. The process may take a long time and require considerable patience.[131]

In the recent work[132] of Schwab and Malleret that was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, they made the following observation:

> The worldwide crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic has no parallel in modern history. We cannot be accused of hyperbole when we say it is plunging our world in its entirety and each of us individually into the most challenging times we've faced in generations. It is our defining moment – we will be dealing with its fallout for years, and many things will change forever. It is bringing economic disruptions of monumental proportions, creating a dangerous and volatile period on multiple fronts – political, socially, and geopolitically.[133]

Schwab and Malleret[134] argue that a lot of what we consume happens through social interaction and that services in the United States represent about 80% of total jobs. Social industries have been hit the hardest by the lockdown. It is clear in the book[135] that COVID-19 contributes to the misery of *Homo disruptus* in many ways. Although the church is not mentioned, one can argue that social interaction is a crucial part of church life. A survey[136] conducted in the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NRCA), starting on 21 May 2020[137] reveals something of the fear that lives in the hearts of pastors. A total of

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129. Dreyer (2019:2).

130. Moynagh (2012:383).

131. Moynagh (2012:383).

132. Schwab and Malleret (2020). The book, *COVID-19: The Great Reset*, was written during June 2020 when the pandemic continued to worsen globally.

133. Schwab and Malleret (2020:11).

134. Schwab and Malleret (2020:loc. 2282).

135. Schwab and Malleret (2020).

136. Ungerer (2020:3).

137. The poll took place from the 55th day of the lockdown and ended on the 68th day.

145 pastors were involved in 36 Zoom conversations.[138] Five questions were presented using Zoom Polls, and each respondent answered anonymously by ticking the yes, no, occasionally or unsure box. Two of the questions were related to koinonia and hospitality. The questions[139] were formulated as follows:

- *Question 2:* 'Do you have the fear that your congregants, after the lockdown, will be so used to online services that they won't attend physical services anymore?'
    o The result: 22 answered 'yes', 83 'no' and 40 occasionally worried about the possibility.
- *Question 5:* 'Do you think social distancing as applied during the lockdown, and the fear for possible infection because of renewed outbreaks in the future, will affect the living out of physical koinonia?'
    o The result: 64 answered 'yes', 50 'no' and 31 were unsure.

It is still early days and by writing this chapter,[140] most provinces in South Africa are still advancing towards their coronavirus infection peak expected in August/September 2020. The result of the two questions may change in the months to come and only time will show what the effect of the pandemic will be on social interaction on Sundays during worship services and around the coffee table afterward.

The Zoom conversations with the pastors of the NRCA provided a glimpse[141] of what a new normal might be. There is consensus that online church services will continue post-COVID-19 as an additional way to serve people who are unable to attend physically and especially for cyber-members who are spread all over the world. There is also consensus that corona-fear will affect physical koinonia – even for a considerable time post-COVID-19.

Sharpening the focus amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

- The digital front door of a church's website must be appealing to would-be visitors who are planning to visit in person or for *Homo disruptus* who prefer cyber-attendance.
- Continue to provide digital services post-COVID-19 in coherence with the normal church activities.

138. The Zoom conversations took place, one circuit at a time meeting virtually in each of the 36 circuits with the local pastors who participated.

139. Number 2 and 5.

140. July 2020.

141. Ungerer (2020:3).

- Develop a strategy to accompany *Homo disruptus* step-by-step to explore one-to-one relationships with other believers which may eventually result in a shared faith experience with larger groups.
- It is essential to extend a warm digital hand of hospitality towards cyber visitors and minister to them in whatever way possible.
- It is essential to normalise physical koinonia post-COVID-19 by gradually exposing congregants to previous forms of social activities, providing that the necessary precautions and safety measures of the new normal will be in place.

■ Conclusion

Paul Visser[142] writes about a letter he received from a man in Rotterdam who, despite many promises in 10 years, did not attend church services. He prefers cycling on Sundays. On one specific Sunday, it was raining and he decided in the spur of the moment to attend church. Afterwards, he attends regularly, and 9 months later, he attended an Alpha course and came to faith. The reason, he witnessed, was a sermon of Visser 10 years ago, urging the congregation to pray 1 minute a day for someone who wants nothing to do with God. His female neighbour reacts on the plea and prayed for years on an end without visible results. After coming to faith, the prayerful neighbour told the man about Visser's sermon and her continuous prayers for him. God has answered her prayers. May we call this A-One-Minute-Prayer-A-Day-Story. May the following sending prayer contribute to cultivate a prayerful culture of hospitality in your church:

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet
walk with you on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands
stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart
open your hearts to love.
May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet,
and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you. Amen.[143,144]

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142. Visser (2016).

143. The Worship Source Book (2013:629).

144. For the Chapter 7 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

Integrating and coordinating all ministries in the function of developing a missional congregation

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■ Introduction

The theological reflection in this chapter is on the integration and coordination of all the ministries within a systems approach in order to facilitate the discovery and formation of a missional identity.

In the first part of the chapter (see 'Introduction'), a very brief description of each of the ministries within a local congregation will be given, and the link between each of the ministries and the role they play in identity discovery and identity formation is shown. The upbuilding of a missional congregation is strongly linked to identity,[1] and for this reason, the ministries' role in identity discovery and identity formation is concisely discussed.

1. Nel (1994) used the word and concept 'identity' 137 times; see Nel (2005); cf. Zscheile (2012:1).

In the building up of the local congregation, it has to be grasped by the leadership that part of the upbuilding process is an intentional attempt to integrate and coordinate all the ministries.[2] In the second part of this chapter (see 'The different ministries and their role in identity formation'), the integration and coordination of the ministries will be discussed.

The integration and coordination of the ministries can be improved when a congregation's leadership understands concepts such as systems thinking and synergy as argued later in this chapter.

As was mentioned in the Introduction, Matthee analysed the data in order to identify overarching themes and to explore these themes in more detail. Some of the themes that derived from the empirical interviews assume the integration and coordination of ministries. Matthee[3] identified 'discipleship' as an overarching theme and showed its link with the congregation's send-ness, servicehood and *didache*. When the pastors were questioned about the congregation's worship service and the role it plays in the forming of a missional identity the integration and coordination of the ministries came strongly to the fore. A worship service was commonly understood as the place where members must be trained to embody their missional identity. A worship service is also seen as the best place to call upon congregants to service to the world – emphasis was placed on the blessing and sending of the church at the end of the worship service. The important role of witness during a worship service was mentioned, and the need for proper technology in order to visually inform congregants regarding the plight of the poor and other ecological issues was revealed.

Nel argues that the integration and coordination of the ministries is an integral part in the upbuilding of a local congregation. The aim of this chapter is not to convince anyone to accept the integration and coordination of the ministries as a dimension of building up the local church.[4] The aim is rather to underline the importance of integration and coordination in the upbuilding of a missional congregation and to motivate church leaders to further explore the benefits of such an approach. Simply put, this chapter is a request to the ministry leaders in any given faith community to deliberately work together. Whenever ministry leaders pray, plan, work, collaborate, cooperate and serve together, the kingdom wins.

I conducted a study[5] in 2017 under 139 Dutch Reformed ministers of the Highveld Sinod. In this research, a vast majority (81.3%) of the ministers viewed their faith communities as missional congregations. A total of 97.1% said it was

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2. Nel et al. (2015:63–78).

3. Appendix 1.

4. See Nel et al. (2015:63–79).

5. Marais (2018a).

important to them to develop as a missional congregation, and 82.7% agreed that they need to conduct a study on their identity in order to discover what it means to be a missional congregation.

The majority (82%) agreed with the statement that their congregations are being built up when there is an intentional effort to integrate and coordinate the ministries in order to facilitate identity discovery and formation.

■ The different ministries and their role in identity formation

Firet[6] gave us the vocabulary to speak about God's coming to the church and through the church – employing the ministries – to the world. Firet worked with only three ministries (*kerugma*, *didache* and *paraklesis*), and although I opted for Nel's eightfold modi of ministries, Firet[7] paved the way for us to come to a more accurate understanding of God's coming, by way of the official ministry as an intermediary, to the earth. God comes to the world through the *kerugma, leitourgia, paraklesis, didache, koinonia, diakonia, marturia* as well as *kubernesis,* and the congregation is at her best when she promotes and serves the coming of God. Firet uses the term 'pastoral role-fulfilment' to describe God's coming through a person, while Nel[8] and others[9] argue that a congregation can also fulfil this role:

> I believe it is fair and just to claim pastoral role-fulfilment not only for the pastor (as so well-developed in Firet's dissertation) but also for the congregation as subject in God's coming to one another and to the world.[10]

Following his theological mentor, Jacob Firet, Nel[11] understands the ministries as God's coming to his people and his coming to the world via his people. Arguing from the creation accounts in Genesis, Nel[12] meets a God who does not want to abandon his sinful children and gets to know him as the one who is always on the lookout for those who are lost and unseen.

In the movement from the Old to the New Testament, the church becomes the creator God's new creation, and it is continually being renewed and restored

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6. Firet (1986:15).

7. Firet (1986:15).

8. Nel (2015:68).

9. See Moltmann in Runyon (1979:21), Newbigin (1986:142, 1991:6, 1995:129), Pasveer (1992:112), Bosch (1995:59), and Roxburgh (2011:129, 189).

10. Nel et al. (2015:68).

11. Nel et al. (2015:68).

12. Nel et al. (2015:64–66); cf. Genesis 3:8; see Luke 15:1–31.

to meet its original purpose.[13] The church is not a fortuitous reality; it originated in the heart and will of the Triune God for the sake of the world:

> [C]hurch is part of this reality because through it God wants to express his rule over and in the lives of men. While the world denies, rejects and opposes the Lord and his dominion, the church confesses, accepts and serves him as the Only One.[14]

The church is important because God regards it as important, and it gratifies him to display his kingdom through the church. Every congregation is supposed to be a display window of how it looks where God rules. In this world, the church is the hauler of the coming of the Kingdom of God and the way in which he comes to the world.[15]

Hobbs[16] views the missional church as a visible manifestation of the good news of Jesus Christ where the church is the representative of God in the encounter between him and human culture. Schaller[17] argues for a paradigm shift where the identity of the congregation is linked with the specific ministries that are present:

> Instead of defining the identity by the denominational label or the personality and gifts of the pastor or the real estate or the weekend schedule of services or local traditions, define the congregation's identity by its distinctive role in ministry.[18]

More than three decades ago, Moltmann[19] already said that the future of the church lies in the recovery of the ministries within the local congregation. He argues that the local congregation is the future of the church and that God bestows his gift of *diakonia* onto all the believers in the church. A deacon is someone who serves and everyone is called to serve the world.[20]

In this chapter, Nel's[21] eightfold understanding and exposition of the ministries will be used (as stated above). The congregation is a relational unit, and it is being lovingly recreated by God. The relational nature of the ministries is evident when studying Nel:

- relational communication: *kerugma* and *leitourgia*
- relational care: *paraklesis* and *koinonia*

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13. Colossians 1:15–18.

14. Nel et al. (2015:66); See also Newbigin and Wainwright (2003:107).

15. Nel et al. (2015:66–67); cf. Newbigin (1986:124).

16. In Barrett (2004:159).

17. Schaller (2003:185).

18. Schaller (2003:185).

19. In Runyon (1979:37).

20. Moltmann in Runyon (1979:2); cf. Gittens (2008:4).

21. Nel (2009).

- relational service: *marturia* and *diakonia*
- relational *didache*
- relational *kubernesis*

What follows is a short description of each ministry and how it facilitates missional identity finding and identity forming at a hermeneutical level. This is done because the upbuilding of a local missional congregation is closely related to identity finding and identity formation. Identity finding is closely related to the *discovery* of identity, while identity formation is linked to living out our given (and newly discovered) identity within our particular context.

■ Relational communication: *Kerugma*

Nel[22] argues that the quality of a congregation is directly equal to the quality of the communication between God and the congregation. That is why Nel says that when God stops speaking through the kerugma, the congregation ceases to exist, because there is no relationship.[23] Biblical preaching happens when a preacher prayerfully studies the Bible on behalf of the congregation and then speaks on Christ's behalf what he or she has heard.[24] Stott is convinced that the church is God's creation through his word and explains his thinking when he says the church, as God's new creation, is as dependent upon his Word as his old creation (the universe).[25]

Long[26] pleads for kerugma as marturia (preaching as witness). Before a preacher speaks, he or she had to see something – therefore, the act of preaching is similar to being called to the witness stand during a trial. 'To be a preacher is to be called to be a witness, one who sees before speaking, one whose right to speak is created by what has been seen'.[27]

Cilliers argues that preaching is one of the most critical things that should happen in these times, and he believes that God himself is present and at work in and through the kerugma.[28]

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22. Nel (2005:28).

23. See Gittens (2008:9).

24. Long (1989:48).

25. Stott (1982:109).

26. Long (1988:4).

27. Long (1988:4).

28. Cilliers (2004:21–27).

☐ *Kerugma* and identity

The church's identity is being revealed at a deep-lying level via the Word, and through biblical kerugma believers discover their identity.[29] Packer[30] argues that the church experiences challenges regarding identity in every generation and that it sometimes escalates to an identity crisis.[31] He states that the Western church has a very frail sense of calling and identity and therefore argues that preaching is by far the best way to focus the church's identity and to illuminate her calling.

■ Relational communication: *Leitourgia*

The Report of the Liturgical Committee of the Christian Reformed Churches[32] says that liturgy is what people do when they worship. Dulles states:

> In all Christian ecclesiology, the church is intimately connected with divine revelation. If there were no revelation there could be no faith in the biblical and Christian sense, nor any worship, nor any church.[33]

Leitourgia is more than just the order of a worship service. Leitourgia is service to God that takes form in an identified service, and it is not limited to an hour on a Sunday. Liturgy is what happens whenever believers gather to worship God.[34]

☐ *Leitourgia* and identity

Pieterse[35] understands *leitourgia* as a faith community's expression of their identity, while De Klerk[36] argues that a church's life is expressed through her *leitourgia*. By way of the *leitourgia,* a faith community interacts with the living God, and it facilitates the encounter with him.[37] Burger[38] argues that 'prayer' is a different word for 'liturgy' and pleads for regular gatherings where faith communities can spend time in the presence of the Lord.

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29. Thompson (1981:17).

30. Packer (1986:19).

31. De Roest (1998:372–373).

32. Report of Liturgical Committee (1974:2).

33. Dulles (2002:167).

34. Müller (1987:43).

35. Pieterse (1998:348).

36. De Klerk (2000:461).

37. Burger (1999:74).

38. Burger (2011:184).

Wepener[39] mentions scholars like De Klerk,[40] Pieterse[41], as well as his own work with Pauw[42] and states that a lot of research has gone into the relationship between liturgy and identity forming:

> These examples of liturgical research which point towards the fact that there is a connection between liturgy and identity formation are a clear barometer that in South Africa over the past decade or more our liturgy was and indeed is on the edge of tradition [...] seeking and longing for the (trans)formation of identities.[43]

■ Relational care: *Paraklesis*

Firet points out that *paraklesis* 'is the mode in which God comes to people in their situations of trepidation, suffering, sin, anguish, error, and insufficiency'. God comes to persons to rescue them out of their distressing situation to bring them into a new life with the church in the enjoyment of the salvation which is in Christ comforted and spirited in the joy of new obedience.[44]

Paraklesis and *koinonia* belong together like oxygen and life.[45] When speaking about relational care (*paraklesis* and *koinonia*), the interwovenness of the ministries comes strongly to the fore. Believers are connected in and through Jesus Christ and out of his pastorship all care flows. Firet[46] studied the group of words used in Scripture when he discusses *paraklesis* as the third mode of pastoral role fulfilment. Activities that are mentioned include to appeal, to beg, to beseech, to invite, to entreat, to ask, to urge, to conciliate, to exhort, to give or receive encouragement, to console and to comfort. Studying them, one discovers they are all translations of *parakalein*.[47]

□ *Paraklesis* and identity

In Dykstra's book *Images of pastoral care*,[48] he shares 19 images that researchers like Anton Boisen, Alastair Campbell and Henri Nouwen use to describe pastoral care. Metaphors such as the solicitous shepherd, the

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39. Wepener (2008).

40. De Klerk (2000).

41. Pieterse (1998).

42. Wepener and Pauw (2004).

43. Wepener (2008:324).

44. Firet (1986:82).

45. Nel (2009).

46. Firet (1986:68–82).

47. Firet (1986:68).

48. Dykstra (2005).

wounded healer, the intimate stranger and the midwife are used. The pastor's identity is to be found where or she spent time with the lost who are being marginalised:

> Here, pastoral identity paradoxically seems to be found in a threatened loss of identity and pastoral theology's relevance in the perception that it lacks much relevance.[49]

◼ Relational care: *Koinonia*

As children of God, believers are brothers and sisters and we are part of Christ's household.[50] Bonhoeffer[51] writes in his *Sanctorum communion* that the church is a unique organisation that cannot be equated to any other, but if it has to be compared the family or household is the entity that has the most similarities. In Christ, and through him, believers are connected to each other in one body. The Father creates in Christ and through the Spirit a new community of disciples where human beings can be liberated from loneliness. Following Wuthnow, Burger[52] believes the church of the 21st century can be a thriving organisation as long as it provides the members with a strong sense of belonging. Newbigin said:

> No one can be made whole except by being restored to the wholeness of that being-in-relatedness for which God made us and the world and which is the image of that being-in-relatedness which is the being of God himself. [53]

▢ *Koinonia* and identity

De Roest[54] states that the '*koinonia*' of the future determines the identity of the congregation in the present. German theologian Ulrich Kuhnke[55] believes that koinonia can reconstruct the identity of the church. Bilezikian[56] says it is God's dream that his creatures should live together in unity and harmony.[57] The church has, however, drifted numerous times from what Scripture teaches, and therefore, continuous reformation is needed. He says the church must

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49. Dykstra (2005:2).

50. See Ephesians 2:19.

51. In Burger (1997:129).

52. Burger (1997:7).

53. Newbigin (1995:70).

54. De Roest (1998:290).

55. Kuknkhe (1992:99–106).

56. Belezikian (1997:9).

57. Cf. Psalm 133:1.

rediscover her identity in *koinonia* because several church leaders no longer experience the church as a divinely designed community.[58]

■ Relational service: *Diakonia*

All actions are acts of service and *diakonia* not only grows out of healthy koinonia and pastoral care but is simultaneously part of both.[59] Dietrich et al.[60] admit that the concept of *diakonia* has evolved over the last couple of decades, and basically, there are three characteristics to the new understanding. Firstly, the ecclesiological dimension of *diakonia* is strongly emphasised. Earlier *diakonia* has been seen as the work of clergy or professional persons or agencies, but nowadays it is being understood as something that is part of the nature and mission of the church. Secondly, acts of service should embrace a holistic approach where the emotional, spiritual, psychological and physiological dimensions of a person are taken into account. And thirdly, *diakonia* is more than just humble service: through humble service, large prophetic action in solidarity with the marginalised and those who suffer are undertaken.

□ *Diakonia* and identity

Dietrich et al.[61] views *diakonia* as a theological concept that points to the true identity and mission of the church. In his study on the '*diak*' words (*diakonia, diakonein* and *diakonos*) Collins[62] shows that it means in the first place something such as task or mission:

> The importance of this task and its content relate to the one who authorizes and, in whose service, the *diakonos* is sent as a messenger and go-between.[63]

■ Relational *Marturia*

Newbigin[64] refers to the IMC's 1952 Willengen conference where they confessed that one cannot take part in Christ without participating in his mission to the whole world:

> The first and fundamental thing that needs to be said about the pattern of the Christian missionary enterprise is that we must recover the sense that

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58. Belezikian (1997:9).

59. Nel (1994:83).

60. Dietrich et al. (2014:2).

61. Dietrich et al. (2014:2).

62. In Dietrich et al. (2014:3).

63. Dietrich et al. (2014:3).

64. Newbigin (1995:1).

it is the enterprise of the whole Church of God in every land, directed towards the whole world in which it is put. We have to recover a sense of the Christian mission based upon such fundamental scriptural texts as the word of our Lord in John 12:31 – 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself'.[65]

□ *Marturia* and identity

Witness to the gospel defines the identity, the activity and the communication which are the calling of the church since Pentecost.[66]

Guder also makes the following statement regarding the concept of marturia: It is missiologically provocative that this word family includes terms for the person who is the witness (martyrs, mainly in Acts), the testimony rendered by the witness (*martyria, martyrion*) and the process of giving or bearing witness (*matyrein, diamartyresthai*).[67]

■ Relational *didache*

In the kerugma, God enters human life with his salvation; in the *didache,* God points out a new way of life.[68]

Bosch's understanding of discipleship is when the teachings of Jesus are being embodied and when his commands are lived:

It is unthinkable to divorce the Christian life of love and justice from being a disciple. Discipleship involves a commitment to God's reign, to justice and love, and obedience to the entire will of God.[69]

Developing a missional faith community is in a particular sense a ministry of training. A unique component of developing a missional congregation is the teaching and training of disciples.[70] Stoppels[71] views the church as an open space where discipleship can be learned. In his view, the church is like a training ground where one is called to be a follower of Jesus Christ. In the words of Bonhoeffer: 'Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. It remains an abstract idea, a myth'.[72] Every person

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65. Newbigin (1994:11).

66. Guder (2000:71).

67. Guder (2000:55).

68. Firet (1986:68).

69. Bosch (1991:81).

70. Nel et al. (2015:185).

71. Stoppels (2013:13).

72. Bonhoeffer (1959:50).

who is in a relationship with Jesus Christ is a disciple and he or she is also part of the Body of Christ.[73]

The term *disciple* was used in the ancient Greek world as a word meaning 'apprentice' where the student is a keen follower or imitator of his teacher. The term also refers to the intellectual bond between a teacher and pupil. *Disciple* is only found in the Gospels and Acts and here it is used to point towards those who serve Jesus as their Master:[74]

> Yet, this is also the main point of New Testament discipleship – 'disciple' implies the existence of a personal bond – a bond that determines the whole life of the individual.[75]

Disciples take the words of Jesus seriously, and while doing this, they come to terms with the meaning and demands of discipleship. It is a lifelong commitment and process and as such, believers are disciples on a journey.[76] The formal opportunities for training (such as catechesis and Sunday school programmes) are where people are introduced to the extensiveness of God's mission, the work of the Spirit-filled church *in* being a medium of that mission and the various ways in which the church can fulfill it. It is also the place in which individuals are encouraged to start participating in God's mission in experimental ways.[77]

□ *Didache* and identity

A congregation can, to a large extent, be described as a people who continuously learn and discover who God is, how he works, how he works in as well as through us and what he desires for the world.[78] The development of a missional congregation centers around the truth that believers, individually as well as corporates, are being built up to participate in God's mission for the world. Through their participation in God's mission, they come to appreciate their identity as well as their reason for existence.[79]

■ Relational *kubernesis*

Kubernesis is according to Louw and Nida[80] 'being able to lead' of 'being able to get others to follow'. Nel[81] describes *kubernesis* as the action of taking

73. Nel et al. (2015:186).

74. Nel et al. (2015:188–190).

75. Nel et al. 2015:190).

76. Nel et al. (2015:193).

77. Walker and Parry (2014:140).

78. Nel et al. (2015:194).

79. Nel et al. (2015:185).

80. Louw and Nida (1988:466, 548).

81. Nel (2009:12).

a freight ship that does not belong to you to a destination that has been determined by the owner. Romans 12:8 tells those of us who have the gift of leadership that we better step up, take notice and that we should lead with assiduousness:[82]

> Why, because the Church, the bride of Christ, upon which the eternal fate of the world depends, will flourish or waver largely on the basis of how we lead.[83]

Pasveer[84] says *kubernesis* is about the management and regulation of processes in order to accomplish the desired outcomes. *Kubernesis* originally meant helmsmanship, although Plato used the term for the management of cities and countries.[85]

□ *Kubernesis* and identity

God prepares his people through the leaders to comprehend their identity, to fulfil their functions according to the purpose of God for his congregation and to create organisations that best serve the acts of God's salvation in a given time and society.[86]

■ Integration and coordination of the ministries

Nel[87] explains the integration and coordination of the ministries by using the metaphor of building an 8000-piece puzzle. It is not possible to complete the task successfully without seeing a picture of what needs to be built. If the picture is unavailable, the possibility exists that congregation leaders will play throughout their ministry with the 'ministry pieces' without knowing what needs to be built:

> On top of the box is the complex image of who we are in Christ and we are integrating and coordinating the explicitly distinguished ways by which God makes this happen. We do so knowing that for the whole picture all the pieces are equally important and essential. Integrating and coordinating are both an art and trade.[88]

Ministries (whatever named or in whatever order mentioned) are God's way of coming to the church and through the church to the world. In toto, these

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82. Hybels (2002:27).

83. Hybels (2002:27).

84. Pasveer (1992:47).

85. Pasveer (1992:47).

86. Nel et al. (2015:143); cf. Marais (2018a, 2018b).

87. Nel et al. (2015:79).

88. Nel et al. (2015:79).

ministries are communicative acts, serving the communication of the gospel of Christ. Integrating ministries deals specifically with the interwovenness of ministries, for example, that there is *didache* in *kerugma* and vice versa and that congregational leaders should be aware of and sensitive for this. Coordinating ministries focus on the art of being aware of and equipped to functionally coordinate ministries while doing ministry. Coordinating, for example, preaching (*kerugma*) and worship (*liturgy*) serve as a good example.

The integration and coordination of the ministries is a complex challenge but it should not be neglected because of its complexity. This is the way through which God comes to the world.[89]

By integrating the ministries, we take them all seriously. In this way, the ministries within a system approach become more than what they would be on their own. To say it differently, the separate ministries need one another to be truly effective.[90]

Integrating ministries deals specifically with the interwovenness of ministries, for example, that there is *didache* in *kerugma* and vice versa and that congregational leaders should be aware of and sensitive about this. Coordinating ministries focus on the art of being mindful of and equipped to functionally coordinate ministries while doing ministry. Coordinating, for example, preaching (*kerugma*) and worship (*leitourgia*) serves as a good example. The ministries (it does not matter in what form or what it is called) are the way God comes to the church and through the church to the world. The entire ministry consists of all the communicative acts that serve the communication of the gospel. Each mode of ministry and all of them together are three-dimensional: The implication of this is that each ministry should always be in service to the Triune God, in service of the believers and serving the world.[91]

Osmer[92] is a scholar and independent thinker who understands the importance of a strong bond between the ministries within the local congregation. He says:

> The congregation and its members are formed as they act with and for others beyond the church in partnership, mutual learning, and solidarity with the vulnerable. Missional formation in a congregation of centered openness includes, but goes beyond, the typical practices we associate with spiritual formation. An important practical implication of this point is the need to build deep connections between ministries of upbuilding and sending in formation. Perhaps the best examples of this in my interviews were mission groups and learning communities. These are

89. See Nel et al. (2015:78).

90. Nel et al. (2015:78).

91. Nel et al. (2015:70).

92. Osmer (2012:51).

relatively small groups – up to thirty people – that combine worship, fellowship, study, and service.[93]

In these groups, there is a deep connection between the upbuilding and the sending of the congregation. Service shapes fellowship and deepens study; worship and mutual care sustain service and through all of this missional formation takes place.[94]

In summary, it can be said that all eight modes of ministry facilitate identity finding and identity forming. Arguing from the literature, it is clear that the ministries are interwoven and that they function together and can, therefore, be described and understood in terms of systems thinking.

■ Systems thinking: Integration and coordination of ministries

In this part, we will be looking at the integration and coordination of ministries through the lens of systems thinking. The importance of all the ministries is emphasised, and we will also devote some time to synergy as an act of multiplication. Senge[95] compares systems thinking to the different elements of a thunderstorm. In a thunderstorm, all the elements come together – each affects the rest, an influence that is usually concealed from view.[96] He argues that all human endeavours are systems, and systems are connected through the unseen fibre of interrelated actions that influence each other. Events influence other events, although it is not always perceived.

The essence of the discipline of systems thinking lies in a shift of mind:

• seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains
• seeing processes of change rather than snapshots.[97]

Concerning Senge's argument, Marais[98] states that when a person or group within a learning environment focuses on only the bigger picture or merely on the parts, appropriate erudition will not take place. Marais is a proponent of systems thinking within a congregation where the different ministries are in continual conversation with each other in order to advance the communication of the gospel. As a person is connecting the parts with the whole, an ecclesiology is being build.

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93. Osmer (2012:51–52).

94. Osmer (2012:52).

95. Senge (2006:6).

96. Senge (2006:6).

97. Senge (2006:73).

98. Marais (2009:8).

Senge[99] describes systems thinking as the discipline to see the whole picture as well as the underlying patterns and related networks. He emphasises the need for systems thinking in the 21st century for the reason that now, more than ever, we are drowning in too much information.[100] He argues that systems thinking is the cornerstone of a learning community. It is the discipline that integrates the parts with the whole within a system.

Nel compares the necessity of all eight ministries in a local congregation to the diet of a healthy person:

> What we need to be, live, and work in a healthy way is food. Our food is made up of different minerals etc. We need them all. In the case of a local church this is similar.[101]

In the upbuilding of a local congregation, all the ministries must be present. It is, for instance, a theological insight that a local congregation needs worthy preaching as well as good management.[102]

The church is God's gift to the world and consequently, all the ministries are required. In the upbuilding of a local congregation, none of the ministries can be ignored or demeaned. Every congregation needs all the ministries because this is the way God expresses what he gives and what he plans through the church for the world.[103] Nel[104] argues that most scholars in the study field will argue that it will not benefit a congregation to pick some of the ministries at the expense of others. The core argument is that the upbuilding of a local congregation is about the integration and coordination of all modes of ministry:

> It cannot be stressed enough that developing a missional local church has to take the whole of the ministry seriously in the service of the communication of the gospel.[105]

Although the ministries are interleaved it does not take away their uniqueness. The building up of the local congregation is more than just adding all the diverse ministries in the congregation – the growth of the congregation cannot succeed without each of the ministries; however, it is more than their sum.[106]

Greeley[107] referencing an article in the New York Times Magazine says our religion gets impoverished when it is reduced to one system. Armour and

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99. Senge (2006:68).

100. Senge (2006:69).

101. Nel (2005:369).

102. Nel (2005:369).

103. Nel et al. (2015:77).

104. Nel et al. (2015:78).

105. Nel et al. 2015:71).

106. Nel (2015:74).

107. In Armour and Browning (1995:143).

Browning[108] argue that for religion to make the deepest impact, it needs to connect with different systems in addition to a variety of experiences. To that end, having multiple systems in a congregation is not a detriment, but an advantage. Properly engaged, that diversity can spawn renewed energy and creativity that refreshes the entire body of Christ. Furthermore, the earlier modalities, through their interaction with the later ones, gain sophistication and breadth they could never achieve alone.[109]

Senge[110] views systems thinking as an art form that stares through the detail of complexity to see the underlying systems that generate change. It does, however, not mean that the detail of complexity is ignored. On the contrary, it drives us to organise the detail of complexity in a coherent story that shines light on the origin of problems and how these problems can be unravelled in the future.

When considering the upbuilding of the local congregation, Louw[111] argues for a systems model that is about the corporate entirety of the cell within the body model, where the congregation is the subject of *paraklesis* and *diakonia*. A team approach is important in this model that is intended for the whole congregation, the church around the globe as well as the need of the world.

Pasveer[112] searches for the benefits that systems thinking can have for the upbuilding of a missional congregation. He[113] argues that systems can be described with the following aspects:

- *een totaliteitsaspect*
- *een (inter-)relatieaspect en*
- *een finalisatie- of doelgerichtheidsaspect.*

  De gemeente is een systeem dat open heeft te staan voor haar omgeving. Zij is een systeem en als zodanig wordt zij gekenmerkt door eigenheid of identiteit, waardoor zij zich onderscheidt van haar omgeving, maar zij is tevens een open systeem, wat maakt dat zij in een voortdurende interactie staat met haar omgeving.[114]

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108. Armour and Browning (1995:143).

109. Armour and Browning (1995:143).

110. Senge (2006:124).

111. Louw (1985:35).

112. Pasveer (1992:28).

113. Pasveer (1992:32).

114. Pasveer (1992:110). Freely translated as: 'The congregation is a system that has to be open to her context. With unique features and a distinctive identity, she is a system on her own, but as an open system she is in continuous interaction with her context'.

One of the advantages of systems thinking is the existence of a base theory that applies to several scientific disciplines. Pasveer[115] argues that a congregation can be seen as a system and that systems thinking has something to offer in the upbuilding of a local congregation. Furthermore, he[116] believes that systems thinking can help a congregation to live out its purpose and reason for being. As a whole, a congregation is characterised by certain aspects that distinguish it from its environment, but a congregation is and will always be an open system. That means church leaders can never think about a congregation apart from her context or setting. The environment has an influence on the congregation and the congregation affects the environment. There is constant interaction between a congregation and her context. What happens in the congregation's milieu summons the church to take action. That means there is, or can be, a continuous dialogue between the congregation and context. Pasveer calls it an identity discourse.[117]

Systems thinking can serve the upbuilding of the local congregation at several levels and Pasveer[118] argues that it can help a congregation with identity finding in relation to its Umwelt, by enclosing itself as a social system from her context. A congregation, living out the *Missio Dei*, does not exist for herself and is in constant conversation with her surroundings. As she learns from, communicates, debates and reacts to what is happening, identity discovery and identity forming are taking place.[119]

Whenever a congregation is confronted with novel problems, the question should always be asked as to what the appropriate response will be. It can, therefore, be stated that a congregation's context plays a key role in her reason for being.[120] Congregations, as they are present and working in the communities, are daily confronted with challenges that can shape their identities. Apart from its relationship with the world, a congregation will lose its identity.[121]

■ Synergy: Action of multiplication

Armour and Browning explain the concept 'synergism' as the 'principle that two systems or processes can produce more when yoked together than when

115. Pasveer (1992:57).

116. Pasveer (1992:107).

117. Pasveer (1992:57–58).

118. Pasveer (1992:107).

119. Pasveer (1992:107).

120. Pasveer (1992:176).

121. Pasveer (1992:235).

standing on its own'.[122] Synergy is the creation of a whole that is grander than the simple sum of its parts.

Nel[123] argues that the upbuilding of a missional congregation is not equal to *leitourgia + paraklesis + kubernesis + didache + koinonia + diakonia + marturia + kerugma*, although the upbuilding cannot happen without all the ministries. One is also doomed to failure if one selects only a few of the so-called important ministries and focuses only on them. A plant for instance will not be able to grow if everything except phosphorus is available in abundance. The ideal is an action of multiplication where all the ministries are taken seriously. Within such a system approach, all the ministries 'become' more than they will be able to when functioning alone. The ministries need one another to be truly effective.[124]

Stephan Covey argues that synergy, simply defined, means that the whole is bigger and better than the sum of its parts:

> It means that the relationship which the parts have to each other is a part in and of itself. It is not only a part, but the most catalytic, the most empowering, the most unifying, and the most exciting part.[125]

Armour and Browning[126] define synergy as the principle where two systems can produce more when working together as opposed to each one on its own.

■ Examples of multiplication

What follows are some examples of actions of multiplication when ministries are deliberately integrated and coordinated. These examples show that the different ministries need each other and that they are reliant on each other. As a sub-section of synergy, it points out that when different ministries are properly integrated and coordinated it serves the advancement of the *Missio Dei.*

□ *Paraklesis* and *leitourgia*

Heitink[127] writes about the relationship between *leitourgia* and *paraklesis* and argues that *leitourgia* is not limited to a Sunday service for the reason that it can be part of *paraklesis. Leitourgia*, as the heart of the congregation, may come to the fore in visitation when a pastor reads from the Bible or says a prayer with a member of his or her church. On visitation, mere words often fall

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122. Armour and Browning (1995:53–143).

123. Nel et al. (2015:74–75).

124. Nel et al. (2015:78).

125. Covey (1989:263).

126. Armour and Browning (1995:143–144); see Senge (2006:217).

127. Heitink (1998:180–181).

short and that is where a passage from scripture can comfort, encourage and inspire. A hermeneutical sensitivity is, therefore, required to read from an appropriate Bible text.[128]

Davie[129] mentions that *paraklesis* was mostly seen as something between a pastor and the parishioners, but there are progressively more signs of appreciation for ritual and sacrament in paraklesis. This feature marked a revitalisation in the Church of England of the traditional pattern of Catholic pastoral care.[130]

☐ *Didache* and *koinonia*

When a congregation takes discipleship seriously, members experience mutual bonding and become a firm communion of disciples. 'They come to learn that no believer can receive, experience and enjoy the fullness of life that Christ gives without other'.[131]

There is a creative association between *didache* and *koinonia*. The one needs the other to be what God has intended it to be. When the cost of discipleship is not maintained, *koinonia* becomes a reduced togetherness without any real pledge to mutual aid, admonishment and service. Discipleship becomes hard and cold, an insincere and legalistic attention to duty, if not rooted in a true communion of disciples.[132]

☐ *Kerugma* and *paraklesis*

Callahan[133] argues that an average preacher's messages will be heard as above average when he or she is someone who prioritises visitation. 'We have a pastor who is a good shepherd, loving and loved by the congregation. His sermon, rated a 7, will be heard as a 9'.[134]

Cilliers[135] views preaching as a concentrated form of the Christian hope and argues that in preaching words are heard that is needed, on a conscious or unconscious level, by the world.[136]

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128. Heitink (1998:181).

129. Davie (1983:25).

130. Davie (1983:25).

131. Nel et al. (2015:196); cf. Mark 10 and John 13.

132. Nel et al. (2015:196).

133. Callahan (2010:16).

134. Callahan (2010:16).

135. Cilliers (2004:19).

136. Cilliers (2004:21).

☐ *Leitourgia* and *paraklesis*

In his book, *Worship as pastoral care,* Willimon[137] argues that the distinction between worship and work is too big:

> Likewise, Christian ministers, if they are doing what they have been called to do, will testify that no clear distinction can or should be made between their work as priest and their work as pastor. When the pastor counsels parishioners in his or her study, beside a hospital bed, or around a kitchen table, the pastor is only doing what he or she does in baptism, at the Lord's table, in a sermon or a wedding – guiding the people of God in a liturgy whereby they are enabled to meet God and God can meet them.[138]

☐ *Koinonia* and *paraklesis*

Louw[139] in the 1980s already said that the DRC should keep itself busy with the question as to how *koinonia* should be organised with the intention of meeting the needs of the world. He writes that *diakonia* as well as paraklesis come about under the cross and therefore in the presence and power of the resurrection.[140]

☐ *Leitourgia* and *marturia*

In his book, *Welcoming the stranger*, Keifert[141] shows that *leitourgia* and *marturia* can complement and supplement one another. By 'liturgical worship', Keifert[142] means worship dependable on the historic liturgy of the Christian church whereby 'the full, conscious, and active participation' of the people takes place. This description of liturgical worship is in obvious contrast to worship understood as 'presentation evangelism', which leaves people passive observers of a few who seeks to evangelise them.[143] He understands effective evangelism as the proclamation of the good news and to lead people to a public identity in Christ.[144]

■ Conclusion

In this chapter, we focused on the integration and coordination of ministries as systems thinking. Systems thinking is a frame of mind where underlying

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137. Willimon (1979:48).

138. Wilimon (1979:48).

139. Louw (1985:41–42).

140. Louw (1985:42).

141. Keifert (1992:5).

142. Keifert (1992:5).

143. Keifert (1992:5).

144. Keifert (1992:5).

connections and patterns are seen, and it also integrates the parts with the whole. As an art form, it deals with the complexities of congregational life but it does not get trapped there – it strives to discover the core systems that drive and generate change. Each ministry has a role to play in the discovery and formation of a faith community's missional identity. Everything that happens in a missional congregation influences everything else, although it is not visible at all times. For this reason, it is crucial that the people who are responsible for the different ministries must implement a systems approach where they work together in order for the ministries to multiply their God-given effectiveness. For this to happen, a congregation's core leadership team must make an intentional decision to integrate and coordinate all the ministries in their participation in the *Missio Dei*. Within such a system approach, the different ministries are and become far more than what can be done when they function separately.[145]

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145. For the Chapter 8 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

Missional integrity in the pulpit

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'When the nonverbal conflicts with the verbal, listeners trust the nonverbal'.

– Arthurs J.D.[1]

■ Introduction

Preaching is so much more than just an act of communication and so much more than just a 'speech-act'.[2] Preaching is ultimately about God, who in Christ, through the Holy Spirit revealed himself to us. It is about the Word of God. It is about the *gospel* of Jesus Christ. It is about the *world* God loves so much. It is about…? Yes, that is true. But, it is also about communication. It is

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1. Arthurs (2017:109). He does so with reference to Mehrabian (1968:53). Cf. also Mehrabian extensive research on communication (1971) and Wiener and Mehrabian (1968). He (1971:43, 44) points to both liking and feeling in communication as '7% verbal [liking & feeling] + 38% vocal+55 facial'. Cf. also a remark by Zscheile (2018) in an interview with the author: 'people trust the messenger before they trust the message'.

2. Cf. Searle (1969, 1971).

also a speech-act: all-encompassing communicating about God, in Christ, through the Spirit…! Preaching is a spoken word, in public.[3] It is about bringing under words what was and is being revealed to us in so many ways, 'but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe'.[4] Preaching is communication within a very specific bulk of theological insights and knowledge.[5]

Within the context of this book, it is about bringing under words, with missional integrity, what was 'said' – whether this might be in leading worship or preaching the Word of the sending God as one of his sent people. In this chapter, I will focus on what missional integrity might mean. Also, what and how missional integrity might help within the broader question of this publication: what role do worship and preaching play in cultivating missional congregations.[6]

■ The impact of the person in the pulpit

Philip Brooks coined the phrase that 'preaching is truth through personality'.[7] In recent years, he has been criticised, especially by homileticians in the 'Evangelical' paradigm, for his lack of faithfulness to Scripture – especially for using the incarnation as an argument for his understanding of the importance of the role of the person.[8] This yellow light is indeed important. Preaching can easily become what one may call 'personality-driven', like in a Hollywood movie. And the question that arises is, 'who is cast in the main role?'[9] Vine and

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3. Gräb (2013:33ff.) refers to preaching as *'öffentliche religiöse Rede'*.

4. Hebrews 1:2 (NIV).

5. The literature on Preaching as a science of Homiletics is vast. I refer the reader for a good introduction to the ground-breaking older source by Rudolf Bohren (1980) and to other well-known scholars in the field: Thomas Long (2016); Long and Tisdale (2008). For a recent contribution in German cf. Gräb (2013).

6. I have reflected elsewhere on the missional integrity of local churches as it relates to their contextual relevancy (Nel 2011).

7. Brooks (1964:5, 8). The full quote: 'Truth through personality is our description of real preaching… The truest truth, the most authoritative statement of God's will, communicated in any other way than through the personality of brother man to men is not preached truth'.

8. Cf. Fuller (2010:44–77) with special reference to (2010:65–77); Vines and Dooley (2018:37–48). According to Fuller (2010:75): 'Christ's incarnation, formulated and applied in a distinctly anthropological manner, forms the axis of Brook's theology. In his thought, the doctrine serves as the model for anthropology, the source of revelation and truth, the informant for the doctrine of God, and the essence of salvation'. This is troublesome for Evangelicals 'especially considering that evangelicalism is – after all – the conviction that Christianity requires certain essential doctrines. He ignored or denied both theologically and homiletically some of these doctrines, like substitutionary atonement and supernatural conversion' (Fuller 2010:76–77). I leave it to the reader to discern herself as to these statements.

9. Cf. Eclov's (2012:67–74) chapter under the title: 'The Clint Eastwoods of the Pulpit?'

Dooley are very much correct when they warn, 'beware of personality-driven preaching'. And again later, 'Sermons that do not bring glory to God *will* bring glory to someone else. Thus they become idolatrous'.[10]

At the same time, no one can ignore the importance of the person leading worship and preaching. In more than one way, this lies behind the research reflected on in this book.[11] I once tried to argue a case for the impact of personality on preaching, interpreting especially two sources: Brooks and the empirical research conducted by Van der Geest.[12] There is indeed a tension of balance between *what* preaching is and *who* is preaching. This is supposed to be a creative tension. One that should not be let go of because of the inconvenience it causes. Or, as is my experience from time to time, because we want to hide behind some theological arguments for a certain lack of commitment to become who we are supposed to be – as we claimed to be called to the task of preaching – however odd that may be.[13] A human is in the pulpit, leading the people of God in worship and preaching. Neufeld-Erdman says it this way:

> And preaching, if it is to be Christian, requires real humanness – God's own in Jesus Christ, and ours as his witnesses, as scandalous as that may be […] We think we can preach from inside the half-light of falsehood. But from behind our masks we cannot be as truthful as the gospel invites us to be, truthful as our congregations need us to be.[14]

In my understanding of Brooks, I have never found a reason to doubt his sincerity with theology as such and for using the incarnation as a hermeneutical principle. Fuller,[15] as a part of his conclusion in the chapter on 'Incarnation and Preaching', quoted Craddock as part of his critique on Brooks. I want to use the same quote to strengthen my argument that the abovementioned tension is important to maintain. Craddock writes:

> When a man[16] preaches, his method of communication, the movement of his sermon, reflects his hermeneutical principles, his view of the authority of Scripture […] and especially his doctrine of man […] How one communicates is a theological commentary on the minister's view of ministry, the church, the Word of God, sin, salvation, faith, works, love, and hope.[17]

10. Vines and Dooley (2018:37, 54). Add to this Briscoe (2004:32): 'The greatest care must be taken to ensure that nothing in the preaching distracts from the person of Christ or does damage to the message of the gospel'.

11. Cf. the first chapter and the background of the team-research project.

12. Nel (2018), Cf. Brooks (1964, 1969), and Van der Geest (1981).

13. Cf. the title of Willimon's book (2015a): *How odd of God. Chosen for the Curios Vocation of Preaching.*

14. Neufeld-Erdman (2014:6).

15. Fuller (2010:74–75).

16. One can only hope that Craddock today would have added 'or woman'.

17. Craddock (1979:44).

Sisk captures the balance within this creative tension:

> The great nineteenth-century preacher Phillips Brooks's classic observation that preaching is 'truth through personality' reminds us that the gospel we preachers hope to portray always passes through the prism of the preacher's personal expression on its way to the congregation's ears. That prism is colored by our background, education, biases, mood, political leanings and a host other factors. Our task is not to attempt to excise all those factors from our preaching. We couldn't anyway. They are often what makes a sermon interesting [...] To be true to ourselves, and our calling, however, we must take account of how all these various factors that can influence our preaching come into play. And the calling to preach the gospel compels us to attempt to preach in ways that keep the gospel foremost, that treat the congregation fairly, and that are true to our own convictions and our personal integrity.[18]

In his foreword to a book on *The Future of Preaching,* Leslie Griffiths reminds us that not only the 'definition' by Brooks should be quoted. He refers to the very next sentence to the well-known words of Brooks:

> The truth must come really through the person, not merely over his lips, not merely into his understanding and out through his pen. It must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him.[19]

While I respect the sensitivity for the 'heresy' of personality-driven preaching, I find it difficult to understand the essence of the critique against this argument of Brooks. Early in his lectures, he stated:

> [*T*]ruth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching. The truest truth, the most authoritative statement of God's will, communicated in any other way than through the personality of brother man to men is not preached truth. Suppose it written on the sky, suppose it embodied in a book which has been so long held in reverence as the direct utterance of God that the vivid personality of the men who wrote its pages has well-nigh faded out of it; in neither of these cases is there any preaching. And on the other hand, if men speak to other men that which they do not claim for truth, if they use their powers of persuasion or of entertainment to make other men listen to their speculations, or do their will, or applaud their cleverness, that is not preaching either. The first lacks personality. The second lacks, truth. And preaching is the bringing of truth through personality.[20]

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18. Sisk (2008:xi, xii). He later adds (Sisk 2008:11; [*emphasis in original*]) the following important remark as to personality and personal experience: 'Homiletician Thomas Long, in his influential introductory text, *The Witness of Preaching*, identifies witness as a controlling image for the work of the preacher. By that he means that ultimately what the preacher has to offer is what he or she has experienced [...] We describe what has happened to us [...] In addition, to a great degree all I can say is what happened to *me*. As Hadden Robinson, a long-time Gordon-Conwell professor and teacher with an evangelical perspective, says in his definition of expository preaching, biblical preaching happens 'through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of the passage in its context, *which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher,* then through the preacher, applies to the hearers'. Long (2005:45–51); Robinson (2001:31).

19. Brooks (1891, 1964:8).

20. Brooks (1891, 1964:5).

And truth to him is ultimate personal: 'Christianity is Christ' and Christ incarnated.[21] However uncomfortable this truth must be, there is no way to escape it when we 'attempt the noble art of preaching'[22] – and may I add, the noble art of leading worship.

Preachers have to be 'in it', in the message themselves. 'The preacher who grips an audience is the preacher who is obviously gripped by the message'.[23]

■ What would missional integrity entail?

■ Integrity?

It has been said in many ways. However complex, it has to be said in accessible ways. Greer says it in such a way:

> *Personal* integrity is when we are authentically the persons we were created to be. It means living a life of wholeness and congruence. *Moral* integrity is when we do what is right simply because we know it is the right thing to do […] First, *integrity* means wholeness. It involves living in harmony with myself – where my thinking and my feelings and my acting are in sync. This is when what I believe, and how I feel and the way I live are congruent.

> *Integrity* comes from the Latin *integer*, meaning whole, integrated, complete. It is where my beliefs, convictions, thoughts, and behaviors are integrated together into my life. This first meaning of the term was is use before A.D. 1400.[24] […] Then by the mid-sixteenth century a second understanding of integrity merged with this idea of wholeness, involving values such as honesty. The person of integrity intentionally follows a moral or ethical code. A major element in my completeness as a person is following the set of values in which I believe and by which I strive to live […] Integrity involves both the uniqueness of who I am as a person and the integration of the values and wisdom that guides me […] The first understanding of integrity involves being the *person* I am. The second involves being the *person of faith* I am. The former is my *personal integrity*. The latter is my *moral integrity* […] Integrity means to live with congruence – connecting my life, its purpose and direction, with the God of its creation.[25]

It is probably unnecessary to even mention that personal and moral integrity has everything to do with being and living ethically. Even in the science of ethics as such, integrity is being rediscovered.[26]

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21. Brooks (1891, 1964:7).

22. Griffiths in Stevenson (2010:ix).

23. Briscoe (2004:35). Much later in the book he (Briscoe 2004:179) writes, quoting Lloyd-Jones (1971:82): 'In preaching, all one's faculties should be engaged, the whole man should be involved. I go so far as to suggest that even the body should be involved'.

24. Barnhart (1988:535).

25. Greer (2009:9–15, 39).

26. Cf. the festschrift for Konrad Hilpert: Sautermeister (ed.). 2013.

Integrity is multifaceted. There are, however, golden threads running, noticeably, through the core.

Being and becoming the person we have been baptised to be and to become:

> Like every Christian, a pastor has received a core identity from God in Christ through the gift of baptism. At baptism God made the person, who later in life assumed the role of a pastor, the recipient of all baptismal gifts: forgiveness of sins, deliverance from evil, and eternal life. At baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit, the person who later was ordained to ministry of Word and sacrament received unconditional belovedness as God's child for Christ's sake. [...] One of the most difficult challenges facing those who serve in ordained ministry is keeping their lives primarily oriented to this baptismal identity rather than confusing this core affirmation with their 'working' role as a pastor of a church. Much confusion and dis-ease in the lives of pastors is a consequence of allowing one's role as pastor to displace one's identity as a baptised child of God.[27]

In his book *Calling & Character*, Willimon sees baptism as the starting point for our calling to ordained ministry:

> [*T*]he ministry of all Christians for which ordained, pastoral ministry is but a species of a broader genus called the ministry of the baptised. We clergy have significance, we ought to be praised or blamed, on the basis of what ought to happen among the baptised.[28]

Long wrote along the same lines that:

> Preachers 'come from God's people' in another and more basic sense as well. Those who preach are baptised Christians. Because preachers are people who have been baptised into Christ, they are *members* of Christ's body, the church, before they are its *leaders*.[29]

Living by what we know is right and doing what is right because it is the right thing to do:[30]

> Living ethically requires that we learn when not to trust our own judgement and what to do instead. Our judgement, according to the research, is often shaped by forces beyond our conscious awareness, in the deep, primitive parts of the mind, where urges and desires activate our outward behaviors, sometimes before conscious decision making can even begin to occur. Ethical decision making is a

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27. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:124); cf. also Goetting (2012:48–67) for his chapter on 'Baptism: Ordination for our Common Ministry'; cf. Donohue (2007:117–133) for his chapter 'Baptism, Mission, and Ministry'.

28. Willimon (2000:10). Cf. also Willimon (2015b:vi) where he wrote: 'All Christians, by virtue of their baptism, are called by God to witness, to teach, to heal, and to proclaim. All Christians are amateurs so far as their relationship with God is concerned. Yet from the ranks of the baptized, some are called to lead. As Luther noted, because not every Christian can do all the church's tasks every time the church gathers, for the sake of good order the church has found it helpful to ordain some from among the baptized to witness, to teach, to heal, and to proclaim to the church on Sunday so that all baptized may witness, teach, heal, and proclaim during the rest of the week'.

29. Long (2016:4).

30. See Greer (2009:9) as quoted above.

much slower process than what it takes to generate feelings and urges. Often by the time the conscious mind gets involved, the train has left the station, and the conscious mind is left to construct a rationale for what we are already doing. The result is often self-deception rather than self-revelation.[31]

Be sincere and serious in, what Mahlberg and Nessan call and discuss under, 'role integrity'.[32] They do so as part of their important discernment of what they refer to as integrity and boundary respect.[33] At stake here is the role of being in and leading worship. They discuss this under a heading, 'Integrity in Worship: delineating the ultimate boundary':[34]

> God is God and we are not […] Worship is the human activity that most reorients human beings to live according to God's original creative purpose. The very act of worshiping God reestablishes human beings in the role afforded them from the creation of the world. Human beings are neither gods unto themselves nor humiliated creatures unworthy of being. At worship those who think too highly of themselves are instructed to let God be God and are set free of all presumption. At worship those who claim too little for themselves receive the affirmation of their created goodness and are restored as those made in God's own image. Worship of the One who is truly God grants to humans their status as creatures – nothing less and nothing more. We were created to serve as stewards of God's creation, responsible for tilling and keeping the garden (Gn 2:15) in which God graciously placed us for nourishment, enjoyment and life […] Transition from the matters of personal life into the right attitude for worship.[35]

In close relation with the above is what one may call a holistic understanding of integrity. Concerning the content of this chapter, I refer to the fact that no worshipper and listener can separate the person in the pulpit from the person they know to be the pastor, leader, father – or in whatever other roles. We cannot disconnect the liturgist, preacher from the 'leader', pastor, etc. I specifically want to emphasise the relationship between personal integrity and how the pastor is being perceived as vocationally committed to and in love with the 'sache Jesu', the church as his body. I want to do so by referring to Doohan's reflection on *Spiritual Leadership. The Quest for Integrity*:

> Among the shifts we see new emphasis on other, on service, on collaboration, and on family values. Some values seem to be perennial, among which we find respect, honesty, and integrity […] Two attitudes are critical to leadership, personal integrity in relation to the organization's primary values, issues and loyalties […] integrity is a constitutive component of leadership […] Since being an agent of change

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31. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:4); cf. also Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004:171–187).

32. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:45–62); Cf. also a remark by Smith (2018) in a personal interview: 'Integrity in being is to be rightly aligned with your public role'.

33. 'Integrity and boundary respect: Identity boundaries (like names, etc.)'; Physical boundaries; Will boundaries; Emotional boundaries; Mental boundaries; Resource boundaries (Mahlberg & Nessan 2016:93); Spiritual boundaries (2016:94).

34. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:65–76).

35. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:66, 68, 69).

is essential to leadership, people need to be assured that the individual leading them through change is a person of integrity in terms of the communal vision and values.[36]

Doohan refers to a remark by Conger, namely that 'Credibility is based on trustworthiness (honesty), expertise (competence), and dynamism (inspiring)'.[37] Leaders who want to lead to and through transformation, often dealing with conflict and ambiguity, need to be people of integrity and with credibility – integrity being the 'balance between personal and public life'.[38]

It is exactly here that vocational integrity comes into play: 'Mature leadership is an expression of a well-developed and defined sense of vocational integrity'.[39] In the words of Doohan:

> Leaders who strive to be recognized for integrity must build trusting environments around them [...] An organization with a trusting environment appreciates diversity, shared values and vision, fosters good clear communication, and mutually challenges members to their tasks [...] Integrity is primarily an inner self-knowledge, but also refers to follower's perception that leaders' values and actions match their words. It is a form of holistic living [...] When a person has integrity he or she gains trust. However the integrity must involve every aspect of one's life – personal, relational, organizational, and societal. This basic leadership ingredient is an added value to competence. It is beyond expertise and motivation, it is the honesty that one's core believes guide one's decision making in leadership [...] Leaders of integrity bring quality presence to all they do [...] Personal, relational, institutional, and vocational integrity reinforce quality of life and lasting leadership [...] Leadership is a spiritual journey to the depths of one's inner convictions, where, alone, one hears a call that no one else hears [...] They evidence dignity in their service of others and appear to others as having healthy self-esteem, socially satisfied, and fulfilled. They are known for their abiding sense of excellence, inner directedness, integrity, and commitment [...] Trust is the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together. When a trusting environment exists, followers confidently rely on the authenticity of their leaders. However, a trusting environment also becomes the foundation for mutual respect, confident risk-taking, partnership, and collaboration. In a trusting environment both leaders and followers know that each respects the competence of the other, grants them freedom to act and even make mistakes, identifies the blind spots throughout the organization, and will always highlight the positive wherever it is to be found.[40]

There is just no way to bluff worshippers and listeners concerning vocational loyalty, credibility and integrity. The question members ask is whether the person in the pulpit is the same person they observe in public life? Or as

36. Doohan (2007:65); cf. also Wells (2008:26–28) and his reference to and discussion of 'character' in preaching in this era, an era he refers to as the third chapter in history.

37. Conger (1992:100).

38. Doohan (2007:66).

39. Ramey (1991:67).

40. Doohan (2007:68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73).

Thielicke has pointed out in 1965 already, playing on the world of advertising, 'does the preacher himself drink what he hands out in the pulpit?'[41] And a few pages later:

[/]f I see no connection between his Christian and his human existence – so argues the average person consciously or unconsciously – then I am inclined to accept the conclusion that he himself is not living in the house of his own preaching, but has settled down somewhere beside it, and that therefore the center of gravity is his life lies elsewhere.[42]

Willimon discusses all of this under the concept of 'character' – it is about the subtle but important difference between being and doing, morale and morality. Character has to do with both ethics and morality. To quote him on this:

This book begins with an overriding concern for the nature of clergy character, then examines some of the ways in which the practice of ministry raises questions about how our Christian commitments ought to be exemplified by the lives we lead as ministers.[43]

He, to my mind rightly so, shares that our problem may not only be the 'burn out' of pastors but even more so a 'black out':

[T]hat is [to] lose consciousness of why we are here and who we are called to be for Christ and his church. It is easy amid the great demands of the pastoral ministry, to lose sight of that vision that once called us into being as pastors.[44]

Resner Jr. reflected on this in the following way:

A basic definition of 'character' is 'stamp' or 'imprint'. This way of understanding character emphasizes the indelible impression that is made by that outside pressure which has had the greatest influence on one's identity. Jesus' cross-event, and its contemporaneous expression in the world of the disciple, become that ever-present

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41. Thielicke (1965a:3). "'*Trinkt der Prediger das selber, was er auf der Kanzel ausschänkt*"?' (Thielicke 1965a:13).

42. Thielicke (1965b:6). For the German quote see Thielicke (1965:18). The German sentence on page 17 is striking: '*Wohnt er also in seinem Lehrgehäuse*?' The English translation has all this under the heading 'Our Credibility' while the German text is under the heading '*Unsere Unglaubwürdigkeit*' (1965a:3, 1965b:14, respectively).

43. Willimon (2000:12). He says this admitting that in so many ways this is true for all baptized people. It is the leadership service we have been called to that makes it so critical for pastors. He refers to Hauerwas who once wrote, with reference to the book of Acts: 'The lives of the saints are the hermeneutical key to Scripture' (Hauerwas 1983:70). Willimon (2000:11). Cf. also Hauerwas's (1983:44–46) discussion of 'Freedom as the Presence of the Other' in a chapter on character.

44. Willimon (2000:21). Cf. also Nel and Scholtz (2015). Cf. also Mertz (2019:n.p.) for his contribution on 'What Builds Character': 'But character is more than visual. Character is engraved within us. The engraving isn't always planned and clean. The word "character" comes from the *Greek kharakter* that means "engraved mark." The character trace goes back to another definition of "to scrape or scratch." For me, the combination of engrave, scrape, and scratch fit well with what character really means. Here are my thoughts on why:
  • *Engrave* – An active art of determining what builds our character – honesty, courage, and the like.
  • *Scrape* – Learning from the challenges that come our way (or those we create) and then proving what we learned by doing much better than before.
  • *Scratch* – The act of working our way back when we fall down and gaining strength of integrity from what we experience'.

outside influence on the Christian's life which shapes the Christian's character with indelible imprint.[45]

Resner Jr. then continues by quoting Käsemann who wrote:

> Christ is our life and according to II Corinthians 4:10 we only manifest Jesus' life if we carry his death about with us. For what the apostle says about himself here, applies to every messenger of the gospel; that is to say, it is true of every Christian. He is only a disciple as long as he stands in the shadow of the cross.[46]

One more golden thread that is worth pointing out is what I would call the deep inner consciousness of the peace and integrity of forgiveness. Living by the grace of God who loves the world, of which 'I' am a part, so much, is to know I am forgiven. The peace of forgiveness saturates life with a sense of wholeness that is not to be missed. It is part and parcel of nonverbal communication. It is just there. As Tibbits writes, '*Forgiveness is the process of reframing one's anger and hurt from the past, with the goal of recovering one's peace in the present and revitalizing one's purpose and hopes for the future*'.[47] He is correct in stating that forgiveness facilitates healing: 'In one sense, personal forgiveness is the starting point for the other dimensions of forgiveness [relational forgiveness, spiritual forgiveness] because until you yourself are healthy, you're unlikely to develop healthy relationships with others'.[48]

For our understanding of what is meant by *missional integrity* within the context of this publication, I believe this last-mentioned dimension of integrity is critical. In the process of cultivating faithful kingdom-seeking (missional) congregations, conflict is a given.[49] Integrity asks for living by forgiveness and forgiving one another, as Christ has forgiven us.[50]

◼ Missional integrity?

What would then be added when I refer to *missional* integrity? I name but a few, to my mind, critical characteristics of such integrity.[51]

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45. Resner Jr. (1999:149).

46. Käsemann (1971:37). Cf. Resner Jr. (1999:149). For a more complete discussion on what he used as part of the subtitle to the book, namely, *Person and Message* (cf. 1999:133–180).

47. Tibbits (2006:5; [*emphasis in original*]).

48. Tibbits (2006:8).

49. Cf. Oppenshaw, Nel & Louw (2018:1-11).

50. Cf. Colossians 3:11–17(13).

51. I am not repeating what I wrote in an article, published in Afrikaans, under the title: Missionale integriteit en kontekstuele relevansie (Missional Integrity and Contextual Relevance). The focus of that article was different.

It is a deep and personal awareness and even sensitivity of being sent myself. Kim, in a very good book on *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence,* argues for what he calls a Cultural Intelligence Drive.[52] It is part of developing cultural intelligence, almost getting more and more into the mindset (or should it be heart-set) of the sending God. Livermore portrays Cultural Intelligence Drive as 'the motivational dimension of CQ [which] is the leader's level of interest, drive, and energy to adapt cross-culturally'.[53] Developing our CQ plays a critical role in a growing sense of being sent ourselves as we lead worship and preach among God's sent people. This has everything to do with our understanding and willingness to become part of God's dealing with all the cultures represented in his and our world we live in. Cultural sensitivity is part and parcel of a deep awareness of the world God loves so much. Nieman and Rogers' extensive empirical research serves as one of the backdrops to Kim's book.[54] Nieman and Rogers, as did Kim, pointed towards the culturally diverse world we live in. Whoever is in worship comes out of a week where this was and is the reality. We worship and preach within and as a part of such a diverse reality. We are required to develop in our appreciation for the diversity of the world we learn to love. And we do so as we grow in our sense of being sent as part of God's love for his diverse world. When this is not happening, we probably get stuck in prejudice, alienation and even racism. Kim links up with the understanding of the cultural quotient (CQ) theory as developed by Earley and Ang in the business world. They defined cultural intelligence as 'the capability to deal effectively with other people with whom the person does not share a common cultural background and understanding'.[55] If one agrees with Kim's definition of culture it makes a whole lot of sense to continue developing our CQ – it will hardly come naturally. Kim defines culture as: 'culture is a group's way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving in the world, for which we need understanding and empathy to guide listeners toward Christian maturity'.[56]

I believe Kim is right in pointing out that 'Cultural intelligence (CQ) resembles emotional intelligence (EQ), which measures one's capacity for relational and interpersonal skills'.[57] In light of all of this, Kim then discusses the four stages proposed by Livermore to develop CQ. According to Livermore, these stages are:

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52. Kim (2017:6). He does so with reference to Livermore (2009a) as quoted below.

53. Livermore (2009a:26); Cf. also Kim (2017:6).

54. Nieman and Rogers (2001); cf. Kim (2017:46,120–121).

55. Earley and Ang (2003:12).

56. Kim (2017:5).

57. Kim (2017:5); He does so with reference to Alcántara (2015:198).

1. *CQ Drive*: What's your motivation for engaging with the cultural dimensions of   this project?
2. *CQ Knowledge*: What cultural differences will most influence this project?
3. *CQ Strategy*: How will you plan in light of the cultural differences?
4. *CQ Action*: How do you need to adapt your behavior to function effectively on this project?[58]

Earlier already, Livermore in his 'CQ Map'[59] had as one of the central dimensions of this development: 'love: desire -----> ability'. We are 'compelled'[60] by a desire to represent God in this culturally diverse world and to do so with cultural intelligence. In this regard, I want to come back to the research by Nieman and Rogers. According to them, those:

> [*W*]ho wish to take cross-cultural preaching seriously should grasp the importance of recognition. When we use that term, recognition means not only honor (respecting dignity) but also familiarity (developing appreciation) and finally insight (rethinking commitments) [...] We were guided, for example, by the theological image of 'neighbor' in order to *honor* those among whom we preach.[61]

For many of us in pulpits, this may ask for deep change: a change in our understanding of our own identity, our purpose, our culture and in our operational procedures[62] when we are in the pulpit – becoming and being a changing and changed person, being different. It is this kind of integrity that can never go unnoticed. Our continuing development of cultural intelligence and our continuing conversion towards loving this world (God loves so much that...[63]) is indeed a spiritual process. This is God's promise in baptism that he will continue to change us towards our purpose. We were ordained in baptism for this kind of desire and love, long before we were ordained to lead in the service of Word and Sacrament. I believe it is in place to back this up with a few remarks by Quinn in his book on *Deep Change.* He states that 'the book is about the process of becoming an internally driven leader who is able to draw on his or her own ultimate source of power'.[64] He sees 'continuous personal change' as a key to successful leadership:

> Personal change is a reflection of our inner growth and empowerment. Empowered leaders are the only ones who can induce real change. They can forcefully:

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58. Livermore (2015:4–5); cf. for a detail discussion Livermore (2015:43–186). Cf. Kim (2015:6–8). He writes (2015:6): '"Borrowing CQ as conceptual framework to guide this book, my goal is to employ cultural intelligence in our significant calling as preachers".'

59. Figure 1 in Livermore (2009b:13).

60. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14 (NIV).

61. Nieman and Rogers (2001:139).

62. Osmer (2008:178). He also refers to Quinn (1996:201) in this regard.

63. Cf. John 3:16.

64. Quinn (1996:xiv).

communicate at a level beyond telling. By having the courage to change themselves, they model the behavior they are asking of others. *Clearly understood by almost everyone, this message, based in integrity, is incredibly powerful.* It builds trust and credibility and helps others confront the risk of empowering themselves.[65]

Later on in the book Quinn refers back to the issue of effectiveness and integrity. In a chapter on 'confronting the integrity gap' he writes: 'The heart of effectiveness is building integrity through the constant observation of one's [the leader] lack of integrity'.[66] He continues, 'Ultimately deep change whether at the personal or the organizational level, is a spiritual process'.[67]

No cultural intelligence can develop without the acknowledgement of our predispositions, prejudices and so often even animosity towards 'the other'. Kim retells a story[68] of two friends, a giraffe and an elephant. The giraffe was living in his tailor-made house for a giraffe when his friend, the elephant, paid a visit. However much the two friends tried and whatever suggestions were made for the elephant to change in order to fit into giraffe's award-winning home, nothing worked. Eventually, the elephant said: 'But to tell you the truth, I am not sure that a house designed for a giraffe will ever really work for an elephant, not unless there are some major changes'. Giraffes represent the 'insiders' who determine the culture of the organisation. The elephants are the outsiders of whom it is expected to adapt and 'conform to the ways of the majority culture in order to fit in'.[69] Developing and growing cultural intelligence is part and parcel of missional integrity, but it does not come cheap. Certainly not in societies and culture where building our own houses according to our cultural liking was even theologically justified. Deep change within us regarding who are in the pulpit can motivate and expedite such deep change for missional joy and growth. We need to see 'others' differently. In their book on *The Integrity of the Body of Christ*, Mahlberg and Nessan write:

> Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* proposes that it takes the spiritual discipline of seeing the other through the eyes of Jesus Christ rather than through our human eyes: Now other people, in the freedom with which they were created, become an occasion for me to rejoice, whereas before they were only a nuisance and trouble for me.[70]

65. Quinn (1996:34–35; [*author's added emphasis*]).

66. Quinn (1996:76). He wrote this with reference to Torbert (1987:162–164).

67. Quinn (1996:78).

68. Quoted from Thomas, Jr. (1999:3–4); Kim (2017:xii).

69. Kim (2017:xii).

70. Bonhoeffer (1996:95).

These disciplines of integrity in worship expand our capacity to live lives of love well beyond our human limitations.[71]

If I may return to Quinn again and how he relates integrity in our process of deep change to vision and casting a vision:

> [*T*]rusting in our vision enough to start our journey into the chasm of uncertainty, believing that the resources will appear, can be very difficult. The fact that we have enough trust and belief in ourselves to pursue our vision is what signals to others that the vision is worth investing in. Our message is filled with integrity and good intentions. However, it is usually our actions, not our words that send the message. Acting on a vision that exceeds our resources is a test of our vision, faith, and integrity. A vision would lead them toward a plan that exceeded their present resources.[72]

It is only when we experience deep change that the new vision comes into view: 'When we can actually "see" our vision, we must be willing to put it into action'.[73] He, later on, relates this strongly to leaders and their integrity:

> Their source of credibility is their behavioral integrity. A leader must walk the walk and talk the talk Every action must be in alignment with the vision. To fail on this dimension is to reduce the vision to an exercise in hypocrisy.[74]

Elsewhere I have pointed out that I agree with Quinn stating that we often seek the reasons why 'the insiders' do not want to change only within the culture of the insiders. Quinn points out that to find the real source of this predicament we need not only look to the external 'system' that we often complain about. The problem is closer to home, 'it actually exists within each of us … Why does change not happen? It has to do with the unconscious map in us'.[75] Picking up on the quote above Quinn writes:

> Tackling deep change and facing a new future, we must be willing to get lost with confidence. This confidence, along with tenacity, will guide our actions as we begin to build the bridge toward our vision. It is only when we experience deep change that the new vision comes into view. When we can actually 'see' our vision, we must be willing to put it into action.[76]

My reason for labouring this point in reflecting on missional integrity is to drive home the necessity of the one in the pulpit becoming a true (albeit hesitantly so) example of knowing who we are in the diverse cultural world created and loved by God. This is the world, and we are an integral part of it. This world is our home address as the place we have been sent to as part of

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71. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:72).

72. Quinn (1996:85).

73. Quinn (1996:86).

74. Quinn (1996:125).

75. Quinn (1996:101, 102); cf. Nel et al. (2015:329) and also Nel's reference to Stoppels (2009:39–63).

76. Quinn (1996:85, 86).

God's sent people. We are all ordained in baptism to be his in and as part of this world. This is the necessity of growing our cultural and emotional intelligence.

A second golden thread in missional integrity in the pulpit is to my mind to grow into a missional hermeneutic reading of Scripture and preparing worship and preaching from within this mindset. Getting into this mode of being is often difficult and challenging. It is related to a deep ecclesiological reformation as part of deep change as explained earlier. This is not the place to argue the 'sentness' of God's people again. In Chapter 1 of this publication, I have tried to briefly explain the reasoning behind a new ecclesiological paradigm. The literature in this regard is vast.[77] Almost in summary, a reference to Johnson is helpful:

> A sense of shared identity and common calling, a belief among a congregation that it has been sent by God to a particular people at a particular time and place for a particular purpose, is central to being a missional church [...] For each congregation, though, the *Treasure in Clay Jars* researchers found that pastoral leadership was vital to the discernment of the congregation's vocation [...] In their preaching, these pastors helped shape the vocation of the congregation through specific and repeated messages, through repeated reinforcement of the core narrative of the congregation, or by regularly calling the congregation to remain open to God's leading.[78]

It is true that the idea of 'missional hermeneutics' is under construction.[79] It is however, some years later, very much clear what is meant by it. It is part and parcel of the missional conversation.[80] To faithfully be a sent and sending congregation, we need continuing *katartidzein*.[81] In the words of Guder:

> The missional church is a community where all members are learning what it means to be disciples of Jesus, The Bible has a continuing, converting, formative role in the church's life.[82]

Missional integrity on our side would mean developing missional faithfulness, and with cultural intelligence interprets the text through this missional

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77. Cf. Nel et al. (2015:385–405) for an extended list of publications in this regard. Also cf. Sunquist (2019).

78. Johnson (2015:112, 113). He refers to Barrett (ed. 2004). Cf. also the well-chosen subtitle of Johnson's (2015) book: *Equipping the Community for Faithful Witness.*

79. Cf. Footnote 25 in Johnson (2015:117). Cf. also Hunsberger (2011:309–321).

80. It is not the place to argue a case for missional hermeneutics here. For an in-depth and at-length reflection on it cf. Goheen (2016a), with special reference to the contributions of Goheen (2016b:3–27); Bauckham (2016:28–44); Hunsberger (2016:45–67), Goheen (2016c:241–262), Davy and Goheen (2016:330–338) on 'Missional Hermeneutics Bibliography'. A very important publication in this regard is Wright (2006:29–70); cf. also Adam et al. (2006) for their contribution to what they call *Reading Scripture with the church. Toward a hermeneutic for theological interpretation.*

81. Cf. Ephesians 4:1–16(12).

82. Guder (2004:59).

hermeneutical lens, asking the question, 'How did this text equip the missional church, then, for its vocation, and how does it do that today?'[83] I could recently be inspired again by how Paul relates whatever happens to him to the purpose of 'equipping' the congregation:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. [6] If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [7] And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.[84]

To my mind, rightly so, Johnson relates this understanding of the calling and being of the faith community to public worship. To use his own words: 'Since the community's life together is a public witness to a watching world. The core of that life, which is their worship of God, is also public witness'.[85] He continues by quoting Stutzman and Hunsberger:

> Worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future. Flowing out of its worship, the community has a vital public worship.[86]

> The ministry of being God's people in this world belongs to the people of God.[87]

That was and is God's purpose. In the pulpit, leading their worship, and preaching and teaching, we are the people who help them, not only to understand this but to be equipped (*katartidzein*):

> […] [12]for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up [13]until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.[88]

In reflection on the 8th pattern[89] in 'the witness of missional congregations', namely, 'missional authority', Johnson writes:

> The Holy Spirit gives the missional church a community of persons who, in a variety of ways and with a diversity of functional roles and titles, together practice the missional authority that cultivates within the community the discernment of

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83. Johnson (2015:118). His quote is from Guder (2007:257).

84. 2 Corinthians 1:3–7 (NIV). Cf. Proctor (2017).

85. Johnson (2015:125).

86. Johnson (2015:12); Stutzman and Hunsberger (2004:100).

87. Cf. the befitting subtitle of the book by Ogden (1990): *The new reformation: Returning the ministry to the people of God.*

88. Ephesians 4:12, 13. In Chapter 10 of this publication I come back to the core importance of equipping referred to in this letter.

89. With reference to Barrett (ed. 2004:139).

missional vocation and is intentional about the practices that embed that vocation in the community's life.[90]

Missional integrity is embedded in a deep theological or spiritual understanding of the congregation's calling to be God's people. And it is exactly this understanding that does not come easy. It is just to 'counter-culture' in nature to develop 'naturally'. Let me bring a remark by Sunquist concerning a remark by Newbigin. Let me quote Newbigin first. Johnson[91] refers to a remark by a reviewer (without a name) of Newbigin's book *Foolishness for the Greeks* that to criticise one's own culture is like 'trying to push a bus while sitting in it'. According to Johnson, Newbigin picked up on this remark in another book saying:

> Can I get off the bus? Can I stand outside myself and look at my way of thinking as a critic of it? More specifically, can this book […] the Bible, call into question the whole way in which I, as a member of this society, understand the world? […] Where can we find the Archimedean point outside our culture? Are we compelled to sit tight in the bus, even if it is headed over the precipice? Or can we appeal to the Bible to call our culture into question?[92]

Is Sunquist, who knows the work of Newbigin well, right when he starts his reflection on *Why Church*? with a chapter on 'Come'. He does so, saying: 'We come to Jesus: conversion; we come to the body of Christ: community; we come to worship: identity'. As to conversion, which to my mind is at stake when it comes to missional integrity, he says:

> Conversion is surrender. It is surrender to the one who can save us, who can comfort and guide us. But it is also surrender to our true identity, which is not found in us alone, but in God. We become our true selves, and our true selves are more glorious than we ever could have imagined before.[93]

Missional integrity is indeed about the conversion of the evangelist, the church.

And this does not come easy. For us, in pulpit and preaching, it may come at a high price. One may call it part of our 'cost of discipleship'.[94] In my home country, South Africa, many have paid the price for missional integrity in the sense explained above. When the well-known and respected South African theologian, David Bosch, in 2011 wrote the following he had already paid a high personal and professional price:

> The New Testament witnesses assume the possibility of a community of people, who, in the face of the tribulations they encounter, keep their eyes steadfastly on

90. Johnson (2015:134); For a description of Pattern 8, Missional Authority cf. Van Kooten and Barrett (2004:139–148); cf. also Guder (2000:163).

91. Johnson (2015:193).

92. Newbigin (1989:96).

93. Sunquist (2019:35).

94. Cf. Bonhoeffer (1953).

the reign of God by praying for its coming, by being his disciples, by proclaiming its presence, by working for peace and justice in the midst of hatred and oppression, and by looking and working toward God's liberating future.[95]

One more note is in place: a long-term commitment to the faith community we love enough to help them develop as a corporate faithful witness to the gospel – however tough that may be. This is where integrity and credibility meet. I will not use space to argue this issue again. I have done so elsewhere.[96] To put this element of integrity in context, at least a reference to what I wrote before:

> The better we understand the process (and the long-term nature of it), the better equipped we are to discern where we are in the process, the better we are equipped to give leadership in line with the will of God and the identity of the local church. It is almost a given that this presupposes long-term tenures by leaders. Deep change (reformation) takes time. It also requires a high level of trust among members and pastors. Pastors earn trust and this in itself takes time. Niemandt[97] and I agree on this point. He is correct in saying that trust and integrity are tremendously important in creating a new climate for transformation. So are relationships. Unless God in a very clear way calls pastors away, I maintain that pastors who are serious about and committed to the ministry of developing a missional local church stay long-term, if not for a lifetime. This long-term ministry challenges our calling to prepare God's people for ministry in this world.[98]

■ Conclusion

From the qualitative data, it is clear that pastors and academics alike are convinced that integrity plays an important role in developing missionally faithful congregations. It is one of the key concepts that came out of the answers to question 3.1.

What contribution are your unique gifts and personality making to the missional transformation of the congregation? It was part of a cluster of concepts, including:

- mixture of academic capability and piety
- living example
- missional attitude

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95. Bosch (2011:54). Cf. also Kritzinger and Saayman (2011) and a review on the book by Thomas (2011:515–516).

96. Nel et al. (2015:79–83).

97. Niemandt (2013:135, 147, 153).

98. Nel et al. (2015:83; [*author's added emphasis*]). Cf. a recent remark by the well-known Rick Warren. Reflecting on 2020 and the vision he casted some 40 years ago, he wrote under the heading 'Developing a God-Sized Vision for 2020': '2020 is a special year for Saddleback. When I shared that vision in 1980, *I made a commitment to spend at least 40 years at this church*'.

- feeling for context (I link this with what I discussed above under cultural intelligence)
- bridge builder
- the uniqueness of a feminine touch as valuable for the transformation of the congregation
- facilitating as a 'guide on the side' rather than a 'sage on the stage'.[99]

Needless to emphasise that there is always more to say about developing, cultivating missional congregations than the *being* of the pastor or leader. The theology, for example, by which such a pastor is saturated is critically important.[100] So are training and capabilities, skills and even more. But when all of these necessary 'skills' have not emerged in integrity and credibility the necessary trust, so important in any process of change, will not be cherished and developed. *Being* and *doing* are both relational in nature. The local church is constituted by relationships. Facilitating the transformation of congregations is in essence a journey of relational growth.

One may summarise it with a reference to how Horne wrote in 1975 already:

> Preaching cannot be dynamic unless the gospel has become personal in the life of the preacher [...] Believe the gospel [...] experience the gospel [...] preach the gospel as experienced [...] and live the gospel.[101]

And under the heading of experiencing the gospel: 'the preacher can speak with authority when objective truth has become subjective reality'.[102]

It is not an afterthought to refer here to the gift of preaching – taking everything said above into account. Preaching is indeed a gift[103] and as such implies integrity, requires integrity. Smith helps us with his distinction among three levels of *charisma*. In a well-documented book, he explores what he calls *The Quest for Charisma*:[104]

- Level one has to do with 'a function of rhetorical competence, particularly with regard to delivering a speech in an engaging way'. Such persons 'know how to use the theory of rhetoric to project a persona with which audiences can identify. They create a kind of presence that is entertaining, assuring, and/or endearing'.[105]

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99. Quoted from the Atlas.Ti analysis done by Dr. Nicolaas Matthee.

100. Cf. again what was said above as to the tension between the theology of the preacher and the person of the preacher.

101. Horne (1975:31, 32, 34, 36).

102. Horne (1975:32).

103. Cf. but 1 Peter 4:10–11.

104. Smith (2000).

105. Smith (2000:1).

- The second level of charisma 'is more difficult to achieve because it requires speakers to be "authentic," by which I mean they know who they are and they take responsibility for their actions and what they advocate. They also urge the same authenticity from their audiences'.[106]
- The third level of charisma 'is accessible to speakers who can reach beyond the material and associate in some way with the metaphysical, the transcendent, the spiritual, or some other form of perfection. Admittedly these concepts are a matter of faith'.[107]

Smith then continues to explore this 'spiritual realm by investigating the rhetorical technique of Jesus and his followers'.[108] Would it be oversimplifying a complex matter by saying that this third level is in essence when the giver is worshipped and not the gift: that deep discipleship truth of relatedness to the one who has called us: 'the oddity of a God who would call the likes of me to preach'.[109] And to know, '24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it'.[110,111]

106. Smith (2000:2).

107. Smith (2000:2). Of special interest is his chapter on 'Authentic Charisma' with an insightful table that explains the 'Complexity of Charisma Matrix' (2000:179–204; table on p. 180).

108. He relates his understanding of this to the second and third stages of Kierkegaard's existentialism: The 'moral or "ethical" stage because it requires individuals to reflect on how they make decisions, particularly concerning intent and consequences. The third stage is the "spiritual," the transcendent – that which is divine illuminated' (Smith 2000:2). He, unfortunately so, does not give a source in this case. In chapter 7 (Smith 2000:157–177) he describes in more detail 'An existential approach to Charisma' and also discusses Kierkegaard (in Smith 2000:161–164).

109. Willimon (2015a:ix).

110. 1 Thessalonians 5:24. (NIV).

111. For the Chapter 9 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

Worship and preaching: Equipping disciples to seek the *Sjalom* of the Kingdom

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The simplest and most comprehensive way of stating the content of the commission to the church is therefore to be found in Jesus' initial word: 'Peace be with you'. Peace, shalom, the all-embracing blessing of Yahweh – this is what the presence of the kingdom is. The church is a movement launched into the life of the world to bear in its own life God's gift of peace for the life of the world. It is sent, therefore, not only to proclaim the kingdom but to bear in its own life the presence of the kingdom

– Leslie Newbigin[1]

I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of
the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live it.

– Leslie Newbigin[2]

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1. Newbigin (1995:48–49, 1978:54).

2. Newbigin (1989:227).

■ Introduction

As a research team we are deeply convinced that worship and preaching play a major role in the becoming of a missional congregation. We also confess that this role will be more effectively played when worship and preaching are well-coordinated and integrated with all the other modes of ministry.[3] We confess that worship and preaching alone (on their own) will not do it, but this will also not happen without worship and preaching as vital, core ministries done in the name of the Triune God.[4]

■ Equipping as overarching purpose of ministry

It is not the time or place to exegetically discover what is meant by *katartismon* as the central concept in Ephesians 4:12.[5] It is, however, necessary to emphasise that this is what the function (or so-called offices) as gifts to the congregation is all about:

> [*T*]o equip (τὸν καταρτισμὸν) his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.[6]

Elsewhere I have stated it this way:

> In several parts of the New Testament it is stressed that the faithful have received gifts. The Father and Son grant gifts through the Spirit to every believer […] It is important to mention it here, because this truth helps us to understand the content and reason for the 'building up'. These gifts help us to build up the congregation.[7] According to Ephesians 4, for instance, the congregation is built up when the believers (with the gifts they have received) are equipped and trained for service. Their service is in fact the building up of the body – individually and together with the 'joints' (the special ministries[8]) given by God in order to train them. The latter task, to equip or train, further explains the content of building up. The word used in Ephesians 4:12 (*katartismos*) points to equipping the believers for service. It bears the character of preparing them to function effectively, fulfilling them, bringing

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3. Cf. again Nel (2015:63-79); Marais (2018); Nel (2009b). Cf. also Chapter 8 of this publication.

4. Cf. Anderson (1979:6–21); 'Ministry is what we do in the name of the triune God' (Anderson 1979:9). Cf. also a remark by Rienstra (2018:n.p.): 'Other ministries develop from the central ministry of worship' and 'Ministries are reflected in worship: worship echoes' what happens'.

5. 12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ. (NT Greek text).

6. Ephesians 4:12–13 (NIV).

7. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:1–11; Dulles (1980:22).

8. For how we need all of these 'given' ministries or functions see Gibbs (2009:159–160); Hirsch and Catchim (2012:xix).

them up to standard, helping them to fulfil their calling and equipping them.[9] One may put it like this: It is the function of the special ministries to help the other believers (each with their own gift[s] granted by God for service) by training them to do what God expects them to do with their gifts to build the congregation. In this sense we all need to be prepared for our participation in the mission of God.[10]

■ Worship and preaching as equipping for witness, testimony, and confession

In a book which is so relevant to the research at stake in this publication, Johnson explored the work of three theologians: Thomas G. Long, Anna C. Florence and David Lose.[11] The three, respectively, see preaching as witness, testimony and confession. The purpose of Johnson's research is to develop what he calls a 'missional homiletic of witness' to eventually 'equip the community for witness to the world'.[12] His analysis of the three authors is worth every minute of reading. Given the limited space to bring this discussion fully into play within the purpose of this chapter, let me quote Johnson when he says, leading into his interpretation of the three authors:

> Indeed, given the many theological and theoretical differences among them, it is remarkable that these three authors are unanimous in arguing that witness is the most appropriate way to understand and practice the ministry of preaching today.[13] The way in which Johnson brings the interpretation of these authors into a 'dialogue' with the ecclesiology of Barth is remarkable.[14] One might say that he works with these four authors in developing a 'missional homiletics of witness'.[15] Johnson states that '*For Barth, witness is not a way of preaching, but preaching is a way of witness*'. Barth argues that every activity in which the church is engaged is an act of witness.[16]

He builds a statement like this on Barth's understanding of the church as a community that exists as Christ exists:

> 'The first is that the Christian community exists as called into existence and maintained in existence by Jesus Christ as the people of His witnesses bound,

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9. Cf. Grosheide (1954:67), Delling in Kittel Vol. 1 (1964:476), Roberts (1983:117), and Hogue (n.d.:104).

10. Nel (2015b:17).

11. Johnson (2015:22). The three authors he refers to are: Long (1989, 2005); Florence (2000, 2007); Lose (2003).

12. Johnson (2015:139ff., 195ff.).

13. Johnson (2015:29). In a footnote he explains that and how the three share a similar theological background as having studied (and taught in the case of Long) at Princeton Theological Seminary.

14. Johnson (2015:67–106). Cf. his references to Barth CD IV/3 (1958b).

15. Cf. among others Johnson (2015:103ff., 137–138, 139ff.).

16. Johnson (2015:103; [*emphasis in original*]).

engaged, and committed to Him'.[17] This means that the being of the community is grounded in God and in Jesus Christ as its Lord. Moreover, the community exists as Christ exists, not simply because he exists. By this Barth means that the being of the community is 'a predicate, dimension and form of existence of His'.[18]

Space does not allow to explore this in more depth. It is, however, clear that the faith community is being equipped for witness by people in pulpits who themselves are witnesses, testifying and confessing the very essence of what God did in Christ. As Barth has said elsewhere, even being and enjoying being equipped:

> [*W*]onderful and glorious as this is, it is not an end in itself even in what it includes for its individual members. The enlightening power of the Holy Spirit draws and impels and presses beyond its being as such, beyond all the reception and experience of its members, beyond all that is promised to them personally. And only as it follows this drawing and impelling is it the real community of Jesus Christ.[19]

Johnson explores how Barth sees this witness as *service of and by the community*. According to Johnson:

> Barth has described the people of God as they find themselves in world events; he has argued that the community exists for the world and that it has the specific commission of confessing Jesus Christ to the world.[20]

For Barth, witness is the common thread running through our service in and to the world:

> The community must not only declare the gospel, but also unfold and explain it, making it intelligible to those who hear.[21]

According to Barth:

> The first and fundamental form of oral witness is the praise of God: the affirmation, approval and extolling of God for who God is and what God has done [...] The second basic form or oral witness is preaching.[22]

In the seven criteria for missions, the first one is of special importance here: Missions is pursued 'in the belief that everything necessary for the salvation of these people has already been accomplished'.[23] This is the good news.

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17. Barth CD IV/3.2,752.

18. Barth CD IV/3.2,755; cf. Johnson (2015:79).

19. Barth CD IV/3.2,764; cf. Johnson (2015:81). Cf. Bellinger (2014:20, 21) who refers to the importance of preaching as equipping members: 'For the regulars who have no other source of growth in discipleship, the message from the pulpit may be their only faith formation moment... The quality of the homily shapes those regular attendees who are on the edge of parish life even more than it forms those who are at the center'.

20. Johnson (2015:91).

21. Johnson (2015:93). In Barth's own words: 'To explain the gospel is to define and describe the nature, existence and activity of God as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer' (Barth CD IV/3.2, 849).

22. Johnson (2015:96); Barth CD IV/3.2, 865,867.

23. Johnson (2015:98); Barth CD IV/3.2, 873ff.

'The good news in a word is Jesus, whom to know is life, whom to love is joy, whom to serve is freedom. He is the eternal gospel'.[24] Or to say it with Barth: 'For to proclaim Jesus Christ is to attest the goodness of God, no more, no less, no other'.[25]

To conclude this section on people in pulpits being witnesses, let us say it with one of the four participants referred to above, Tom Long:

> We need to think of ourselves as more than just 'church people', as more than people who go about our daily business and who have a quiet, almost secret compartment in our lives where we are religious. We cannot be human, much less faithful to God, if we keep silent. We must begin to think of ourselves – dare we claim the name? – as *witnesses*.[26]

■ Worship and preaching: Equipping disciples to seek the *sjalom* of the *Kingdom*

■ Disciples make Kingdom-seeking disciples

Discipleship and seeking the Kingdom of God are high on the agenda in the missional conversation,[27] and I would say rightly so. In the process of cultivating and developing missional congregations, we cannot escape a serious rethinking and rediscovery[28] of this core metaphor for who we are. The literature is already vast and still growing. I have joined in this discussion with five articles, referring to some of the most recent and important resources.[29] This is not the time and place to try and argue a case for discipleship and disciplemaking or discipling again. My purpose here is different. But I cannot but refer again to a remark by Van Aarde, the New Testament scholar, referring

24. Armstrong (1987:54).

25. Barth CD IV/3.2, 798; cf. also Johnson (2015:86).

26. Long (2004:20). Cf. also Long (2009:27–54) and his 'argument' with Marcus Borg (2009:79–110). For readers interested in the teaching of preaching cf. also Long and Tisdale (2008).

27. It is well worth looking at some of the literature that goes with the Conference on World Missions by die World Council of Churches, held in 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania. Two volumes that capture the essence of being disciples are the publication by the Noort and Van der Giessen-van Velzen (2018) under the title: *Geroepen om leerling te zijn* [Called to be a learner or pupil]. The booklet contains translated articles published in the second and original source I refer to: Anders and Biehl (2018) – especially the article by Biehl on '*Zur Nachfolge berufen*' (2018:105–117). For the Dutch translation of an article by Kahl on 'following in the New Testament' see Noort and Van der Giessen-van Velzen (2018:27–34) in Anders and Biehl (2018:143–148). Also cf. Geluk (2015).

28. Cf. Osmer (1990:141) for his well-versed description of what this means: 'Rediscovery is the activity of discerning once again the meaning and power of tradition that has been repressed or forgotten. Recovery goes further. It involves the positive evaluation and appropriation of that tradition, using what has been rediscovered to structure present patterns of thought and action'.

29. Cf. Nel (2009b, 2015a, 2017a, 2017b) and Nel and Schoeman (2019). So did many others. Cf. for example Niemandt (2016). Cf. also Botman (2000). Cf. Schoon (2018) to whom I have referred in Chapter 1 already.

to the Great Commission as the manifesto of the New Testament, putting it at par with the 'Hear o Israel' text in the Old Testament.[30] We are dealing with a core value and truth in our understanding and being the people of God now.

My intention in this chapter is to highlight the importance of equipping learners (disciples) to be God's people *of the way*, *on the way*, again.[31] Being disciples, and becoming even more so, as we learn what it means, includes at least the following paragraphs.

A growing sense of belonging to and being obedient to King, Jesus, the Christ. If any local church ever wants to be and become a 'sign, an instrument and foretaste of this Kingdom',[32] this has to be clear: we are under the rule, the Headship of the caring, creator King, God in Christ. McKnight phrases it as such: 'It is good to seek the common good, but not at the expense of personally surrendering to King Jesus. If the kingdom story is the true story, in fact, *there is no good for the common good until humans surrender to King Jesus*'.[33] In his commentary on the letter to the Romans, he indeed helps by stating the inescapable consequences of grace when he even titled the book: *Reading Romans backwards.* His intention is to let us see that Paul's ultimate purpose is to help followers of the Christ live lives which befit the grace bestowed upon them.[34] He describes the meaning of chapters 12–16 under the concept of 'Christoformity'.[35]

When local churches are no longer content by playing 'church' and adapt to the reigning cultural trends and become serious about what it means to be disciples of the King, seeking the Kingdom, this is serious. It may be life threatening to pastors but eventually lifesaving (setting us free) to be what God has created us to be. Trinitarian thinking, which should be part and parcel of our very theological being, leads to and informs a new Kingdom vocabulary. I wish my readers could read this in Henau's own language (Dutch), but let me try to give some insight into how he puts it:

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30. Van Aarde (2006:112) with reference to Deuteronomy 6:4. Van Aarde wrote this with reference to Von Harnack in Bruner (1990:1094) and Ernst Lohmeyer (1967:416).

31. Cf. Acts 11:26 where the μαθητὰς were called Χριστιανούς for the first time. In the Complete Jewish Bible it is translated as follows: 'Also it was in Antioch that the *talmidim* for the first time were called "Messianic"'.

32. Nikolajsen (2015:58) with reference to Newbigin (1987:12).

33. McKnight (2014:37). Cf. a remark by Padilla (1985:200) as to the importance of the reality of The Kingdm of God. He says: 'To speak of the Kingdom of God is to speak of God's redemptive purpose for the whole creation and of the historical vocation that the church has with regard to that purpose here and now, "between the times"…The mission of the church can be understood only in light of the Kingdom of God'.; cf. also DeBorst (2016:57).

34. With reference to Romans 1–11.

35. Cf. the 4 chapters McKnight (2019:27–50): 'Christoformity – Paul's Vision for a Lived Theology of Peace; Christoformity Is Embodied God Orientation; Christoformity Is Embodied Body-of-Christ Orientation; Christoformity Is Public Orientation'.

God's kingdom establishes a new world in the midst of this old world. The latter becomes apparent in the fact that people in this old world begin a new life, without fear, with confidence, comforted, healed, in one word: free. Jesus breaks through, as it were, the limits set by mankind, and thus opens up a new space of freedom.[36]

McKnight puts it thus:

If the kingdom story is the true story, then we are summoned by it to surrender our pride and our desire to rule, to lay them before the One who died our death, who was buried, who was raised, and who is now exalted at the right hand of the Father as the King. We are to turn from our own ruling to the ruling of the King. In the grace of this surrender we are converted by the power of God's new creation Spirit.[37]

I believe that Wells is correct when he writes that:

Rather than using Jesus as a kind of safety valve, an extra gallon of gasoline we can draw on when we forgot to fill up the tank one morning, we should be thinking like the four stretcher bearers, 'What is the kind of gesture that makes Jesus smile because he recognises himself in it?'[38]

Will this call for repentance and conversion? For sure. The Kingdom come and coming always does.[39] With reference to discipleship, Wells writes: 'Preaching and worship in vital congregations calls people to conversion, to a new way of looking at the world, to a turning around of all their accustomed patterns of thinking and living'.[40]

Add to this the very important research by McKnight as to the meaning of conversion with Jesus:

So much is this clear that we are led to conclude that *for Jesus conversion was a highly personalized and individualized challenge to awaken to the new possibilities inherent in the kingdom which he was announcing* [...] It is far more accurate to say that Jesus revealed the implications of the kingdom for a variety of individuals, and each of those individuals was to take up that challenge as an individual. But this is not individualism[41] [...] Jesus saw conversion as consequences in behaviour [...] Jesus measured conversion by behavioural standards – by love, by holiness, by righteousness, and by mercy. It is not about repeating a formula, or belonging to a

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36. Henau (2005:15): '*Gods rijk sticht midden in deze oude wereld een nieuwe wereld. Deze laatste wordt zichtbaar in het feit dat mensen in deze oude wereld een nieuwe leve beginnen, zonder angst, vol vertrouwen, getroost, geheeld, in één woord: vrij. Jezus doorbreekt als het ware de grenzen die de mens zich gesteld want, en opent zo een nieuwe ruimte van vrijheid*'.

37. McKnight (2014:36).

38. Wells (2008:107); cf. among many other texts Ephesians 5:8–20.

39. Cf. for but one Biblical reference, Matthews 4:17 (NIV): 'From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."'.

40. Wells (2019:115).

41. McKnight (2002:177).

church, or praying a prayer; it is about following Jesus as the shaping of one's core identity.[42]

Rediscovering the meaning of discipleship in being church asks for nothing less than this deep change, deep and continuing conversion.[43]

Another truth concerning our rediscovery of being disciples is *to learn as we follow*, learning what it means to live life the Jesus way. How to be and become even more so the Jesus People of this world.[44] It is only within this ever-deepening relationship with the Lord himself, only in following him daily that we learn what the Kingdom means and how he brought it and sought it himself.[45] He has indeed in person, word and deed, set an example to what the Kingdom is and how it is to be 'seek' by his disciples. *Imitatio Christi* is our calling.[46] But this can only be learned in a following relatedness to him. It is the called people who get to know him even better on a daily basis. Already since St. Augustine and St. Anselm, we underwrite the truth of '*fides quaerens intellectum*' – faith seeking understanding. It means that faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ prompts a questioning search for deeper understanding. Migliori even titled his book *Faith Seeking Understanding*.[47] According to Migliori, Augustine used it, meaning 'I believe in order that I may understand', and Anselm coined the phrase as we know it. With reference to St. Augustine, St. Anselm, Barth and Luther, Migliori writes:

> A common conviction of these theologians, and of the classical theological tradition generally, is that Christian faith prompts inquiry, searches for deeper understanding, dares to raise Questions. How could we ever be finished with the quest for a deeper understanding of *God?* What would be the likely result if we lacked the courage to ask. Do I rightly know who God is and what God wills? [...] As Luther goes on to explain, our god may in fact be money, possessions, power, fame, family, or nation. What happens when those who say they believe in God stop asking whether what their heart really clings to is the one true God or an idol?[48]

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42. McKnight (2002:180, 181). Cf. also Ferguson (2019) for his book *The radical invitation of Jesus: how accepting the invitation of Jesus can lead to a living faith and fulfilling life for Today.*

43. For a good reflection on how we, over many years, have impoverished the church in a Christendom paradigm of what it means to be church cf. Guder (2000). The title of the book (*The Continuing Conversion of the Church*) captures what he calls 'reductionisms' (Guder 2000:120ff.).

44. Cf. McPhee (1978) as he calls Christians 'Good News People'.

45. Cf. Nel (2009b:2of11): 'While rabbis and Greek philosophers all presented a specific subject to their pupils, Jesus Christ presents (sacrifices) himself. Two things constitute Biblical discipleship: • acceptance into a personal relationship with Him who calls you to belong to Him; and a vocation, which means that you have to be a follower and pupil of the Christ who has called you' (cf. Rengstorf 1967:446).

46. Cf. John 13; 1 John 2; Ephesians 5:1–2.

47. Cf. Migliori (2014).

48. Cf. Luther, Larger Catechism (1529) and in Tappert (1959:365). He said: 'money and possessions – on which he fixes his whole heart. It is the most common idol on earth'. And as to God: 'To cling to Him with all our heart is nothing else than to entrust ourselves to him completely' (Tappert 1959:366).

Christian faith is at bottom trust in and obedience to the free and gracious God made known in Jesus Christ.[49]

McKnight is probably correct that this challenges the local church to help people of faith that 'kingdom mission means an ever-deepening discipleship into the story'[50] [of the kingdom]. Worship, preaching, help with the personal reading of the Bible and our Christian Education programmes for all ages should help disciples learn in relationship with the King what the King and his Kingdom stands for.

In 1986, Dingemans wrote that his choice for *mathetes* as a concept to carry what is supposed to be happing in Christian Education is influenced by this understanding of discipleship: 'We are not departing from the content of faith and how it should be taught, our departure point is the learning human who develops in her or his contact with faith and the church...we therefor do not start with subject didactics asking how we teach for faith, but start with the question how we come to faith, *how people become learners or pupils of the Lord*' (Freely translated from the Dutch).[51]

In a summary of his remarks on helping members get to know, to get saturated by the Kingdom story, McKnight puts it this way:

Kingdom mission, then, is local church mission:

- Evangelism
- Worship
- Catechesis: wisdom
- Fellowship: love
- Edification: advocacy
- Discipleship: nurture
- Gifts: Spirit unleashed

The only place kingdom work is and can be done is in and through the local church when disciples (kingdom citizens, church people) are doing kingdom mission.[52]

How often this is true: deepening the spiritual relationship of love and commitment with God, Lord of all, is the key to all the change needed to become a kingdom-seeking disciple community.[53] I believe that this links up

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49. Migliori (2014:2–3). He does so with reference to Outler, Augustine (1955:1338); St. Anselm (1951:178.33); Barth (1964:36). See references for detail.

50. McKnight (2014:37). Cf. also Goheen (2016) helping disciples 'reading the Bible missionally'.

51. Dingemans (1986:81; [*author's added emphasis*]). The original Dutch is: '*We gaan niet uit van het "geloofsgoed" dat "overgedragen" moet worden, maar van de lerende mens, die in zijn ontwikkeling ook in aanraking komt met "geloof" en "kerk". Wij beginnen daarom niet met een "geloofsdidactiek", die de vraag stelt, hoe men het geloof kan onderrichten, maar met een "mathetiek", die de vraagt stelt, hoe mensen tot geloof komen; hoe mensen "leerling van de Heer" worden*'.

52. McKnight (2014:208).

53. Cf. *The Oaklane Story* for the change of a local church to an inclusive multi-cultural serving community (Armstrong 1979:13–20[16]); Armstrong (1971).

with what I called elsewhere the missional integrity of the leaders in local churches[54] – in this case being disciples ourselves. It should be as clear as daylight that *we learn as we follow*. This journey or 'way' approach to being church is very much what White pleads for in his book on the *Seeking Church*.[55] In an argument well-developed by him, he argues against a 'propositional' approach to faith in favour of a relational approach where doubt is part of the process. So, his focus is not on the 'seeking' dimension of say Luke 15, but an attitude of us as disciples not being so absolutely certain of what we believe, but seeking meaning on this journey of being learners. As we discover the Kingdom story, learning on a daily and weekly (worshipping) basis, we are driven by this seeking drive not to miss anything – and to discover ever more in full what does it mean to represent God in Christ, under the guidance of the Spirit.[56]

I cannot but remember a prayer by Moses as recorded on the way from Egypt to Kanaan, in the desert: 'If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people'.[57]

A seeking church prays in such a way. We learn that the way we are on is not all that easy. The cultural certainties of Christendom and of the *volkskirche* are gone. We experience that only the presence of the King is enough. Our blessedness, joy and future are safe with him and only in him. We have found back our powerlessness and exactly in that lies our 'authority'. We have something to say not because we 'have the say' in society. We have rediscovered the joy of being the people who know how dependant we are on God.[58] If I may call upon a New Testament scholar again:

> If we put these first three beatitudes together, we find Jesus blessing the oppressed and the poor for their powerful trust in God, their willingness to wait on God for justice and the kingdom, and for their devotion that runs so deep they mourn over the condition of Israel and implicate themselves in the causes of that condition. These are the sorts of people, not the typical ones, that are (and will be) in the kingdom.[59]

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54. For more on this see chapter 9 of this publication.

55. White (2009).

56. Cf. White (2009:13–49).

57. Exodus 33:13 (NIV).

58. The current 1983 Afrikaans translation of οἱ πραεῖς, in Matthews 5:3 (NIV): 'poor in spirit'. Cf. Van Aarde (2006) to rediscover how we find happiness and motivation in our 'powerlessness' [*magteloosheid*] that makes us blessed people 'for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (NIV).

59. McKnight (2013:43).

Is this not exactly what makes faith communities a 'fellowship of differents'? When McKnight identifies the church as such a fellowship he challenges us, as people on the way of learning, what being disciples means. In his own words:

> God has designed the church – and this is the heart of Paul's mission – to be *a fellowship of difference and differents.* It is a mixture of people from all across the map and spectrum: men and women, rich and poor. It is a mix of races and ethnicities; Caucasians, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, Indian Americans – I could go on, but you see the point. The church I grew up in, bless its heart, was a fellowship of sames and likes. There was almost no variety in our church. It was composed entirely of white folks with the same beliefs, the same tastes in music and worship and sermons and lifestyle; men wore suits and ties and women wore dresses and not a few of them wore church hats.

> Getting the church right is so important. The church is *God's world-changing social experiment* of bringing unlikes and differents to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. When this happens, we show the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation and life together are designed by God to be. The church is God's show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family. But there's something deeper going on too. Church life should model the Christian life.[60]

One more remark with regard to the truth of disciples seeking the Kingdom of God is a brief reminder that disciples would normally be considered as 'church' in this world. But we have to remember that the church and the Kingdom are not identical. The church is in more than one way relative in importance when it comes to the Kingdom. The defining issue is God's Kingdom, and the church only has relevance when it is seeking first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness – and in doing so continue to change into such a Kingdom-seeking faith community. When the Kingdom has come in its full glory the church will be no more and will gladly confess: it is finished! In the meantime, while we seek and wait, we are supposed to be an image of the Kingdom we seek![61] It is exactly when the church realises her relativity in this way, that she rediscovers her God-given relevancy.

◼ Disciples make peace-seeking disciples

To develop a peace-seeking local church is to develop disciples who grow ever more sensitive to justice and the wholeness of life for everyone in God's world, including the ecosystem (*kosmos*). It is not necessary for me to repeat here what I have covered elsewhere in some detail under the heading of the words of Matthews 6:33: 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' (NIV).[62]

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60. McKnight (2015:16).

61. Cf. Nel et al. (2015b:50-59) and Heyns (1987:388).

62. Cf. Nel (2017a, 2017b).

My purpose here is to reflect on the concepts that came out of the empirical interviews: the Kingdom plays a great role according to the pastors interviewed in developing missional congregations. And add to this the complex nature of what this might mean in South Africa, given the history and the many legacies of *apartheid.* My attempt is to focus on three (four) core values for any Kingdom-seeking church:

• Peace and Forgiveness.
• Peace and Transformation.
• Peace and Justice.

Anyone of the readers of a book like this will know that there is no way to cover these three (four) in any depth. It is not my intention. I hope that some of the sources referred to may help. My purpose is more to sensitise for what should not be missed in our everyday being and seeking.

☐ Peace

In the case of explaining in some way what 'peace' denotes, I draw on my 2018 publication – for two reasons. One is to draw attention to the fact that all God's disciples young and old are involved in seeking peace and secondly to bring to the table the remarks by scholars I quoted then. In the book referred to I discussed the *shalom Jahve* as an important purpose in Youth Ministry.[63] For my understanding then, I quote:

> The very use of this word led to the conclusion that shalom is relational in nature and '*denotes* a relationship rather than a state'.[64] For the believer in Israel shalom was God's gift. The gift that brings about this well-being comes from *Jahwe*. While shalom also plays a strong role in the prophets, and while there is certainly an eschatological side to this peace, 'we are forced to say that in its most common use *shalom* is an emphatically social concept'[65] In this regard, there is a strong link between God's righteousness and God's peace.[66]

Fuellenbach, in a good book on the Kingdom of God, states the meaning as follows:

> *Shalom* is one of those words in Scripture which cannot be translated literally. This word and its derivatives occur more than 350 times in the Old Testament. The root meaning of *shalom* in the Old Testament is 'to be sound', 'to be safe'. It means 'well-being' with a strong material emphasis.[67]

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63. Nel (2018:203–206).

64. Von Rad (1964:402).

65. Von Rad (1964:406).

66. Cf. Von Rad (1964:406) and Quell (1964:177).

67. Fuellenbach (1995:167). In his 2002 publication *Church. Community for the Kingdom,* he writes: shalom thus includes a social vision: 'the dream of a world in which such well-being belongs to everybody' (Fuellenbach 2002:9). This publication is a 'must' for pastors interested in facilitating the becoming of peace seeking communities for the Kingdom.

I have also referred to Fowler's concept of the public church and related that to the *shalom* of the Kingdom of God. He borrowed the term '*Ecclesiogenesis*' from Boff[68] to explain what he means. It refers to the process of revitalising the local church from within and from the ground level. The description of such a public church and its primary goals is important in the context of goal-setting for Youth Ministry. Fowler[69] lists seven things crucial to building up or developing a public church or, in my terminology, to strengthen the *shalom Jahwe* with regard to the perspective of the Kingdom. According to Fowler, 'public church' implies:

• fosters a clear sense of Christian identity and commitment
• manifests a diversity of membership in congregations
• consciously prepares and supports members for vocation and witness in a pluralistic society
• balances, nurtures group solidarity within with forming and accountability in vocation of work and public life beyond the walls of the church
• evolves a pattern of authority and governance that keeps pastoral and lay leadership initiative in fruitful balance
• offers its witness in publicly visible and publicly intelligible ways
• shapes a pattern of paideia for children, youth and adults that works towards the combining of Christian commitment with vocation in 'public'.[70]

In discussing the Beatitudes in his commentary on Matthew, McKnight points out that there are 'Three Blessings on Those Who Create Peace'.[71] Taking the importance of the first beatitude into account, he wrote as to the whole:

> The antithesis of the 'poor in spirit' is the rich oppressor; one hears this antagonism in James 1:9–11; 2:1–13; and 4:13–5:6. We need to remind ourselves that each beatitude is a reversal of cultural values: the self-dependent or wealthy oppressor is at odds with the economy of the kingdom.[72]

For the sake of the importance of this argument, I am going to quote extensively what this New Testament scholar with his passionate heart for the missional character of being the church writes. With reference to the 7th beatitude[73] *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God* (NIV), he says:

> The 'peacemaker' is someone who is reconciled to God, knows God is for peace, and seeks reconciliation instead of strife and war. Jewish expectations for the messianic kingdom were for peace; hence, a peacemaker is a kingdom person

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68. Boff (1986).

69. Fowler (1991:155–170).

70. Fowler (1991:155–170).

71. McKnight (2013:46).

72. McKnight (2013:39).

73. Matthew 5:9. McKnight (2013:46–49) refers to many other sources.

(Is 9:5–6; Zch 9:9–10). That is, the Beatitudes look at people now through the lens of an Ethic from Beyond. Kingdom realities are now occurring through the peacemakers [...]

This beatitude turns its focus on those who, instead of seeking justice through violence, which remained a Christian temptation [...] Bonhoeffer sketched what would in reality become his own virtue and fate: 'But their peace will never be greater than when they encounter evil people in peace and are willing to suffer from them'.[74]

Peacemaking... is an active entrance into the middle of warring parties for the purpose of creating reconciliation and peace. But neither is it soft-pedalling around real but not identical differences – that is, between those who have experienced apartheid and those who inflicted apartheid, between those who split a church and those who choose to remain, between a husband and wife who are struggling to get along, between two colleagues at the office or between parents and children who cannot seem to find enough common ground to trust one another. The peacemaker, as the person whom Jesus blesses, seeks to reconcile – not by pretending there are no differences or by suppressing differences, but by creating love of the other that transcends differences or that permits the people to join hands in spite of differences. His framing of moral relations in terms of love (McKnight 22:34–40) and servanthood (McKnight 20:20–28) provide foundations for peacemaking.[75]

Peacemaking and justice or righteousness, which follow in verse 10, belong together in the Jewish world of Jesus. What makes this connection secure are these kinds of texts:

Love and faithfullness meet together; *righteousness and peace* kiss each other.[76]

Of the greatness of his government and *peace* there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.[77]

The fruit of that righteousness will be *peace*\its effect will be quietness and confidence forever.[78]

Let me in summary link up with a paragraph by Sider. Both *shalom* and εἰρήνη:

[C]onvey the consistency between life and peace, not only because of its conciseness, but more importantly because it captures the biblical vision of wholeness. Translated most often in English as 'peace', it can also be defined as

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74. Bonhoeffer (2003:108).

75. McKnight (2013:47), cf. his sentence: 'Jesus will speak of reconciliation on other occasions, and these perhaps are the best commentary on "peacemakers" (McKnight 5:21–26, 43–48; 6:14–15; 18:21–35)'.

76. Psalm (85:10; [*author's added emphasis*]).

77. Isaiah 9:7; [author's added emphasis]).

78. Isaiah 32:17; [*author's added emphasis*])

'the fulness of life'. *Shalom* is what results when God reigns as Redeemer and Lord. Life and peace characterise *shalom* existence. Other core elements, such as mercy, justice and the restoration of creation are also part of *shalom*; and when I say *life* and *peace*, I surely keep these other things in mind. As the National Council of Catholic Bishops' 'Challenge of Peace' statement says, 'No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human person'.[79]

☐ Peace and forgiveness

Forgiveness and peace go together like grace and a life of thanksgiving. It is part of our identity as baptised people that God is committed to our forgiveness of sin. God's justice is related to this as Paul has pointed out in 2 Corinthians 5:11–21. Our involvement in reconciliation is the fruit of our own reconciliation. The one cannot 'be' without the other. The one presupposes the other:

> [18] All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: [19] that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. [20] We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. [21] God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.[80]

As Newbigin has put it: 'The forgiveness of sins is what makes possible the gift of God's peace'.[81] This peace is made whole when we as forgiven people forgive others 'just as in Christ God forgave you'.[82] We, people of faith, cannot live fully without forgiving the other, unconditionally so – as we have been forgiven long before we even dreamt of confessing our sins. As a matter of fact we confess because there is forgiveness. Forgiveness is constituted by what happens outside of us, done by God in Christ, then already. Confession (however necessary it might be) is a relationship-restorer and not a forgiveness-earner. Christians forgive. We may hope for a confession as it will restore and heal a relationship, but not for someone to earn our forgiveness. This understanding has critical and positive consequences for every developing missional congregation. There are even theories of how this benefits a healthy brain restoration and functioning as it does what is needed for humans to

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79. Sider (2012:122–123). He gives no indication to the source for the quote from the 'National Council of Catholic Bishops' "Challenge of Peace"'. Cf. also for an even deeper insight into this Gowan (1986); Hauerwas (1983); McKnight (2019).

80. 2 Corinthians 5:18–21 (NIV).

81. Newbigin (1978:54).

82. Ephesians 4:32; Cf. also Colossians 3:13 (NIV).

think differently and even have an effect on the prevention of Alzheimer's disease.[83]

As Bible-believing disciples, it is easy to see the relation of not forgiving and the root of bitterness. And if this is true, which I believe it is, is it not true that local churches are more often than not 'assemblies of bitter people' rather than peace-seeking forgiven and forgiving people? It is good to refer to some verses within three powerful biblical contexts:

> [31]Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. [32]Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

> [14]Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. [15]See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

> [14]Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.[84]

When we think of local faith communities as relational communities, the argument used by Mahlberg and Nessan makes so much sense. They wrote this as part of a paragraph on 'Protecting and respecting the integrity of each sermon' saying:

> A Trinitarian understanding of God – and of human beings as those created by this Triune God – gives a qualitatively different shape to our interpretation of human being [...] Just as the One God is constituted through the dynamic relationships among three persons of the Trinity in life-giving mutuality (*perichoresis*), so human beings find their fulfilment not in pursuit of individualising agenda but through relationships of mutual consideration and mutual accountability [...] Rather, human happiness is grounded in the quality of the relationships we have with others. The quality of our relationships with other people is the crucial factor whether we experience joy in living.[85]

Reflecting on 'relational forgiveness, spiritual forgiveness, personal forgiveness', Tibbits writes:

> At the personal level, forgiveness facilitates your own healing. You recognize your need to let go of resentment. You realize that your failure to forgive is burning a hole in your soul and ruining your life. You also come to understand that there is no value in holding on to your grudge so, by an act of forgiveness, you let that hurt go. This aspect of forgiveness has the most therapeutic and healing value of the three, for it can help you along your journey from hurt to healing, from victim to victor, and from bitter to better...In one sense, personal forgiveness is the starting point for the other dimensions of forgiveness (relational forgiveness, spiritual

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83. Cf. interview of Father Roger Landry with the Neurologist Dr Vincent Fortanasce, https://www.ewtn.com/ watched and visited January 22, 2020. Cf. https://www.healthybrainmd.com/ for Purino Fortanasce Neurology Center. Visited January 29, 2020.

84. Ephesians 4:31,32; Hebrews 12:14,15; Romans 3:14 respectively (NIV).

85. Mahlberg and Nessan (2016:73, 78, 79).

forgiveness) because until you yourself are healthy, you're unlikely to develop healthy relationships with others.[86]

Let us all admit, this is not where we often are, but this is what we are working towards. We live within and with the *simul justus et pecator* confession. We are both and at the same time saints and sinners, as McKnight also pointed out before saying:

> [*L*]ocal churches will be both profoundly formative and sometimes mind-bogglingly disappointing. This is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer was talking about when he exhorted his seminary students to slay their idealizations of the present church. Here's how he put it: 'Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest, and sacrificial'.[87] We soon discover that our admired saints are less than we expected and our local church fails 'to deliver' what we hoped for. This is where we are given the opportunity to embrace the inaugurated reality of the kingdom, we are to embrace ourselves and our fellow 'saints' as those in need of grace and forgiveness and love.[88]

Van Aarde states to my mind correctly that for Paul, the 'righteousness'[89] concept refers to:

- 'the acquittal of transgressions (the legal aspect) [...]
- sinners who are put in the right relationship with God (the association aspect) [...]
- the former (the legal aspect) is directed to the latter (the association aspect) [...]
- the latter is the result of the former'.[90]

☐ Peace and transformation

As I have explained the need for deep change elsewhere in this publication,[91] I will not do so in any depth again. What is necessary to emphasise is that peace is not possible without biding and constant reformation – ever changing into people seeking the will of God with a willingness to do the will of God – which is my understanding of reformation. In my article on the Kingdom and its righteousness,[92] I focused on the importance of biblical passages like Isaiah

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86. Tibbits (2006:7, 8). Cf. also his 'Ten principles of forgiveness' (Tibbits 2006:10) and 'Steps to change memory' (Tibbits 2006:121–122).

87. Bonhoeffer (1996:36, 37).

88. McKnight (2014:40).

89. Cf. αὐτοῦ δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV).

90. Van Aarde (2020:246–247).

91. Chapter 9.

92. Nel (2017a, 2017b).

58 for our understanding of growing in sincerity about seeking with a willingness to follow the will of God. We all know all too well how easy it is in local churches and worship services to go through the motions. Too easy, one would say. Whenever I read Isaiah 58, I feel like I am listening to a text written yesterday:

> [2]For day after day they seek me out;
>   they seem eager to know my ways,
> as if they were a nation that does what is right
>   and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
> They ask me for just decisions
>   and seem eager for God to come near them.
> [3]'Why have we fasted', they say,
>   'and you have not seen it?
> Why have we humbled ourselves,
>   and you have not noticed?'
> Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
>   and exploit all your workers.
> [4]Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife,
>   and in striking each other with wicked fists.
> You cannot fast as you do today
>   and expect your voice to be heard on high.
> [5]Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
>   only a day for people to humble themselves?
> Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
>   and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
> Is that what you call a fast,
>   a day acceptable to the Lord?[93]

Peace, like the wholeness Isaiah and the Old Testament is calling us to, does not come without deep transformation.

Participating in the healing of the society will indeed ask for reformation, transformation. No wonder that McKnight, in his book on *Kingdom Conspiracy. Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church,* discerns two core themes in what he calls 'kingdom theology'. The first one being 'a culture-transformation kingdom vision'.[94] His reflection on the historical roots of the transformational approach is worth reading. He eventually links up with Niebuhr's reflection and puts it this way:

Niebuhr proposed a thinking about this relationship in five different categories:

- Christ *against* culture: the Anabaptist tradition.
- Christ *of* culture: natural law and cultural Protestantism.
- Christ *above* culture: Aquinas and the Roman Catholic Church.

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93. Isaiah 58:2–5 (NIV); Cf. for two good commentaries: Westermann (1969:336–338); Paul (2012:480–481).

94. McKnight (2014:228).

- Christ and culture *in paradox:* Martin Luther and Reinhold Niebuhr.
- Christ *transforming* culture: Calvin, Edwards, Barth.[95]

Niebuhr rightly so warns on how both left and right spectra in society may hijack this approach, often to the deficit of the church. Transformation in not to get Christendom back or as McKnight calls it the 'Constantinian Temptation'.[96] What would one then say transformation is? It is not 'reforming the kingdom vision of the Bible to make it fit culture'. It has to do with sincerity with the 'Christ *transforming* culture' approach where 'kingdom theology [is] at work shaping the whole. Each thinker[97] named above follows his or her moral compass toward kingdom values, ethics, vision, and theology'.[98]

Our calling to participate in seeking peace and transformation is about a new intentional and serious seeking of the will of the King, seeking it with a willingness to follow the will of God. Obedience, however negatively loaded because of legalism, is at stake here. Our very being is at stake. The choice between playing church for the sake of having a 'constituency', a 'club' where members pay their membership dues on time, is at stake. I have tried many a time to argue that finding and understanding our true God-given identity (as given in Christ) drives transformation – or as I have chosen elsewhere, drives our reformation.[99]

What almost separates congregations at this time in South Africa is how we approach the Bible Book where we discover ever so often who we are. We are often not willing for the powerful dynamic of reading Scripture in a dialectic and missional hermeneutic. There is safety in both liberalism and fundamentalism. At these two poles, readers have given up on something: the liberalist has given up on meaning, uncertainty has become the certainty. Fundamentalism has given up on any different meaning, certainty, understood and phrased in a specific way, has become the ultimate: this is how it is. Anyone who has read and are reading dialectic and missional hermeneutic material (like Barth and Guder to name but two) has opted differently. Here the tension between two sides of the story is sometimes almost unbearable but creatively satisfying. To my mind, any person in the pulpit is supposed to be within this tension, like holding on to the two ends of a strongly running electric current, often feeling as if one is being torn or pulled apart. The certainty is in God and in him alone and not in my interpretation. This makes one even more serious about 'what does God say', challenging us to be renewed as his people into

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95. McKnight (2014:229); cf. Niebuhr (1951).

96. McKnight (2014:228).

97. Referring to the reformed theologians in the past, even discussion some of them like Kuyper (2014:231ff.)

98. McKnight (2014:230-231).

99. Nel et al. (2015b).

the likeness of his Son.[100] We are probably in trouble as 'seeking church'[101] when we in this Holding-on-to-God-hermeneutic are more certain about what we are uncertain of than uncertain about what we are certain of.

The challenge is to seek the transforming will of God together for and in the context where we are – given the leadership of pastors, being the theological tour-guides for God's people as they often struggle to discern the will of God. Nessan refers to this as the 'kingdom impulse' that drives worship and mission:

> The Kingdom of God, which we imagine and God enacts at worship must extend into the liturgy of daily life. God's Spirit intends more than ritual performance, as crucial as that might be for the sake of our conversion. The Spirit of God wills the transformation of our very lives and our world according to kingdom impulses. The movement form sanctuary to streets and back again defines the very rhythm of congregational existence.

> The model of congregational life proposed in this book revolves around two foci: (1) the formation and preservation of Christian identity and (2) the movement of the congregation into the world in mission. In a sense, these two are reverse sides of a single coin, A church that knows it's true identity does mission. A church engaged in mission enacts its fundamental identity.[102]

This leads us directly into the serious challenge for Kingdom-seeking disciples – justice!

☐ Peace and justice

It is impossible to miss this when reading the Bible: '*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*'.[103] Taking the immediate context of Matthew 5 into account no one should miss it:

> [23]Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. [24]News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. [25]Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.[104]

According to Matthew's version of the 'good news of the Kingdom' Jesus *then* taught his disciples: They are blessed! However rich this word *blessed* is,[105]

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100. Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

101. Cf. again White (2009).

102. Nessan (2010:169–170).

103. Matthews 5:6.

104. Matthews 4:23–25.

105. Cf. Davies and Allison (2003:431–432) for the history of the concept since 518 B.C.

what it comes to is an awareness, by the enlightening work of the Spirit (like in being born from above[106]), that *I AM* is with us. We are in his presence and this is our joy! And within his presence, we understand the radical differentness of being his: the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the thirsty, the hungry, etc. In the letter to the Ephesians, it is stated as 'you were taught…to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness'.[107]

Seeking justice, seeking righteousness is inescapable for us, God's blessed people. We will do so with the seriousness of the thirsty *thirsting* for water and the hungry *hungering* for food. 'The meaning here is not passive longing but active seeking'.[108] And Davies and Allison add that it is not about being righteous as seekers, but 'instead it [Mt 5:6] lifts up those who are hungering and thirsting for conformity to the will of God'.[109] Van Aarde refers to this as a:

> [*T*]wo-in-one event, grace and obedience […] When the word 'justice' is used in Israelite literature, 'covenantal nomism' is at stake: God does what is right and we do what is right; God loves us, and we love one another.[110]

What went wrong then? Why is it so difficult to even talk about justice, righteousness and everything that go with it? Was Luther right that:

> [*O*]ur god may in fact be money, possessions, power, fame, family, or nation. What happens when those who say they believe in God stop asking whether what their heart really clings to is the one true God or an idol?[111]

Was Van Riessen right when he already wrote some time ago that we have come to worship the gifts of God rather than the giver himself – referring to science, technology, politics and economy.[112] Are we the people who thirst and hunger only for what can satisfy our basic needs, like greedy and prosperous people do? And have we then given in to what the Bible warns against: 'For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy

106. Cf. John 3.

107. Ephesians 4:23–24.

108. Davies and Allison (2003:451). They also point out that 'those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are the same as those who "seek above all else the kingdom and his righteousness"' (Davies & Allison 2003:451).

109. Davies and Allison (2003:453). Cf. also Van Aarde (2020:233–259) for his insightful and critically important reflection on 'Transcendence and everydayness' and 'Righteousness and justice' where he relates Paul and Jesus.

110. Van Aarde (2020:248).

111. Cf. Migliori (2014:3) again.

112. Van Riessen (1957:25–37) and again in the last chapter and conclusion (Van Riessen 1957:229–309). He then already spoke of a necessary 're-Christianization of life' (Van Riessen 1957:308, 309). Cf. also the challenging book by Fowl (2019) under the title *Idolatry.* His references to the challenge and temptation of what he calls 'whiteness' are relevant not only in the United States, but within the context where this publication originated: South Africa (Fowl 2019:123–137).

person – such a person is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God'.[113]

Even more important is the question how we will and can come back to the almost 'natural', or should it be 'spiritual', an inescapable connection between being and living in his presence (be blessed) and seeking justice. As I have tried elsewhere[114] to research and described the essence of the central biblical concepts of justice and righteousness, I want to focus in this last section of this chapter on a few values in coming back to what is normal for people of the way. Before I do so, it might be good to summarise briefly what justice and righteousness means. In the words of McKnight, justice and righteousness referred to in this beatitude might mean:

[*7*]those who 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' are those who love God and God's will (revealed in Torah as love and justice) with their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Because they love God and others, they are willing to check their passions and will in order to do God's will, to further God's justice, and to express their longing that God act to establish his will and kingdom. Their appetites, instead of being sated by the pleasures of food, sensualities, passions, and lusts, are satisfied only in communion with God, knowing and doing God's will and seeking the welfare of others.

Everything hinges on the meaning of the word 'righteousness'. The Jewish context prior to Paul overwhelmingly suggests the term meant 'covenant faithfulness' or 'Torah observant'.[115]

The moment one defines righteousness as conformity to Torah or to Gods Word in Scripture, three things happen. First, the scope of Scripture, especially as we find the prophetic texts, focuses our minds on big issues like justice, mercy, peace, faithfulness, worship, holiness and love. Second, we are pushed into seeing how Jesus himself understood Torah observance, and here we think immediately of two texts, the Jesus Creed of 22:34–40 and the Golden Rule of 7:12, so that for Jesus a 'righteous' person was someone who loved God and loved others as himself. Third, we are pressed into considering the antitheses of 5:17–48, where surpassing righteousness refers to kingdom behaviours.

To those who pursue righteousness Jesus promises they will be filled, and the word 'filled' means 'sated', 'slaked', 'bloated' or 'filled to overflowing'. The metaphor expresses absolute and utter satisfaction: they will find a kingdom society where love, peace, justice and holiness shape the entirety of creation.[116]

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113. Ephesians 5:5.

114. Cf. especially Nel (2017a, 2017b).

115. McKnight (2013:43). He writes: 'But Paul took all of this to a new level because he was involved in a completely different context, the Gentile mission. Paul shifted the focus of the term toward gift, toward "*declared* righteous [justified]." But with Jesus things are still pre-Pauline, and we would do well to remind ourselves of that … What clinches the case is that 5:10, which is to be read in conjunction with 5:6, cannot mean anything other than behavior that conforms to God's will'. Cf again Van Aarde (2020:245–259) for a discussion of Paul and Matthew as to righteousness.

116. McKnight (2013:44).

Justice and righteousness are central concepts in the whole of the Bible.[117] According to White:

> And for us, as God's people of the way, Discipleship in its fullest sense also requires *justice-seeking action* in the world on behalf requires *justice-seeking action* in the world on behalf of the widows and orphans' and the neediest of God's children. These practices are partnered with *compassionate responses to all creation*, the powerful and the oppressed, in the awareness that all are beloved of God. And Christian discipleship in its fullest sense includes *a commitment to transformative, mutual relationships* among all people, so that all participants in those relationships are brought into closer relationship with God and greater congruence with the *imago Dei* within each one.[118]

What is on our table, in worship and preaching, when are we serious about following Christ and being missional disciples and a discipling community? Everything that this book is about and what the 43 colleagues shared in the interviews, indeed. My two remarks are only underlining what this and previous research convinced me of.

Firstly, we need to find ways of getting the *body of believers* involved in 'seeking justice'. In everyday life, we seek justice in a court where a judge or judges listen to all the witnesses, putting a case together, and for her or him to make a just decision. As a faith community, we do not have such a 'seeking for justice' court to go to. In Reformed traditions, there is a system of consulting the broader system (Presbytery, Synod) for help in the process of discerning when in doubt. How would a local faith community go about this? My conviction is that this part of developing missional congregations is also part of 'returning the ministry to the people'.[119] It is indeed about *us. We* seek justice. In every context, disciples should seek together. This will mean that all the witnesses are there already. Justice-seeking can only happen when all the 'facts', realities, hurts, pain, joy, injustices are well-presented by the witnesses. Contextual relevance may imply that the contexts are called upon to come testify of the facts, realities, hurts, pain, joy, injustices, brokenness in 'our

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117. White (2005:vii–viii).

118. White (2005:vii–viii), also quoted in Nel (2018:49); cf. also Fuellenbach (1995:157) for his sentence that 'Justice as a Biblical concept could best be translated as *right relations.* These relations extend in four directions: to God, to oneself, to one's neighbor both as individual and as part of society, and to creation as a whole. To be just means first to respect all of one's relationships with others' (also quoted by Nel 2017b:5of9). For good sources when sharing this core concept with the faith community cf. also Lessing (2014:13, 151–154), Elliot (2007:207–217), and Paul (2012:480–481) for their discussions on Isaiah 58; Brueggemann (2008:355) refers to the 'process of divine intentionality enacted through human effort' and as to the specific verses (Is 58-6-7) as 'obedience includes justice for the oppressed and sustenance for the poor and the homeless' (Brueggemann 2008:232). Also quoted in Nel (2017b:6of 9); cf. also Oswalt (1998) on Isaiah 40–66. For the translation in Matthews 5:6 cf. also Allison (1999:50–51) referring to Gutiérrez's remark that '"righteousness" implies a relationship with the Lord – namely holiness, and at the same time a relationship with human beings – namely, recognition of the rights of each person and especially the despised and the oppressed, or in other words, social justice' Gutiérrez (1991:120).

119. Cf. the title of Ogden 1990: *The new reformation: Returning the ministry to the people of God*; cf. also Nel (2015:19).

neighbourhood'. And how do we become involved even beyond our community in regional, national and international 'justice-seeking' and 'justice-doing'?[120]

A sincere and well-represented congregational diagnosis[121] could be followed up by a series of meetings (some with representatives of the context where we are in doubt how to pursue justice for the broken relationships and overall brokenness of our world) where we discern what is to be done now for our faith community to participate in bringing about the peace of the Kingdom of God. All the time deeply aware that the 'sitting Judge', the King himself, giving guidance for the record of decisions taken before us, through the Bible. In my mind, the trained and often ordained theologians among us will serve as advocates, making the case and putting forward the case for justice, quoting the many 'cases' written up in the *Book of the Kingdom* come and coming.

Secondly, what do we do while we seek to discern how to do justice to and in our communities and beyond? A word used by McKnight[122] comes into my mind: c*ovenant faithfulness*. We stay true to ourselves, as people committed to represent the King to the best of our insight, while we search (thirst and hunger) for what is right. There is no better place in all of ministry than worship and preaching for this attitude to take a hold of mind and body. Brown is correct when she calls preaching 'an act of worship'.[123] Preaching is not an interruption of worship. According to Brownh this notion 'arises when preaching offers little more than instruction and advice. But Christian preaching that educates the mind but does not move the heart misses the mark'.[124] This deep commitment to the will of the King, our God and Saviour in Christ is cultivated in worship and under the Word, searched and preached by someone with missional integrity. This cuts through to our very being as created humans and as disciples who claim that we follow the one in whom God has become known to us – the one whose food it was to do the will of God:

[32]But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about'.

[33]Then his disciples said to each other, 'Could someone have brought him food?'

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120. Cf. a source that will certainly help local leaders in thinking through this, Werntz (2014) on *Bodies of peace: ecclesiology, nonviolence, and witness*; cf. also Brown (2008:89–107) for her chapter on 'Cross Talk for a violent world'; Pieterse (2001a, 2001b) and the publication edited by Dreyer (2002) on *Divine justice, Human justice;* Another important publication is that of Dreyer et al. (2017) *Practicing Ubuntu*; Cf. Cilliers (2018) for his reflection on 'Poverty and Privilege. Re-hearing sermons of Beyers Naudé on Religion and Justice'.

121. Cf. Nel et al. (2015b:255–304) for a discussion of congregational analysis and (Nel et al. 2015:281–304) specifically for the discussion of a congregational diagnosis.

122. See note 103 above. He does so with reference to several others.

123. Brown (2016a:79). Her chapter on 'The Preacher as Interpreter of Word and World' is also at stake here (Brown 2016b:99–122). Also cf. Brown (2008:124–140) for her chapter on 'Cross Talk in Its Liturgical and Cultural Context'.

124. Brown (2016a:80). She says this with reference to Mitchell (1990:22–23).

³⁴ 'My food', said Jesus, 'is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work'.¹²⁵

When in doubt we revert to 'covenantal faithfulness', we find our peace in loving God and loving the other. We find peace in being graceful while we differ. We focus, like never before when we were sometimes so sure of what to do, on Jesus and our unity in him:

> Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.
>
> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.¹²⁶

I believe Lee has captured something that might help us in our understanding of ourselves as representatives of God.¹²⁷ Referring to us not being 'isolated individuals' but as 'reciprocal partner(s) of God's covenant' and as such 'relational in his or her disposition', Lee points out how 'this fundamental desire for communion is often expressed in a destructive, even demonic form – controlling, dominating, and subjugating others'.¹²⁸ But as much as there is this:

> [W]rongful manifestation of this desire, there is also a string yearning for true relationship, for coming to mutual understanding and reconciliation. In other words, the *imago Dei* does not designate the image of a solitary, isolated God, but that of a relational, other-caring God […] A true personhood in a Trinitarian understanding is neither autonomous nor heteronomous but theonomous. A theonomous person is intersubjective in disposition. And intersubjective human interaction requires freedom as its precondition. Human freedom is anchored in human relationship to God, as God created human beings as God's covenantal partner.¹²⁹

■ Conclusion

Would it be fair to say that missional integrity in the pulpit also includes a peace, justice and righteousness awareness and desire? And would it also be true to say in this regard that worshippers know that almost intuitively: my pastor is that kind of person, searching, thirsting, hungering with sincerity for justice – even though not always sure what justice in our context might imply?¹³⁰

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125. John 4:32–34. (NIV)

126. Philippians 2:3–5. (NIV)

127. Lee (2006).

128. Lee (2006:107).

129. Lee (2005:107).

130. For the Chapter 10 reference list, refer to the References section at the end of this book.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Qualitative Interview Questions

Question 1:

The congregation's missional identity

1.1 What is particularly unique about the congregation's missional identity?

1.2 How does the missional identity of the congregation take the coming of God's Kingdom into account?

1.3 How does the environment and larger context affect the congregation's missional identity?

Question 2:

The worship service / preaching and the congregation's development as a missional congregation

2.1 What role do worship services / preaching play in the development / growth of the congregation as a missional congregation? Can you think of specific examples and events over the past few years how this happened?

2.2 What is characteristic of the worship service and especially the preaching's contribution to the development of a corporate and congregational missional consciousness?

Question 3:

Role of the liturgy and preacher

3.1 What contribution do your unique gifts / talents / personality make to the missional transformation of the congregation?

3.2 Refer specifically to your unique contribution as a preacher and liturgist.

3.3 Can you name specific examples that happened during a worship service?

Question 4:

Worship and congregational transformation

4.1 What should happen in the liturgy to promote the congregation's missional transformation? Please give. An example or suggestion.

4.2   What should happen in preaching to promote the missional transformation of the congregation? Please give. An example or suggestion.

4.3   What do you think is the unique long-term dream for the missional development of the worship services in this congregation?

4.4   How can the congregation worship and follow Christ even better with integrity?

Appendix 2: Data Analysis in Afrikaans: Data Analise

Nicolaas Matthee

■ Inleiding

Hierdie verslag kommunikeer die resultate van 'n kwalitatiewe analise van 43 onderhoude se transkripsies soos aan die analis voorsien deur Prof. Malan Nel. Die opdrag was om die data te analiseer en temas of kategorieë te identifiseer wat na vore kom uit die teks. Die onderhoude het uit vier vrae bestaan wat elk 'n paar sub-vrae gehad het. Die resultate word in dieselfde formaat gelewer en beweeg vanaf vraag 1 na vraag 4. Aan die einde is daar 'n paar notas wat die data-analis opgemerk het in die teks. Dit word gevolg deur 'n bylaag waar 'n GoogleDrive link is wat toegang sal verskaf na die elke vraag se data netwerk vir die wat sou belangstel.

■ Vraag 1: Die gemeente se missionale identiteit

1.1 Wat is besonders uniek aan die gemeente se missionale identiteit?

- Gemeentegeskiedenis – was uiters belangrik in die konteks van die uniekheid van 'n gemeente se missionale identiteit.
- Inklusiwiteit – hoofsaaklik in die konteks van toeganklikheid en dat hulle nie-veroordelend is nie. Daar is enkele verwysings na die gay-vraagstuk om inklusiwiteit te verduidelik.
- Dissipelskap – hierdie het baie nou saamgehang met die gedagte van gestuurdheid en diensbaarheid, juis soos Jesus Sy dissipels **gestuur** het om **diensbaar** te gaan wees. 'n Tweede dimensie van dissipelskap was ook daar waar gemeentes dissipelskap programme aangebied het vir die lidmate.
- Gasvryheid – hierdie tema is baie naby aan inklusiwiteit maar dit was genoeg kere apart genoem en daarom het die analis dit apart gehou. Uit die analis se interpretasie van die teks blyk dit dat die gasvryheid geleenthede meer persoonlik van aard was, soos die voorlees en gelukwens van verjaarsdae, klein geskenkies op ander relevante dae ens.
- Gemarginaliseerdes – dit was algemeen dat predikante na hulle werk met die gemarginaliseerdes verwys het om die gemeente se uniekheid te verduidelik. Hier was daar veral 'n fokus op armoede, kinders en die wat siek is. Die ekologie of omgewing was ook verstaan as 'n gemarginaliseerde.

- Gay-vraagstuk – hierdie was nogal 'n populêre punt waar predikante op kon steun om hulle uniekheid te verduidelik. Wanneer gay mense welkom is in 'n gemeente, (volgens die teks) het die gemeente 'n sterk missionale identiteit, ongeag daarvan of hulle teologie plek het vir gay mense.
- Missionale identiteit teks – daar was 'n paar geleenthede waar die uniekheid van die gemeente gekoppel was aan 'n bepaalde teks, hierdie sluit in Genesis 12, Romeine 15, Korintiërs 12, Effesiërs 4.

1.2   Hoe hou die missionale identiteit van die gemeente rekening met die koms van God se koninkryk?

- Teks – daar was 'n paar teksgedeeltes wat prominent was in die antwoord van hierdie vraag, dit sluit in Galasiërs 3:28, Matteus 28:18-20, Matteus 9, Matteus 6:33;
- Evangelisasie – in 'n klomp antwoorde was daar 'n sterk evangelisasie inslag, dat die gemeentelede die evangelie moet verkondig en beliggaam in die alledaagse lewe;
- Interkerklike liggaam – daar was ook die tema van kerke wat saamwerk oor die tradisionele grense en so die koninkryk sigbaar te maak vir hulle onderskeie gemeenskappe;
- Narratief – God se narratief is reeds verweef in die van die mense en wêreld, hierdie gemeentes moet die Godsnarratief sigbaar maak waar hulle beweeg;
- Ekologie – sommige gemeentes het 'n holistiese beeld gehad, een waar die natuur ook God onthul aan mense en kosbaar is;
- Diensbaarheid – hierdie was nogal 'n groot tema, baie gemeentes vra hulleself die vraag af, 'hoe staan ons as gemeente in diens van God se nuwe wêreld?';

1.3   Hoe beïnvloed die omgewing en groter konteks die gemeente se missionale identiteit?

- Taal – hierdie is 'n uiters prominente tema. Die veranderende taal konteks van baie areas in Suid Afrika blyk of dit baie uitdagings bied aan gemeentes. Die plattelandse en dorpsgemeentes voel dit (volgens die teks) die ergste. Daar was nogal 'n skeiding tussen gemeentes wat aktief werk om soveel as moontlik tale te akkommodeer en die wat staan by Afrikaans, en as die vreemdeling nie Afrikaans verstaan of aanklank vind nie is hulle dan per implikasie uitgesluit. Daar was ook 'n tweede dimensie waar gemeentes voel dat lidmate 'n missionale taal moet aanleer om relevant te kan bly in veranderende konteks;
- Demografie – dit hang nou saam met wat hier bo bevind is. Groot subtemas by demografie sluit in verskeidenheid van rasse en gelowe, ouderdom van gemeenskap en politiese affiliasie;

- Skole – dit is bevind dat skole in 'n gemeenskap belangrik is vir die missionale identiteit van 'n gemeente. Die skole bepaal tot 'n groot mate wie bedien word en in baie gevalle wie dan deel vorm van die gemeente;
- Gemarginaliseerdes – die missionale identiteit van gemeentes en hoe hulle reageer op die nood in die gemeenskap word gedryf deur die karakter van die gemarginaliseerdes in die omgewing. As daar baie siekes is reageer die gemeente met 'n kliniek, baie dakloses dan reageer die gemeente met 'n sopkombuis en klere ens.

Hierdie was nie een van die temas nie maar uit die data het daar 'n groepering na vore gekom wat nogal 'n sterk negatiewe impak gehad het op die missionale identiteit van 'n gemeente. Hierdie groepering het bestaan uit die volgende temas: boeregemeenskap, grondonteiening, plaasmoorde, rassisme, plaaslike geregtigheid en die duiwel.

■ Vraag 2: Die erediens/prediking en die gemeente se ontwikkeling as missionale gemeente

2.1 Watter rol speel die eredienste/prediking in die gemeente se ontwikkeling/groei as 'n missionale gemeente? Kan jy aan spesifieke voorbeelde en gebeurtenisse die afgelope paar jaar dink hoe dit gebeur het?

- Toerustingsgeleentheid – dit was algemeen dat predikante die erediens/prediking verstaan het as 'n geleentheid om die lidmate voor te berei om 'n missionale karakter te beliggaam;
- Daag gemeente uit – die erediens/prediking was ook verstaan as 'n geleentheid om die gemeente uitdagings te gee wat verband hou met hulle missionale roeping in die wêreld. Voorbeelde hier sluit in die uitdeel van komberse, koop koffie vir 'n vreemdeling en neem fisies deel aan een van die projekte van die gemeente;
- Die rol van die seëngroet en uitstuur – hierdie was vir die predikante 'n baie belangrike geleentheid in die erediens. Dit was gesien as 'n kragtige moment om die gemeente op te roep na aksie en hulle te stuur om te gaan na die wêreld as gestuurdes. Daar was 'n voorbeeld genoem waar 'aksiestasies' opgerig was in die gemeente, en sou gemeentelede interaksie hê met die stasie dan is dit 'n 'commitment' om iets te gaan doen deur die week;
- Konkrete prediking – prediking moet duidelik en konkreet wees. Die voorstel was gemaak dat mense terugvoer gee en getuienis lewer van areas waar hulle deelneem aan God se sending en sodoende die gemeente inspireer en dit duidelik maak dat God aan die werk is;

- Gebed – dit was belangrik dat daar ook gereeld vir die gemeente gebid word in die erediens;
- Preekreekse – hierdie was 'n baie populêre antwoord op 2.1. Predikante voel dat gefokusde preekreekse baie kan doen om 'n gemeente se missionale karakter te ontwikkel;

Die laaste was weer 'n groepering wat na vore gekom het uit die data. Daar was die idee dat die tegnologiese aspek van die erediens ook 'n belangrike rol speel. Daar was sterk klem op die visuele aspek daarvan met die spesifieke doel om die gemeente deurlopend visueel blootstelling te gee aan armoede en ekologiese verwoesting om hulle op die manier ook bewus te maak van die nood en noodsaaklikheid vir 'n missionale ingesteldheid.

2.2 Wat is kenmerkend van die erediens en veral die prediking se bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van 'n korporatiewe en gemeentelike missionale bewussyn?

- Taal – in hierdie konteks het taal 2 dimensies. Die eerste is dat taal eenvoudig en reguit moet wees om mense so 'n nuwe 'woordeskat' te leer. Dit speel ook 'n groot rol in die tradisie van die gemeente. Die tweede dimensie is waar taal gebruik word om grense oor te steek, soos om Engelse of Tswana dienste te hê;
- Media – media speel 'n belangrike rol om die gemeente informasie te gee oor wat aangaan en waar hulle betrokke kan raak;
- Getuienisse – speel 'n belangrike rol om die gemeente bewus te maak van die feit dat die gemeente se missionale karakter in elke lidmaat beliggaam moet wees. Dit gee die gemeente ook die geleentheid om te deel in wat God reeds doen in die gemeenskap;
- Preekreekse – dit is hier weer 'n belangrike strategie om die gemeente almal op dieselfde plek te kry rondom hulle unieke missionale karakter en verstaan;
- Nie-veroordelend – dit is belangrik dat die prediking en erediens op geen manier veroordelend verstaan word nie;
- Pastorale prediking – pastorale prediking maak die gemeente bewus dat die gemeente self 'n plek is waar God se heling en liefde ervaar kan word, en dit is beskikbaar vir enige persoon;

■ Vraag 3: Rol van die liturgie en prediker

3.1 Watter bydrae lewer jou unieke gawes/talente/persoonlikheid tot die missionale transformasie van die gemeente?

- Integriteit – predikante het genoem dat hulle integriteit baie belangrik is vir die missionale transformasie van die gemeente;

- Mengsel van akademie en vroomheid – daar was heelwat predikante wat gevoel het dat hulle 'n kombinasie van goeie akademiese teologie en vroomheid voorlê aan die gemeente en dit is wat hulle dan kognitief en emosioneel bydrae tot die transformasie van die gemeente;
- Lewensvoorbeeld – dit is bevind dat die lewe van die predikant 'n voorbeeld moet wees vir die gemeente, die predikant kan dan ook sy/haar eie storie as getuienis gebruik om die gemeente te inspireer;
- Missionale ingesteldheid - daar is 'n groot groep predikante wat voel dat hulle eie missionale ingesteldheid belangrik is vir die transformasie van die gemeente;
- Gevoel vir konteks – dit was as waardevol geag om 'n goeie gevoel te hê vir die konteks van die gemeente en gemeentelede. Hierdie kan dan uitdrukking vind in prediking, ander groepe en pastorale gesprekke;

Daar was 'n groepering wat weer na vore gekom het wat drie benamings insluit:

1. Brugbouer – heelwat predikante het hulleself beskryf as brugbouers wat maklik grense oorsteek en die gemeente dan begelei. Rassegrense was 'n populêre uitdrukking van hierdie eienskap;
2. Vroulikheid – is gesien as uniek en waardevol in die transformasie van 'n gemeente;
3. Fasiliteerder – sommige predikante het hulleself ook verstaan as fasiliteerders wat dan meer van 'n 'guide on the side' is as 'n 'sage on the stage';

3.2 Verwys spesifiek na jou unieke bydrae as prediker en liturg.

Baie van hierdie bydraes is reeds bespreek in 3.1, hier word net nuwe bydraes bespreek:

- Responsoriese geleenthede – die gebruik van responsoriese tegnieke in die liturgie was belangrik. Dit is die gevoel dat dit gemeentebetrokkenheid in die erediens bevorder;
- Gevoel vir konteks – gebruik van die onlangse gebeure in lidmate se lewens om konteks te gee aan die prediking en spasie te skep in die liturgie;
- Stories en metafore – baie predikante voel dat hulle goed kan werk met stories en metafore om abstrakte en uitdagende tekste konkreet en tasbaar te maak vir die gemeente;
- Nie-veroordelend – die skep van 'n inklusiewe en veilige ruimte in die erediens en gemeente is belangrik;

3.3   Kan jy spesifieke voorbeelde wat tydens 'n erediens gebeur het, noem?

Die predikante het hierdie vraag relatief sleg beantwoord en dikwels oor voorbeelde gepraat buite die erediens, enkele temas gaan hier bespreek word sonder om al die voorbeelde te bespreek:

- Armoede – hierdie is 'n groot tema wat in die erediens tot uitdrukking kom en kan waargeneem word as deurkollektes, kruideniersware projekte, klere skenkings, voeding en kombers insamelings;
- Spesifieke gebede – wanneer die gemeente saam bid vir baie spesifieke mense of gebeurtenisse. Sluit voorbidding in;
- Getuienisse – die lewer van getuienisse tydens die erediens. Dit kan of die predikant self, 'n gemeentelid of iemand van buite die gemeente wees;

■ Vraag4: Erediens en gemeentelike transformasie

Baie van die temas herhaal deur die projek, daar waar baie min verander rondom die tema gaan dit nie weer gelys en bespreek word nie.

4.1   Wat behoort in die liturgie te gebeur om die gemeente se missionale transformasie te bevorder? Gee asb. 'n voorbeeld of voorstel.

- Praktiese elemente – daar was 'n paar voorstelle in hierdie opsig: meer gemeentebetrokkenheid, meer fisiese beweging in die liturgie, meer responsoriese geleenthede, kanselruilings (ander predikers uit die gemeenskap), vars liturgiese idees, ander deelnemers in die liturgie soos kinders, gemarginaliseerdes ens;
- Deurlopende visuele herinneringe – die idee hier was dat die gemeente deurlopend visueel gestimuleer moet word met beelde wat hulle bewusmaak van hulle missionale verantwoordelikheid;
- Seëngroet en wegstuur – baie dieselfde as in die eerste afdeling, die geleentheid moet missionaal aangewend word;
- Musiek – musiek en sang moet aanpas by die preek en die woorde moet die boodskap ondersteun. Daar was ook gevalle waar groter diversiteit in musiek op die tafel gesit is;
- Afkondigings – hierdie moment moet volledig deel vorm van die liturgie en ook missionaal aangewend word om mense bewus te maak en geleentheid te gee om deel te raak;
- Gebed en taal – die taal van die gebede in die liturgie moet missionaal wees;

4.2 Wat behoort in die prediking te gebeur om die gemeente se missionale transformasie te bevorder? Gee asb. 'n voorbeeld of voorstel.

1. Missionale raamwerk – uit die data het 'n groepering na vore gekom wat die analis na verwys as die missionale raamwerk en dit sluit die volgende temas in:
   a. Missionale preek temas – dit is noodsaaklik dat die prediking missionale temas het. Uit vorige besprekings is dit duidelik dat preekreekse 'n belangrike rol speel, maar die temas van die reekse is net so belangrik;
   b. Missionale terminologie – die gemeente moet 'n basiese missionale terminologie aanleer wat dan verryk word deur die prediking;
   c. Missionale hermeneutiek – in die proses van preekvoorbereiding moet die eksegeet 'n missionale hermeneutiek toepas om sodoende die missionale aard van die teks te bring na die gemeente;
2. Konkrete en kontekstuele prediking – baie dieselfde as die temas wat vroeër bespreek is wil hierdie kategorie sê dat prediking die volgende moet doen:
   a. Konkreet – prediking moet konkreet wees en nie mense uitdaag op abstrakte maniere nie;
   b. Gemakzone uitdaag – prediking moet gemeentelede uitdaag om buite hulle gemakzone te beweeg en hulle grense te verskuif;
   c. Kontekstuele prediking – prediking moet die Bybelse boodskap kom neersit in die konteks van die gemeente en die gemeenskap waarin die gemeente geleë is;
   d. Teksgetrou – prediking moet teksgetrou wees;
3. Gemeente konteks – 'n derde groepering het na vore gekom en sluit die volgende temas in:

   a. Gemeente konteks – prediking moet kommentaar lewer op die konteks van die gemeente;
   b. Gesamentlike erediensbeplanning – erediensbeplanning moet die bydraes van gemeentelede insluit;
   c. Stemme uit die gemeente – die stem van elke gemeentelid moet gehoor word in die erediens, dus moet gemeentelede die geleentheid kry om funksies te vervul wat tradisioneel net deur iemand van die amp vervul is;

4.3 Wat is, volgens jou, die unieke langtermyn droom vir die missionale ontwikkeling van die eredienste in hierdie gemeente?

- Openheid – hierdie is die sambreel-tema vir 4.3. In die meerderheid van die predikante se antwoorde het die tema van 'n openheid of selfs 'n radikale openheid die lig gesien;
- Daar is wel weer drie groeperings wat belangrik is:

1. Oorsteek van rasse grense – hierdie was 'n sterk kategorie wat die volgende temas ingesluit het:
   a. Oorsteek van rasse grense – 'n toekoms word verbeel waar ras geen of nie 'n bepalende invloed het op die karakter van 'n gemeente nie;
   b. Groter samewerking met die VGK – daar is 'n behoefte om nouer saam te werk met die VGK en saam as een liggaam te funksioneer;
   c. Multicultural – 'n toekoms waar verskillende kulture saam aanbid en saam die Koninkryk sigbaar maak;
2. Erediens en gemeente – die volgende temas kom hier na vore:
   a. Erediens as plek van ontmoeting met God – 'n toekoms waar lidmate uit roetine kan beweeg en deelneem aan die erediens om te verwag om God daar te ontmoet;
   b. Groter betrokkenheid in die gemeenskap – 'n toekoms waar die gemeente sentraal is aan die gemeenskap;
   c. Gemeenskapskerk – baie dieselfde as hier bo, maar op self nog meer van 'n persoonlike vlak;
3. Filosofiese perspektief – sluit in:

   a. Hier en nou – sommige predikante was van die opinie dat daar nie langtermyn drome kan wees nie, die *Missio Dei* is nou en gemeentes moet nou aanpasbaar wees;
   b. Lewenslange proses – ander was weer van die opinie dat 'n mens nooit die punt sal bereik waar gemeentes "arrive" het nie, dat mens altyd sal strewe na 'n missionale karakter;

'n Laaste (negatiewe) tema, daar was ook die opinie dat baie Afrikaanse mense 'n tipe van 'n "laer" trek wanneer dit kom by 'n missionale leefstyl en gemeente. Hierdie maak dit moeilik vir predikante in daardie kontekste om die proses te stimuleer;

4.4 Hoe kan die gemeente Christus nog beter met integriteit aanbid en volg?

Hierdie vraag het nie veel nuwe temas bygedrae tot die datastel nie, en die antwoorde van die predikante hier was in meeste gevalle al goed verteenwoordig in die data netwerk. Die paar nuwe temas gaan kortliks bespreek word:

- Skeiding tussen kerk en wêreld – daar is die opinie dat die wêreld en die kerk baie vêr van mekaar af bestaan en hulle moet nader aan mekaar kom om die onus op gelowiges te plaas om lewens van integriteit te leef;
- Minder onverdraagsaam – gemeentes moet meer verdraagsaam wees in terme van hulle uitdagings in daaglikse konteks;

■ Enkele notas

Die data wat hier bo bespreek is, is so objektief as moontlik weergegee. Daar is wel 'n paar notas wat die analis wil byvoeg wat natuurlik nou subjektief en 'n interpretasie is:

1. Dwarsdeur die teks het semantiek 'n groot rol gespeel. Dit wil voorkom asof die suksesvolle posisionering van 'n gemeente op die reis na 'n missionale karakter op baie vlakke direk eweredig lê aan die semantiese raamwerk waarbinne dit gedoen word;
2. Dit behoort duidelik te wees uit die analise, maar daar is dwarsdeur die teks 'n sterk lyn tussen 'n missionale gemeente en die outentieke oorsteek van rassegrense;
3. Predikante is baie lief vir slogans. Die teks is geweek in honderde slogans soveel so dat daar omtrent een is vir elke kategorie wat bespreek is. Dit wil voorkom of daar ook 'n korrelasie is tussen die missionale karakter van 'n gemeente en die bemarkings vermoë van die span wat dit dryf;
4. 'n Laaste nota is dat daar in baie gevalle 'n dichotomie was tussen die predikant en die gemeente. Die taal 'ek' of 'ons' teenoor 'hulle' was baie gebruik in die onderhoude. Ek is onseker wat die implikasies daarvan is vir 'n missionale ingesteldheid maar dit mag dalk van waarde wees;

■ Bylaag

In die GoogleDrive folder sal daar twee prente wees per vraag, die een is die data netwerk van die prominente kategorieë wat hier bespreek is en die ander (wat gewoonlik 'n 'Big' agteraan het) is al die temas wat vir daardie vraag na vore gekom het.

Die link (copy en paste in die browser):

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1m1CuJ7O1clTBxJRQAk4yfNwDud wMo7qZ?usp=sharing

Appendix 3: Data Analysis in English: Data Analysis

Nicolaas Matthee

■ Introduction

This report communicates the results of a qualitative analysis of 43 interviews' transcripts as provided to the analyst by Prof. Malan Nel. The assignment was to analyse the data and identify themes or categories that emerge from the text. The interviews consisted of four questions, each of which had a number of sub-questions. The results are presented in the same format and move from question 1 to question 4. At the end there are some notes that the data analyst noticed in the text. This is followed by an attachment where there is a GoogleDrive link that will provide access to each question's data network for those who would be interested.

Question 1: The congregation's missional identity

1.1 What is particularly unique about the congregation's missional identity?

- Congregational history - was extremely important in the context of the uniqueness of a congregation's missional identity.
- Inclusivity - mainly in the context of accessibility and that they are not judgemental. There are some references to the gay issue to explain inclusivity.
- Discipleship - this was very closely related to the idea of mission and willingness to serve, just as Jesus sent His disciples to be **to serve**. A second dimension of discipleship was also there where congregations offered discipleship programs for the members.
- Hospitality - this theme is very close to inclusivity but it has been mentioned separately enough times and therefore the analyst kept it separate. From the analyst's interpretation of the text, it appears that the hospitality events were more personal in nature, such as the readings and congratulations of birthdays, small gifts on other relevant days, etc.
- Marginalised - it was common for pastors to refer to their work with the marginalised to explain the uniqueness of the congregation. Here the focus was on poverty, children and the sick. The ecology or environment was also understood as marginalised.
- Gay issue - this was quite a popular point that pastors could rely on to explain their uniqueness. When gay people are welcome in a

congregation, (according to the text) the congregation has a strong missional identity, regardless of whether their theology has a place for gay people.

• Missional identity text - there have been a few occasions where the uniqueness of the congregation has been linked to a particular text, these include Genesis 12, Romans 15, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4.

1.2 How does the missional identity of the congregation take the coming of God's Kingdom into account?

• Text - there were some passages that were prominent in the answer to this question, these include Galatians 3:28, Matthew 28: 18-20, Matthew 9, Matthew 6:33;

• Evangelism - in a lot of answers there was a strong evangelistic element, that the congregation members should communicate the gospel and embody it in everyday life;

• Interchurched body - there was also the theme of churches working together across traditional boundaries and thus making the kingdom visible to their respective communities;

• Narrative - God's narrative is already intertwined in that of the people and world, these congregations must make the God narrative visible where they move;

• Ecology - some congregations had a holistic image, one where nature also reveals God to people and is precious;

• Willingness to serve - this was quite a big theme, many congregations ask themselves the question, 'how do we as a congregation stand in the service of God's new world?';

1.3 How does the environment and larger context affect the congregation's missional identity?

• Language - this is an extremely prominent theme. The changing language context of many areas in South Africa seems to present many challenges to congregations. The rural and small-town congregations feel it (according to the text) the worst. There was quite a separation between congregations that work actively to accommodate as many languages as possible and those that stand by Afrikaans, and if the foreigner does not understand Afrikaans or find appeal, they are then by implication excluded. There was also a second dimension where congregations feel that members need to learn a *missional language* in order to remain relevant in a changing context;

• Demographics - this is closely related to what was found above. Major sub-themes in demography include variety of races and religions, age of community, and political affiliation;

- Schools - it has been found that schools in a community are important for the missional identity of a congregation. The schools determine to a large extent who is served and in many cases, who then forms part of the congregation;
- Marginalised - the missional identity of congregations and how they respond to the need in the community is driven by the character of the marginalised in the area. If there are many sick people, the congregation responds with a clinic, many homeless people, then the congregation responds with soup kitchen and clothes, etc.

This was not one of the themes but from the data a grouping emerged that had quite a strong negative impact on the missional identity of a congregation. This grouping consisted of the following themes: farming community, land expropriation, farm murders, racism, local justice and the devil.

Question 2: The worship service / preaching and the congregation's development as a missional congregation

2.1   What role do worship services / preaching play in the development / growth of the congregation as a missional congregation? Can you think of specific examples and events over the past few years how this happened?

- Equipping Opportunity - it was common for pastors to understand worship / preaching as an opportunity to prepare members to embody a missional character;
- Challenge the congregation - the worship service / preaching was also understood as an opportunity to give the congregation challenges related to their missional calling in the world. Examples here include handing out blankets, buying coffee for a stranger and physically participating in one of the congregation's projects;
- The role of the blessing and sending out - this was a very important opportunity for the ministers in the worship service. It was seen as a powerful moment to call the congregation to action and send them to go into the world as 'sent people'. An example was mentioned where 'action stations' were set up in the congregation, and should congregation members interact with the station then it is a 'commitment' to do something during the week;
- Concrete preaching - preaching must be clear and concrete. The suggestion was made that people give feedback and testify of areas where they participate in God's mission and thus inspire the congregation and make it clear that God is at work;
- Prayer - it was important that the congregation is regularly prayed for in the worship service;

- Sermon series - this was a very popular answer to 2.1. Pastors feel that focused sermon series can do much to develop a congregation's missional character.

The latter was again a grouping that emerged from the data. There was the idea that the technological aspect of the worship service also played an important role. There was a strong emphasis on the visual aspect of it with the specific aim of giving the congregation continuous visual exposure to poverty and ecological destruction in order to also make them aware of the need and necessity for a missional attitude.

2.2 What is characteristic of the worship service and especially the preaching's contribution to the development of a corporate and congregational missional consciousness?

- Language - in this context language has 2 dimensions. The first is that language must be simple and straightforward to teach people a new 'vocabulary'. It also plays a big role in the tradition of the congregation. The second dimension is where language is used to cross borders, such as having English or Tswana services;
- Media - media play an important role in giving the congregation information about what is going on and where they can get involved;
- Testimonies - play an important role in making the congregation aware of the fact that the missional character of the congregation must be embodied in each member. It also gives the congregation the opportunity to share in what God is already doing in the community;
- Sermon series - this is again an important strategy to get the congregation all in the same place around their unique missional character and understanding;
- Non-judgemental - it is important that preaching and worship are not condemning in any way;
- Pastoral preaching - pastoral preaching makes the congregation aware that the congregation itself is a place where God's healing and love can be experienced, and it is available to any person.

Question 3:   Role of the liturgy and preacher

3.1 What contribution do your unique gifts / talents / personality make to the missional transformation of the congregation?

- Integrity - ministers mentioned that their integrity is very important for the missional transformation of the congregation;
- Mixture of academia and piety - there were many pastors who felt that they were presenting a combination of good academic theology and piety to the congregation and this is what they then cognitively and emotionally contribute to the transformation of the congregation;

- Example of life - it was found that the life of the pastor should be an example for the congregation, the pastor can then also use his / her own story as evidence to inspire the congregation;
- Missional mindset - there is a large group of pastors who feel that their own missional mindset is important for the transformation of the congregation;
- Sense of context - it was considered valuable to have a good feeling for the context of the congregation and congregation's members. This can then find expression in preaching, other groups and pastoral conversations;

There was a group that came up again that included three names:

1. Bridge builder - many pastors have described themselves as bridge builders who easily cross borders and then guide the congregation. Racial boundaries were a popular expression of this trait;
2. Femininity - was seen as unique and valuable in the transformation of a congregation;
3. Facilitator - some pastors also understood themselves as facilitators who are then more of a 'guide on the side' than a 'sage on the stage';

3.2 Refer specifically to your unique contribution as a preacher and liturgist.

Many of these contributions have already been discussed in 3.1, here only new contributions are discussed:

- Responsive opportunities - the use of responsive techniques in the liturgy was important. It is the feeling that it promotes congregational involvement in worship;
- Sense of context - use of recent events in members' lives to give context to the preaching and create space in the liturgy;
- Stories and metaphors - many pastors feel that they can work well with stories and metaphors to make abstract and challenging texts concrete and tangible for the congregation;
- Non-judgemental - creating an inclusive and safe space in the worship service and congregation is important.

3.3 Can you name specific examples that happened during a worship service?

The pastors answered this question relatively poorly and often talked about examples outside the worship service, some themes will be discussed here without discussing all the examples:

- Poverty - this is a major theme that is expressed in worship and can be observed as collections, grocery projects, clothing donations, nutrition and blanket collections;
- Specific prayers - when the congregation prays together for very specific people or events. Include intercession;
- Testimonies - giving testimonies during the worship service. It can be either the pastor himself, a member of the congregation or someone from outside the congregation;

Question 4: Worship and congregational transformation

Many of the themes are repeated throughout the project, where very little changes around the theme will not be listed and discussed again.

4.1 What should happen in the liturgy to promote the congregation's missional transformation? Please give. An example or suggestion.

- Practical elements - there were some suggestions in this regard: more congregational involvement, more physical movement in the liturgy, more responsive opportunities, pulpit exchanges (other preachers from the community), fresh liturgical ideas, other participants in the liturgy such as children, marginalised etc;
- Continuous visual memories - the idea here was that the congregation should be continuously visually stimulated with images that make them aware of their missional responsibility;
- The 'Greet' and sending away - much the same as in the first section, the opportunity must be used missionally;
- Music - music and song must adapt to the sermon and the words must support the message. There have also been cases where greater diversity in music has been put on the table;
- Announcements – this liturgical 'moment' must be fully part of the liturgy and also used missionally to make people aware and give them the opportunity to participate;
- Prayer and language - the language of the prayers in the liturgy must be missional.

4.2 What should happen in preaching to promote the missional transformation of the congregation? Please give. An example or suggestion.

1) Missional framework - from the data a grouping emerged which the analyst refers to as the missional framework and this includes the following themes:
   a. Missional sermon themes - it is essential that the preaching has missional themes. From previous discussions it is clear that

sermon series play an important role, but the themes of the series are just as important;

b. Missional terminology - the congregation must learn a basic missional terminology which is then enriched by preaching;

c. Missional hermeneutics - in the process of sermon preparation the exegete must apply missional hermeneutics in order to bring the missional nature of the text to the congregation.

2) Concrete and contextual preaching - much the same as the themes discussed earlier, this category wants to say that preaching should do the following:

a. Concrete - preaching must be concrete and not challenge people in abstract ways;

b. Comfort Zone Challenge - Preaching should challenge congregation members to move beyond their comfort zone and push their boundaries;

c. Contextual preaching - preaching must place the biblical message in the context of the congregation and the community in which the congregation is located;

d. Text-faithful - preaching must be text-faithful;

3) Congregational context - a third grouping has emerged and includes the following themes:

a. Congregational context - preaching should comment on the context of the congregation;

b. Joint Worship Planning - Worship planning should include the contributions of congregation members;

c. Voices from the congregation - the voice of every congregation member must be heard in the worship service, so congregation members must be given the opportunity to fulfil functions that have traditionally only been fulfilled by someone in office.

4.3   What do you think is the unique long-term dream for the   missional development of the worship services in this congregation?

- Openness - this is the umbrella theme for 4.3. In the majority of the ministers' answers, the theme of an openness or even a radical openness was revealed;

- There are again three groupings that are important:

1. Crossing racial boundaries - this was a strong category that included the following themes:

a. Crossing racial boundaries - a future is imagined where race has no or no decisive influence on the character of a congregation;

    b. Greater collaboration with the Uniting Reformed Church (URC) - there is a need to work more closely with the URC and function together as one body;

    c. Multicultural - a future where different cultures worship together and make the Kingdom visible together;

2. Worship and congregation - the following themes emerge here:

    a. Worship as a place of encounter with God - a future where members can move out of routine and participate in the worship service to expect to meet God there;

    b. Greater involvement in the community - a future where the congregation is central to the community;

    c. Community church - much the same as above, but on a more personal level;

3. Philosophical perspective - includes:

    a. Here and now - some pastors were of the opinion that there can be no long-term dreams, the mission is now and congregations need to be adaptable now;

    b. Lifelong process - others were of the opinion that one would never reach the point where congregations "arrived", that one would always strive for a missional character;

A last (negative) theme, there was also the opinion that many Afrikaans people draw a type of "lager" when it comes to a missional lifestyle and congregation. This makes it difficult for ministers in those contexts to stimulate the process;

4.4 How can the congregation worship and follow Christ even better with integrity?

This question did not contribute many new themes to the data set, and the answers of the ministers here were in most cases already well represented in the data network. The few new themes will be briefly discussed:

- Separation between church and world - there is the opinion that the world and the church exist very far apart and they need to get closer to each other to place the onus on believers to live lives of integrity;
- Less intolerant - congregations need to be more tolerant in terms of their challenges in daily context;

■ Notes

The data discussed above were presented as objectively as possible. There are, however, a few notes that the analyst would like to add, which of course are now subjective and an interpretation:

1. Throughout the text, semantics played a major role. It would seem that the successful positioning of a congregation on the journey to a missional character on many levels is directly proportional to the semantic framework within which it is done;
2. This should be clear from the analysis, but there is a strong line throughout the text between a missional congregation and the authentic crossing of racial boundaries;
3. Ministers are very fond of slogans. The text is soaked in hundreds of slogans so much so that there is about one for each category discussed. It would seem that there is also a correlation between the missional character of a congregation and the marketing ability of the team that drives it;
4. A final note is that in many cases there was a dichotomy between the pastor and the congregation. The language 'I' or 'us' versus 'them' was widely used in the interviews. I'm not sure what its implications are for a missionary mindset, but it may be of value;

■ Appendix

In the GoogleDrive folder there will be two images per question, one is the data network of the prominent categories discussed here and the other (which usually has a 'Big' at the back) are all the themes that emerge for that question came.

The link (copy and paste in the browser):

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1m1CuJ7O1clTBxJRQAk4yfNwDudwMo7qZ?usp=sharing

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Index

I found this book enjoyable to read. It is well written, and each chapter forms a whole in terms of addressing the theme from different perspectives, albeit with a holist mind-set of proclaiming a 'mission that moves'. Authors provide the reader with a novel way of approaching the idea of missional congregations and leadership, while remaining faithful to the foundations of Scripture and Christian traditions. This book is exceptional because it provides readers with a critique of local and contextual experiences, while simultaneously moving from constructive critique of contexts and congregations to the enculturation of a collaborative, solution-focused, multi-inclusive mindset. The book and its chapters remain true to the confession stated in the Foreword: to remain faithful to the mission of seeking God's Kingdom and righteousness, by continually reforming the church so that she can become what God intended her to be.

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What an inspiring book this is! The title is moving and very descriptive of the content of the book. The authors – all practical theologians – engage excellently with the South African context and disseminate original research that will contribute immensely to missional orientated congregations. It shows how critically important local congregations are in missional thinking. To be missional is to be contextual. The authors confess the importance of servant-leadership, and that leaders and congregations must be trained in cultural intelligence. Although it is written from a specific South African perspective, the authors' reflections are also translatable to other countries, both within and outside the African continent. The data assembled and reflected on in this text will be of significant use to faith communities in South Africa who want to build, develop, and cultivate faithful Kingdom seeking congregations. The book creates a platform for further and future discourse and research. The deep theological reflection and content will add knowledge to everyone who reads it, through the authors' reflectivity on the different building blocks of what is required of ministry in its totality.

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