

**Becoming a missional church: the case of Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
Southern Africa (ELCSA).**

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## STATEMENT OF OWN WORK

I, Mokadi Max Mathye, declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Theology at the Faculty of Theology, Department of Science of Religion and Missiology, University of Pretoria, Gauteng Province in South Africa.

I certify that the dissertation is my own work and all references used are accurately reported.

Signed:

*Mokadi Max Mathye*

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Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2012

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## SUMMARY

The topic of my study is: Becoming a missional church- the case of Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (ELCSA). The lack of missional astuteness and intelligence emanating from Christendom mind-sets and agendas is detrimental to the growth of the church and is creating missional chaos and paralysis; this is what I am struggling with in my study.

The challenge I am grappling with is that the ELCSA as a church has been exposed to a variety and multiplicity of missional cultures and mission settings through a diversity of missionaries operating from different missional landscape and backgrounds. The various and differing missional histories has created inconsistencies in the theological foundations that underpin and add force to her missional outlook and maturity. As the church considers becoming a missional church, there is an imperative need to radically revisit her traditional ecclesiologies in order to develop a clearer understanding of her missional vocation. The missional direction of the church is in quandary, partly because of the leadership failure to manage the contradictory and inconsistent missional attempts and missional immaturity within the ELCSA. Leadership development and formation within the Lutheran training institutes in Southern Africa, which are crucial in church life seems inadequate from a curriculum perspective. Failure to understand and appreciate the current missional language will inadvertently confuse the church's understanding of God's mission in the world (*missio Dei*). The challenge facing the ELCSA will therefore be an imperative and absolute need to move from a church with mission to a missional church. The study seeks to further explore and investigate insights from the ELCSA's mission history with a view of determining the missional

health and checking whether the church has a comprehension and understanding of the concept and language of a missional church and missional leadership. In this study I will also attempt to answer two possible sub-problems of the study viz. How does the ELCSA create a missional leadership aptitude environment and how does the ELCSA implement the missional conversation(s) to the operating landscape of the church? This study will also contrast the attractional and incarnational mindsets.

I reflect in the conclusion the significance and importance of a missional church and highlight the characteristics or indicators of such a church by applying it to the ELCSA.

Recommendations are indicated for consideration by the ELCSA and are not presented as an answer or solution to the challenge that the church is facing.

## **KEY TERMS**

**Christendom**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA)**

**Leadership**

**Mission**

**Mission statement**

**Missional**

**Missional Church**

**Missional Leadership**

**Missio Dei and Missio Ecclesiae**



## GLOSSARY

**Christendom** Hirsch (2006:276) maintains that it describes the standardised form and expression of the church and mission formed in the post-Constantine period (AD 312 to present). It is important to note that it was not the original form in which the church expressed itself. The Christendom church is fundamentally different from the New Testament (NT) church, which is made up of a network of grassroots missional communities organised as a movement. Christendom is marked by the following characteristic:

1. Its mode of engagement is attractational as opposed to missional/sending. It assumes a certain centrality of the church in relation to its surrounding culture. (The missional church is a “going/sending one” and operates in the incarnational mode.)

**Leadership** Clinton (1989:59) provides the following definition of leadership: A Christian leader is a person with a God-given capacity and the God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God’s people toward God’s purpose for the group. According to Gibbs (2005:20), the definition of leadership by Clinton draws attention to the initiative of God in calling forth leadership, a point that is strongly emphasised throughout Scripture.

**Mission** Ross (2010: 21) asserts that current experience worldwide teaches that ‘mission’ has different dimensions and can be understood in different ways:

1. Those who have studied 'mission' have put emphasis on the idea of the mission of God (*missio Dei*)— a comprehensive understanding of all that God is doing in human life and history;
2. Those who are responsible for the mission practice of the churches have put emphasis on mission as proclamation— making known the good news about Jesus Christ;
3. Those who are coming from a position of disadvantage or oppression have put emphasis on mission as the struggle for justice and liberation.

According to Ferguson and Wright (2005:435), mission conveys the Biblical idea of being sent, classically expressed by Jesus saying: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (Jn.20:21). The parallel between God sending Jesus and Jesus sending his disciples describes both the method and the content of mission." The church's mission, then, encompasses everything that Jesus sends his people into the world to do. It does not include everything the church does or everything God does in the world." (Ferguson and Wright, 2005:435).

**Mission statement** Hindle (2008:133) defines a mission statement as an organisation's vision translated into written form. He maintains that a mission statement makes concrete a leader's view of the direction and purpose of an organisation.

**Missional** Hirsch (2008:2) asserts that a proper understanding of *missional* begins with recovering a missionary understanding of God. By his very nature God is a "sent one" who takes the initiative to redeem his creation. This doctrine, known as *missio Dei*—the sending of God—is causing many to redefine their understanding of the church. Because we are the "sent" people of God, the church is the instrument of God's mission

in the world. As things stand, many people see it the other way around. They believe mission is an instrument of the church; a means by which the church is grown. Although we frequently say "the church has a mission," according to missional theology a more correct statement would be "the mission has a church." *Missional* represents a significant shift in the way we think about the church. As the people of a missionary God, we ought to engage the world the same way he does—by *going* out rather than just *reaching* out. To obstruct this movement is to block God's purposes in and through his people. When the church is in mission, it is the true church.

**Missional Church** Barrett *et al* (2004:36-37) maintains that a missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending, as being sent. A missional congregation lets God's mission permeate everything that the congregation does—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God's mission."

Hirsch (2006:285) asserts that a missional church is a church that defines itself, and organises its life around, its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organising principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that

adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to obstruct God's purposes in and through his people.

**Missional Leadership** Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006:29 &135) asserts that missional leadership is cultivating an environment that releases the missional imagination of the people of God. They further maintains that missional leaders need to be skillful in engaging conflict and helping people live in ambiguity long enough to ask new questions about who they are as God's people. "Missional leadership is that form of leadership that emphasizes the primacy of the missionary calling of God's people, etc."(Hirsch 2006:284).

**Missio Dei and Missio Ecclesiae** Bosch (1991:391) maintains that we have to distinguish between mission (singular) and missions (plural). The first refers primarily to the *missio Dei* (God's mission), that is, God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God for people. God is a missionary God, according to Bosch (1991:390; cf Aagaard 1974:421). Missions (the *missiones ecclesiae*: the missionary ventures of the church), refer to particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in the *missio Dei*. "The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, and holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of Epiphany." (Bosch 1991:391).

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Long Form or Description
CCLF	Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation
ELCSA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
ELCSA-NT	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa(Natal-Transvaal)
FELCSA	Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa
IDI	Individual Depth Interviews
PoV	Point of View
ETC	Et cetera
UP	University of Pretoria
LCSA	Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
LTI	Lutheran Theological Institute
LTS	Lutheran Theological Seminary
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
TEEC	Theological Education by Extension College

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter serves as an introduction to the contextual setting of the study, the problem statement (sub-problems) and research question. It highlights the research objectives, the importance and the limitations of the study. It introduces the research methodology by outlining the research design, methods and approaches that were used during the research.

### **1.1. Audience**

The research report will be of interest to three groups of readers:

1. Academics, scholars or students who are interested in, or wish to conduct research on a missional church or missional leadership in Southern Africa.
2. Churches operating in Africa, particularly in Southern Africa.
3. Lutheran Missionaries who are considering and contemplating working in Southern Africa.

### **1.2. Contextual Setting**

“The idea of the missional church has single-handedly captured the imagination of church leaders of all backgrounds and denominations. Take your pick: from the boomer power pastors of suburbia to the preaching punks of “emergia” and the collared intellectuals of “liturgia”, everyone wants to be missional.”(Mancini 2008:33).

Mancini (2008:33) further asserts that missional church reorientation is essentially a way of thinking that challenges the church to re-form and reforge its self-understanding (theologically, spiritually, and socially) so that it can relearn how to live and proclaim the gospel in the world.

According to Van Gelder (2007:86, cf Roxburgh 2007:5), the *missional church* shifts the focus to the world as the horizon for understanding the work of God and the identity of the church.

According to Gibbs (2005:31&34), church leaders in the twenty-first century must be prepared to re-examine all of their established assumptions, policies and procedures.

Gibbs(2005) further asserts that if the church is to be credible as it communicates the message of the good news of the reign of God, it must demonstrates the values of the kingdom, including humility, honesty, integrity, purity of life, justice and compassion.

Roxburgh and Boren (2009:70) assert that *missio Dei* calls us to see that God is up to something radically different than we imagined and that there is another vibrant, powerful, awesome missional river streaming towards us.

Van Gelder (2007:18) maintains that in understanding *missio Dei*, we find that God as a creating God also creates the church through the Spirit, who calls, gathers, and sends the church into the world to participate in God's mission.

According to Hirsch (2006:82), a *missional church* is a church that defines itself, and organises its life around its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world. By implication the church's authentic and genuine organising principle and attitude centres on the mission of God and not necessarily the mission of the church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus Christ. *Missional leadership* is conferred by God and missional values may be inferred. When the leadership is faithful and

competent the church will benefit; when the opposite happens, the church suffers. Such an experience can be great or absolutely terrifying. Hirsch (2006:284) asserts that missional leadership is that form of leadership that emphasises the primacy of the missionary calling of God's people. To obstruct and barricade this approach creates a wedge in God's purpose for humanity and calls for a serious rethink on the mandate of the church.

Popham (2006) in his article titled "The Reemergence of Missional Leadership", asserts that missional leadership must be restored within the 21<sup>st</sup> century church, transitioning apostolically gifted leaders from the managerial to the missional role within leadership, as well as incubating the emergence of new leaders birthed by missional vision instead of cloning to meet the growing plethora of managerial demands of the building bound church.

"Missional leadership must be about cultivating the capacity and gifts of the people who are already part of the church. When people understand leadership as cultivation, a new excitement about the possibility of congregational life emerges."(Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:30).Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006:24) maintain that missional leaders must learn to discern what God is doing in, through, and among all the movements of change in which a congregation finds itself. Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006) asserts that leaders must develop the capacity to assist the members in reflecting on what they are experiencing, and listening to each other's stories in terms of their encounter with a radically changing environment.



Stetzer and Putman (2006:202) assert that leaders who break the missional code have both great vision and good administrative skills. According to Stetzer and Putman (2006), the missional leaders are unique in that they can see the big picture, but they can also implement details through people.

Creps (2006:38) claims that a missional point of view (PoV) on the citizens of Postmodernia begins with Jesus point of view on himself: “the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost.” Postmoderns (and premoderns, and moderns!) are not philosophers in need of enlightenment or rock stars seeking a gig; they are human beings searching for the transcendent.

“The missional church represents God in an encounter between God and human culture. It exists not because of human goals or desires, but as a result of God’s creating and saving work in the world. It is a visible manifestation of how the good news of Jesus Christ is present in human life and transforms human culture to reflect more faithfully God’s intention for creation. It is a community that visibly and effectively participates in God’s activity, just as Jesus indicated when he referred to it in metaphorical language as salt, yeast, and light in the world.”(Barrett *et al* 2004:159).

Gibbs (2005:18) maintains that leadership is a complex issue; it cannot be defined in one short sentence. It takes on different forms in diverse situations in which individuals demonstrate contrasting leadership traits. We can more readily identify the characteristics of leadership by their absence since, unfortunately, we have more experience of both leadership vacuums and leadership muddles than we do of leadership that has a clear sense of direction and empowers the community it leads.

Bosch (1991:10) concludes that we have to distinguish between mission (singular) and missions (plural). The first refers primarily to *mission Dei* (God's mission), that is, God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God for people. Missions (the *missiones ecclesiae*: the missionary ventures of the church), refer to particular forms; related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in *missio Dei*.

### **1.3. Research Problem and sub-Problems**

ELCSA as a church has been exposed to a variety and multiplicity of missional cultures and mission settings through a diversity of missionaries operating from different missional landscape and backgrounds. The various and differing missional history has created inconsistencies in the theological foundations that underpin and add force to her missional outlook and maturity. As the church journeys towards becoming a missional church, there is an imperative need to radically revisit her traditional ecclesiologies in order to develop a clearer understanding of her missional vocation. The missional direction of the church is in a quandary partly because of the leadership failure to manage the contradictory and inconsistent missional attempts and missional immaturity within the ELCSA. Leadership development and formation within the Lutheran training institutes in Southern Africa, which are crucial in church life seems inadequate from a curriculum perspective. Failure to understand and appreciate the current missional language will inadvertently confuse the church's understanding of God's mission in the world (*missio Dei*). The challenge facing the ELCSA will therefore be an imperative and absolute need to move from a church with mission to a missional church. The study

seeks to explore and investigate insights from her mission history with a view of determining the missional health and whether the church has a comprehension and understanding of the concepts and languages of a missional church and missional leadership. A reflection of the historical context of the ELCSA in Chapter 2 and the introduction of the missional church and missional leadership conversations in Chapter 3 will help to gauge her comprehension and understanding of the concept and language of the missional church and missional leadership. The results of the questionnaire in Chapter 4 will help to further clarify this position.

The research problem is thus defined as:

The lack of missional astuteness and intelligence emanating from Christendom mindsets and agendas is detrimental to the growth of the church and creating missional chaos and paralysis.

The possible sub-problems are as follows:

1. How does the ELCSA equip and train the current crop of leaders to lead missional congregations?
2. How does the ELCSA implement the missional conversation(s) to the operating landscape of the church?
3. How does the ELCSA emphasise the imperative need to focus predominantly on God's mission (*missio Dei*) in resuscitating the church and thereby becoming a missional church?
4. Contrasting the attractional and incarnational mindsets.

#### **1.4. Research Question**

The primary research question will thus be:

Considering the current missional church and missional leadership conversations and language, how can the ELCSA learn from the current missional expressions to improve her missional outlook and align her mission to the redemptive mission of God (*missio Dei*)?

The questions facing the church are thus multi-pronged and require some research:

1. How does the church address the missional challenges facing her in the midst of insightful and profound cultural transition and a glaring leadership vacuum?
2. How does the church deal with the surrounding community given the cultural shifts and the ever changing needs of the neighbourhood?
3. How does the church find the appropriate knowledge and skills required to lead the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond?
4. How does the church equip and train the current crop of pastors to deal with transitional missional challenges?

#### **1.5. Research Objectives**

The primary and crucial objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine and establish the missional health of the ELCSA as a church;
2. To define and identify the characteristics/ indicators of a missional church and how they apply to the ELCSA;
3. To describe the missional Leadership concept and apply it to the ELCSA operating landscape;

4. To investigate and isolate the importance and significance of the missional church and missional leadership concepts to the mission of the ELCSA.

### **1.6. Delimitation of the study**

The research will focus exclusively and wholly on the ELCSA, and therefore does not reflect on other denominations. This research is focused on a missional Church and missional Leadership in the ELCSA.

### **1.7. Importance of the study**

1. The research will explore and investigate the spiritual health and missional wealth associated with a missional church;
2. The research will look at the identified characteristics/ indicators of a missional church with a view of enriching it from the perspective of the ELCSA in Southern Africa;
3. The research will eventually introduce missional leadership as a concept and highlight the paybacks of being associated with a missional church concept within the ELCSA.

### **1.8. Key Assumption(s)**

According to Stetzer & Putman (2006:4) there is a missional code that needs to be broken. Stetzer and Putman(2006) asserts that breaking the code means recognising that there are cultural barriers, in addition to spiritual ones, that blind people from understanding the gospel. The research will assume that there are cultural and spiritual barriers that exist within the ELCSA that hinder her from becoming a missional church.

### **1.9. Possible Constraints to the Research**

The ELCSA is formed by seven dioceses that are geographically spread among Botswana, the Republic of South Africa and Swaziland. The distance between the three countries might be a possible constraint for the research in ensuring that the intended interviewees are effectively reached.

### **1.10. Research Methodology**

The methodology for this study was based on a literature review approach in order to assess and consider the comprehension and understanding of a missional church and missional leadership language within the ELCSA. The design focused on responses from a questionnaire distributed to the target group and determines the perspectives and viewpoints on the subject matter.

The questionnaire was analysed to report the findings of the study of the subject population.

#### **1.10.1. Research design**

The study was an explanatory one and the purpose was to explain missional church and missional leadership concepts.

The research question was answered using qualitative techniques which were influenced by the literature review, with an express rationale of increasing understanding of the topic. Investigative and probing questions were asked during individual depth interviews (IDI) with members of the church to satisfactorily answer the research question and establish the applicability of the missional church and missional leadership concepts within the ELCSA.

The study took place under field conditions or the actual environment conditions in which the criteria variables occur, covering the operating landscape of the ELCSA.

### **1.10.2. Sample design**

The target population was any member of the ELCSA, especially the clergy leadership of the church (Bishops and Deans) in Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland. The lecturers at the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI) formed part of the target population.

The sample frame was the circuits and dioceses of the church within the ELCSA. The size of the population was unknown and so the sample representation was a non-probability sample in which each population element does not have a known nonzero chance of being included; no attempt was made to generate a statistically representative sample. The sample size will need to be as big as possible so that the results are likely to be as close to the population as possible. No maximum sample size was stated, only a minimum sample size of fifty valid participants. As pointed out by Cooper and Schindler (2008:170), a snowball sampling happens when participants refer researchers to others who have characteristics, experiences, or attitudes similar to or different from their own. The researcher made use of snowball sampling techniques in order to attract the required amount of each class for the quota sample.

The researcher expressed appreciation for participation to improve cooperation in subsequent studies.

### **1.10.3. Measuring instruments**

A letter was sent out to as many circuits/dioceses that could be contacted, based in Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland. These circuits/dioceses were identified, and a list drawn up, through a review of listed circuits/dioceses in the ELCSA almanac.

The communication approach was through personal interview, telephone and mail or sometimes a combination of these (called hybrid studies).

The measurement instrument was a questionnaire that was distributed in several ways, namely:

1. Via email or fax to circuit deans and diocesan bishops.
2. Hand delivered to those deans and bishops who preferred a verbal interview rather than using email or fax based instruments.

The desired response rate was around 50% and was driven through telephonic follow-ups to assist in increasing the response rate. The interest and motivation to participate was awakened by choosing or designing questions that are attention getting and more informative for the subject matter.

Questionnaires and interview schedules ranged from those that have a great deal of structure to those that are essentially unstructured.

The measuring instrument was pretested with the assistance of the study supervisor before it was distributed to participants to overcome instrument problems and challenges.



## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY**

The focus of this chapter is on the theoretical foundation of the study, scholarship review and the scope of the body of knowledge.

Since the ELCSA underpins the purpose of the study, it is crucial to explain the historical background by giving a background and contextual basis of Lutheranism and Lutheran theology of the institution in order to appreciate and understand the research problem. In order to fully grasp the problem and to be able to answer the research question, a brief overview of the history and policies of ELCSA were deemed to be important.

The Training Institutions (Seminaries) where the ELCSA pastors are trained was reviewed in order to appreciate the environment within which their ministerial formation is grounded.

### **2.1. Brief introduction to ELCSA**

The early history of Lutheranism in Southern Africa is the history of several different missionary societies, each with its own culture, working quite independently in different parts of the region. Missionary agencies from overseas that came to Southern Africa to spread the good news came from different churches and national backgrounds and unfortunately introduced those backgrounds and traditions among the racial groups with whom they came into contact. Most of the missionaries came from Berlin, while others came from Hermansburg. Others were from America, Norway and Sweden. It goes without saying that the inclination to have differing cultures was high, which brings with it cultural diversity. Marty (2007:14-15) asserted that coming from many nations with so

many languages, traditions, customs and theological accents; they were often strangers to each other. The main Lutheran accents involved attempts to be faithful to the Scriptures, accepting their full authority and drawing from them the central theme that God is a God of judgement and mercy who relates to humans through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that nothing in that relation is more important than 'faith and grace.' The varying *modus operandi* weakened the Lutheran cooperation and unity in Southern Africa in my opinion. While the ages of the missionaries are often not an issue, the historical influences cannot be ignored. My view is that even if the young missionaries were sent to the southern part of Africa, they came along with ancient ways of attracting their intended targets. My submission therefore would be that an attractional mode as opposed to the incarnational one was used. 'An attractional church operates from the assumption that to bring people to Jesus we need to first bring them to church. It also describes the type or mode of engagement that was birthed during the Christendom period of history, when the church was perceived as a central institution of society and therefore expected people to "come and hear the gospel" rather than taking a "go-to- them" type of mentality.'(Hirsch 2006:275). My view is that churches must appreciate that with the changing times and the multiplicity of social challenges, the chances are that the church will no longer be perceived as a central institution of society and therefore the method of reaching the target group needs to be reviewed. 'When we talk of incarnational in relation to mission it means similarly embodying the culture and life of a target group in order to meaningfully reach that target group of people from within their culture.'(Hirsch 2006:281). My opinion is that given the current times, an

incarnational mode will certainly yield better results for the ELCSA particularly because the values and beliefs of the target group are at a cross road.

Out of this missionary work regional churches began to grow and it was not long before some form of unity or coming together and working together of all Lutherans was being proposed. This resulted in the formation of the Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation (CCLF) in 1951. The formation of the CCLF presented the Lutherans with a united opportunity to present themselves as a cohesive front. As the cooperation was taking shape, it became clear that a much bigger structure that might ultimately unify the Lutherans was required. In 1966 a loose federation with no decision-making power was formed. It was called FELCSA (Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Southern Africa). According to Scriba and Lislrud (1997:125), FELCSA was instrumental and influential in the formation of the ELCSA. As the missionaries grew older and became fewer in number, the black pastors and bishops began to take over the congregations founded by the missionary societies. Four predominantly black synods (Cape Orange Region, South Eastern Region, Transvaal Region and Tswana Region) from different parts of the country united to form the ELCSA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa), which was officially birthed on 18 December 1975 in Tlhabane, Rustenburg (North-West Province) during the constituting assembly which took place from 15 to 20 December 1975. The formation of the ELCSA is one of the most significant milestones in the history of Lutheranism in South Africa. Voges (1988) in his article, states that the dioceses of the ELCSA are organised on a geographical basis. This means Lutherans speaking different languages and of different cultural backgrounds are members of the same diocese. Thus the ELCSA wants to point to the

fact that boundaries of language, culture, race, nation, and tribe cannot divide the Body of Christ. There are three white Lutheran churches in South Africa: the Cape Church, the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA) and the Natal-Transvaal Church. The tendency of these churches to support apartheid or racially divided churches has brought them into serious conflict with all other Lutherans throughout the world. ELCSA is an affiliated member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), South African Council of Churches (SACC), Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) and World Council of Churches (WCC). In 1977 the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) challenged the white churches to put their houses in order and to reject unequivocally the existing apartheid system as contrary to the Lutheran confession of faith. At the next meeting of the LWF held in Budapest (Hungary) in 1984, the membership of the South African white churches was suspended. In 1991, after the Nationalist Party had formally abandoned its policy of apartheid, the three churches signed declarations rejecting apartheid and were thus re-admitted to the Lutheran World Federation. Nevertheless, the question of a merger with ELCSA remains. The white churches continue to be separate for no other reason in my view than race and fear of losing their identity and independence. The Lutheran Church in South Africa currently comprises of four separate churches, namely: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA), Lutheran Church in South Africa (LCSA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Natal-Transvaal), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church). Whatever the reasons and motivations might be for the current status quo, Lutherans must work towards unity among them — not for the sake of denominational pride, but for the sake of the church in South Africa. In 1984/85, the three churches

decided through their synods/general assembly's to start the unification process. Needless to mention, ±28 years down the line, not much has been achieved in terms of this goal. Meeting after meeting was held on constitutional, financial, legal and contractual matters. It is my view that the former reasons are more camouflage to disguise that the actual issues border on racism and separate racial tendencies. It is therefore imperative to continue praying for church unity within the Lutheran family in southern Africa. After serving a five-year term as General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, Dr. Janet Somerville (2009:2) writes that "racism is deep, deep in the ways of the world, always to the advantage of the privileged. The protection of privilege runs so deep that we find ourselves helpless to change what racism has wrought in ourselves, our relationships, and our society and in our churches...helpless to change...unless we let ourselves be truly transformed." One is biased to conclude that the ministries of reciprocity, real power sharing and practicing of reconciliation and even facing the question of reparations for the sins of racism are crucial and necessary actions for knocking down the walls of indeterminate unity. One is inclined to question if the suspension from the Lutheran World Federation might have been the primary motive for starting unity talks? While the need to unite and form the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA) is imminent given the ministry of hope, it is, however, premature to overlook the hidden and most crucial reasons for the deadlock to date. Under the present ecumenical limitation, Lutheran unity is perhaps the most tangible and natural aim to strive towards, particularly when it is not in itself an end but is directed in its purpose by an imperative need for shared ministry to serve God without colour barriers. It is alleged that a Unity Committee has found areas of

agreement and consensus, but it is critical to note that there are areas of differences and sensitivity that are allegedly making the final consensus difficult. As a Lutheran I sometimes wonder what it would have been like if the Lutheran churches in southern Africa had been united since inception and the introduction of Lutheranism in the country. In order to grow the church and strengthen her membership, the ELCSA needs to manoeuvre through her challenges and embark on how to become a missional church in our context and condition. The church must remain faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ by defining and organising herself around the purpose of becoming an agent of God's mission to the world. One hopes that the diakonia services will enable the Lutherans to continue to form, serve as a united community and proclaim the love of Christ through the work of a cooperating church.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa is currently constituted by seven dioceses spreading between Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland. Lesotho is currently organising members, although a few have already joined and are therefore treated as a preaching station for the ELCSA. Today more than 580,000 are members within the ELCSA, ±90% of which are in South Africa. According to paragraph 1.2 of Chapter 1(Part 1) of its constitution, the ELCSA is an Episcopal church. "The church shall therefore have an office of the Bishop entrusted with authority and oversight concerning the teachings and spiritual matters." One is not too sure if the futuristic resolution was taken here by reflecting the church as an Episcopal church or whether an episcopal authority or hierarchy was the ulterior motive? Nurnberger (2005:130) asserts that for Luther the idea that the church was based on the authority of the hierarchy was spurious. He maintains that the hierarchy had, in fact, abused its power

and stood in the way of the development of the true church. It was during the 2008 General Assembly that the constitution of the church was amended to reflect the ELCSA as an Episcopal Church (refer part 1, chapter 1: paragraph 1.2 of the constitution). It will help in my opinion if the ELCSA constitution was detailed enough to introduce the character of the church and the rationale behind the resolution. In my opinion the specific paragraph of the constitution is open for scrutiny and lack of proactiveness in that regard can be detrimental to the image of the church. According to Horton (2006:687) episcopalianism is a form of church government wherein supreme authority is vested in a board of bishops (the episcopacy). Nurnberger (2005:168) stresses that Luther and other Reformers rejected the authority of the episcopacy. One is not sure if by implication the issue of supreme authority is being rejected or whether there is a call for a clearer definition of the powers of the Episcopal Council? It is interesting to note that the ELCSA Episcopal Council has the power to defer the decisions of the General Assembly (highest decision making body). Be that as it may, I am convinced that the decision and or resolution to regard the ELCSA as an Episcopal Church is questionable. The advantages and disadvantages of going this route were thoroughly discussed but due to the canning decision making processes of the General Assembly, such a resolution was taken. It remains to be seen even today if the real reasons for taking this resolution were beneficial for the ELCSA, although in my view it is very precarious. My persuasion and conviction in this matter remains that the church has failed to differentiate between the spiritual and secular authority (and power). How can ELCSA claim to be an Episcopal Church when the Presiding Bishop manages his own diocese and is not yet full time? By virtue of managing his own diocese, there is a

possibility that he might find himself involved in the lower structures, which will weaken his authority and resolute decision making powers. The term of Presiding Bishop was accordingly changed as per resolution to six years to allow productivity and innovation in the office. The General Assembly is the highest decision making body of the ELCSA but if the Church Council can rescind and over-rule its decisions, then its credibility remains questionable. During the General Assembly of 2008, it was resolved that the Bishop shall hold office for a period of twelve years but was since annulled by the Church Council to indicate that the Bishop shall hold office until he/she reaches retirement age. The problem with the latter is that once elected and eventually consecrated, a tendency of adopting laissez-faire exists, which unfortunately does not take the church forward. Marty (2007:28) is instrumental in asserting that church councils do err. One continues to pray and hope that sanity will prevail on the term of the office of the Bishop to ensure that the ELCSA as a church grows exponentially and spiritually. ELCSA should guard against being preoccupied with the achievement of secondary objectives such as her quantitative growth to the detriment of her qualitative growth. 'They decree or vote or judge one way and some years later they may have to repeal or studiously forget what they voted and once said.'(Marty, 2007:28). This is the ultimate hope in the case of ELCSA Church Council. According to paragraph 2.1 of Chapter 2 (Part 1), "The foundation upon which the church stands is Jesus Christ, the Word of God as proclaimed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, which we believe to be correctly explained by the three ecumenical symbols, namely the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed and the writings of the Lutheran Reformation, especially the Catechisms of Dr Martin Luther and the Unaltered



Augsburg Confession.” In my opinion and assessment, there is a serious grey area that applies to the laity and the congregants. I believe the ELCSA has a duty to ensure that all her membership is well versed and grounded with the latter paragraph of the constitution. It is sad to advocate for a return to the tendency and inclination to be a teaching church, which the ELCSA was known for historically. The positive effects of Christian Education should be instilled and encouraged within the church in general.

According to the current ELCSA constitution (Part 1,Chapter 3:2011), the mission of the church is to glorify and praise the name of the Triune God and that can be achieved and realised by the following approaches:

1. Proclaiming the crucified and risen Christ;
2. Bringing the gospel to all people through preaching and teaching the word of God and through administering the sacraments;
3. Being a witness of Jesus Christ as a servant to the world by word and deed in faith, love and hope;
4. Working towards the realisation of the oneness of the Body of Christ;
5. Actively supporting ecumenical movements and by being prepared to co-operate with other churches for the extension of the Kingdom of God, provided such co-operation does not violate the confessional basis of the church; and
6. Advocating for justice, peace and reconciliation for the people of God.

A quick glance at the mission of the church currently reveals a paradigm shift from a church that did not proclaim the crucified and risen Christ (Part 1:3.1) and a church that did not advocate for justice, peace and reconciliation for the people of God (Part 1:3.6). While it is not clear how the crucified and risen Christ is proclaimed, it is comforting to

know that the church is centered on Jesus Christ, which in my view is linked to the mission of God. It is equally reassuring that the church has taken an initiative to advocate for justice, peace and reconciliation for the people of God. A step that is essential and overbearing in moving towards a missional church.

The amended constitution revealed the following mission of the church:

1. Bringing the Gospel to all people through preaching and teaching the word of God and through administering the holy sacraments;
2. Being a witness of Jesus Christ as a servant to the world by word and deed in faith and love and hope;
3. Working towards the realisation of the oneness of the Body of Christ; and
4. Actively supporting ecumenical movements and by being prepared to cooperate with other churches for the extension of the Kingdom of God, provided such cooperation does not violate the confessional basis of the Church.

A reflection on the mission of the church today in comparison to the initial one as adopted in 1975 raises a number of critical questions. While the intention of this study has nothing to achieve by comparing the two contrasting missions of the church, it is, however, sufficient to ask why such changes were deemed necessary, unless the changes were necessitated by a misguided need to reform and the need to move away from regional church structures? According to Corrie (2007:14-15), the aims of Christian mission are derived from Scripture, Jesus and the apostolic era, although they have also been influenced by historical context. The aim of mission is therefore to make known God's revelation about himself and that reconciliation is available through Christ's sacrificial death. A church riddled by ethnic and racial politics will always find it

difficult to execute the mandate and mission of God. The ethnic and cultural platforms take priority in confusing instead of uniting God's people. It therefore becomes crucial to understand why ELCSA was formed and whether there were clearly formulated goals and objectives for such a formation? Perhaps ELCSA must continually be guided through her missionary efforts by a clear understanding of her *raison d'être* since inception? The need to become a missional church becomes crucial and imperative. For the ELCSA to become a missional church it is critical to understand that the questions of ecclesiology and polity from a missional standpoint are indispensable. Corrie (2007:51) proclaims that there are several reasons why the understanding of the church in mission (missional ecclesiology) is a topic of great importance and increasing interest:

- ❖ The historically unprecedented growth of the church, especially in the non-Western world, and the shift of the centre of gravity of the church from the North to the South, draws attention to the worldwide expansion of the church;
- ❖ Through the various movements of ecumenism and cooperation, both conciliar and evangelical, and aided by increasing globalisation and internationalisation in general, churches have come into closer contact with each other and become aware of the various societal and cultural contexts in which the church exists.

### **2.1.1. Seminaries or Training Institutions for Pastors**

Guder (1998:216-217) asserts that seminaries are seeking to reorient their training philosophies to adequately equip more leaders today, which are shaped by the kind of missional ecclesiology. This shaping would mean the redesign of theological education.

Guder (1998) proclaims that the first year of such an education might be a year for initiates who are discerning whether God is calling them to the vocation of missional leadership. The classrooms would become communities, and the initiates would live in these communities shaped by ecclesial practices and disciples of accountability. The remaining years of preparation would involve the initiate in a close covenant relationship between the theological training school and an actual missional community.

Traditionally the Lutheran pastors in South Africa were trained at both Umphumulo Theological Seminary in Natal and Marang Seminary near Rustenburg. Unfortunately these institutions are now closed and the buildings are dilapidated and in shocking states. The closure of these institutions remains questionable, especially when one relates it to the chaos and disorder that emanated from such activity. ELCSA does not have enough pastors and the decision to close both institutions remains a serious mystery to some of the inquisitive minds operating in her structures. Most of the people who were involved in the leadership of the two closed institutions still don't know why such seminaries were closed. It is alleged that the real reason for such closures was financial by nature, which raises a question of sustainability? Lutheran pastors are currently trained at the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI) based in Pietermaritzburg in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The LTI was constituted by consolidating the Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) and the Lutheran House of Studies in Pietermaritzburg in January 2003. Since the constitution of LTI, it has been battling with accreditation challenges, especially for the Diploma courses. Some of the courses taught currently at LTI are subcontracted to the Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC). While the outsourcing of certain courses might be viewed as an admission of structural and

organisational insufficiencies, it is important that the issue of accreditation be addressed urgently. The question remains on the authenticity of the qualifications and the curriculum content. My attention and focus for now is not so much on the legitimacy and validity of the qualifications but rather on the curriculum content. The crucial questions that one is grappling with are as follows: How does ELCSA equip and train the current crop of leaders to lead missional congregations and deal with the transitional missional challenges? Leadership development and formation within the Lutheran training institutes in Southern Africa, which in my understanding are crucial in church life seems inadequate from a curriculum perspective. My observation is that while subjects like Church leadership, Management and Administration are offered at LTI, they merely focus on the theological foundations without enough emphasis on the secular aspect of the disciplines. The inclination to adopt the introduction approach to the discipline is visible in my opinion, which borders on casual approaches. The casual approach to these important disciplines does not prepare the students in my view for their responsibilities as leaders, managers and administrators within ELCSA once in ordained ministry. It is important that the methodology and the curriculum content are urgently reviewed in my opinion.

## **2.2. Lutheranism and Lutheran theology**

The Lutheran Reformation was pre-eminently a theological movement, which was deeply religious and evangelical. ‘Lutherans first called themselves evangelical, because they preached the “*evangel*,” or gospel.’(Marty 2007:14). What is crucial in my view is for the ELCSA to ask herself if they are continuing in the tradition of preaching

the good news? Martin Luther's plea (1522-AE 45:70-71; 36:265) is worth noting: "I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans...But if you are convinced that Luther's teaching is in accord with the gospel...then you should not discard Luther so completely, lest with him you discard also his teaching, which you nevertheless recognise as Christ's teaching. You should rather say: Whether Luther is a rascal or a saint I do not care, his teaching is not his, but Christ's." Marty (2007:12) is helpful in declaring that the name "Lutheran" was not the one that Luther liked or that Lutherans chose; it was pinned on them. Engelbrecht (2010:4) states that Lutherans believe that the Bible is God's inspired and inerrant (without error) word. 'Lutherans have stood in awe of the fact that everything begins with the Word of God and that, while the mountains and worlds may cease, the Word of the Lord endures forever.'(Marty 2007:26). According to Bosch (1991:244), the church was created by the *verbum externum* (God's word from outside humanity) and to the church this word has been entrusted.

According to Kinnaman (2010:21), the Reformation rested upon three fundamental principles:

1. Our salvation is entirely a gift of grace from God and not our own doing;
2. We receive that grace through faith and not by any works we might do;
3. The sole norm and rule of all doctrine is the Holy Scriptures.

It is crucial and essential to note that Luther's theological activity and output was to find a courteous and gracious God. "The sacred Scriptures are the very word of God, and as

such carry with them the authority and truthfulness of God himself.”(Ferguson and Wright 2005:405).

The Lutheran theology teaches that Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*) is the source of all theology and the rule and norm for judging all teachers and teachings in the church. Ferguson and Wright (2005:405) asserts that the divine Scriptures and the word proclaimed on the basis of Scripture have a soteriological purpose and to this end are inherently powerful, both to condemn and destroy and to comfort, create faith and save. According to Kinnaman (2010:21) there are four solas of Lutheranism:

1. *Sola Scriptura*: Scripture Alone- Lutherans believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and that it alone is the source and norm for what they believe and what they practice.
2. *Sola Gratia*: Grace Alone- At the center of what the Lutherans believe is the assurance that salvation is based on the unearned free gift of God’s grace. Ferguson and Wright (2005:406) proclaims that salvation and everything pertaining to it are by God’s grace alone.
3. *Sola Fide*: Faith Alone- God’s gift of grace is received through faith in what Jesus has done for us. The good things we do flow out of being made right with God, but they have no power to make us right with God. McCain (2006:33) stresses that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works.
4. *Solus Christo*: Christ Alone- Our sole basis and assurance of salvation is the life, death and resurrection of God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

According to Lutheran theology the chief article of the Christian faith centres in the person and work of Christ, in his substitutionary atonement. Ferguson and Wright(2005:405) affirms that the saving, redemptive work of Christ and his obedience to die in the place of all sinners constitutes the basis for God's loving and gracious justification, or acquittal of the sinner.

Corrie (2007:54) affirms that the Lutheran church has in a classical way expressed its understanding of the church as the communion of saints (or believers), where the gospel is preached purely and the sacraments administered rightly. The church is seen as a fellowship of human beings, and not primarily as an institution.

### **2.3. Missiones Ecclesiae**

Mission is a movement of God to the world and the church is an instrument for that mission. Our missionary activities are only relevant insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God. 'The *missio Dei* is the *missio ecclesiae*.'(Flett 2010:291).The church is one of the most fundamental realities of the Christian faith. According to Bosch (1991:391), the primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio-Dei*, representing God in and over against the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of Epiphany. Ferguson and Wright (2005:140; cf. Hendriks 2004:21) asserts that the doctrine of the church is often called *ecclesiology*. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:298) state that a Trinitarian-inspired *ecclesiology* speaks of the church as a communion in mission. Roxburgh and Boren (2009: 70) assert that *missio Dei* calls us to see that God is up to something radically different than we imagined and that there is another vibrant, powerful, awesome missional river streaming towards us. Van Gelder



(2007: 18) maintains that in understanding *missio Dei*, we find that God as a creating God also creates the church through the Spirit, who calls, gathers, and sends the church into the world to participate in God's mission. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:290) argue that God's mission (*missio Dei*) is carried on outside of and independently of the church. According to Bosch (1991: 390), the classical doctrine of *missio Dei* includes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. In other words, there is church because there is mission and not vice versa. Bosch (1991: 390) asserts that to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love towards people, since God is a fountain of sending love. 'Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of hope. The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit. How important it is too coercive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22) to become living witnesses to the coming reign of God! From a renewed appreciation of the mission of the Spirit, how do we re-envision God's mission in a changing and diverse world today?'(WCC 2012:2).

It is interesting, however, to note that in contrast to 1910, when the emphasis of the Edinburgh World Mission Conference was on the mission of the churches, the emphasis in 2010 is on God's mission (*missio Dei*) in which Christians participates. Balia and Kim (2010: 49) assert that the contrast represents a move from "a church-centred mission to a mission-centred church", and towards an exploration of missionary collaboration beyond the church. Corrie (2007:234) affirms that in the history of missionary thought,

*missio Dei* has played both deepening and corrective roles. It places the theology of mission at the heart of Christian theology by upholding the missionary nature of the Triune God from which it seeks to draw the theological basis and meaning of the church's mission. It is not the church that has a mission; it is God's mission that has a church. According to Bosch (1991: 390), mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. LWF (2004:27) asserts that the church's participation in God's mission is a gift of God's grace, a gift grounded in and flowing from the in-breaking reign of God in Christ. It is therefore crucial that ELCSA recognises and be familiar with the fact that to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love towards people, since God is a fountain of sending love.

Bosch (1991:391) is influential in highlighting that for the *missiones ecclesiae* (the missionary activities of the church) the *missio Dei* has importance, which in my view could be beneficial to ELCSA:

- ❖ 'Mission' singular remains primary; 'missions' in the plural, constitute a derivative. It follows that we have to distinguish between mission and missions. We cannot without ado claim that what we do is identical to the *missio Dei*; our missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God;
- ❖ The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather, it has to be a service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God,

holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of Epiphany;

- ❖ The *missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate. According to the World Council of Churches (Par.101 & 102; 2012), the mission of God (*missio Dei*) is the source of and basis of the church. Mission is the overflow of the infinite love of the Triune God, who created the whole world out of nothing and then proceeded to create all humankind in his image and likeness, to make us partakers of this ineffable love. A theology that starts from the participation of the church in God's mission cannot fail to point out that the church was born in the context of the mission of Jesus Christ.

Guder (1998:5) argues that mission is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit is expanded to include yet another movement: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. He maintains that the structure and theology of the established traditional churches is not missional and that they are shaped by the legacy of Christendom. Hirsch (2006:276-277) contends that a Christendom church is marked by the following characteristics:

- ❖ Its mode of engagement is attractational as opposed to missional/sending. It assumes a certain centrality of the church in relation to its surrounding culture.

(The missional church is a going/sending/sending one and operates in the incarnational mode);

- ❖ A shift of focus from dedicated, sacred buildings/places of worship. The association of buildings with the church fundamentally altered the way the church perceived itself. It became more static and institutional in form (The early church had no recognised dedicated buildings other than houses and shops, etc.);
- ❖ The emergence of an institutionally recognised, professional clergy class acting primarily in a pastor-teacher mode. (In the NT church, people were commissioned into leadership by local churches or by an apostolic leader. But this was basically different from a denominational or institutional ordination we know in Christendom, which had the effect of breaking up the people of God into the professional Christian and the lay Christian. The idea of a separated clergy is alien to an NT church, as it is in the Jesus movements of the early church);
- ❖ The paradigm is also characterised by the institutionalisation of grace in the form of sacraments administered by an institutionally authorised priesthood. (The NT church's form of communion was an actual meal dedicated to Jesus in the context of everyday life and the home).

Considering that the ELCSA was birthed by a multiplicity of missional societies operating regionally in Southern Africa, who by implication were also not missional, I want to submit that the ELCSA is therefore not missional as well and that it is shaped by the legacy of Christendom.

Guder (1998:11) affirms a number of characteristics of a faithfully missional ecclesiology and I find this one to be contributory to the ELCSA's journey in becoming a missional church:

- ❖ A missional ecclesiology is contextual- Every ecclesiology is developed within a particular cultural context. There is but one way to be the church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting. The gospel is always translated into a culture, and God's people are formed in that culture in response to the translated and Spirit-empowered word. All ecclesiology's function relative to their context. Their truth and faithfulness are related both to the gospel they proclaim and the witness they foster in every culture. The various cultures within the contextual composition of the ELCSA clearly require an ecclesiological review and understanding.

LWF (2004:11) stresses that in analysing its context, the church may ask, among other things, questions relating to situations requiring transformation and or healing, situations of conflict and reconciliation, and situations of control of power- its abuse, misuse, or lack of it. Understanding the contexts requires naming the realities and powers that are operative in the world; these include the identification of both the powers of evil and the power of God.

It is crucial for the ELCSA to appreciate that there are many important voices in her operating landscape which might name the contexts and to which the church needs to listen carefully and intentionally. The cries of the poor, the oppressed, the excluded, and the forgotten and silenced, points to the destructive arrogance of the powerful and the

need for the in-breaking reign of God in Christ, where there is justice and inclusion in a life-giving community.

According to Guder (1998:14), the church knows to expect a life full of ambiguities because it is shaped by its context as the gospel reshapes the context. Such a calling never leaves the church in a finished, settled, or permanent incarnation. Its vocation to live faithfully to the gospel in a fully contextual manner means that it can sometimes find itself either unfaithful or uncontextual. In addition, the human context that shapes it continues to change. Therefore the questions of its faithfulness are always fresh ones. The gospel of God is never fully and finally discerned so that no further transformation can be expected. The interaction between the gospel and all human cultures is a dynamic one, and it always lies at the heart of what it means to be a missional church.

According to Hirsch (2006: 285), a *missional church* is a church that defines itself, and organises its life around its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world. By implication the church's authentic and genuine organising principle and attitude centres on the mission of God and not necessarily the mission of the church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus Christ. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through his people. According to Van Gelder (2007: 86), the *missional church* shifts the focus to the world as the horizon for understanding the work of God and the identity of the church. This understanding is expressed in terms of the relationship of the *missio Dei* (the larger mission of God) to the kingdom of God (the redemptive reign of God in Christ). The missional church debate will hopefully

reorientate the ELCSA in her thinking about what it means to be a church in regard to God's activity in the world.

According to Hirsch (2006), *missional leadership* is conferred by God and missional values may be inferred. When the leadership is faithful and competent the church will benefit; when the opposite happens, the church suffers. Such an experience can be great or absolutely terrifying. Hirsch (2006: 284) asserts that missional leadership is that form of leadership that emphasises the primacy of the missionary calling of God's people. To obstruct and barricade this approach creates a wedge in God's purpose for humanity and calls for a serious rethink on the mandate of the church.

### **2.3.1. Ecclesiastical *praxis* and *raison d'être* of Christian mission**

According to Hendriks (2004: 22), *praxis* means reflective (prayerful) involvement in this world. Hendriks asserts that this reflection involves making use of what history and systematic theology teaches using theory wisely to engage in the witness and work of the church in the world. According to Ferguson and Wright (2005: 527), *praxis* essentially means action. "It describes the two-way traffic that is always going on between action and reflection—a dialectical engagement with the world in transforming action." (Ferguson and Wright 2005:389-390). Ferguson and Wright assert that through *praxis*, people enter into their socio-historical destiny. The following rhetoric questions by Ferguson and Wright (2005: 391) are worth noting: Does our distinction between principle and application hinder us from linking the transforming power of the gospel and the transformation of society and its structures? Does our understanding of the hermeneutical process still leave us with a gap between action and reflection that silently models a Christian commitment only to the *status quo*? "Is there a hidden

agenda in our theological formulations that has helped to make the world-wide church more comfortable with the middle and upper classes than with the poor?” (Ferguson and Wright 2005:391). According to Bevans and Schroeder (2004: 2), the church is missionary by its very nature. “If to be church is to be in mission, to be in mission is to be responsive to the demands of the gospel in particular contexts, to be continually reinventing itself as it struggles with and approaches new situations, new peoples, new cultures and new questions.”(Bevans and Schroeder 2004:31). Bevans and Schroeder (2004) further allege that the *praxis* model employed particularly by communities struggling for liberation focuses on the dimensions of culture involved in social change and develops a reinterpretation of Christianity in the midst of reflective action in favour of change that embodies Christian principles.”The church is called to be with the poor through an option of both solidarity and praxis, what has come to be called the preferential option for the poor.” (Bevans and Schroeder 2004:372).

Balia and Kim (2010:21) maintain that faithfulness in fulfilling the one mission of God implies participating in the one body of Christ and sharing the same Holy Spirit. Balia and Kim (2010: 27) assert that mission is what the church is sent to be—*koinonia*, community, presence, nearness, worship. Mission is what the church is sent to do—*diakonia*, care, service. In my view *diakonia* is much more than the active serving of the weak. Mission is what the church is sent to say- *kerygma*, proclamation of the gospel, dialogue, apologetics. The overriding concept is that mission is a witness to others about the gospel. *Martyria* is the sum of *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*- all of which constitute dimensions of witnessing. The *raison d'être* for mission is to share the good news in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is sad to state that the deaconesses and



deacons ministry within the ELCSA is dysfunctional, partly because their training is still in an infancy stage. The establishment of Kenosis as a training institution for deacons in 2011 was meant to address the latter situation, although in my view the institution is riddled with structural and financial challenges. Marty (2007:155) asserts that the Greek word *diakonia* means service of others, and deacons were to lead in that. My observation is that the widows, the poor and the marginalised are neglected within the ELCSA not because there are no resources but rather because the deacon's ministry is dysfunctional. There is an imperative need to urgently review the objectives and organisational vision of Kenosis within the ELCSA in my opinion. It is equally important to mention that the funding pie by international relief agencies has since shrunk and the need for self-reliance is urgent and the ELCSA must get her deacons ministry in order.

### **2.3.2. Foundations and Models of mission**

The Lutheran theological understanding and conviction that the mission of the church, derived from its participation in God's mission, is a holistic mission which was developed further at the Eighth and Ninth LWF Assembly in Curitiba (1990) and Hong Kong (1997). This understanding was also strongly emphasised by the Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg (2003) as stated in its message: "Our participation in the mission of the Triune God involves the three interrelated dimensions, diakonia, proclamation and dialogue, which are integral parts of the mission of the church.

'Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of hope.'(WCC 2012:2; cf Bosch (1991: 391; Balia & Kim 2010:36).

### **2.3.2.1. Foundations of mission**

Balia and Kim (2010) group the foundations for mission into three categories: experiential, Biblical and theological. “The last century has seen a growing awareness that our history, culture, politics, environmental and economic status (often termed context) influence the way in which we read the Bible, theologise and participate in mission.” (Balia & Kim 2010:12). As Bevan and Schroeder (2011:10-13) says: God is mission and a mission has a church. I am in agreement with Bevan and Schroeder (2011) in their assertion that the church comes to be when the church engages in mission, as it crosses the boundary of Judaism to the Gentiles and realises that its mission is the very mission of God: to go into the world and be God’s saving, healing, and challenging presence. It is therefore crucial that the ELCSA takes cognisance of the fact that mission precedes the church and not vice versa. “Mission calls the church into being to serve God’s purposes in the world. The church does not have a mission, but the mission has a church” (Bevan & Schroeder 2011:15-16).

Balia and Kim (2010: 18) assert that in accepting experience as one of its foundations, mission has the twin-obligation of being informed by experience (both past and present) and seeking to impact human experience (spiritual, physical, psychological, social, cultural, political, and economic) in creative fidelity to the gospel of Christ. In my opinion the historical experiences of Lutherans within the ELCSA in interacting with different missionaries and their societies should be pivotal in making them appreciate that ministry exists for mission and not for itself. Balia and Kim (2010: 28) maintain that in discerning its mission the global church has to acknowledge that the history of Christian mission was at one time very much aligned with European colonial expansionism.

Attentiveness to the experiences of those affected by this agenda of colonial expansionism has to prompt a radical rethinking of mission within the ELCSA leadership, including financial dependency inclinations and syndromes. Balia and Kim (2010:30) affirm that to appreciate movements in mission today, it is important to hear testimonies from Christians in different regions of the world of their experiences of conversion, justification, sanctification and new life and of struggles and the formation of Christian community. The mission of God within the ELCSA would be more effective if the church was willing to listen and to witnesses from regional experiences that have necessitated her formation. “Experience as a foundation for mission brings with it a constructive-critical dimension to Christian mission, which enables Christian mission to learn from the past while engaging with the present and envisioning the future.” (Balia & Kim 2010:14). The future outlook of the ELCSA would not be bleak if the constructive-critical dimensions were adhered to. Bevans and Schroeder (2011) are influential in advocating for the need to listen closely and deeply to the poor and taking the needs of those on the margin of society seriously. Ross (2010: 45) seems to be in agreement in asserting that a balanced understanding of mission will be informed by a wide range of experience. Balia and Kim (2010: 16) assert that the popular understanding of mission in the context of experiences is proclamation and pastoral care which are expected to result in numerical church growth. While the diminishing numbers of the ELCSA is a continuous cause for concern, one cannot for certain conclude that experience of the past has a causal impact in the negative trends of membership, although such suspicions exist. My view is that since the Lutheran experiences in Africa are Euro-centric to a large extent, the need to be contextual in understanding the current

experiences is imperative and crucial. This would involve inter alia the need to review the doctrinal formulations and liturgical customs and traditions.

Balia and Kim (2010: 18) maintain that the mission of God as understood from the Biblical witness includes affirming the sanctity of life, particularly whenever it is threatened, abused or destroyed. They further submit that the former makes mission an ally of those who are struggling for life—the poor, the oppressed and the excluded. It is therefore important that the ELCSA in her strategic reviews should also focus on how the church interacts with the needy, the poor and the marginalised. The church is therefore called to do a serious introspection in this regard as it maps her future outlook. Balia and Kim (2010: 18) assert that the experiences of the poor and the marginalised are often referred to and seen as ‘negative contrast experiences’, which have special revelatory significance when considered in juxtaposition with Biblical, witness to God’s activity. “Not all human experience is a valid foundation for mission, but only that which resonates with the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (Balia & Kim 2010:17).

‘Christian mission is grounded in the Scriptures in their entirety. “The inspiration of the Word, notwithstanding the different ways this has been understood in Christian history, is related to the inspiration of Christian community, receiving from Scriptures guidance and strength for walking the paths of mission.’(Balia & Kim 2010:23).The reading of the Bible in different mission contexts has demonstrated, Biblical criticism notwithstanding, how the changing contexts of our witness bring about new ways of understanding and engaging in God’s mission.

According to Balia and Kim (2010: 27), Christ's sending out the apostles to proclaim his gospel is rooted in his being sent by God the Father in the Holy Spirit (John 20:21). "This classical formulation of *missio Dei*, affirming that mission is God's sending forth was expanded in ecumenical discussion in the twentieth century to include the participation of the church in the divine mission." (Balia & Kim 2010:23). "Our mission has no life of its own: only in the hands of the sending God can it truly be called mission, not least since missionary initiative comes from God alone." (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:290). The church has a responsibility to live out the unity for which Jesus prayed for his people; "that they may all be one, so that the world may believe". (John 17:21). If God is the primary missionary and if God works in the whole world, then it is the world that sets the agenda for the church. (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:290).

### **2.3.2.2. Models of mission**

According to Ross (2010: 24), mission will be defined in the years to come not by any single master model, but by looking through the lenses provided by a variety of models. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on three models: liberation, dialogue and reconciliation. 'The three models have gained prominence during the last forty years' (Balia & Kim 2010: 32). They are appropriate in my view because ELCSA has gone through a variety of missional experiences inundated by different backgrounds. The potential for continuous dialogue and conversations are important in trying to locate the church in the African context. In an attempt to liberate her from the differing upbringings, the church will constantly attempt to unite and bond cultures that seems to be at the opposing end of each other. In my view, the historical memories of the past before 1975 continue to be at play and the need to manage them appropriately is essential.

According to Volf (2006: 25), we are not just shaped by memories; we ourselves shape the memories that shape us. I am therefore in agreement with Volf that the current ELCSA is shaped by her historical challenges which remain unresolved. Until such time that the church takes concrete steps to deal with issues that are hampering growth due to their historical nature, then the church remains unfortunately doomed.

### **2.3.2.3. Mission as liberation**

‘Liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society, thus enlarging the concept of salvation by understanding Jesus as redeemer from structural evils’(Balía & Kim 2010: 28). The criticality of this statement should be positioned within the context of the ELCSA attempting to reflect on her historical past before the merger and her endeavours to eliminate unfairness from the past in crafting a bright missional future. The commitment of the church to first eradicate the regional challenges (and or comfort zones) that is engulfed by ethnicity and culture dominance is important before embarking on becoming a missional church. In an attempt to answer the research question and inevitably the research problem, the study has assumed that there are cultural and spiritual barriers that exist within the ELCSA, so it is important equally to get rid of the former and the latter. According to Ross (2010: 24), where Christians have drawn on their faith to expose and overcome unjust political and social structures, they have defined mission in terms of liberation. My view is that when the ELCSA starts exposing and identifying whatever cultural challenges that continue to harass her; it will be a necessary move to overcome them. The issue rests in drawing strength from her faith in dealing with the imminent blockades and missional obstructions without

continuing to pretend as if all is well. My opinion is that the church is still trapped in cultural barriers and exploring mission as a liberating force is in the cards and remains imminent. 'In exercising its liberative mission the church is guided by the gospel imperative that all will be judged according to whether they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, or visited the prisoner' (Balia & Kim 2010:28). The latter is one of the challenges that the research question seeks to address by trying to locate the church in the surrounding community and constantly checking if she does execute her missional duties.

#### **2.3.2.4. Mission as dialogue**

Bevans and Schroeder (2011) align themselves to an understanding that dialogue can mean 'an attitude of respect and friendship, which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelising mission of the church' an attitude that can be called 'the spirit of dialogue.' I am in agreement with their assertion that the spirit of dialogue within mission should be done in humility and sensitivity to others in a contextual situation. My persuasion in this regard is that the ELCSA as a church will grow if it embraces the following characteristics of authentic dialogue: respect, openness, willingness to learn, attentiveness, vulnerability, hospitality, humility, and frankness (Bevans and Schroeder 2011:29).

LWF (2004:40) emphasises that at differing degrees, churches have engaged in dialogue with people of diverse faiths and convictions. The relevance and aims of such dialogue in relation to the mission of the church has been a much-debated theme in theological discourse. Interfaith dialogue, the search for peace and cooperation in

society, for mutual understanding and for the truth, is an integral part of the mission of the church.

The importance of inter-faith dialogue is crucial in my opinion. 'Many societies have experienced increasing plurality in religious adherence of citizens; there has been a growth of inter-faith dialogue' (Ross 2010:25, cf. Balia & Kim 2010: 26). In my assessment over the last decades, more and more churches are engaged in inter-faith dialogue as part of their witness. The ELCSA is therefore expected to participate faithfully in inter-faith dialogue as a way of not only positioning herself but also of positively impacting the surrounding community that she operates under. It is a sad state of affairs in my view if the church is not visible in her community, but more depressing when such visibility does not influence the operating landscape by addressing the socio-economic challenges. One of the sub-problems of this study is to understand how the ELCSA implements missional conversations to her operating landscape. My opinion is that through dialogue and active engagement with other faith-based organisation, the church will be able to influence her surroundings. The vocational voice of the church on issues of dialogue is crucial in my view. 'In a global context where there is an imperative for mutual respect between religious communities, dialogue may be the most appropriate way in which to witness to neighbours' (Ross, 2010: 25, cf. Balia & Kim 2010:27, Bevan & Schroeder 2011:28). In my opinion maintaining this dialogue should be aimed at showing forth the love of God and bearing witness to the virtues of God's kingdom, rather than growing the institutional church. In circumstances where there is no communal dialogue, the missional state of the church is bound to be dysfunctional. The dysfunctionality of the missional state of any church is



a bad recipe for a missional church. The ELCSA in my view has to constantly strive to maintain mutual respect with other religious community's in order to continue witnessing in her surrounding environment. Being engaged in dialogue will enhance the possibility of becoming an effective missional church.

#### **2.4.2.5. Mission as reconciliation**

LWF (2004:34) asserts that the church in mission participates in God's reconciling mission as God's ambassador, beseeching people on behalf of Christ to be reconciled with God. This is a foundational aspect of reconciliation: restoring the relationship between God and human beings.

'Reconciliation takes people to a new place; it empowers them for renewed relations and responsibilities.'(Nordstokke 2009:45). My opinion is that the decision to become a missional church is a new place for the ELCSA and through reconciliation the church will be empowered for renewed relations and missional responsibilities. The internal squabbles and disputes will be addressed, although the challenge is that the truth must prevail. The latter creates an opportune platform for a missional church. My submission is that the internal disputes are the by-product of a misguided mission of the church and does not form part of the purpose and mission of God within the ELCSA. According to Balia and Kim (2010:28), in a world full of conflict and fractured relationships it is all the more important that the practice of Christian mission should demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation. In my view the ELCSA's world is littered with unresolved issues of relationships, which impacts negatively on God's mission. While the ability to demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation is dubious, my own observations have been that it is partly because conflict resolution mechanisms are seriously inadequate.

Internal conflicts that are left unresolved are hampering her ability to proclaim the good news to the people of God. Bevans and Schroeder (2011:70) are helpful in emphasising that in a world of increasing violence, tensions between religions, terrorist actions and continuous threats, globalisation and displacement of people, the church's witness to and proclamation of the possibility of reconciliation may constitute a new way of conceiving the content of the church's missionary work. 'Reconciliation is needed at many levels: between humanity and God; between humans as individuals, communities and cultures; and between humans and the whole of creation.'(Ross 2010:25). In the case of the ELCSA, one observes a situation where conflict manifests itself in different levels and obviously necessitating reconciliation at diverse levels. The church is obligated to identify the various levels that require serious attention, especially those heights that are stumbling blocks enroute to a missional church. 'The mission of God as reconciliation calls for transformed relationships in all domains: between humans and God; between humans as individuals, communities and cultures; and between humans and the whole of creation' (Balala & Kim 2010:29). If the latter statement is indeed true and anything to go by, then transformed relationships are hopefully imminent within the ELCSA. My view is that when a church is deeply trapped in its own mission instead of God's mission, the resultant scenario is often chaotic and the visibility of egocentrism and self-interests are easy to identify. 'The church's mission is primarily a responsive one to the mission of God, as it discerns the movement of the Spirit in the world and seeks to follow the Spirit.'(Douglas 2002:171). My assessment is that the spirit of discernment is seriously lacking within the ELCSA to a point where she might even fail to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit. It is not surprising that one still finds

sporadic situations within the ELCSA where Pentecost is not celebrated and or observed. The latter could be an indication of failure to discern the movement of the Spirit. Douglas (2002:171-2) argues that the church's mission requires discernment of the *missio Dei*, the mission of God as the first step. Until such time that the ELCSA's ability to discern the *missio Dei* is enhanced, the chances are that the road leading to a missional church might be uphill. Ross (2010: 26) asserts that thinking of mission in terms of reconciliation and healing draws together a wide range of dimensions—from personal conversion grounded in Christ's sacrificial atonement to peacemaking activity which reflects the same commitment at the level of inter-communal conflict or international relations. The disintegrating state of relationships within the ELCSA does not augur well for the future of the church. An appropriate language for a missional church is indeed required in the midst of the latter challenges that have since overwhelmed the ELCSA. The research question attempts to consider the current missional church conversations and languages with an anticipation that the ELCSA will learn, engage and implement. Balia and Kim (2010: 29) are in agreement in maintaining that reconciliation is an integrating metaphor which encompasses and draws together a wide range of ideas which are the elements of the one mission of God. The different Biblical terms related to reconciliation, such as sacrificial atonement, shalom, justice and peacemaking, suggest five dimensions of Christian mission which illustrate this integrative power of reconciliation:

1. Conversion as reconciliation;
2. International peacemaking;

3. Reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples;
4. Reconciliation between Christians; and
5. Reconciliation with the whole of creation.

For the ELCSA paragraph 3 above is crucial as the make-up of the church varies between those that consider themselves to be indigenous and the ones that are non-indigenous. The interesting observation is that there is even racial tension between the so called indigenous, which borders on ethnocentrism. Hill (2005: 117) asserts that ethnocentrism is a belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture. The ELCSA must therefore guard against the negative impact of ethnocentric behaviour, which in my view will destabilise the mission of God within the church. Corrie (2007:114) argues that as a source of empowerment for the dominated minorities, or as a way of competing for political and economic power, ethnicity provides the basis for conflicts over the distribution of power and resources. According to Kirk (2002: 23), the need for reconciliation assumes an abnormal situation and also a process of restoration to normality, which is the gift of the fullness of life, encompassed by the Biblical vision of shalom. Moving from the premise that reconciliation accepts an abnormal situation, one is inclined to remain hopeful that the ELCSA does have an opportunity to become a missional church. 'Reconciliation depends on a right diagnosis of an abnormal situation.'(Kirk 2002:24).My take is that a sober analysis of the prevailing situation is imperative for the ELCSA to refocus her attention and purpose. If there is an incorrect diagnosis, then the opposite normally happens which is not in line with the desired outcome. Kirk (2002:25) further asserts that human beings are individually and

collectively alienated from one another, themselves, creation and the Creator. What then are the symptoms?

1. People live at a distance from one another because of a lack of understanding of the reality and circumstances of the other, because of false accusations, misrepresentation, generalisations, scapegoating, prejudice, stereotyping and 'demonising'.
2. A barrier is created when people perceive that difference threatens their own identity or when they feel the threat of displacement by the potential removal of their jobs, culture or political power by other strange people from outside. Such barriers can lead to a paranoid fear of the other and the belief that one needs to protect one's own interests by an aggressive pre-emptive strike.
3. Alienation happens on a massive scale through some human beings using others for their own ends. In order to justify the abuse of power, such people may well go to great lengths to create ideologies, doctrines, myths, and even religions that seek to give such practices an unsustainable legitimacy.

'Reconciliation requires more than the truth, more even than full disclosure.'(Volf 2006:219). He argues that it requires moral judgement and the wrongdoer's acceptance of moral responsibility. My understanding is that both parties of the reconciliation process have a role to play. The leadership and followers within the ELCSA have a pertinent role to play in ensuring that a way forward is found. 'To understand the meaning of reconciliation theologically, we need to start with Jesus Christ as the one model of normal and normative human life, and as the one way of reaching it.'(Kirk

2002:27). My take is that a clear understanding of reconciliation is imperative, irrespective of whatever dimension we might want to focus on. Kirk (2002:27) further argues that the crucifixion is the supreme evidence of alienation and sickness in the human race, so it is the only and final means of complete reconciliation and healing. For Christians, reconciliation is God's merciful gift grounded in the message that God has reconciled the world in Jesus Christ (Nordstokke 2009:44).

The mission of God within the ELCSA can be improved by truthful dialogue in appreciating that reconciliation is the gracious work of God. Bevans and Schroeder (2011:71) advises that to facilitate the recognition of God's gracious work in the midst of so much violence and tragedy, the church needs to develop communities of honesty, compassion, and acceptance. Ministers of reconciliation need to hone their skills of contemplative attention and listening.

While the ELCSA has a role to play in the communities where it operates to promote dialogue, it is inevitable in my view that it should first demolish the entrenched barriers of hostility amongst its members, the laity and leadership and create harmony and congruence in the types of ordained ministries.

In this chapter the ELCSA was introduced by narrating and describing the historic upbringing. It was crucial to understand the historical background and establishments of the ELCSA in order to diagnose her missional health. A reflection of the historical context of the ELCSA has helped to ground the church within the history of Lutheranism in Southern Africa. It was equally important to have a full grounding of Lutheranism. The solas of Lutheranism forms a basis of understanding ELCSA.

The missional background and missionary societies that played a role in the formation of the ELCSA was highlighted. This discourse was important as the various and differing missional histories has created inconsistencies in the theological foundations that underpin and add force to her missional outlook and maturity. Understanding the seminaries attached to the ELCSA facilitated to highlight how the theological formations of church leaders were undertaken. The curriculum content of the seminary was reviewed and appreciated in order to identify gaps that needed to be filled in understanding how the ELCSA equip and train the current crop of leaders to lead missional congregations. The Lutheran theology played a role in the establishment of the ELCSA and it was vital to understand such a background in order to grasp the problem and be able to answer the research question. Understanding the *missiones ecclesiae* is crucial in comprehending the missional formation of ELCSA and the role that *missio Dei* plays in the church. The missionary God plays a role in mandating the church to impact his creation. It was therefore important to highlight this background so as to be able to answer the sub-problem that seeks to understand how the ELCSA emphasise the imperative need to focus predominantly on God's mission (*missio Dei*) in resuscitating the church and thereby becoming a missional church.

### **CHAPTER 3: The Missional Church and Leadership construction**

This chapter focuses on missional church and missional leadership as theological persuasions that are crucial to the ELCSA as a church.

The operating missional landscape of the ELCSA is plagued by a number of challenges which creates doubt on whether the church operates as a missional church or not and this chapter will be built upon the previous Chapter 2 which gave an exposition of the history of the church by exploring and investigating insights from the ELCSA's mission antiquity.

The ELCSA as a church has been exposed to a variety and multiplicity of missional cultures and mission settings through a diversity of missionaries operating from different missional landscape and background. The various and differing missional history has created inconsistencies in the theological foundations that underpin and add force to her missional outlook and maturity. As the church journeys towards becoming a missional church, there is an imperative need to radically revisit her traditional ecclesiologies in order to develop a clearer understanding of her missional vocation. The missional direction of the church is in a quandary partly because of the leadership failure to manage the contradictory and inconsistent missional attempts and missional immaturity within the ELCSA. Leadership development and formations within the Lutheran training institutes in Southern Africa, which are crucial in church life seems inadequate from a curriculum perspective. Failure to understand and appreciate the current missional language will inadvertently confuse the church's understanding of God's mission in the world (*missio Dei*). The challenge facing the ELCSA will therefore be an imperative and absolute need to move from a church with mission to a missional church. The study



seeks to explore and investigate insights from her mission history with a view of determining the missional health and whether the church has a comprehension and understanding of the concepts and languages of missional church and missional leadership.

The research problem as stated in Chapter 1 is as follows:

The lack of missional astuteness and intelligence emanating from a Christendom mindset and agenda that is detrimental to the growth of the church and creating missional chaos and paralysis.

The study seeks to further explore and investigate insights from the ELCSA's mission history with a view of determining the missional health and checking whether the church has a comprehension and understanding of the concepts and languages of missional church and missional leadership. In this chapter I will also attempt to answer two possible sub-problems of the study viz. How does the ELCSA create missional leadership aptitude environments and how does the ELCSA implement the missional conversation(s) to the operating landscape of the church? This chapter will also contrast the attractional and incarnational mindsets.

Since the ELCSA underpins the purpose of the study, it is crucial to explain Missional church and Missional leadership theories so as to comprehend the research problem. In order to fully grasp the problem and to be able to answer the research question, an outline of the two concepts is essential and necessary. Having been in church leadership structures myself for over 12 years, I have gained exceptional insights and perceptions dominant within the ELCSA to narrate on the subject matter.

### 3.1. Missional Church

According to Barrett *et al* (2004), being a missional church is all about a sense of identity, shared pervasively in a congregation that knows it is caught up into God's intent for the world. Barrett *et al* (2004:36-37) maintains that a missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending, as being sent. A missional congregation lets God's mission permeate everything that the congregation does—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God's mission."

Barrett *et al* (2004), shares the following patterns of the missional Church, which in my view will help the ELCSA to become a missional church:

**Pattern 1:** Missional Vocation- the congregation is discovering together the missional vocation of the community. It is beginning to redefine "success and vitality" in terms of faithfulness to God's calling and sending. It is seeking to discern God's specific missional vocation (charisms) for the entire community and for all its members.

**Pattern 2:** Biblical Formation and Discipleship- the missional church is a community in which all members are involved in learning what it means to be disciples of Jesus. The Bible is normative in this church's life. Biblical formation and disciplining are essential for members of the congregation.

**Pattern 3:** Taking Risks as a Contrast Community- the missional church is a learning to take risks for the sake of the gospel. It understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death and resurrection of its Lord. It is raising questions, often threatening ones, about the church's cultural captivity, and it is grappling with the ethical and structural implications of its missional vocation. It is learning to deal with internal and external resistance.

**Pattern 4:** Practices that demonstrate God's intent for the World- the pattern of the church's life as community is a demonstration of what God intends for the life of the whole world. The practices of the church embody mutual care, reconciliation, loving accountability, and hospitality. A missional church is indicated by how Christians behave towards one another.

**Pattern 5:** Worship as Public Witness- 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 witness.

**Pattern 6:** Dependence on the Holy Spirit- the missional community confesses its dependence upon the Holy Spirit, shown in particular in its practices of corporate prayer.

**Pattern 7:** Pointing the Reign of God- the missional church understands its calling as witness to the gospel of the in-breaking reign of God, and strives to be an instrument, agent, and sign of that reign. As it makes its witness through its identity, activity, and communication, it is keenly aware of the provisional character of all that it is and does. It

points towards the reign of God that God will certainly bring about, but knows that its own response is incomplete, and that its own conversion is a continuing necessity.

**Pattern 8:** Missional Authority- 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 missional vocation and is intentional about the practices that embed that vocation in the community's life.

Hirsch (2006:285) asserts that a missional church is a church that defines itself, and organises its life around, its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organising principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to obstruct God's purposes in and through his people.

'A working definition of missional church is a community of God's people that defines itself, and organises its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world.'(Hirsch 2006:82). It is crucial and important for the ELCSA to appreciate that as a church it is obliged to craft her purpose of being an agent of God's mission. I am in agreement with Hirsch that when a church is in God's mission, it is a true church. The mission of the ELCSA should be centered on God's mission. One of the sub-problems of this study interrogates how the ELCSA implements the imperative need to

focus predominantly on God's mission (*missio Dei*) in resuscitating the church and thereby becoming a missional church. My conviction in this regard suggests that the church has defined itself around its mission instead of God's mission. One is inclined to suspect ulterior motives for the current state of affairs within the ELCSA. Until such time that the ELCSA actually realises that the church itself is not only a product of God's mission but that it is indebted and meant to extend it by whatever means possible, then the prevailing turmoil will continue.

The Lutheran identity within the ELCSA requires a serious attention in my view. There are still impacts of varying liturgical grounding which creates confusion instead of synergies.

Roxburgh and Boren (2009:31-34) laid out the following eight trends in the missional conversation that creates confusion in trying to illustrate what missional church is and in my opinion I feel that if the ELCSA avoids these misunderstandings, it will enhance its missional astuteness:

1. Missional church is not a label to describe churches that emphasises cross-cultural missions. While cross-cultural missions are important, the missional church conversation is not about missions as traditionally understood. The confusion arises from the fact that many churches that we call missional are doing significant work in cross-cultural missions. Instead of relying on traditional denominational institutions to reach people groups, they are directly engaging these people by sending missionaries and partnering with local leaders in cross-cultural settings. But this is a modified version of a traditional perspective on

missions. The missional church conversation can overlap with this new way of doing mission, but it does not equate with it. The ELCSA as a church operates in a multi-cultural context and constantly engages with people who are battling with their historical traditional backgrounds. The argument that Roxburgh and Boren (2009) depicts are applicable to the situation that the ELCSA operates under and as such it raises questions in my view since it is not a missional church.

2. Missional church is not a label used to describe churches that are using outreach programs to be externally focused. Because the term missional means “being sent,” people assume that the missional church is focused on outreach. While it is true that missional churches are entering and indwelling their neighborhoods and communities incarnationally, their focus is not on establishing programs to minister to people outside the church. The church has long used this language of inside/outside that divides its life into internally and externally focused segments. The assumption is that the way insiders’ minister to outsiders is by doing something for the outsiders through programs or mission. We believe this keeps churches in a mode of being program-driven and treating people as objects that we attempt to draw inside the church. Building programs based on this inside/outside imagination establishes an us/them mentality. On the missional church journey we want to pitch our tent beside the people in our neighbourhoods and communities as Jesus did (see John 1: 1-4), not as a programme but as a way of being the church. We want to enter these places in order to discern and discover how the Spirit will have us shape our lives as God’s

people. This is not about externally focused programs but about a radically different way of being a church.

3. Missional church is not a label for church growth and church effectiveness. Being missional is not about getting people to come to a building, although more often than not missional churches will have buildings and corporate gatherings. But the focus and energy of a missional church is not church growth and counting noses at church events. The ELCSA current strategy is geared towards increasing members from 580,000 to 5 million by 2017. While the objective is not practical in my opinion considering that the ELCSA has failed to reach a million members in  $\pm$  36 years of her existence, it is clear that it is focused on church growth.
4. Missional church is not a label for churches that are effective at evangelism. While we don't want to diminish the importance of individuals choosing to trust Jesus as Lord, the common perspective of evangelism can lead people to misapply what it means to be missional. Missional churches do relate to non-Christians and invite them to enter the kingdom of God, but a reductionistic view of salvation limited to private, individualistic conversion falls far short of being missional. In my view, the ELCSA does not accommodate non-Christian members. There is a huge opportunity for growth in ecumenism and how the ELCSA interacts with other multi-faith organisations.
5. Missional church is not a label to describe churches that have developed a clear mission statement with a vision and purpose for their existence. Vision and mission statements and finding the next way that provides a niche for a church in

the spiritual marketplace misses the point of being missional. Missional churches are not missional because they have a mission statement or a clear definition of its purpose. There is nothing wrong with having these things, but that is not what we mean by missional.

6. Missional church is not a way of turning around ineffective and outdated church forms so that they can display relevance in the wider culture. But missional churches move beyond relevance and concern themselves with how they are engaging and relating to the surrounding culture in everyday life.
7. Missional church is not a label that points to a primitive or ancient way of being a church. There are many who talk of an ideal era (usually the first three hundred years of church life) and call for the church to return to the practices of that period. We are on the other side of Christendom, and we are called by the Spirit to imagine and shape forms of being church that address our time and place. We must do this with a full sense of the history of the church but also with the clear understanding that there is no ideal, perfect, or right era in the past for us to copy.
8. Missional church is not a label describing new formats of church that reach people who have no interest in traditional churches. Many churches carry the label of emergent, creative, liquid, simple or postmodern, but they are simply attractional churches in a different form. Being missional is more than being postmodern attractional.



‘Entering the missional waters is not about strategies or models; it is about working with the currents that shape our imagination of what God is doing in this world.’(Roxburgh & Boren 2009:39). Taking a hint from the eight trends that were illustrated by Roxburgh and Boren, I am inclined to suggest that there are valuable lessons that the ELCSA can learn in coming up with alternative imagination for being the church and for that matter a missional one. Being trapped in the Christendom mindset will rob the ELCSA the opportunity to be relevant in focusing on the current epoch. Hirsch (2006:65) stresses that in the Christendom era the church perceived itself as central to society and hence operated in the attractional mode.

Van Gelder (2007:17) also argues that purpose and strategy are not unimportant in the missional conversation, but they are understood to be derivative dimensions of understanding the nature, or essence, of the church. He further asserts that the missional church reorients our thinking about the church with regard to God’s activity in the world.

Stetzer and Putman (2006:49) are very influential in arguing that to be a missional church means to move beyond our church preferences and make missional decisions locally. The missional church builds upon the ideas of church growth and church health but brings the lessons learned from each into a full-blown mission’s focus- within their local mission field as well as the ends of the earth. Their illustration of these concepts below can be very advantageous to the ELCSA in ensuring that missional church language is comprehended:

<b>Church Growth</b>	<b>Church Health</b>	<b>Missional Church</b>
Members as inviters	Members as Ministers	Members as Missionaries
Conversion/Baptism	Discipleship	Missional Living
Strategic Planning	Development Programs	People Empowerment
Staff-Led	Team Leadership	Personal Mission
Reaching Prospects	Reaching Community	Transforming Community
Gathering	Training	Releasing
Addition	Internal Group Multiplication	Church Planting Multiplication
Uniformity	Diversity	Mosaic
Anthropocentric	Ecclesiocentric	Theocentric
Great Commission	Great Commandment	Missio Dei

**Source: Stetzer and Putman (2006:49)**

Stetzer and Putman (2006:50) maintains that a missiological, discerning application of the external principles from each movement can and does help the missional church.

### **3.2. Missional Leadership**

‘A missional church needs missional leadership, and it is going to take more than the traditional pastor-teacher mode of leadership to pull this off.’(Hirsch 2006:152). Hirsch (2006:152-153) asserts that leadership always provides a strategic point of leverage for missional change and renewal. My assessment is that the ELCSA is riddled with a lot of

traditional pastor-teacher mode of leadership and mostly emanates from how they were trained and the curriculum content. One of the sub-problems of this study questions how the ELCSA equips and trains the current crop of leaders to lead missional congregations? Unfortunately church history is littered with false leaders. Roxburgh(1997:64-65) argues further in saying that in actual practice, a predominantly pastoral concept of the church and ministry now actually constitutes a major hindrance to the church reconceiving itself as a missional agency.

Niemandt (2012:4) asserts that his interest in *missional leadership* flows from an approach that recognises the important influence of ecclesiology on the missional praxis and organisation of the church. The *church does what it is and then organises what it does* (Van Gelder 2007:18). In organising what it *does*, leadership plays an important, if not the most important, role. Or, to put it differently – we should ask what ecclesiology lies behind many of the current impasses in the church. What kind of ecclesiology (what the church is) might assist the church in these times of intense changing of contexts and of liminality, so that what the church does (and how leadership functions) looks different?

Barrett *et al* (2004:139) asserts that 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 missional vocation and is intentional about the practices that embed that vocation in the community's life.

'Missional leadership must be about cultivating the capacity and gifts of the people who are already part of the church.'(Roxburgh & Romanuk 2006:30). The leadership of the ELCSA has an opportunity of promoting and encouraging the capacity and gifts of her people enroute to becoming a missional church. Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006) further

affirm that cultivation opens a space to discover ways of forming the missional community. In my opinion, it will be in the interest of the ELCSA to ensure that her followers understand leadership as cultivation, which creates excitement about the possibility of missional congregational life.

Guder (1998:183) argues that the key to the formation of missional communities is their leadership. Spirit empowers the church for mission through the gifts of people. He asserts that leadership is a crucial gift, provided by the Spirit because, as the Scriptures demonstrate, fundamental change in any body of people requires leaders capable of transforming its life and being transformed themselves.

According to Guder (1998:214), missional leadership will require skills in evoking a language about the church that reshapes its understanding of its purpose and practices. The practice of missional life calls forth a people who live by standards of judgement and action quite different from those of the culture in which they are set. Leaders will enable God's people to give voice to this language of the reign of God as a way of living into such practices.

The WCC (par.36) states that in the light of the cross, we are called to repent of both our misuse of power and our use of the wrong kind of power in mission and in the church. Furthermore, 'disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and an accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God

resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.’

According to Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006: 145-146), the leader’s primary calling is to cultivate a people and nourish the conviction that God’s future is among them. The leader’s role is to help form a people among whom God’s future is called forth. According to their experiences, which in my view makes sense and would be beneficial for the ELCSA, there are some specific skills focused on the formation of missional people:

1. Fostering a missional imagination among the people themselves
2. Cultivating growth through specific practices and habits of Christian life
3. Enabling people to understand and engage the multiple changes they face in their lives
4. Creating a coalition of interest, dialogue, energy, and experimentation among the people of the congregation

Taking a tip-off from the latter skills, the ELCSA can actually realise that missional practices and formation are not a matter of learning new abilities, but rather recovering ways of life that once were at the heart of Christianity. Missional leader’s guard and pay attention for such missional opportunities in my view.

Creps (2006:10) argues that a missional life, then, experiences the centrality of Christ as our failures expose the illusion that we merit the center position. Failure, among other forces, reveals this illusion for what it is, crucifying it and giving us the chance to

invite Christ to assume the central role in practice, instead of just in doctrine. It is incumbent upon the ELCSA in my view to experience the centrality of Christ by allowing Him to assume the central role in practice and once that is done, then the missional life and experiences within the church will be boosted.

For the purpose of this study, missional leadership should be understood in the context of being that form of leadership that emphasises the primacy of the missionary calling of God's people (Hirsch 2006:284).

### **3.3. Church Leadership**

The *modus operandi* of the ELCSA's leadership has traditionally been centered on the deans, bishops and councils, although since 2010, it is shared between the elected clergy, staff and elected lay leadership.

'We can more readily identify the characteristics of leadership by their absence since, unfortunately, we have more experiences of both leadership vacuums and leadership muddles than we do of leadership that has a clear sense of direction and empowers the community it leads.'(Gibbs 2005:18).

The sad reality in my opinion is that Gibbs seems to be depicting a situation that is more noticeable within the ELCSA given the lack of succession plans. The church has unfortunately lost its plot in directing and empowering the community it leads. Instead of leading God's people, the leadership is more confused in trying to maintain the status quo by punishing those that are robust, authentic and engaging. The energy of the church leadership is spent on confusing instead of building the congregants. Sharing leadership roles and responsibilities is vital to the health of the ELCSA in my view.

It is interesting to learn what Gibbs (2005:18) refers to as “zombification and atrophication,” which he describes as the protective response encountered in organisations where leadership has become either *laissez faire* or controlling. For the purpose of this study, I find it appropriate to share some of the leadership symptoms, which Gibbs (2005) shares because I find them so common in the ELCSA:

1. People are punished for being aware and being authentic. In other words, telling it as it is.
2. Leaders stop telling the truth and lie or keep silent about things that matter.
3. Feedback is no longer oriented on how people can succeed but on how they have failed- not just in their work but as human beings.
4. Performance assessment becomes judgmental and hierarchical rather than supportive and participatory.
5. Honesty is separated from kindness, integrity from advancement, and respect from communication.

Gibbs (2005:19) stresses that the above indicators are more applicable and widespread with respect to the church. I am in agreement with his assertion as in my assessment I find them more applicable and widespread within the ELCSA and they continue to create missional disorder and paralysis. Because of the latter, the young generation is reluctant to assume leadership responsibilities, which inevitably creates a leadership vacuum.

'In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually loosing influence due to lack of leadership.'(Barna 1997:18).

The ELCSA is one church blessed with all sorts of human resources and in my view they are either marginalised or underutilised by church leadership.

The discourse of missional church, missional leadership and church leadership and how relevant and significant they can be to the ELCSA was underscored in this chapter. By reflecting on the missional church and missional leadership conversations in this chapter, I was able to answer the following questions relating to the study:

1. How does the church address the missional challenges facing her in the midst of insightful and profound cultural transition and a glaring leadership vacuum?
2. How does the church find the appropriate knowledge and skills required to lead the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond?

Barrett *et al* (2004:149-150) was instrumental in asserting that the proclamation of the word and deed should not focuses solely upon the salvation of persons, or the transformation of individual human lives, but also the transformation of the church, human communities, and the whole human community, history, and creation in the coming and already present reign of God. I want to argue that the former and latter assertions and approach are holistic by nature and therefore will help the ELCSA in addressing some of the missional challenges she is facing.

The patterns of the missional church shared in this chapter will help the ELCSA to become a missional church. By reviewing the missional church and missional leadership concept and languages, applying the eight missional church patterns to the ELCSA and asking specific questions to the target group of this study, I was able to gauge the missional understanding of the church.



## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The Research questionnaires were distributed and completed between August 2011 and May 2012 amongst the ELCSA Diocesan Bishops, Circuit Deans and Lecturers at the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI). Investigative and probing questions were asked during individual depth interviews (IDI) with the target group of this study while they were answering a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed through the emails, faxes and some were hand delivered. 60 questionnaires were distributed in total and 35 were returned, which amount to a 58% return rate. The completed questionnaires are available from the author and will be kept for 5 years from the publication of this dissertation. The largest percentage of respondents came from the Circuit Deans (68%), followed by Bishops (21%) and the Lecturers at LTI(11%).

## Respondents and their Gender:

TABLE 1:

Gender	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>		
Males	100%	100%
Females <sup>1</sup>	0%	100%
<b>Deans</b>		
Males	83%	83%
Females	17%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>		
Males	100%	100%

## Country specific data:

TABLE 2:

Country	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
<b>Bishops</b>		
Botswana	14%	14%
South Africa	72%	86%
Swaziland	14%	100%

<sup>1</sup> There were no female Bishops within the ELCSA at the time of completing the questionnaires.

<b>Deans</b>		
Botswana	9%	9%
South Africa	82%	91%
Swaziland	9%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>		
Botswana	0%	0%
South Africa	100%	100%
Swaziland	0%	100%

In an attempt to answer the research question, the following questions were asked  
**(Rating scale:** 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree)

TABLE 3: The ELCSA seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members? **(Q7)**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
		29%	57%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	9%	13%	56%	22%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			75%	25%	100%

Δ Lack of consistency pattern on how the question was answered is somehow worrying and the 13- 29 % of those who are not sure between the Bishops and the Deans cast a shadow of doubt to the whole discernment of missional vocations within the ELCSA. Stetzer (2011) recently commented as follow: “In terms of missional ecclesiology, I continue to find it very important to stress that the gathering of the church is not the ultimate purpose of mission, but rather it is the primary means by which God is carrying out his healing mission in the world. The gathered life of the Christian community is, then, not an end in itself but the way in which God's people are equipped for their vocation as witnesses in the world. I would insist that we consider every action and activity of the gathered church in terms of its missional vocation: how does what we are doing together "equip the saints for the work of ministry, the building up of the body of Christ," which happens as the church is scattered in the world like salt, leaven, and light? I am especially concerned that the gathered, public, worship of the community be both practiced and experienced as missional formation for apostolic living in the world. I think that our classic emphasis upon "Word and sacrament" must be re-thought in terms of missional formation.” In my view it is crucial that the ELCSA convincingly discern its missional vocation for the benefit of the body of Christ and her operating landscape.

TABLE4: The ELCSA community is moving beyond homogeneity towards a more heterogeneous community in its racial, ethnic, age, gender and socioeconomic makeup? (Q8)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
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<b>Bishops</b>					
	14%	14%	43%	29%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	30%	9%	26%	35%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
	75%			25%	100%

△ the drawn picture above seems to suggest that either the question was not clearly understood or it confirms rigidity along racial and ethnic boundaries. The unfortunate known factor is that the ELCSA is indeed riddled by ethnicity and tribalism, which in my view emanates from the regional historical make-up of the church. The 30-75% of the Deans and Lecturers who disagreed endorse the assertion that the ELCSA is indeed peppered by ethnicity and tribalism. Florin (1965:67) asserted that the fact that Lutherans in South Africa are today organised in Regional Churches is not only the result of coincidental mission history. It is true that individual mission agencies concentrated on certain African tribes or larger language groups, thus setting the pattern for differentiation according to ethnic lines. My view is that the ELCSA is still stuck in the homogeneous mindset that borders on the simplicity of similarity that repels mixed breeds of worship.

TABLE 5: The ELCSA is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus. **(Q9)**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>

<b>Bishops</b>					
		15%	71%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	5%	53%	37%	5%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
		25%	50%	25%	100%

△ the aggregate picture drawn from the responses suggests that in general all of the ELCSA's members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus. In my view the responses confirms that the church has an opportunity to learn from each other in becoming true disciples of Jesus Christ.

TABLE 6: Worship is the central act by which the congregation celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future. **(Q10)**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
			57%	43%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
			30%	70%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			50%	50%	100%

△ the 43-70% confirms that Worship is the central act by which the congregation within the ELCSA celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future. The deification should not in any way be construed to suggest happiness in the context of praise and worship. Joy is a relative word and does not propose lack of issues that requires attention on devotion in general.

TABLE 7: There is recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God. (Q11)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
		28%	43%	29%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	9%	39%	30%	22%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			75%	25%	100%

△ While the statistics depicted above are self-explanatory, it must be noted and stated that there is a general confusion on how people perceive the church and how they observe God. A lot of people seem to view the church as God and vice versa. The church should always be viewed as an institution which receives her identity from the reign of God. Bevans and Schroeder (2009) asserts that such an understanding of the church points to its radical missionary nature, for it is only in mission that the church continues to be what it is. The 28-39% of the respondents who were not sure is decisive evidence.

TABLE 8: Local congregations are beginning to function as missional churches, sent on a mission in their own contexts. (Q12)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
14%		15%	57%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	35%	30%	26%	9%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
	25%	25%	25%	25%	100%

△ The local congregations are under the jurisdiction of the Deans and their responses to this question was very influential. That 30% of them were not sure was a worrying signal but equally more disturbing was the fact that 35% of the Deans were in disagreement that local congregations are operating as missional churches.



TABLE 9: The ELCSA is shaped by participating in God’s mission (*Missio Dei*). (Q13)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
			86%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
35%		30%	9%	26%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			100%		100%

Δ There was a general consensus from all the respondents to this question in agreeing that the ELCSA is shaped by participating in God’s mission (*Missio Dei*). This implies that the mission of the church (ELCSA) takes its existence from its participation in God’s mission. Bosch (1991) states that to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love towards people, since God is a foundation of sending love. In my view, the critique of this question should be measured by the ELCSA’s actions in

comprehending that the missionary activities of the church have important obligations and responsibilities.

TABLE 10: The *missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate. (Q14)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
	15%		14%	71%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
			52%	48%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			25%	75%	100%

△ There was harmony in answering this question. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF 1988:6-10) was very clear and strong in stating that mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate. In my view it is heartening to see the ELCSA comprehending such an assertion, since a different viewpoint might create doubts on the Lutheran understanding of *Missio Dei*. It should further be stated that such a comprehension should be widely debated within rank and

file in the ELCSA to drive home the fact that mission has its source in the heart of God (Bosch 1991:392).

TABLE 11: The ELCSA allow God's mission to define their identity and their actions- both their being and their doing. (Q15)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
		58%	28%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
30%	17%	9%	35%	9%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			50%	50%	100%

△ While the response to this question seems to contradict Q13 and Q14 in a way, it is inauspicious to note the 9-58% of responses were not sure whether the ELCSA allows God's mission to define their identity and their actions. More discouraging was the fact that 58% of the Bishops were actually not sure. In my view this might suggest that the ELCSA has lost her missional salt and has therefore become useless to the intended stakeholders. While the Lutheran identity and actions are crucial to the future of the ELCSA, it is equally important that the ambiguity and uncertainty expressed in answering this question be noted with apprehension.

TABLE 12: The ELCSA struggles with the application of secular principles of organisational leadership. (Q16)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
		58%	28%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
30%	17%	9%	35%	9%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
		50%	50%		100%

ΔThe picture depicted and described above is worrying to say the least. The responses, especially those that were not sure (9-58%) seem to suggest that indeed the ELCSA struggles with the application of secular principles of organisational leadership. The Bishops as institutional leaders painted a picture that confirms that the ELCSA is struggling with the application of secular principles of organisational leadership. The convincing 58% of those that were not sure are Bishops and that in my view points to the wounded trials and tribulation within the leadership of the church. Barna (1997:18) argues that if leaders were not necessary, God will not have included leadership among the spiritual gifts. In my view the church as an institution requires the application of

secular principles of organisational leadership to remain focused in her mandate, as long as prudence and caution is exercised.

TABLE 13: Constructive criticism is an inevitable price of leadership. (Q17)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
			43%	57%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
			57%	43%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
		25%	25%	50%	100%

Δ There was a general consensus in answering this question, where 43-57% respondents strongly agreed that constructive criticism is an inevitable price of leadership. In my assessment, the ELCSA leadership could tremendously grow and become more effective if they were willing to accept constructive criticism without being defensive all the time. The general observation one could make in assessing the interactions between the ELCSA leadership and followers is that it is riddled with defensiveness, even when well reasoned opinions and constructive criticism are offered.

TABLE 14: The ELCSA leadership must be prepared to reexamine all of their established assumptions, policies and procedures. (Q18)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
			58%	42%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
		13%	35%	52%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
				100%	100%

Δ A 42-100% response from all of the target group is substantial enough to justify the urgency on the part of the ELCSA leadership to reexamine all of their established assumptions, policies and procedures. Gibbs (2005:31) argues that church leaders must initiate change by asking those they serve whether the church and its leadership are obstacles or channels to becoming a more effective missional presence in their specific cultural context. I am in agreement with Gibbs in asserting that the primary task of the leader is to reconnect ecclesiology and missiology in order that the church is defined first and foremost by its God-given mission.

TABLE 15: Pastors and lay leaders stand together in addressing the spiritual and practical aspects of ministry, maintenance and mission. (Q19)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
		30%	42%	28%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
13%	9%	26%	17%	35%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
25%	25%			50%	100%

△ The manner in which this question was answered is very fragmented and disjointed, as if suggesting that there is an undercurrent worth noting. My personal observation is that the relationship between pastors and lay leaders is challenged by suspicion from both fences that emanates from trust issues and both inferiority and superiority complexes. It is unfortunate that lay leaders were not part of the target group in this regard as their views would have given a balanced point of departure in understanding the interaction between the subject matters. Barna (1997:19) makes an interesting observation worth noting by stating that he has discovered most recently that the current exodus from the Church is partially attributable to the flight of the laity who possesses leadership abilities, gifts and experience. While I can attest to that observation, particularly as it relates to the ELCSA, I find it really sad that such a

situation should be allowed to continue without initiating both correcting and corrective measures. That 26% of Deans were not sure that pastors and lay leaders stand together in addressing the spiritual and practical aspects of ministry, maintenance and mission and yet they are the custodians of congregations and parishes who act in *loco parentis* is cause for concern.

TABLE 16: The ELCSA is riddled with leadership vacuums and leadership muddles.

**(Q20)**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
	28%	14%	29%	28%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
		17%	26%	48%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
				100%	100%

△ Gibbs (2005:18) maintains that we can more readily identify the characteristics of leadership by their absence since, unfortunately, we have more experience of both leadership vacuums and leadership muddles than we do of leadership that has a clear sense of direction and empowers the community it leads. The general agreement that ranges from 29-100% of those that strongly agree from all the respondents that the ELCSA is riddled with leadership vacuums and leadership muddles indicates a very disturbing scenario in my opinion. I want to submit that a church that is riddled with leadership vacuums and leadership muddles is bound to create dysfunctional and toxic



leaders who do nothing but wait for retirement while creating toxic followers. The 29% of Bishops who strongly agree that the ELCSA is riddled with leadership vacuums and leadership muddles is cause for concern for the church in general.

TABLE 16: Administration, Leadership and Management forms part of the curriculum to shape both the minds and hearts of those being prepared for ministry. (Q21)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
		29%	57%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	46%	17%	9%	28%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
				100%	100%

△ There was no consensus in answering this question, although the Lecturers at LTI were 100% in strongly agreeing that Administration, Leadership and Management forms part of the curriculum to shape both the minds and hearts of those being prepared for ministry. 17-29% of both the Bishops and the Deans were not sure and 46% of the Deans disagreed, that in my view depicts a situation that requires responsiveness, particularly the formal responsibilities related to the disciplines. In my opinion, a paradigm shift is required within the ELCSA when it comes to Church Administration, Leadership and Management appreciation and comprehension. While the existing curriculum might camouflage the existence of the disciplines, it is important to revisit the subject contents.

TABLE 17: The ELCSA considers training and development of existing pastors as an investment. (Q22)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
14%			57%	29%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
48%		9%	26%	17%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
		50%	25%	25%	100%

Δ There was no agreement from the respondents in answering this question. The computed individual responses clearly shows in my view that while the determination within the ELCSA exists in considering the training and development of existing pastors as an investment, the reality paints a different picture. 9-50% of the respondents were not sure, while 14-48% strongly disagreed and it so happens that it is the Bishops and Deans who strongly disagreed that the ELCSA considers training and development of existing pastors as an investment.

TABLE 18: The Great Commission is an obligation incumbent upon the whole community of faith within the ELCSA. (Q23)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
		15%	43%	42%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	22%		17%	61%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			50%	50%	100%

Δ There was an overwhelming consensus of 42-61% from all respondents, who strongly agreed that the Great Commission is an obligation incumbent upon the whole community of faith within the ELCSA. The 15% of Bishops who were not sure could suggest in my view that they did not understand the question but the 22% of Deans who disagreed that the Great Commission is an obligation incumbent upon the whole community of faith within the ELCSA were somehow firm in my view.

TABLE 19: The ELCSA makes ethical, thoughtful decisions in relation to her strategic objectives. (Q24)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
	17%	27%	42%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
31%		35%	26%	8%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
	25%	25%		50%	100%

△ The responses above shows a lack of agreement, which is characterised by 25-35% of respondents that were not sure, coupled with 17-31% who disagreed and strongly disagreed. In my assessment, the archives of the ELCSA are full of decisions that need to be rescinded and/or annulled. While the basis of the rescindment and/or annulment might not be whether the decisions were ethical or not, it certainly borders on egocentricity and selfishness.

TABLE 20: Execution and implementation of decisions (resolutions) is one of the challenges that have plagued the ELCSA. (Q25)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
	14%		57%	29%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
			52%	48%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			25%	75%	100%

△ Bossidy and Charan (2002:33) proclaims that organisations don't execute unless the right people, individually and collectively, focus on the right details at the right time. The 29-75% of respondents who strongly agree that execution and implementation of decisions (resolutions) is one of the challenges that have plagued the ELCSA confirms in my view that the ELCSA does not have the right people who are astute and judicious on matters of execution and implementation. The question in my opinion is whether the ELCSA focuses on the right details at the right time as asserted by Bossidy and Charan, when attempting to execute and implement their decisions (resolutions)?

TABLE 21: Church planting is an essential strategy of the ELCSA. (Q26)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
	14%	57%		29%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	31%	26%	26%	17%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
75%				25%	100%

△ Hirsch (2006:277) defines Church planting as the initiation and development of new, organic, missional-incarnational communities of faith in multiple contexts. 57% of the Bishops were not sure whether Church planting is an essential strategy of the ELCSA. If indeed church planting is an essential part of any authentic missional strategy, then the above responses are worrying to say the least in my view. A 17-75% of those who strongly disagree that church planting is an essential strategy of the ELCSA are sending a disturbing signal.

TABLE 22: The ELCSA is preoccupied with numbers (statistics) and getting people through the doors of the church as opposed to transforming them. **(Q27)**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
	14%	57%		29%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	5%	26%	26%	43%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			75%	25%	100%

Δ The above responses suggests in my view that the ELCSA is a quantity driven as opposed to a quality driven church. 29-75% of the respondents are in agreement that the ELCSA is preoccupied with numbers (statistics) and getting people through the doors of the church as opposed to transforming them, while 26-57% were not sure. While the authenticity of the respondents is not questionable, one wonders how true it is that a church that is preoccupied with numbers since 1975 would still be sitting at 580,000 registered members, unless the reliability of the statistics is dubious.

TABLE 23: The ELCSA is trapped in an era of unprecedented and relentless change.

(Q28)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Percentage
<b>Bishops</b>					
	30%	14%	28%	28%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	32%	17%	43%	8%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
	25%	50%		25%	100%

Δ Barna (1997:209) asserts that change may be necessary for long-term stability and growth, but that does not make the act of changing any easier. New opportunities for influential ministry always seem to cause substantial, often unforeseen, change when those opportunities are exploited. There were 8-28% of respondents who strongly agreed that the ELCSA is trapped in an era of unprecedented and relentless change, coupled with 28-43% who agreed. The 14-50% of the respondents was not sure and 25-32% disagreed. In my assessment, those who were not sure and those who disagreed seem to outnumber those who strongly agreed and that to me raises a balancing question, unless it suggests that the change that the ELCSA is trapped in is just an ordinary one that will not affect the long-term stability and growth of the church.



TABLE 24: There is a paradigm shifting from the attractional mind-set to the incarnational mode in the ELCSA. (Q29)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
	15%	57%	28%		100%
<b>Deans</b>					
	14%	60%	26%		100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
		50%	25%	25%	100%

Δ Hirsch (2006:275 &281) asserts that the attractional church operates from the assumption that to bring people to Jesus we need to first bring them to church, while the incarnational means embodying the culture and life of a target group in order to meaningfully reach that group of people from within their culture. There was no consensus on whether there is a paradigm shifting from the attractional mind-set to the incarnational mode in the ELCSA, which in my view was worsened by the 50-60% of those that were not sure in their responses. The fact that there was no agreement suggests in my opinion that the ELCSA is still trapped in the Christendom mentality of expecting people to come and hear the gospel as opposed to taking the gospel to them, which might be impacting their membership negatively. In my view, the church has to explore all possibilities of becoming an incarnational expression of Christ.

TABLE 25: Apostolic and prophetic ministry is lacking in the ELCSA. (Q30)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Bishops</b>					
30%	28%		28%	14%	100%
<b>Deans</b>					
10%	8%	9%	17%	56%	100%
<b>Lecturers</b>					
			50%	50%	100%

△ There was no consensus in answering this question and the 14-56% of all the respondents are in agreement that Apostolic and prophetic ministry is lacking in the ELCSA. In my interpretation of the responses from all the respondents, I think that the church still has an opportunity to explore the possibility of sharpening their apostolic and prophetic mandates.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Research conclusions**

The missional church and missional leadership conversations and languages have not openly featured on the agenda of the ELCSA councils and decision makers. The results of the questionnaire portray a situation where in most instances the respondents were not sure and that alone suggests that the missional conversations and languages are not fully comprehended within the ELCSA (especially to the target group). Considering the benefits associated, as well as the theological imperative of becoming a missional church, it is therefore imperative that the missional conversations and languages be introduced and added to the agenda of the church urgently.

Stetzer and Putman (2006:49) affirm that the missional church is not just another phase of church life but a full expression of who the church is and what it is called to be and do. The missional church builds upon the ideas of church growth and church health but brings the lessons learned from each into a full-blown missions focus-within their local mission field as well as the ends of the church. To be missional means to move beyond our church preferences and make missional decisions locally as well as globally.

The missional church conversation is permeating and infiltrating the walls of every church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and I am convinced that the ELCSA can benefit by joining missional dialogues and exploring the best possible ways of becoming a missional church. Hirsch and Catchim (2012:7) confess that one of the biggest issues in the church today is the discussion about what it means to be missional. It is therefore

imperative that the ELCSA engages in the discussion of what it means to be a missional church.

According to Nurnberger (2005:165), the church must be subject to constant reformation (*ecclesia semper reformanda*). I therefore conclude that by becoming a missional church, the ELCSA will reform and reforge its self-understanding (theologically, spiritually, and socially).

### **5.1.1. Conclusions relating to the research question**

The purpose of this dissertation was an attempt to appreciate, comprehend and answer this question: Considering the current missional church and missional leadership conversations and languages, how can the ELCSA learn from the current missional expressions to improve her missional outlook and align her mission to the redemptive mission of God (*missio Dei*)?

It is evidently clear from the responses to the questionnaires (especially Q13 & Q14) that there is a general consensus on whether the ELCSA is shaped by participating in God's mission (*missio Dei*) and the fact that the *missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate. Van Gelder (2007:18) maintains that the missional church reorients our thinking about the church with regard to God's activity in the world. The Triune God becomes the primary acting subject rather than the church. The WCC (2012, par.101) states that the mission of God (*missio Dei*) is the source of and basis of the church.

On the basis of the former and the latter, I conclude that the missional soil within the ELCSA is fertile to allow the church to learn from the current missional expression,

especially with reference to missional church and missional leadership conversations and languages.

Hirsch and Catchim (2012: 7) argue that they fear that so many of those vital missional conversations are doomed to frustration because the people in them are unwilling or unable to reconfigure ministry to suit the missional context. Although many buy into the concept, they are unwilling to recalibrate the ecclesiology.

I therefore submit that the readiness and willingness to recalibrate the ecclesiology is therefore crucial and fundamental to the church and church leaders if the ELCSA has to benefit from the missional ecclesiology and ultimately improve her missional outlook.

Hirsch (2006:16) asserts that we find ourselves lost in a perplexing global jungle where our well-used cultural and theological maps don't seem to work anymore. We have woken up to find ourselves in contact with a strange and unexpected reality that seems to defy our usual ways of dealing with issues of the church and its mission.

It is disturbing to note that the missional church literature is besieged with perspectives from the West and very little from the South. Given this inference, it is still important that the ELCSA ought to radically review the inherited liturgical traditions, languages and current ways of thinking missions to embrace the missional church and missional leadership conversations. I hope that my contribution in this regard will help towards a growing involvement from the Christian South.

The missional church and missional leadership conversations and languages are essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and would benefit the ELCSA tremendously as the church

interacts nationally and internationally as an agent of God's mission (*missio Dei*) in the missional landscape.

Guder (1998:268) argues that a missional ecclesiology must clearly identify and resist all attempts to equip the church merely for its maintenance and security. It must reject every proposal to restore the trappings and privileges of Christendom. The ELCSA should take note that the era of Christendom is rapidly dying and use that realisation to establish herself as a missional church.

Hirsch and Catchim (2012:7) assert that the Christendom church has been run on a largely shepherd-teacher model, and because it has had a privileged position in society, it has been inclined to dispense with the more missional or evangelistic ministry types (apostle, prophet and evangelist).

Hirsch and Catchim(2012:7-8) argue that these inherited forms of church are not equipped for the missional challenge because they refuse to recalibrate their ministry along the lines suggested in Ephesians 4. They believe that in order to be a genuinely missional church, there must be a missional ministry to go with it, and that means putting the issues of the apostle, prophet and evangelist roles back on the table. They believe that if the latter is not done, then there is no possibility of becoming truly missional.

### **5.1.2. Conclusions relating to research objectives**

The primary and crucial objectives of this research were as follow:

1. To determine and establish the missional health of the ELCSA as a church: The results of the questionnaire are not convincing in my opinion to conclude that the

missional health of the ELCSA as a church is good to say the least. The contrasting view points on most issues that underpins missional conversations and languages puts the missional wellbeing of the ELCSA at risk in my opinion.

2. To define and identify the characteristics of a missional church and how they apply to the ELCSA. Barrett *et al* (2004:159) highlights the following indicators of a missional church:

- 2.1 The missional church proclaims the gospel. What it looks like: The story of God's salvation (as told in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus) is faithfully repeated in a multitude of different ways. This in my view is applicable to the ELCSA.

- 2.2 The missional church is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus. What it looks like: The disciple identity is held by all; growth in discipleship is expected of all. In my opinion this is not applicable to the ELCSA.

- 2.3 The Bible is normative in this church's life. What it looks like: The church is reading the Bible together to learn what it can learn nowhere else—God's good and gracious intent for all creation, the salvation mystery, and the identity and purpose of life together. This applicable to the ELCSA.

- 2.4 The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death and resurrection of its Lord. What it looks like: In its corporate life and public witness, the church is consciously seeking to conform to its Lord instead of the multitude of cultures in which it finds itself. In my opinion this is not applicable to the ELCSA.

- 2.5 The church seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members. What it looks like: The church has made its "mission" its priority, and in overt and communal ways is seeking to be and do "what God is calling us to know, be, and do." In my view this applies to the ELCSA, although it is debatable.
- 2.6 A missional community is indicated by how Christians behave toward one another. What it looks like: Acts of self-sacrifice on behalf of one another both in the church and in the locale characterise the generosity of the community. This is not applicable to the ELCSA in my opinion.
- 2.7 It is a community that practises reconciliation. What it looks like: The church community is moving beyond homogeneity towards a more heterogeneous community in its racial, ethnic, age, gender, and socio-economic makeup. Please refer to answers to Q.8 in Chapter 4. The target group (especially the Deans and Lecturers) in the questionnaire disagreed that ELCSA was moving beyond homogeneity towards a more heterogeneous community in its racial, ethnic, age, gender and socio-economic makeup. By becoming a missional church, the ELCSA will be empowered to practise and appreciate the importance of reconciliation as it manoeuvre through the negative impact of ethnicity and tribalism.
- 2.8 People within the community hold themselves accountable to one another in love. What it looks like: Substantial time is spent with one another for the purpose of watching over one another in love. This is applicable to the ELCSA.



2.9 The church practices hospitality. What it looks like: Welcoming the stranger into the midst of the community plays a central role. This is applicable to the ELCSA.

2.10 Worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future. What it looks like: There is significant and meaningful engagement in communal worship of God, reflecting appropriately and addressing the culture of those who worship together. Please refer to answers to Q.10 in Chapter 4. While 43-70% of the respondents confirmed that worship is the central act by which the congregation within the ELCSA celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future, it is crucial to note that the opportunity to worship in context and within the African way is important. The ELCSA has to constantly check if the traditional way of worship is not affecting her membership.

2.11 This community has a vital public witness. What it looks like: The church makes an observable impact that contributes to the transformation of life, society, and human relationships. This is applicable to the ELCSA in my opinion.

2.12 There is recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God. What it looks like: There is a widely held perception that this church is going somewhere – and that “somewhere” is a more faithfully lived life in the reign of God. Please refer to Q. 11 in Chapter 4.

3. To describe the missional leadership concept and apply it to the ELCSA operating landscape. Guided by Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006:29 & 135) and Hirsch (2006:284), I conclude that the missional leadership concept is appropriate but not yet applicable and functioning within the ELCSA (partly because it is not a yet missional church).
4. To investigate and isolate the importance and significance of missional church and missional leadership concepts for the mission of the ELCSA. In my opinion Chapter 3 has succeeded in investigating and isolating the importance and significance of missional church and missional leadership concepts to the mission of the ELCSA. The eagerness and preparedness to embrace the concepts are entirely up to the ELCSA.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

The research problem was defined as follow:

The lack of missional astuteness and intelligence emanating from Christendom mind-sets and agendas is detrimental to the growth of the church and creating missional chaos and paralysis.

### **5.2.1. Embracing and recalibrating the missional ecclesiology**

The ELCSA is encouraged to take stock of her missions and establish if they are in line with God' mission (*missio Dei*). The stock-taking will enable her to embrace, readjust and recalibrate her missional ecclesiology.

### **5.2.2. Instilling a sense of missional astuteness and intelligence within her operating landscape**

The ELCSA is encouraged to create a conducive missional podium in her operating scenery so as to instill a sense of missional astuteness and intelligence. This is possible through the creation of missional ministries. It is imperative that the ELCSA reviews the initial mandate of her formation or existence and check the contextual imperativeness. “The leadership of the ELCSA is challenged to ask questions and focus on how the gospel relates to local situations and not how ‘how the church could be more attractional’”. (Mathye, 2010:67).

### **5.2.3. Investigating her position in the society**

For ELCSA to be a missional church, it is important to understand her position in society and the communities in which she operates. Decisions that are imposed on the general membership instead of ensuring that they are brought along and introduced properly are detrimental to the ELCSA in my view. The ELCSA is therefore encouraged to investigate her position in the society by interacting with the general membership in all decision making processes and ensuring that the stakeholders are taken on board in preparation to journey towards becoming a missional church.

### **5.2.4. Reviewing the Curriculum content of the Training institutions (Seminaries)**

Van Gelder (2009:11) asserts that significant changes are taking place in theological education today regarding the formation of church leaders.

The ELCSA is encouraged to immediately review the curriculum content of the subjects that are offered at her training institutions and ensure that missional church and leadership formation forms part of the curriculum.

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## **APPENDICES**

Becoming a Missional Church Questionnaire.