

**Redesigning the ‘shape’ of the local church:  
Leaders building with applied timeless ecclesiology in  
the midst of prevailing culture**

**BY  
Jason Humphreys**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**MAGISTER ARTIUM**

**In the Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria  
The study was done through the Cape Town Baptist Seminary  
SUPERVISOR: Prof. Julian Müller  
CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr. Linzay Rinquest**

**August 2011**

**Humphreys, J.**

**August 2011**

**Redesigning the 'shape' of the local church:  
Leaders building with applied timeless ecclesiology in the  
midst of prevailing culture**

**J. Humphreys**

# Table of Contents

<b>Summary</b>	VI
<b>List of Key Terms</b>	VII
<b>Chapter 1</b>	1
1.1. Rebuilding the walls	1
1.2. Stating the problem	2
1.2.1. Ineffective cultural engagement	3
1.2.2. Fractured mission	4
1.2.3. Unprepared leaders	4
1.3. Crystallizing the problem statement	5
1.4. Hypothesis	5
1.4.1. Applied Timeless Ecclesiology: Does the church have a discernable unchanging nature?	6
1.4.2. Prevailing Culture: what characteristics of prevailing culture must be understood in order for the local church, and its leaders, to better position the church to engage its local community?	7
1.4.3. Responsive church leadership: Does the role and style of leaders need to change in light of this timeless nature?	8
1.5. The thesis title	9
1.5.1. Redesigning	9
1.5.2. Shape	10
1.5.3. Local church	11
1.5.4. Leaders	12
1.5.5. Building	12
1.5.6. Applied Timeless Ecclesiology	13
1.5.7. Prevailing Culture	14
1.6. Methodology	15
1.6.1. Types of theological research to be employed	15
1.6.2. Presuppositions to the research	16
1.7. Thesis Goals	17

1.7.1. To identify an applicable timeless ecclesiology	17
1.7.2. To survey and evaluate the current prevailing culture of the affluent southern suburbs of Cape Town	17
1.7.3. To investigate the role of church leadership in light of this timeless ecclesiology	18
1.8. Motivation	19
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1. Why study the church	22
2.2. A new community is formed	25
2.2.1. The purpose of the church in the teaching of Jesus	25
2.2.2. Jesus links the kingdom of God to the church	26
2.2.3. The demands of the kingdom that are to shape the Christian community, the church	29
a) What aspects of the kingdom have bearing on the nature of the church?	30
i. The authority of the kingdom demands submission	31
ii. The morality of the kingdom demands righteousness	32
iii. The effect of the kingdom demands experience	33
b) Aspects of the kingdom that demand the action of the church	35
i. The kingdom must be proclaimed	35
ii. The kingdom will grow	39
iii. The fulfilment of the kingdom must be anticipated.	41
2.2.4. The Matthean sayings	42
a) Matthew 16:18	43
b) Matthew 18:17	44
2.3. The early community post Pentecost	46
2.3.1. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the book of Acts	46
a) A Jewish beginning: timeless ecclesiology applied to a Jewish context	47

b) A developing shape as seen through the terminology of Acts	48
c) Church, the term ἐκκλησία in the book of Acts	49
2.3.2. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the writing of Paul	51
a) The people of God	52
b) The body of Christ	53
c) The temple of God	54
d) A Spirit-filled community	55
2.3.3. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the epistle to the Hebrews	56
2.3.4. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the epistle of James	57
2.3.5. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the epistle of 1 Peter	57
2.3.6. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the Johannine Epistles and Revelation	59
2.4. Summary	60
<b>Chapter 3</b>	63
3.1. Why study culture	63
3.2. Defining culture	65
3.3. The demographics of the southern suburbs of Cape Town	66
3.4. Why we need to learn from western culture in the southern suburbs of Cape Town	67
3.5. The elements of Western culture: Modernism and Postmodern thinking	68
3.5.1. Western world view – Premodernism	69
3.5.2. Western world view - Modernism	70
3.5.3. Western world view - Postmodernism	74
3.6. An introduction to Strauss and Howe’s Generational Theory	76
3.7. The fourth turning of the Millennial	78
3.7.1. Engaging with generational understanding in the millennial turn	78
3.8. Summary	82

<b>Chapter 4</b>	83
4.1. Why Leadership	83
4.2. Defining church leadership	84
4.3. Challenges currently facing Christian leaders	87
4.3.1. The challenge of leaders applying timeless ecclesiology	89
4.4. Timeless ecclesiology applied to leadership methodology in the early church	90
4.4.1. The developing form of leadership in the New Testament church	91
4.4.2. Implications of diverse leadership form in the New Testament and early church	95
4.5. Leaders, inspiring a form that responds to timeless ecclesiology and engages prevailing culture	95
4.5.1. Leaders inspiring a form that promotes submission to Christ and the kingdom	96
4.5.2. Leaders inspiring a form that responds to the ethics of the kingdom	97
4.5.3. Leaders inspiring a form that encourages experiencing the kingdom	100
4.5.4. Leaders must inspire a form that encourages the proclamation of the gospel and the kingdom	101
4.5.5. Leaders must inspire a form that encourages church growth	101
4.5.6. Leaders must inspire a form that anticipates the parousia	103
4.6. Summary	104
<b>Chapter 5</b>	106
5.1. Church shape can and must change	106
5.2. Evaluation of the hypothesis	108
5.2.1. Evaluating the first goal: is there an applicable timeless ecclesiology?	110

5.2.2. Evaluating the second goal: To survey and evaluate the current prevailing western culture to inform accessible new expressions to timeless ecclesiology	110
5.2.3. Evaluating the last goal: redefining the role of church leaders in light of applied timeless ecclesiology	111
5.3. Areas for further study	112
5.4. Final Remarks	112
<b>6 Appendix</b>	<b>114</b>
Appendix A: Additional terms to ecclesia in the book of Acts	114
Appendix B: Developments in leadership form within the early church, post the canonical writings	117
Appendix C: Phases of transitional leadership	119
Appendix D: Example planning for awakening phase	121
Appendix E: Example planning for envisioning phase	122
Appendix F: Example planning for re-architecting phase	123
<b>7 Reference List</b>	<b>124</b>

## Summary

The church is facing a season of challenge in Western Europe and America, areas where once the church was strong and influential. We find, however, that the affluent suburbs in Cape Town are themselves not exempt from the challenge western culture is bringing to the church. Though there are signs of growth in some Christian sectors to inspire hope, there remains a great responsibility on the leaders of the local church today to engage this challenge. A responsibility rests on church leaders to hold firmly to the timeless message of the scriptures, and lightly to the forms of church that no longer engage a culture increasingly unimpressed with the face of modern Christianity.

Within this thesis, we will attempt to outline a tenet of the western church's ecclesiology that has been diluted in many places; this weakness has impacted the church's ability to engage its community, as well the form and shape of the activities of the local church.

Through investigating Jesus' intention for the local church, we will shown that the church is not defined by the form of its activities, but by people's response to the demands of the kingdom. We will show that focusing on the church's response to the demands of the kingdom is able to be a uniting and strengthening force in the church in this season of cultural challenge.

The demands of the kingdom are, therefore, to set the agenda for local church leaders, and free those leaders to redesign the form of the church's activities to engage the local community in culturally appropriate ways.

## List of Key Terms

1. Archetypes
2. Church shape
3. Generations
4. Gospel
5. Kingdom of God
6. Leadership
7. People of God
8. Postmodernism
9. Suburban
10. Timeless ecclesiology
11. Transnationalism
12. Western culture

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Rebuilding the walls

“Then I said to them, ‘You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach’.” (Neh 2:17)

It would not be overly dramatic to say that Nehemiah’s evaluation of the state of Jerusalem is akin to certain sectors of the Christian church today (Sweet 1999:45-46). Yet, it is the position of this thesis that she is not without hope, nor without beauty. She is, however, in need. She is in need of the faithful attention of Christian leaders who are prepared to call out, like Nehemiah, for the rebuilding of her walls so that she no longer lies in shame.

Is the church today “under attack,” and “bleeding to death,” which are the words of Archbishop George Carey as he laments the decline in church attendance within the Anglican church (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:21)? Or is the church simply being refined, purged of the unfaithful? Tim Keller, for example, provides a different perspective on the downtrend experienced in much of the western church, as the decline not of genuine Christianity, but the removal of the “mushy middle”, a Christianised culture that never reflected genuine Christianity to begin with (Advance the Church 2011). However, regardless of whether it is the mushy Christianised middle or people who are genuine Christians, the fact remains,

people are leaving the church and the effectiveness of the church requires our attention.

## **1.2. Stating the problem**

Guder, describing failures in the early church, as outlined by Bosch, proposes that the first and most critical failure of the early church was the “dilution and reduction of the gospel of the kingdom of God to a manageable religion” (Guder 2000:181). As a result of the above reduction, Guder proposes that the primary concern of the church switched from aggressively engaging culture to surviving as a religious entity (*ibid.*). The articulation of this proposed weakness in the early church has inspired the research of this thesis. Has the church of our time made a similar mistake? Guder notes that the “greatest challenge to incarnational mission” is a reduction in how the church understands the “good news of God’s reign”, the gospel of the kingdom of God (Guder 2000:181-182).

Guder (2000:44-48), focusing on mission and evangelism, touches on what we will show to be part of God’s intended timeless ecclesiology: a way of understanding the church’s identity and purpose that is informed by the demands of the kingdom of God (see also Ladd 1979:111-119). We will propose, therefore, that a significant problem facing certain sections of the modern church today, stems significantly from a misunderstanding and dilution of the demands of the kingdom on the people of God, the church (Guder 2000:181). This weakness can be seen in the following areas.

### 1.2.1. Ineffective cultural engagement

Carson (2008:4) notes that God's people have transitioned from being a "covenant nation" to now, in light of the new covenant, becoming an "international covenant people" (Carson 2008:4). Herein lies the challenge of culture and the church. The church cannot dictate the culture of its context, yet the cultural context is often at odds with the theology of the church.

Hesselgrave (1992:C36) shows from Nida's 'Message and Mission' that the process that is required for effective, culturally appropriate communication, is one of 3 phases. The "three cultured model" supported by Hesselgrave (*ibid.*) outlines a dialogue between a missionary's culture (in our case the local suburban church), the biblical culture, and the respondent's culture (in our case the society of the local suburban church). A breakdown in understanding at any point in this process will weaken the church's ability to engage the respondent culture. Running throughout all cultures is, however, the true message of the Bible, contextually packaged, yet culturally transcendent. This message must be clearly understood; first from the biblical culture, then from the missionary culture and lastly explained within the respondent's culture (Hesselgrave 1992:C38). The church must therefore guard against three possible errors of cultural engagement. The church cannot afford to ignore its contextual culture; this would lead to miscommunication. The church's message would be misunderstood by the respondents (*ibid.*). The church must equally understand its own culture so as not to transmit cultural practice under the banner of gospel- proclamation. Lastly, the church must not lose sight of the biblical culture which contains the message of God.

Gibbs and Bolger (2005:15) state that the overall mission of the church, within the United States and the United Kingdom, has been undermined by precisely this weakened ability to culturally engage, not with those who live far away but rather those in our immediate context.

### **1.2.2. Fractured mission**

The church is to be a united and universal body (Erickson 2001:1136-1152). However, the church today appears fractured on many fronts. A myriad of denominations are testament to the often sad history of lost unity within the church. From arguments in Corinth (1 Cor 1 & 3) to the great divisions of history, the East West Schism and the Reformation, the church has often been the antonym of Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17: 22). There is diversity in form, theology and mission. If the church is to regain its witness in the world, the issue of unity must be addressed. Guder, though recognising the value of varied forms of Christian expression, states that "where there is competition, rancour, and mutual renunciation, the gospel witness is diminished profoundly" (Guder 2000:185). Though seeking unity in the church may seem idealistic in our current situation, or even incongruent with the desire to redesign yet again the shape of the church, an attempt to assist the church's missional effectiveness that does not address the global unity of the church would be sorely deficient.

### **1.2.3. Unprepared leaders**

Lying beside the carnage of failed churches is a multitude of hurt and disgraced Christian leaders (Gibbs 2005:19). One cannot help but feel that the church's first failure has been in the area of adequate and strategic leadership development, a

leadership development that focuses as much on identity, character, style and function as it does on contextualisation, mission and theology (Gibbs 2005:27). The question must be asked, have we been able to build balanced leaders equipped to deal with the complexity of ministry in a twenty-first century post-Christian society (Gibbs 2005:31-39)? If the numerical success of the church is a measure of our success in Christian leadership development, we can only conclude this is yet another area of failure for the modern church.

### **1.3. Crystallizing the problem statement**

The problem that this thesis will wrestle with may therefore be stated in the following way:

A weakness within the western, suburban church's ecclesiology, coupled with a misunderstood cultural context, has hindered the church's impact in its local community.

For the remainder of this thesis we will attempt to explain and wrestle with this problem with a particular location in mind - the affluent suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa.

### **1.4. Hypothesis**

We propose that the above mentioned problem (*a weakness within the western, suburban church's ecclesiology, coupled with a misunderstood cultural context,*

*has hindered the church's impact in its local community) can be addressed by: Rediscovering the timeless nature of the church and empowering leaders to begin a process of redesigning the shape of the church in light of the church's nature and the current prevailing culture. .*

The above hypothesis requires the answering of three basic questions. First, does the church have a discernable unchanging nature? Second, what characteristics of prevailing culture must be understood in order for the local church to better engage its local community? Third and flowing from the above questions, what role should local church leaders play in the necessary redesign of local church shape?

#### **1.4.1. Applied Timeless Ecclesiology: Does the church have a discernable unchanging nature?**

Erickson (2001:1038-1040) notes that this type of philosophical investigation into the church's nature has been largely replaced in theological circles for a method that focuses primarily on an empirical dynamic definition of the church. Erickson, highlighting this sentiment, quotes the late Carl Michalson, the prominent professor of systematic theology at Drew University, who, commenting on the nature of the church, says that "these conjectural topics which have drawn theology into a realm of either physical or metaphysical speculation remote from the habitation of living men should be abandoned" (Erickson 2001:1039). However, as Erickson notes, if the expression of the church is changing and will change further, we must find that which is able to "distinguish the church as the church," otherwise the new forms must be referred to by a new name (2001:1040).

Guthrie (1981:701) highlights the challenge of that exercise, stating that there is even a “wide variety of views” on the basic question that must be asked in order to ascertain the essential nature of the church. It is, however, a challenge that must be engaged. We will show in the following chapter that, as Guthrie explains (1981:702-706), the connections between the kingdom of God and the church are foundational to our understanding of the church’s identity and nature and therefore transcend culture.

Discovering and unpacking this unifying essence of timeless ecclesiology will enable us to see with greater clarity that which must remain, that which can be changed as well as that which must be changed. Applying timeless ecclesiology, even in the face of changing culture, will enable us to redesign and rebuild the shape of the church’s activities with freedom and confidence into the future.

**1.4.2. Prevailing Culture: what characteristics of prevailing culture must be understood in order for the local church, and its leaders, to better position the church to engage its local community?**

Second is the question of culture. Though this paper is written in Africa, we are not untouched by western culture, especially within the urban centres of South Africa (Hendriks 2004:20). It seems that the currently prevailing western culture of postmodernism, with its fusion of relativism and consumerism (Erickson 1999:17-20), is impacting the communities of many of our churches in South Africa (Hendriks 2004:20). The Christian leader today must understand the language of this culture, the foundations of its symbolism and practice, and the reason for its protest against the church.

The church cannot meaningfully engage with a people whose values and practice she does not understand. Rainer and Rainer (2008:18) note further that “churches that keep their internal culture unchanged” will eventually die as they lose their ability to engage with society. The reality that church culture will have to adapt, at least in part, to better facilitate this engagement is undeniable (*ibid.*).

#### **1.4.3. Responsive church leadership: Does the role and style of leaders need to change in light of this timeless nature?**

If, as Gibbs (2005:13) supposes, “change in leadership roles and styles is not an option but a necessity,” how do we evaluate what change must be made? What changes to leadership style or leadership shape need to be made within the sphere of the local church, to better reflect the church’s timeless ecclesiology? In order to answer these questions, a preliminary question must be asked. To what degree is the shape of leadership found in the New Testament prescriptive? Is the shape of church leadership fixed, or is there, as with the church, an essential thread to define church leadership, yet at the same time, a fluidity of permissible form (Giles 1997b: 219-221)? We will look, therefore, in the fourth chapter at the implications of timeless ecclesiology on church leadership and the nature of leadership from within the New Testament.

Hence, to address the question of church shape; the form of the church’s activities we will address: the issue of applied timeless ecclesiology, the tenets of the current prevailing western culture and the form of the local church leader.

## 1.5. The thesis title

It is prudent at this point to provide some explanation of the thesis title.

### 1.5.1. Redesigning

We propose that the nature and purpose of the church has never and will never change (see chapter two). We therefore use the word “redesigning,” not to imply changing the foundation of the church, but rather the continual process of adaption that is required to maintain cultural bilinguality (Guder 2000:94). Redesigning is a word chosen to describe the process of discerning how best to continue fulfilling God’s mission in a changed and changing society.

Redesigning does not imply a lack of continuity or a disregard of things past (Chapell 2009:17-19). On the contrary, the things past are of immeasurable value as we look towards the future. However, we must expect the language of the church to change (Guder 2000:93-96), though the church maintains a “self sameness” that ties its identity to the past (van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela 2008:2). In essence, we are striving to apply and give form to the narrative identity of the church, not to deny the “*idem*” but to understand the “*ipse*,” the self sameness, “constancy within a variety of circumstances,” identity that can remain genuine but dynamic. In redesigning the shape of the church, we are seeking to discover the potential of the *ipse*, the church’s identity - that which remains true in all situations, but is able to be different when the situation and context changes (*ibid.*). As Erickson explains, the church must always be “versatile and adjustable in adjusting its methods and procedures to the changing situations of the world” (2001:1077).

In this the church reflects Christ, who adapted to “the condition of the human race”, though his form did not undermine his identity (Erickson 2001:1078).

### **1.5.2. Shape**

It is critical that we define what we mean by the term shape, as it relates to this thesis. What is not meant by the term ‘shape of the church’ is the nature or the purpose of the church. These concepts will be discussed under timeless ecclesiology in chapter two. The phrase ‘church shape’ is used here to denote the way the church acts, meets and serves; not the activities themselves, but the form in which those activities are expressed. Some may say the shape of the activities are irrelevant; yet from a missional perspective the shape of the church’s activities often communicate the loudest to a watching world. As Chapell notes, very often the “medium is the message”, at least the message that the community receives (2009:17).

The activities of local churches are many (evangelism, edification of believers, worship, social action - see Erickson 2001:1061-1069) and all have been encased within a given form as they relate to culture and theology (Branson and Martíez 2011). Chapell, in his book ‘Christ-centred worship: letting the gospel shape our practice,’ explains with particular focus on the liturgy of the church that “similar to church architecture, differing church traditions and cultural contexts have resulted in great variation in the structure of Christian liturgy” (Chapell 2009:18).

A passage of scripture significant to church shape is found in chapter 9 of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian church, where Paul describes the process of changing

personal 'shape' and appearance, for the sake of effectively bearing witness to the message of the gospel. He does not claim to change the message nor the essence of who he is as an apostle, but there is a purposeful redesigning of shape so as not to place unnecessary stumbling blocks in the path of those who may respond to the message of Christ. Sweet, describing the meaning of Paul's "becoming all things to all people" (1 Cor. 9:22) observes that Paul is "only following in his master's footsteps when he admonished the church to contextualise the gospel in the culture" (Sweet 1999:97). Sweet explains further that "every generation needs a shape that fits its own hand... every person needs a different handle from which to receive the living waters of Jesus" (Sweet 1999:37). Seeing church shape and form as a handle from which the community of a church can grab onto the theology of the church is a useful metaphor for the purpose of this thesis.

This principle can be applied at a church level when church leaders intentionally decide to adapt and redesign the shape of their activities, even elements that perhaps seem to be essential aspects of local church culture, yet are, when compared to the nature and purpose of the church, peripheral, and therefore changeable.

### **1.5.3. Local church**

Though in 1 Corinthians chapter 9 we have the example of an individual who sets a precedent for personal contextualisation of the gospel message, the purpose of this thesis relates to how that process of contextualisation can take place within the gathered community of Christian believers.

Grudem explains that though, in its essential nature, the church is 'invisible' as we are unable to see the nature of people's hearts, the local church is the church "as Christians on earth see it" (Grudem 2003:856). The concept of the local church is perhaps the primary sense of the word *ἐκκλησία* as used within the New Testament, and normally describes "a group of believers" who meet within a particular location (Erickson 2001:1042). It is with a specific location in mind that this thesis is written; the affluent Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa.

#### **1.5.4. Leaders**

The type of leadership upon which this thesis is focused relates to those leaders who have been positioned as leaders within a specific local church. The title of this thesis therefore refers to Christian leaders who not only sense the responsibility to lead but who are able and empowered by the community to steer the church towards God's intended purposes (Gibbs 2005:29).

The church leader needs to become an expert in three fields: ecclesiology, culture and missional leadership. This thesis, as is implied within the title, will endeavour to reveal the role of the local church leader, as it relates to changing church shape. It is a leadership role that must remain "biblically informed and theologically grounded" (Guder and Barret 1998: 213).

#### **1.5.5. Building**

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt 16:18). Though this is a controversial verse (see Chap. 2 and Davis-Allison in Hagner 1995:469), what is clear is that the

church is built. The church does not simply exist, it is created, and it is fundamentally Jesus that creates his church. However, Jesus builds his church through the people of his church, as Paul explains: “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9). Therefore, though it is God who does the work, he does it through the people of his body. Jesus builds the church, through the church. Paul elaborates further, stating that “by the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it” (1 Cor 3:10). We recognise therefore that change comes to the church as the result of intentional effort by the people of God, as we allow Jesus to build his church through us.

#### **1.5.6. Applied Timeless Ecclesiology**

As noted above, though there are some that would disregard the search for an ontological understanding of the church;<sup>1</sup> others such as Erickson (2001:1038-1041) and Guthrie (1981:701) recognise it is a necessity.

The concept of applied timeless ecclesiology relates to those truths that are universally true concerning the church, will remain universally true in all contexts and at all times, and therefore must always find practical application within any given local church. It must be an ‘applied’ ecclesiology in that the timeless essence of the church must find expression in the church’s practice. They are not simply beliefs concerning the church, but the guiding DNA of the church. Without this “DNA of the church” (Viola 2008:33), she will lose her identity and will be lost,

---

<sup>1</sup> See Erickson (2001:1039) who describes the tension between an empirical-dynamic understanding of the church and a deductive Platonic understanding of the church.

tossed on every wave of culture, her 'self sameness' threatened and her practice ungrounded in God's purpose. Hence, while we search for fresh approaches to living as God's church on earth, maintaining the necessary adaptability of the church (Erickson 2001:1040); we do so seeking applied timeless ecclesiology.

### **1.5.7. Prevailing Culture**

As stated above, the process of rebuilding requires more than an intimate theological understanding of the church. An extensive understanding of the church's context is also required for the process to be of value, though not all agree that this search for meta-narratives is useful (Sire 2004: 214).

The major cultural paradigm that this thesis will investigate, as stated above, is that of the postmodern west. Sweet quotes Dupre, stating that "The West appears to have said its definitive farewell to a Christian culture" and the new post-Christian culture that has replaced it is influencing a vast segment of the global church today (2001:45). It is a cultural paradigm that could be labelled "pre-Christian" or "post post-Christian" in content (*ibid.*).

It is of vital importance for the church leader, working within the fall-out of this prevailing western culture, to recognise its potential for the church, and also its dangers and challenges. Though the effects of postmodernism and western thinking have had a slower, more sporadic, impact in a South African context, there are pockets of society where the influence is great and effecting the church dramatically (Hendriks 2004:20). One of these is the specific cultural context of this thesis, the affluent southern suburbs of Cape Town.

## **1.6. Methodology**

The purpose of this thesis, as an exercise in practical theology, is to apply theological truth to the actual problem of the South African suburban church. As Cowen explains, this is a transformative approach to theology (Smith 2008:204). In an attempt to wrestle with the above stated problem and hypothesis with a transformative outcome in mind, the following multifaceted approach to research will be applied.

### **1.6.1. Types of theological research to be employed**

As there are a variety of questions that must be answered in addressing the above, a range of research must be carried out. In addition to the review and appraisal of appropriate scholarship on the topics of ecclesiology, leadership and culture, exegetical and systematic processes will need to be employed within the thesis.

Smith (2008:169) describes the exegetical process of research as an “in-depth, inductive, examination of scripture”. As a central theme of this thesis is the search for a timeless ecclesiology, this method of research will be necessary specifically with regard to Jesus’ teaching on the church and the kingdom (see chapter 2).

As aspects of this thesis touch on themes of theological thought, namely ecclesiology, it will be necessary to apply a systematic approach to certain areas of the problem. This will involve approaching a range of relevant passages and constructing “a model that accounts for what all the relevant scriptures teach” (Smith 2008:185).

### 1.6.2. Presuppositions to the research

It is also important to state the assumptions that undergird the research of this thesis. The research is written from a theologically evangelical perspective, and more specifically from within a broadly Charismatic Baptist theological framework. The assumptions that are relevant for this research are the following:

The default hermeneutical approach employed within this thesis is the grammatical-historical approach: namely, that any given text has effectively one primary meaning, the author's intended meaning (though this is not the end of the hermeneutical process, as application is the ultimate end of hermeneutics: see Osborne 2006:23). This primary meaning is discerned through understanding the genre of the writing, the cultural context of the author and recipients and any significant linguistic features of a given passage. Though a passage may have one primary message, the same passage may have an array of necessary applications.

Erickson outlines the heart of evangelical theology by drawing attention to humanity's two primary problems; sin that has separated people from God and sin that has spoiled the human heart, rendering us morally broken (2001:918). Christ has, however, made possible the solution to the above mentioned problems (*ibid.*); "God has acted" and "God has spoken" into human history on our behalf to save humanity (Vanhoozer 2007:17). The evangelical perspective focuses therefore on that which can and must be done to inherit the eternal (Erickson 2001:919).

The term 'charismatic' is used in the following sense: that there is a continued ministry of the Holy Spirit that allows for all the gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament to manifest in the church today (Grudem 2003:763).

## **1.7. Thesis Goals**

### **1.7.1. To identify an applicable timeless ecclesiology**

A primary goal of this thesis is to investigate the hypothesis that the church has a timeless nature. The investigation will begin with Jesus, and question whether he indeed intended for the church to exist. In investigating Jesus' view of the church, one is forced to explore the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church and the intended impact that the kingdom of God should have upon God's people the church (Guthrie 1981:701-706). This investigation will provide a framework of evaluation from which to launch further study into the rest of the New Testament. The goal is to investigate the hypothesis that the nature of the kingdom of God provides the DNA for the church today and always.

### **1.7.2. To survey and evaluate the current prevailing culture of the affluent southern suburbs of Cape Town**

If the shape of the church is to be redesigned through an interaction between ecclesiology and culture, then the church leaders must understand the culture of the world that encases the church. This thesis will provide a workable sketch of the prevailing western culture, the 'personality' of western society, not simply evaluating society as a whole but with cognisance of the fact that at any given time there are varieties of generations present in society, all of which contribute a

unique feel to the mood of a culture. This is particularly evident within the southern suburbs of Cape Town, an area affected by global mega trends in culture (Hendriks 2004:20). Transnationalism, the phenomena of cultural “border crossings” (Clavin 2005:423) has led to a unique cultural situation within the southern suburbs, which has a largely western worldview within an African context.

### **1.7.3. To investigate the role of church leadership in light of this timeless ecclesiology**

A primary goal of this thesis will be to investigate the necessary role that church leaders must play in order to steer the church into greater effectiveness in cultural engagement. If current forms of Christian leadership are found to be ineffective, as some suppose (see Adair 2004:73-74 for an example within the Church of England), then it would not be the first time that the leadership of the Christian church has needed to undergo transition and flux. Even within the New Testament era there was a measure of development and diversity of variant leadership shapes that developed necessarily (Giles 1997b:220).

This thesis will therefore investigate the precedent for this change by surveying the diversity of leadership shapes as contained within the New Testament era. If, as Giles explains, the early church was complex and cannot fit into any one organisation or leadership mould (*ibid.*), there is perhaps space for transition still today. This is an important fact to remember when addressing the re-designing of the church’s shape in our time as there were significant developments in

leadership style, emphasis, and organisation through the life of the apostles and the immediate generation that followed them (Hansen 1997:105-110).

The hypothesis of this thesis is that the church requires creative, missional leaders who are able to understand the paths of our current cultural trends and where and how the church needs to engage them. Organisations have life cycles of effectiveness; while a particular product is in demand, a product may flourish. If, however, the success of the company is tied to its context, and the context changes, it may have a negative impact on the company. During this time of external change the company may plateau or even decline. It is in this time of plateau that transitional leadership is required and without it, the organisation will fail (Lewis 1996:51-59, 85-91).

### **1.8. Motivation**

The church does not need to fail in order to motivate Christian leaders, who love the church, to re-evaluate the way we lead. There is always merit in assessing the biblical strength of the church and seeking to make changes where necessary to better conform to the biblical mandate of God for his people. Where the church is struggling, however, we find additional urgency to see the church alive, healthy and strong in our societies. Church attendance in the United Kingdom has been in decline since 1979 (Gibbs and Coffey 2005:21) and this decline appears to be speeding up within the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom (Gledhill 2010); the situation in America is equally bleak with an anticipated 60% of all churches closing by 2050 (Gibbs and Coffey 2005:20). The established, traditional, mainline denominations appear to be struggling in missionary effectiveness and numerical

growth (Gibbs and Coffee 2005:20-22). The situation is urgent, as Hemphill notes, “if the church fails to reach the youth of one generation, it greatly impacts its ability to provide leaders for future growth” (2008:XVii).

The world is changing; culture is shifting, society changing; without doubt that has an impact on the church (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:26-33). Hendriks quoting Hall (2004:20) reminds us that the universal societal shift is “momentous” on the scale of the reformation of the 1600’s and even the great schism of the church in 1053 AD. Hendriks notes that this immense societal shift is not simply affecting Europe and North America but is also affecting Africa, especially the “African First World communities such as one finds in metropolitan areas in South Africa” (Hendriks 2004:20).

This is, however, not the first time the Christian church has found itself within an environment that poses challenges to its growth. The early church was born in an environment savagely hostile to the spreading of the gospel, yet the opposition only created opportunity for further growth (see Acts 8). Surely if the church is struggling, it cannot blame shifting culture, but must look internally to potential weaknesses that have existed prior to changes in our society.

Hence, Christian leaders today have, by virtue of the day, a responsibility of great magnitude; we are called to fresh investigation, and reaffirmation of our timeless ecclesiology. This is a season, as Erickson (2001:1037) notes, where though study of the church has been largely neglected, now more than ever, it is a theological sphere that must be addressed. This investigation into timeless

ecclesiology has two connected branches, leadership and culture. Gibbs (2005:17), speaking of the task of the church in western contexts, inspires the need for fresh understanding of church leadership; if we are truly looking to “engage, infiltrate and transform culture”. Guder, applying terminology from Newbigin, relates the necessity of churches, who work within western urbanized societies, to speak the language of that society, churches that are able to be cultural bilinguals (Guder 2000:94). This ability to speak the language of the culture our churches find themselves within, to know and understand the society we have been called to serve is of critical importance to the church’s health (*ibid.*).

The role of the leader throughout this phase of redesigning and rebuilding is, therefore, to facilitate a conversation between ecclesiology and culture and to apply the conclusions. The aim of the conversation is not to reach a compromise, nor is it anticipated that ecclesiology and culture will always agree. The purpose is to discover the point at which timeless ecclesiology, the essence of what the church is, can meaningfully be understood and practically engage with the prevailing culture of its context. Hence the role of the local church leader is to be understood as fundamentally missional (Gibbs 2005:45-46).

## Chapter 2

### The Church

#### 2.1. Why study the church

What is the church? What defines the church? These questions are both simple and yet intensely complex (Erickson 2001:1037-1044). The question over the nature of the church lies, however, at the heart of the articulated problem of the western suburban church. If the problem statement of this thesis is valid and weaknesses within the church's ecclesiology have affected the church's missional effectiveness (Guder 2000:182-185), the solution begins with a fresh appraisal of ecclesiology for the suburban context. For, as Guder, explains a primary weakness of the early church can be seen in the tension between the purpose of the church and the form of the church; wherever the form of the church dictated the purpose of the church, the mission of the church suffered. The same can be true of the church today (Guder 2000:182).

Van Gelder (2000:14) highlights some of the primary concepts of 'church' in a North American context, "a building, an event, a policy body, a relational group, an institutionalised denomination, an organizational style and the practice of affirming correct confessional criteria." He comments further that though the church relates to all of the above; it is unquestionably above them all: no single picture can fully describe the church; the sum of definitions does not adequately portray it (*ibid.*). This is because the concepts of the church listed above relate to the form of the church, the expression of the church. These empirical understandings of the church will never adequately describe the essence of the church as they vary

throughout history and across the cultures of the world (Erickson 2001:1040). Though there are some that see a search for the essential or ontological understanding of the church as a redundant theological exercise, Erickson explains that without this it would be impossible to ever truly define when the church is in fact the church (2001:1040).

Dunn (1990:104) comments in his work “Unity and Diversity in the New Testament” that there are a range of methods for approaching an investigation into the nature of the church. Dunn (1990:104) explains that one method of seeking the nature of the church would be to survey and critique the views of other authors. He notes that there is already a sufficient body of research to make this approach possible (this view on the sufficiency of research is in contrast to Erickson 2001:1037). Dunn, however, believes that the most efficient method of investigating the essential nature of the church is to survey the concepts of church through the different ‘periods’ of the early church (1990:104). Dunn proceeds to survey Jesus’ teachings, the earliest community, followed by the ministry of the Pauline Churches and the period leading up to Ignatius, seeing the Pastorals as post-Pauline. He also surveys the Johannine writing as a separate entity. In his conclusion, Dunn remarks that the church appears to have developed so dramatically through these periods that there is little to connect them together outside the single unifying element - “Jesus, and faith in him” (1990:122). Dunn looks to Käsemann’s claim that the New Testament does not in fact promote a unified church but provides simply “the basis for the multiplicity of confessions” (1990:122).

Guthrie in his 'New Testament Theology' approaches the question of the nature of the church in a similar way to Dunn, though arrives at different conclusions (1981:787-789). Guthrie in like manner to Dunn looks at the concept of the church through the different periods of the New Testament church. Guthrie first evaluates the 'early community,' focusing on the church in the synoptic gospels, with particular reference to the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God, the concept of community in the teaching of Jesus and the ecclesia sayings in Matthew. Following the synoptic gospels, Guthrie proceeds to sketch the concept of the church from the perspective of John's gospel and his epistles and finally through the book of Acts (Guthrie 1981:701-789). Following Guthrie's sketch of the early community, he turns to the concept of 'church' in the 'Developing Church' where he addresses Paul's concept of the church, the view of the church in the book of Hebrews, James, the epistles of Peter and finally Revelation (*ibid.*).

The approach of this section will follow Guthrie (*ibid.*), though with some of the influence of Dunn (1990:104). We will begin with the forming of a new community, focusing on the teaching of Jesus and the kingdom of God (Guthrie 1981:702-703). We will then approach the developing community post-Pentecost, looking to Acts, Paul, the letter to the Hebrews, James and 1 Peter to see the application of the theological centre of the church established by Jesus. Though Guthrie includes John's epistles with his gospel and synoptics, we will instead, as with Dunn, treat them as a section following within the developing church (see Dunn 1990:104 and Guthrie 1981:730-731). Unlike Dunn, we will treat the Pastoral Epistles within the section under Paul, holding to a Pauline authorship of these epistles (see Carson *et. al* 1992:371).

## **2.2. A new community is formed**

The disciples are the “nucleus of the new community” (Guthrie 1981:707-709) or, as Ladd describes them, the “the nucleus of Israel who accepted his proclamation of the Kingdom of God” and would go on to become better known as the church (1979:342). The disciples were the people with whom Jesus first established the DNA for the new Christian community and Jesus’ teachings to the disciples would become the foundation from which the church would be built (Matt 28:20). Guthrie (1981:707) notes the undeniable fact that Jesus called and gathered a band of individuals who were, though a part of the larger crowds that followed Jesus, singled out for deeper instruction concerning the nature of the kingdom, which was his primary area of instruction and was to form the foundational DNA of his church (Ladd and Hagner 1993).

### **2.2.1. The purpose of the church in the teaching of Jesus**

There is little doubt, as Ladd and Hagner attest, that the central teaching of Jesus, his primary message, was the message of the kingdom of God (1993:368). This has, however, led some such as Alfred Loisy, a Catholic scholar from France, to raise the question, “Did Jesus intend to found the church?” Loisy arrived at the following conclusion to this question: “Jesus foretold the kingdom, and it was the church that came” (Patzia 2001:55). The crux of Loisy’s thesis is that the disciples invented the church when the kingdom failed to materialise (*ibid.*). Patzia (*ibid.*) explains that this is an understandable conclusion if one were to look simplistically at the content of the gospels’ teaching on the church in comparison to the gospels’ teaching on the kingdom; the Greek βασιλεία, “kingdom,” being found in 118 verses of the gospels in comparison to the Greek ἐκκλησία, “church,” which is

found in only two (Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament 1981). The unbalanced use of “kingdom”, “church” terminology is then mirrored for the remainder of the New Testament with βασιλεία, being found in only 36 verses in comparison to ἐκκλησία which is found in 109 (Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament 1981).

One cannot, however, look simply to an empirical study of words to ascertain Jesus’ intention for the church, as Jesus’ intention for the church is not limited to two Matthean verses (Guthrie 1981:702). These verses, however, if the authenticity of which are undisputed, validate both the concept of the church and his purpose in founding the church within his pre-crucifixion ministry (*ibid.*). In order to deal adequately with Jesus’ intention for his new community, we must understand first: the church’s intended relationship with the kingdom, second: how Jesus intended the demands of the kingdom to form and shape his new community and third: the Matthean sayings in light of the above.

### **2.2.2. Jesus links the kingdom of God to the church**

Erickson states that the church is “a manifestation of the kingdom or reign of God,” and in doing so provides a profound definition for the church (2001:1052). This relationship between the church and the kingdom of God is a relationship that has been much misunderstood. Van Gelder, in his work “The essence of the Church,” notes the unhelpful ways in which the church can consider its relationship with the kingdom (2000:87-88). These unhelpful understandings greatly undermine the church’s self identity.

Van Gelder states that the relationship between the church and the kingdom has been misunderstood if the church sees itself as responsible for building, promoting, extending or establishing the kingdom of God (2000:87-88). According to Van Gelder, the biblical relationship that is outlined between the kingdom and the church is one of receiving (see for example Mk 10:15), entering (see for example Mk 9:47; Mt 7:21), seeking (see for example Mt 13:45; Luke 12:31) and inheriting (see for example Mt 25:34) the kingdom (2000:88). The focus therefore in the ministry of Jesus is building a people who will respond rightly to the kingdom of God. This reflects Erickson's statement about the nature of the church above (2000:1052). If the kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven, as recorded in Matthew's gospel) is regarded as the dynamic activity of God's reigning (Guthrie 1981:420), it follows that we as the church are not able to create the kingdom. We are, however, called to submit and respond to it (Van Gelder 2000:88).

The announcement of the coming reality of the kingdom, by John the Baptist and Jesus needs to be understood therefore, as the proclamation of the coming and present reality of God's authoritative ruling on earth to which humanity must submit (Guthrie 1981:409-412). This dynamic concept of the kingdom must be understood as both present and future (Ladd 1979:65-70), for the authoritative reign is already among us (Matt 12: 28, Luke 17: 20-21), yet is to be fully revealed (Matt 24-25, Mk. 13, Luke 21).

The notion that the church is to respond to, not be responsible for, the kingdom, as well as the understanding of the kingdom determining the purpose of the church, is implied by Erickson (2001:1052) as he outlines Ladd's five basic points on the

relationship between the church and the kingdom. According to Ladd, the relationship between the kingdom and the church can be summarised as follows:

1. The church is not the kingdom.
2. The kingdom creates the church.
3. The church witnesses to the kingdom.
4. The church is the instrument of the kingdom.
5. The church is the custodian of the kingdom.

(Erickson 2001:1052).

How does this relationship between the kingdom and the church instruct us in the nature and purpose of the church? As we have seen above, the church is a manifestation of the kingdom. We see that Jesus' teaching to his disciples focused on their response to the kingdom (Van Gelder 2000:88). The disciples, as the nucleus of the new community of God, were to impart this DNA to the rest of the community as it grew (see Mat 10:7). The character of the kingdom was therefore to inform the character or nature of the community around Jesus, the community that would become the church (Guthrie 1981:707-709).

If Ladd, Van Gelder, Guthrie and Erickson (see above) are correct concerning the relationship between the church and the kingdom, then a study of timeless ecclesiology must have at its centre an understanding of the purpose, demands, power and values of the kingdom of God and consequently their force upon the church (Guthrie 1981:701).

These demands of the kingdom of God may be seen to function as the instructive 'DNA', the essential nature of the church, informing its shape and determining its course. As the demands of the kingdom stand above and over culture and the generations of man, so the DNA of the kingdom, the essence of the church anchors, for all time, the nature and purpose of the church in the timeless essence of God's kingdom (Erickson 2001:1051-1052).

### **2.2.3. The demands of the kingdom that are to shape the Christian community, the church**

As we begin to see the church as shaped significantly by the character of the kingdom of God, which is undoubtedly both a present and future reality (Ladd and Hagner 1993:56), we see the church receiving from the nature of God's kingdom its purpose and values. We must now explore and understand some of those kingdom characteristics and their force upon the church.

It is important to remember that the nature of the kingdom does not equate to the nature of the church (Erickson 2001:1052), rather the character and purpose of the kingdom, which are a reflection of the King himself, must determine the character and purpose of the church if the church is to be a manifestation of the kingdom (Erickson 2001:1052). The new community that Jesus envisioned is the community that has responded rightly to the requests of the kingdom, the authoritative rule of God. In this way, as Van Gelder (2000:88) outlines, the church, the new community of God, is the agent of the kingdom, those affected by the dynamic redemptive rule of God. The new community becomes the instrument of God and the new community a window into life submitted to the rule of God.

The new community that Jesus envisioned was one that sought, entered into, received, and eagerly anticipated the fulfilment of the dynamic authoritative rule of God (Van Gelder 2000:87-88).

In unpacking the characteristics of the kingdom we therefore discover the eternal framework for understanding the heart of the church. In this way we afford ourselves the most complete insight into Jesus' intention for the church today. Below is a survey of first, the aspects of the kingdom that inform the nature of the church, and second, the aspect of the kingdom that inform the activity of the church.

**a)** What aspects of the kingdom have bearing on the nature of the church?

This is a critical question as the church is not the kingdom, but does manifest the kingdom, reflect the kingdom and respond to the kingdom (Ladd 1979:111-119). In Ladd's 'The gospel of the kingdom,' he notes that part of the challenge of understanding the nature of the kingdom relates to the different contexts in which the phrase is used (*ibid.*). Sometimes the kingdom of God relates to the reign of God, sometimes to the present experience of the blessing of God, and sometimes as the expected future blessing which all of God's people will experience at the future consummation of the kingdom (Ladd 1979:63-69).

Beasley-Murray (1986:20), in appraising the view of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament, takes a slightly different approach and lists three primary characteristics of the hope for the coming kingdom: the universality of the rule of

Yahweh, the righteousness of the kingdom and the peace of the kingdom. As it is helpful to provide some framework for outlining the nature of the kingdom here, as its attributes relate to the church, we will borrow and adjust Beasley-Murray's paradigm. He essentially provides three categories for understanding the nature of the kingdom in the Old Testament: the authority of the kingdom, the morality of the kingdom and the effects of the kingdom (Beasley-Murray 1986:20). These are helpful categories from which to unpack the nature of the kingdom as it has bearing on the church, understanding that, as Ladd explains, the attributes of the kingdom are experienced by humanity in a 'now but not yet' tension (Ladd 1981:73).

The authority of the kingdom can be seen primarily as God's "kingship, His rule, His authority" (Ladd 1981:21). Flowing from the authority of the king is the establishment of his character on the kingdom, the morality of the kingdom. In order for the kingdom of God to be righteous it is required to be acceptable to God in every way, an accurate reflection of God's moral nature (Swanson and Williams 2010:76). Last is the effect of the kingdom; this can be viewed as the contrast or change in the experience of those who have received and entered the kingdom, for example, the absence of war and the experience of peace (Beasley-Murray 1986:20).

**i. The authority of the kingdom demands submission**

How should the church respond to the authority of God as a community, as the church? As the kingdom of God is the effective reign of God, to enter into the kingdom is to respond in submission to God (Ladd 1981:21). The church can then

be seen as the people who are in corporate submission to God's authority (Erickson 2001:1052). We have defined the kingdom as the active reign of God - the sphere in which God's reign is perceived, acknowledged and outworked (Ladd 1979:22). It follows that the first demand of the kingdom towards the church would therefore be: submission to the king of the kingdom (Guthrie 1981:419). This aspect of the kingdom's DNA, submission to God as the head and possessor of the kingdom, is well attested in New Testament thinking (Matt 7:24-27, John 18:36, Eph 1:10, 5:24, Col 1:13, 2 Tim 4:1, Heb 1:8, 2 Peter 1:11). With this demand of the kingdom in mind, one can conclude that just as God is the head of his entire kingdom, God must be at all times, the understood head of the church (Ladd 1979:546), the church's leader in both moral character and strategic action. The responsibility, therefore, particularly of the leaders of the church, is for the shape and form of the church to reflect this core value of the kingdom.

## ii. The morality of the kingdom demands righteousness

As noted above, the kingdom must conform to the character of God; it cannot in any way offend his purity or goodness (Swanson and Williams 2010:78). As the kingdom must conform to the moral character of God, it follows that the moral demands can be seen in light of the revealed attributes of God's moral nature. Grudem (2003:197-207), in speaking of God's moral attributes, relates God's goodness, love, mercy, grace, patience, holiness, peace (order), righteousness and justice as attributes of his moral character. Grudem also notes two additional moral attributes that, though often used in a negative sense, are used positively of God; God's jealousy and his wrath (2003:205). Grudem defines God's jealousy as protecting "his own honour" and his wrath as intense hatred of sin (*ibid.*). One can

therefore conclude that the kingdom of God, and therefore the character of the church, should reflect God's own morality, for example, his goodness and love, his purity and his justice.

Community and interpersonal relationships fall within the gambit of the morality of the kingdom of God. Jesus' prayer for his disciples is a cry for unity and peace among those that would follow him (John 17:22-23). There is a perfect and mysterious unity that is expressed in the Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Spirit that provides the standard of unity for the church (Erickson 2001:1137). This divine unity infuses God's kingdom with peace and right fellowship. The nature of the church is then, in part, a response to the morality and unity of the kingdom which calls God's people to come together in kingdom fellowship so that they may work together in collective submission to God.

### iii. The effect of the kingdom demands experience

Ladd (1981:97), speaking of the demands of the kingdom, notes that the most fundamental demand upon us as God's people is a response of the will to God and his kingdom. We choose to receive and to yield, and in doing so we receive the kingdom's life and blessing (*ibid.*).

God has created a kingdom in which his governance, character and presence may be enjoyed (Grudem 2003:864), so the church must respond to, experience and enjoy the blessings and presence of God that come with his kingdom. There can be little doubt that the consummation of the kingdom of God is going to be a blessed occasion for those that are in Christ. The coming kingdom is devoid of

sorrow, sickness, death and despair (Rev 21:4). The coming kingdom will be a kingdom in which all who have entered will know and experience the blessed presence of God, eternal and abundant life in joy and glory for all eternity (Ladd 1981:97). As we have noted above, however, the kingdom is not solely a future reality and the blessing of being submitted to God's reign and authority is not something reserved only for the time after Jesus' second coming (*ibid.*). As Jesus was at pains to demonstrate and explain to both his disciples and the Pharisees, the kingdom of God is also here, it is also already among us (Lk 17:21). Jesus' reading from Isaiah at the inauguration of his public ministry declared, at least in part, that the blessings of the kingdom were to be experienced now by his followers (Lk 4:16-19). Jesus' miraculous healings were continued by the disciples and are, as understood by a significant portion of the Christian community today, still continuing (Grudem 2003:763). These miracles are a sign to people that God's reign and authority in the world transcends the arena of the purely spiritual and moral and eternal, but impacts on our physical present world (Ladd 1981:48). Jesus' demonstrations of power over the spiritual powers of darkness, sickness and even death, were signs that the reality of the coming kingdom are able to be experienced in our living present (Ladd 1979:72-73).

The blessings of the kingdom in our present are, however, not simply a matter of God having authority over sickness and demonic affliction. As Paul reminds us, the kingdom of God is also peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17). The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who brings the peace and joy of the kingdom to the church, is a primary blessing associated with the Christian life.

This attribute of the kingdom, enjoyment of the presence of God, is to have a profound impact on the church. That is not to say the church is to be isolated and removed from the 'realities' of life. Christ certainly was not. We live in a world at war, where the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God stand opposed to each other in a sinful world that is fallen and depraved. Ladd, commenting on Romans chapter 12, comments, "While the evil age goes on, God has made it possible for us to experience a new power that we might thereby prove what is God's will" (1981:41). The church must acknowledge its surroundings and be ever aware of its context; this is the evil age within which the church exists. The church, however, has also received and experiences the blessing of the kingdom, his righteousness, peace and joy (Ladd 1981:69).

As the kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, unity, peace and fellowship, so too must the church be a community of love, unity, peace and true fellowship (Swanson and Williams 2010:76). Jesus explains that a kingdom divided cannot stand (Luke 11:17). In contrast, his kingdom is a kingdom of unity (Blackaby and Blackaby 2007:25), peace and fellowship which will stand forever (Ladd and Hagner 1993:113).

**b) Aspects of the kingdom that demand the action of the church**

**i. The kingdom must be proclaimed**

The kingdom of God has been revealed and made accessible through the ministry of Christ (Ladd 1979:113-119). This good news of the kingdom must now be made known to all people (Matt 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, Acts 1, John 20). The church as

those who know its blessing must proclaim its existence and demands (Guthrie 1981:421).

Jesus explains that the rule of God, his kingdom, must be revealed to all people (Matt 24:14) and that the means of this revelation will be through the church. Ladd and Hagner (1993:113) explain that the mission of the church is to “witness to the gospel of the kingdom in the world.” Some, such as Casarella, propose from a literary word study that it is impossible to understand what the New Testament writers understood by the term ‘gospel’ (1997:431). Some, such as Farley, have questioned whether the gospel is definable at all (2003:80). Farley argues that the gospel is in fact “not a thing to be defined” at all, but a mystery to enter into (*ibid.*). According to Farley, the topic of the gospel is as indefinable as the nearness of the kingdom, impossible to reduce to definition and must, therefore, remain the “mystery of God’s salvific working” (2003:81).

Erickson offers a different opinion to Farley, stating that there was a standardized perception on the meaning and scope of the gospel in the early church (2001:1071). Erickson explains that Paul used the word as a noun without qualification, the implication being that the readers were able to understand the meaning of the term (*ibid.*). The question hanging on Erickson’s statement is: what was that consensus of content and can we define it so as to respond to this instruction of the kingdom to make known the gospel to the world? Erickson notes that though there is a lack of canonical definition, the gospel can be seen as “Jesus Christ and what God did through him” (2001:1072). In essence, according to Erickson, specifically from Paul’s perspective, the gospel can be seen as

synonymous with Paul's understanding of the work and person of Jesus Christ (Erickson 2001:1072)

However, as the above definition is broad, attempts have been made at expanding and detailing the content of the gospel. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism (here after TLCFWE) is one example (TLCFWE 1992:C-170). According to the TLCFWE, the gospel, which they acknowledge as challenging to define, can be understood through the following primary themes: "God as Creator, the universality of sin, Jesus Christ as Son of God, Lord of all, and Savior through his atoning death and risen life, the necessity of conversion, the coming of his Holy Spirit and his transforming power, the fellowship and mission of the Christian church, and the hope of Christ's return." (*ibid.*).

In his article 'Gospel (Good news)' in the 'Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels', Broyles highlights that although the gospel does include the "whole story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus" (1992:282), the gospel is also a proclamation of the kingdom of God. Though the person and work of Jesus can never be understood outside of the context of the kingdom, according to Broyles, the concept of the kingdom is weighty enough to warrant its inclusion in any definition of the gospel (Broyles 1992:286), thus making the TLCFWE definition partly insufficient.

It is helpful, however, as noted above (TLCFWE 1992:C-170), to understand the gospel in terms of its presuppositions, historical content and propositional

demands, while not forgetting the kingdom (Broyles 1992:286) nor the gospel's promise to every individual hearer (Erickson 2001:1073).

The gospel message presupposes a number of truths related to the nature and state of humanity (*ibid.*). A gospel of freedom and grace would be redundant if people were not in bondage and had no need of God. The gospel message, therefore, assumes that people do indeed have a very particular problem, sin, and that people have been oppressed, that humanity does suffer, that people are in need of God and that only God can solve the unique problem humanity faces (Luke 4: 18-19, 2 Thes 1:8).

The gospel message cannot be separated from the historical events of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. As Erickson notes above, the fundamental core of the gospel revolves around the person and work of Jesus (2001:1072-1073). To change or remove the historic events from the gospel is to remove or fundamentally change the timeless truth of its message. The message of the gospel must be a message which explains how the historical activities of God have made possible a remedy to the human condition in its entirety, namely the opportunity to enter into and to receive the kingdom of God (Ladd 1979:115).

The gospel is not only a factual story about the person Jesus, the message is such that it requires response and demands reply (Ladd 1981:97). The gospel message calls people to believe both the truth of its message and the significance of its message. The message of the gospel is not limited to past events but speaks

prophetically into the promise of the present and coming kingdom and its impact on the life of every person who will respond to its call (Erickson 2001:1073).

The gospel, just as it presupposed a particular condition, assumes a particular efficacy on those who positively respond and continue to respond to its message. There is within the gospel a promise of blessing both for the individual and society as a whole. The one who responds positively to the message of the gospel is ushered into the blessing of the kingdom. As Ladd (1981:18) explains from Jesus' teaching in John chapter 3, it is through new birth and a response to Jesus that entrance into the kingdom is made possible. These blessings (as outlined in part above) include release from spiritual oppression, cleansing from sin leading to fellowship with God and the opportunity to live a meaningful, sacrificial life of worship through the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit (*ibid.*).

The gospel does not, however, simply affect the individual. The demands of the kingdom, for which the gospel provides entry, instruct and require the individual, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to effect society with the principles and values of the kingdom which they have now received. As Clapp (1996:171) notes, "the church must indeed be the message it wishes a watchful world to hear and embrace." The reality that is experienced by the church must be expressed in the world.

## ii. The kingdom will grow

Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God is growing and dynamic (Eifird 1980:77-78) and will grow until its final coming; how should the church respond to this aspect of

the kingdom? Caragounis (1992:424), explaining the role of Jesus' parables in outlining the nature of the kingdom of God, notes for example, the parable of the mustard seed (Matt 13:32), in which we see this dynamic growth quality of the kingdom. It may begin in ways that appear weak and insignificant, but quickly the power of the kingdom of God becomes evident. The growth becomes exponential. The substantial nature of the kingdom begins to affect its context and the effect of the present reality of the kingdom is witnessed by all (Caragounis 1992:424).

This aspect of the nature of the kingdom, that it grows and emerges, is to be reflected in the nature of the church. The reign of God is always expanding in our world, so too then must the physical reflection, the people of the kingdom, the church, be expanding, growing and influencing our context and environment. That is not to say that the church must grow until it holds sway over the affairs of our world, but the nature of the kingdom does dictate that the church should never become isolated, but seek to grow and expand. This growth is a direct result of the king of the kingdom extending his reign and influence in the hearts of man (Warren 1995). This raises a serious challenge for the church today which appears to be losing ground in so many sectors of our western society. It is important to clarify who is the cause of the kingdom growth and therefore the growth of the church. As Beasley-Murray explains, the "kingdom cannot be brought about by the efforts of man" but only by God (1986:196). The church does not create the kingdom, but through witnessing to the kingdom and reflecting its character, the church provides a watching world with the opportunity to respond to God, and also enter into his rest. The dynamic quality of the kingdom therefore demands a missional approach

to church, not for the church to create the kingdom, but because the kingdom of God is expanding.

**iii.** The fulfilment of the kingdom must be anticipated.

As God's kingdom is present but not yet, the church must await the coming king and the consummation of his reign (Ladd and Hagner 1993:204). Jesus taught his disciples to pray and he does so in the context of a present and future experience of the kingdom of God (Matt 6:10). We are able to call out to God as a father, and when we do, we are to pray that his kingdom would come. There is, even in this prayer, a desire for both the present coming of the rule of God in our lives and in the lives of our community, as well as the desire for the future consummation of the kingdom. Grenz notes the relationship between the eschatological nature of the kingdom and the church, saying that "what the church is" is defined by "what the church will become" (2000:479).

Jesus teaches again in his parables that we are to eagerly await his coming, not as people who are idle, but as those who are actively aware. Ladd (1979:72-73), exploring the kingdom as the gift of salvation, notes its eschatological nature, which is seen in, for example, the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25: 1-13), the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30, Luke 19:12-27) and the parable of the absent house holder (Mark 13: 33-37) all of which imply a present responsibility that is focused on a future hope. The nature of the kingdom is that it is growing towards its coming, thus the church is to grow with the anticipation of Christ's return. The future of the church is tied unequivocally to the consummation of the kingdom (Grenz 2000:486). This demands the church to be alert, active and

engaged. The church of the kingdom can never be passive, lethargic or uninspired.

#### **2.2.4. The Matthean sayings**

As noted above, there are only two instances in the gospel accounts in which the term 'church' or *ἐκκλησία* is used, both of which are found in Matthew's gospel. Understanding these verses is obviously important in ascertaining Jesus' intended purpose for the church. Though the context of discussion varies, with the focus in Matthew 16 being the person of Christ and, in Matthew 18, disciples within the new community Jesus was forming, they are none the less further evidence for Jesus' perspective of the community he intended to build.

It must be noted that as the context of discussion in both passages does not address the nature of the church specifically, the quantity of information that can be gleaned from them concerning Jesus' concept of the church is somewhat limited. It must also be noted that the term *ἐκκλησία* would not have been used by Jesus himself; he would in all likelihood have used an Aramaic equivalent. According to Hagner (1995:465), the most likely of these would have been *קהל* [*qâhal*] or *עדה* [*'êdâh*], the former being most commonly translated as *ἐκκλησία* in the LXX, and the latter being the most common contemporary word for community during the time of Jesus' teachings. The focus of both of these terms is a gathered community. Having said that, we must also note that in the process of writing the gospel account and in the process of accepting the writings as being canonical, a process in which the Holy Spirit was intimately involved, the Greek term that is used is *ἐκκλησία*, and was chosen to represent Jesus' words. As Guthrie

(1981:710-711) indicates, there is no reason to doubt the authorship of these verses, unless one wishes to assert that Jesus did not intend to form a new community to continue after his death and resurrection. As we have shown above, that is not the case. We can therefore take what is said in the verses of Matthew as a further insight into Jesus' understanding of that intended community.

**a) Matthew 16:18**

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt 16:18).

Hagner quotes Davis-Allison in describing the above verse saying, it is “among the most controversial in all of scripture” (Hagner 1995:469). Matthew's account of Jesus' words to Peter raise questions of the papacy, leadership structures in the church, the authority of the apostles and apostolic succession. The question that is central to understanding the passage is the nature of the rock: is the rock Peter, or is the rock the statement inspired by God, that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 16:16)? Does Jesus build his church on a doctrinal truth, the position many evangelicals would hold to (Hagner 1995:470-471), or does Jesus indeed intend to build his new community upon the person to whom the revelation was given ? The obvious reading of the passage would seem to suggest the latter ; why else would Jesus make the literary link between ‘Peter’ (Πέτρος) the rock, and ‘rock’ (πέτρα) a rock? That, however, does not defend the doctrine of the papacy; that would overstretch the implication of the text, rather it simply acknowledges Peter's role in the early church (Guthrie 1981:712-713). The church is never portrayed as belonging to Peter, the church belongs to Jesus, but Peter can be seen as one of

the “first stones” used as Jesus began to build it (Bruner 1990:128). It must be noted that he is singled out due to his openness to the inspiration of God; it is his message that qualifies him as a genuine stone with which Christ can build (Matt. 16:17).

What can perhaps be seen from this verse, as it relates to the nature and eternal essence of the church, is that though it is undeniably Jesus that builds his church, therefore endowing it with power that ultimately renders it victorious, it is built with individual people who have yielded to the rule of God and been open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Matthew makes it clear that it is Jesus that will ‘οικοδομησω’ (future, active, indicative) build his community and that, as a result, the power of hell will not overcome it. The use of the phrase ‘gates of Hades’ is synonymous with the Hebrew “ פקדתי שאול ” [gates of Sheol] of Isaiah 38:10 (Hagner 1995:471-472). The Greek phrase was used often to symbolise not simply the entrance to a place or city but also its power and strength (*ibid.*). Jesus’ church, though built through people, and therefore built through something of weakness, will stand because it is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God who builds it and inspires its witness. We see then in this verse the church’s primary weakness, its humanity, and the church’s fundamental strength, the inspiration and strength of God himself.

#### **b) Matthew 18:17**

“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector” (Matt 18:17).

We come now to the second of the *ἐκκλησία* sayings of Jesus, though also into a completely different context. In Matthew 16 the topic of discussion is the nature and authority of Jesus. As he is the Christ, the Son of God, the church that he builds will prevail. The church will succeed not through human effort but because it is the Messiah who builds it. In Matthew 18 the focus is entirely different. Here the topic of discussion is discipline within the newly forming community (Guthrie 1981:714).

The fact that Jesus intended a community '*ἐκκλησία*' to form around him after his ascension can hardly be argued if this passage is indeed to be credited to Jesus. We have here, as Hagner (1995:530) explains, the closest teaching to a "handbook of rules for the community". The *ἐκκλησία* is a discernable entity, as a grievance may be taken to them (Matt 18:17). The tangible reality of this community is seen in slight distinction to the concept of *ἐκκλησία* described in Matthew chapter 16. Here in Mathew chapter 18 the *ἐκκλησία* can be organised, congregated, come to a collective decision and act to discipline a particular individual. Although the context of Deuteronomy 17:6 to which Jesus refers is slightly different, the continuity which it provides between the community of God, Israel, and the new community of Jesus cannot be missed (Hagner 1995).

In summary, both Matthew Chapter 16 and 18 reveal Jesus' anticipation of the church, his gathered kingdom community (Guthrie 1981:702-715)

## **2.3. The early community post Pentecost**

Now that the essence of the church has been revealed in the ministry of Jesus; the church as those that respond to the nature and demands of the kingdom, the question remains, in what ways can the early church be seen to express or apply this DNA of the kingdom?

### **2.3.1. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the book of Acts**

It is important for us to note that the church, if defined as the gathered community of Jesus, did exist in some form prior to Pentecost, though in an “embryonic” state. Everything that was needed for the church was present, yet it was the coming of the Spirit that gave breath to the DNA that had already been infused into the hearts of Jesus’ followers. One can perhaps speak of the conception of the church being the point at which Jesus first began to reveal himself and the kingdom of God (Ladd and Hagner 1993:109). The labour that was to bring forth the church could be seen in the death, burial, resurrection and ascension, a time of testing and trial for both Jesus and his disciples. However, as Erickson concludes, the birth of the church took place at Pentecost (2001:1058).

It would be hard to ignore the radical impact that Pentecost had on the community committed to Jesus. It was at Pentecost that Jesus empowered his community to live as he had instructed and taught them, a moment that would change forever the nature of the community following the Messiah (Anderson 2001:43-44).

Hence people entered truly into the body through the Spirit at Pentecost (Ladd and Hagner 1993:587). The outpouring of God’s Spirit served not only an empowering

role in the lives of the community, but also a formative role in birthing the church. The location of this birth, however, put the church in a given context, a primarily Jewish context, and it is from within this context that the shape of the church was first applied.

**a) A Jewish beginning: timeless ecclesiology applied to a Jewish context**

Following Pentecost and Peter's preaching, the numbers of this new community swelled. The followers of Jesus began to meet in homes and in the temple. They broke bread, prayed and submitted themselves to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42-47). The apostolic teaching was a retelling of what they themselves had been taught by the Jesus in his earthly ministry before his ascension (Longenecker 1996:59 and Matt 28:20).

This growing community did not, however, "break with either the temple or synagogue in any outward way" (Ladd and Hagner 1993:380). The form or the shape of their activities remained as far as was possible, suffering opposition from the Jewish authorities, a reflection of Jewish culture. As Giles explains, reviewing the starting point of the church, the Christian movement began truly as a "Jewish renewal movement" and as such, much of what is described concerning the leadership and therefore the shape of the Christian movement needs to be seen in light of "Jewish communal life in the first century" (1997b:220).

As the Christian church was born within the Jewish community, it naturally assumed much of the Jewish form of meeting. There are, as (1997b:221) explains,

close connections between the Jewish concept of 'synagogue' and the early Christian concept of 'church'. As we have shown, the Christian concept of church, the *ekklesia*, was equally the whole of God's people, transcendent across time and geography as well as the specific church within a given area. The synagogue carries a similar multifaceted meaning, as seen within the Septuagint, where the term can identify Israel holistically or later, specific Jewish fellowships (Giles 1997b:221).

There were synagogues in nearly four hundred houses in Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the temple in AD 70, the majority led by the owner of the home in which they met (Giles 1997b:221). Within these Jewish synagogues, the "*gerousia*," made up of '*presbyteroi*', older men of high regard, ruled and oversaw religious community (Giles 1997b:221). In conducting the Sabbath meetings, the '*archontes*' or '*gerousiarches*', a leader of the *gerousia* would be aided by the '*hazzan*' (Giles 1997b:221).

The similarity between the function of the *gerousia* consisting of *presbyteroi* with that of the Christian eldership is obvious. Likewise, the *hyperetes* were a prototype for the deacons of the Christian church (Giles 1997b:221). That the Jews who believed in Jesus adapted the model of leadership that was common to them is the simplest explanation for the common Jewish Christian leadership form (*ibid.*).

**b) A developing shape as seen through the terminology of Acts**

Insight into this developing form and applied ecclesiology of the church can be gleaned in part through a summary of the terms used in the book of Acts (Giles

1997a:196-197). These terms can in many ways be seen to reflect the demands of the kingdom that we have shown should always inform the nature of the church.

Giles, in his article ‘Church,’ outlines five major categories used by Luke to define and name the group of people now referred to as ‘the church’ (1997a:196-197). He notes that some such as Cadbury have listed as many as “nineteen collective titles” used in the book of Acts to describe the church, though some are perhaps stretched (Giles 1997a:196-197 see Appendix A for further discussion on the additional terminology in the book of Acts).

**c) Church, the term *ἐκκλησία* in the book of Acts**

Though not used in the same quantity as ‘disciples’ or ‘brethren’ in the book of Acts, *ἐκκλησία* is none the less a word of significance in Luke’s description of the new community following the Messiah. Luke seems to use the term to denote a specific local Christian community as well as the entirety of the Christian community (Giles 1997a:197). Though the term *ἐκκλησία* is used far more often as describing a local gathering of believers, usually within a “specific city” (Erickson 2001:1042), Acts 9:31 does seem to convey a more catholic nuance (Giles 1997a:197). We see Luke describe “the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria...” enjoying a time of peace (Acts 9:31). In Acts 20:28 we see Paul instructing the elders of Ephesus to keep watch over the congregation that God has entrusted to them but also to “be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood,” which does seem again to carry a more catholic nuance. In this way the definition of those that follow God remains dynamic.

It is significant to remember that the term 'church' *ἐκκλησία* is used then by Luke as a descriptive noun, and as with each of the alternate terms (See Appendix A), none are exclusive and all validate and describe a different aspect of the community that Jesus is building (Giles 1997a:197).

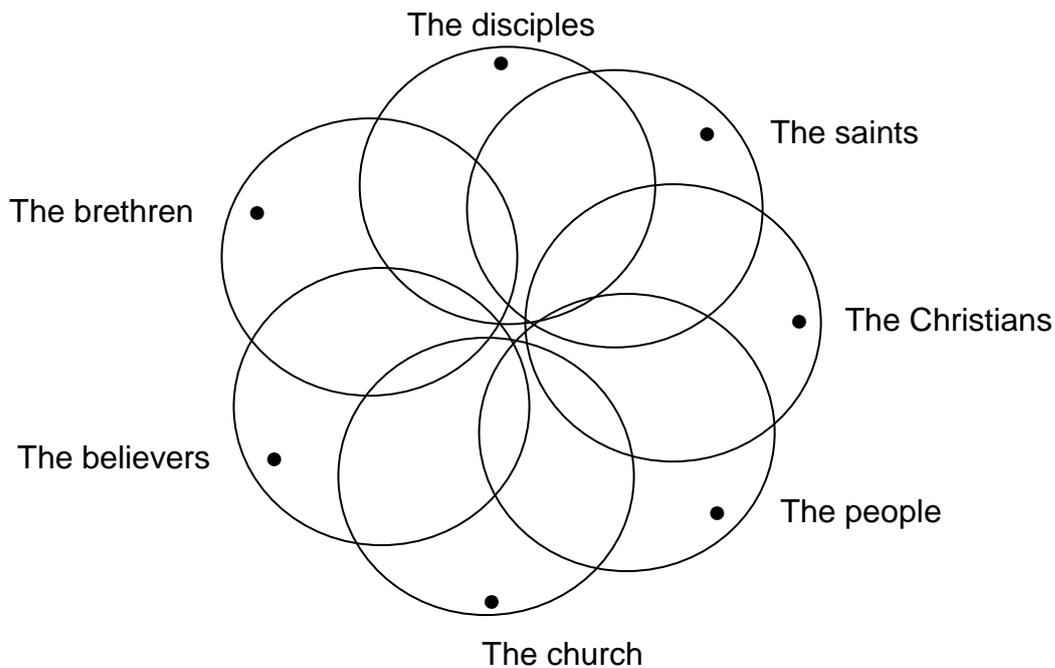


Fig 2.1 (One reality, the Christian community, designated by different terms. Giles 1997a:197)

Giles describes and diagrams (fig 2.1 above) the above collection of titles in the following way - “One reality, the Christian community, designated by different terms” (1997a:197). These descriptions afford insight into the early church’s understanding of its own identity, the chosen application of Jesus’ instruction to gather and form as the kingdom community on earth.

With regard to the characteristics of the kingdom, we see the church, from the perspective of Acts, even in its self-understanding reflecting the demands of the kingdom. The name ‘saints’ indicates, for example the recognised required response of the church to the righteousness of the kingdom (Ladd 1981:97) and names such as ‘brethren’ indicate the unity and the fellowship experienced by the early Christian community (Giles 1997b:197). The believers experienced the powerful realities of the kingdom of God while making the kingdom known from Jerusalem to Rome.

### **2.3.2. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the writing of Paul<sup>2</sup>**

We now move to the writing of Paul, where we are able to gain insight into the form of the church, not just through the descriptions Paul provides but also through the manner in which Paul relates to the churches (Guthrie 1981:742-744). What becomes evident as the concept of Christian community is explored within the writings of Paul is that, like Luke, Paul uses a variety of metaphors and terms to describe the essential nature of the new people that are in relationship to God through Christ (*ibid.*). To look at any single particular image from Paul, without an awareness of the holistic teaching that he brings to the new community in Jesus, would create a skewed impression (*ibid.*). It is pertinent here, therefore, to provide a sketch of Pauline thought concerning the Christian community, a community that is ‘the church’ and when gathered, forms ‘a church’.

---

<sup>2</sup> We would like to recognise the significant debate over the extent of Pauline authorship as regards the New Testament epistles. As this falls, however, outside of the primary scope of this thesis we will follow the traditional assumption regarding the epistles from Romans to Philemon as Pauline (see Carson *et. al.* 1992).

### a) The people of God

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he devotes three chapters to the relationship between the historic people of God, Israel, and the new Christian community. In this discourse we see that the church, the Christian community, is the new people of God (Ladd and Hagner 1993:318); not that Israel has been discarded but that the Gentiles have now been included into the true Israel, those who now by faith have a relationship with God through his Son. Paul quotes Hosea 2:23 - "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one", and in Hosea 1:10 "It will happen in the very place that it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God'". This prophetic word, originally intended for Israel, Paul now applies to the new Christian community that comprises both those of a Jewish background and those from among the Gentiles (Ladd and Hagner 1993:240).

As Erickson (2001:1052-1053) explains, the relationship between the church and Israel is a contentious one. Paul proves both continuity and clarification with the Old Testament concept of the people of God (Guthrie 1981:749-751). There is a separation between the literal nation of Israel and the church (Erickson 2001:1052-1053); if that were not the case, Paul would not consider surrendering his salvation (Rom 9: 3) that they may "be saved" (Rom 10:1). There is, however, an undeniable continuity between the church and the spiritual Israel (Erickson 2001:1052-1053). God has one people, faithful Israel (those like Peter, John and Paul who have accepted the glorious revelation of God through the person of his Son, Rom 11:1) and the Gentiles who have been grafted into the vine of God (Rom 11:24). This makes sense when understood from the vantage point of the

kingdom. God has one kingdom, one kingdom community, one people reflecting and called to apply the demands of that kingdom to their lives and community of faith. They are all the one people of God, they are the church and they have all responded and entered into the kingdom of God (Ladd and Hagner 1993:318).

**b) The body of Christ**

Erickson notes that many theologians regard the concept of the body as “virtually a complete definition of the church” (2001:1048). The imagery relates the “locus of Christ’s activity”, in the sense that as Christ was clothed in the flesh during his earthly ministry, he is now embodied by the church (*ibid.*). Guthrie (1981:744-746) notes the development of the ‘body’ concept in Pauline thought through his epistles. In Romans, the focus centres on the unity of the community of faith, in 1 Corinthians this is present with the addition of greater emphasis on the body’s relationship to the head of the body, Christ (*ibid.*). Guthrie notes that in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians and Colossians the metaphor of the body is most fully realised, Christ is the sustaining controlling force behind the body, the church, as seen from a “universal aspect” (1981:745).

Erickson (2001:1047) notes the power of this image as it relates to both our relationship to God and to each other. There is not a mere familiar relationship envisioned, but a deeply intimate connectedness that should be experienced in both the church’s relationship with God and with each other (Erickson 2001:1047). As Ladd remarks, however, “Paul preserves a clear distinction between Christ and the church,” while maintaining our relationship with him and his with the church (1993:593). The kingdom is submitted to the king, the body is submitted to the

head, Christ. The kingdom is united, the body is one body. Here again we see description of a timeless ecclesial foundation, the church in relationship and response to the kingdom of God and God the king of the kingdom (Ladd 1981:97), though this says nothing of an intended form or shape for the church.

### **c) The temple of God**

The image of the temple is a third metaphor that is used by Paul to describe and teach concerning the Christian community, the church (Erickson 2001:1049). Ladd (1979:540) reminds us that it was Stephen who recognised the irrelevance of temple worship for the new believing community in Acts 7:48 – 50 which states: "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?' says the Lord. 'Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?'" . The presence of God is now to be understood as dwelling in the individual believer, the local church and the church universal (Ladd 1979:540).

Paul makes this point strongly in, for example, his first epistle to the Corinthian church, noting that as the Holy Spirit filled the temple, the Holy Spirit now indwells every believer making the Christian individually and collectively the new temple of God (Erickson 2001:1049) .The image of the church as the temple can also be seen as explaining the new kingdom-centred focus on the experienced presence of God. The kingdom is the place in which God's presence is known and enjoyed; that place is no longer the physical temple but within the church, individually and corporately (Ladd 1979:540). This again makes no indication of the necessary

form of the local church, other than perhaps to deny the need for the church to be associated with a physical structure.

**d) A Spirit-filled community**

It can be said that it is the Holy Spirit who gave birth to the church (Erickson 2001:1058). As mentioned above and applicable here, it is Paul who reminds us that the body is formed through the personal quickening of the Holy Spirit - “For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor 12:13) and it is by the Holy Spirit that we experience new birth and entrance into the kingdom of God (Ladd 1979:615). The role of the Spirit does not, however, according to Paul, end with the creation of the church which is in itself a continual process, but includes the growth and maturing of the body that has been formed. It is the Spirit that gifts the members of the body and enables the church to both witness to and display the attributes of the kingdom of God (Erickson 2001:1049-1051), as well as enabling individuals to build up the body. Whether through prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership or mercy (Rom 12:6-8), all comes through the empowering, enabling work of the Spirit (Grudem 2003:1016-1022). The body of Christ, the church, is to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, empowered supernaturally by the Holy Spirit for fellowship and service in the kingdom. This does not negate or inform any governmental structure (see chapter four for further discussion on leadership structure).

### **2.3.3. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the epistle to the Hebrews**

The nature of the letter of Hebrews makes for a distinctive ecclesiology (Giles 1997b:197). The intended audience and the role of the Old Testament, along with the sharp distinctions between the old and new covenant, provide opportunities for fresh insight into the timeless nature of God's people. We see in Hebrews that the priesthood and the sacrificial system have been "made obsolete" (Giles 1997a:198) and the Christian community has "taken the place of the historic people of God" (*ibid.*).

The author of Hebrews uses the term *ἐκκλησία* only twice, first quoting from Psalm 22 and then in Hebrews chapter 12 where the new Christian community is displayed in contrast to that of historic Israel (Giles 1997b:198). The author of Hebrews does, however, use other terms to describe this new community - the "people of God", or the "city of God" are used though the concept of the church as body is missing from the letter (Guthrie 1981:779). This multiplicity of defining terms again reinforces the understanding that the 'church' is not the only term for the collective people of God who are in new covenant relationship to God, but rather a descriptive term to be taken as part of the witness of the New Testament (Giles 1997a:197). The concept of 'church', as with the other terminology used to describe the community of God; all provide different views of the one reality: a people in response to the demands of the kingdom of God (Ladd 1981:97).

#### **2.3.4. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the epistle of James**

The letter of James is not only descriptive in its ecclesiology; there is a measure of prescriptive teaching concerning the gathering of God's people. There is a discernibly Jewish feel to the applied ecclesiology of James (Guthrie 1981:781). We see in James chapter 2 the use of 'synagogue', a formal term denoting a particular kind of meeting, used to describe the Christian gatherings. "Suppose a man comes into your meeting [*συναγωγή*]..." (Jas 1:22) and further in James 5:14 we see that elders are to play a specific pastoral role in this community or church, "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord" (Carson *et. al* 1992). From the above we can conclude that the church envisioned by James was not one without order and a measure of formality with leadership, teaching and intercession all explained in formal ways (Guthrie 1981:782). With the letter being written perhaps as early as 40 AD (Carson *et. al* 1992), this is significant as we are able to see that this early Christian community took on a form that was culturally appropriate and functionally pragmatic as it responded to God's kingdom demands and timeless purpose in a Jewish context (Giles 1997b:195). As noted above, the earliest Christian community had strong cultural ties with the Jewish culture of Jerusalem (*ibid.*). In James we find perhaps the clearest call to apply God's kingdom demands for justice and social responsibility (Jas 1:27, 14-17).

#### **2.3.5. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the epistle of 1 Peter**

The letter of first Peter is significant in understanding the church. Though Peter does not use the term *ἐκκλησία* (Guthrie 1981:782), he does provide a definition of the nature of the community of God, the new Christian community, and as a result

he provides us with an insightful window into the intended substance of the church (Giles 1997a:198).

As with Hebrews, the new Christian community is the new spiritual Israel (Guthrie 1981:783). They are identified as such through the use of theologically loaded terminology throughout Peter's letter and particularly in his address (1 Pet 1:1-2), where he refers to the community as the "chosen", "sanctified," those "sprinkled with his blood" (Giles 1997a:198). The fact that the new community of God is chosen, (or 'elect' as in 1 Pet 2:4,6,9) provides a direct link with the historic people of God, and as Giles comments, the use of terminology such as "sanctified" and "sprinkled with blood" ties the new Christian community to the concept of covenant, as the Jewish people were tied to covenant through their Sinai experience (1997b:198).

Peter not only ties the new Christian community to the historic people of God, but also to the historic temple, the dwelling place of God's presence (1 Pet 2:4-5 & 9-10). The church is therefore a spiritual building, in the sense that the people of God are spiritual stones, each person a precious and needed part of a greater whole (Guthrie 1981:782). Again we see application of the timeless kingdom realities impacting the thinking and practice of the early church, a people in submission to Christ, a people wholly reflecting the standards of the kingdom, a people who experience the presence of God (Ladd 1981:77).

To be gathered around the Son is to be gathered around the values of the Son and the values and purposes of his kingdom. The resultant community is

described by Peter as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, the people of God (Guthrie 1981:783). This is the church both locally and holistically.

Giles notes that additional to Peter's teaching on the nature of the church is his teaching on the nature of the relationship between the church and the "society in which the church finds itself" (1997a:199). The believing community is unequivocally different from its context in purpose, morality and nature. The purpose of the "pagans" is to do their own will; the purpose of the church is to do the will of God (1Pet 4:2-3). The believing community is to "be holy," uncompromised by the morality of the society it finds itself in, as the society of the church is alien in this land (1 Pet 1:16, 1 Pet 2:11). The conduct of the church is to therefore speak to the secular society about the holy nature of the kingdom (Guthrie 1981:783), and it is to maintain that witness whether it is received appropriately or repaid with unjust hostility.

### **2.3.6. Timeless ecclesiology as evidenced in the Johannine Epistles and Revelation**

According to Giles (1997a:199), a primary concern of John's epistles is the boundary between the true and false community of God. The distinguishing marks of the true church are fellowship with John and his apostolic teaching, the confession of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God and a genuine love for the whole people of God (*ibid.*). There is to be a clear distinction between those in the church and those in the world, or those that have left the fellowship (Giles 1997b:199). John recognises the responsibility of the true church to submit to

Christ in all his commands, to apply all the demands of the kingdom which he leads. These demands are not burdensome, only because of the empowering presence of God that has been passed to us (1 John 5). John likewise sees the continuation of Jesus' holistic ministry (mercy and justice for the marginalised, unity and fellowship for the people of God, intimacy through the paraclete, ministry that is motivated by love and a desire to serve) on earth as the role of the church, Jesus' disciples (John 20:21).

Guthrie explains that in the book of Revelation, though primarily concerned with the parousia, none the less provides interesting insight into the Asiatic churches (1981:785). They are addressed both individually and corporately, and the work of the church and the teachings of the church are recognised to be significant (Guthrie 1981:785-786). A theme that is recurrent through the apocalypse is the concept of the church as bride, a metaphor not unique to John but which is given its ultimate expression in Revelation in its connection with the eternal promise of the fulfilment of the kingdom (Guthrie 1981:786).

#### **2.4. Summary**

We have attempted to show in this chapter that applying timeless ecclesiology within the Christian community will involve practically outworking the demands of the kingdom, in both the church and the society in which the church is located (Ladd 1981:97). We would contend that these timeless demands of the kingdom supersede culture and time though they must find practical application within them for the current context.

The above discussion concerning Jesus' intention for the church may therefore be summarised as follows: Jesus did indeed intend to form a community around himself that would continue and grow after his ascension (Guthrie 1981:707-709) and that community was to respond to the demands of the kingdom (Ladd 1981:97) which he came to establish (a kingdom that has come and is coming).

The anticipated response from the church, the new community of Jesus, was to be a community that in the power of the Spirit sought to receive, inherit, enjoy and enter into these kingdom demands (Ladd 1979:70). A community that (1) entered into a submissive relationship with Jesus, receiving and enjoying his rule in their lives (2) entered into, enjoyed and received a way of life that was just and intolerant of injustice, a life of purity made possible through the ministry of Jesus, receiving Jesus' righteousness by faith in his person and work (3) received the promised blessing of the presence of God, the ministry of his Holy Spirit and the enjoyment of a kingdom of power, righteousness, peace and joy (4) received the power from God to be witnesses to a kingdom that must be made known (5) received the ability from Jesus to grow and enjoyed the expansion of God's rule in the earth (6) entered into anticipation of the fulfilment of the inheritance that is promised in the consummation of the kingdom to be revealed at Jesus' second coming.

The question remains, however, as to who will remind the church, and who will aid the church in a rediscovery and application of this timeless ecclesiology? Within the next chapter we will outline the world in which this must be done, enabling the

church to understand the current context in which this timeless ecclesiology must be applied.

## Chapter 3

### Culture

#### 3.1. Why study culture

There are some, especially those of a more postmodern persuasion, that would challenge the study of culture, or rather the search for broad societal metanarratives. Sire quotes Lyotard defining postmodernism as “incredulity towards metanarratives” (2004:214). There are others that would criticise any attempt to evaluate cultures, as the notion implies the ability to objectively stand outside the culture one attempts to evaluate (Carson 2008:2-3).

In response to the latter, the aim of this section is neither to assign nor deny the value of people who hold to a particular culture, nor does the paper assume complete objectivity. However, the task of seeking to understand the broad values, opinions, presuppositions and symbolism of the culture we find ourselves within is nevertheless an important and necessary task (*ibid.*).

In an attempt to achieve this goal we will begin with the motivation for including the tenets of western culture in a thesis that looks to impact a South African context.

Though it may seem strange to evaluate American and European culture when seeking to understand the culture of the affluent suburbs of Cape Town, it must be regarded as one of the African societies that have been significantly affected by these global trends (Hendriks 2004:20). We will show that there are specific reasons (see 3.3 and 3.4 below) that western culture has permeated the southern suburbs of Cape Town.

The second point of discussion will centre on a more classical description of dominant world views and cultural elements, in particular the turn of postmodernism. One cannot evaluate western culture without describing the shifts between modernism and postmodernism and their influence on western symbolism and activity.

Next will be outlined a methodology of evaluating culture that places people into unified groups based not an individual choice but rather on a factor that is beyond their control, namely, the time generation in which they were born. Gibbs notes that the task of Christian ministry is complicated by the fact that at any one time the church is populated with people from four primary generations, each of which have their “own distinctive cultural characteristics” (2005:46). Our third objective will therefore be an investigation of the generations now present in the western world. An attempt to evaluate western culture without taking into account the variance between the different life phases would result in an overly simplistic story of the current and forthcoming western world.

The purpose of all the above investigation is to guide the shape and form of the activities of local church; the application of timeless ecclesiology within the given context. The question of appropriate form and methods, with regard to the church today, can only be answered with the perspective of culture in mind (Gibbs 2005:48-49).

### 3.2. Defining culture

There are many definitions that one may use to capture the concept of culture. It is important to provide a definition that can be used for this chapter so as to maintain clarity of comment. DA Carson in his book “Christ and Culture Revisited” quotes Robert Redfield’s brief definition of culture as a “shared understanding made manifest in act or artefact” (2008:2). Carson further quotes Geertz defining culture as a “historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life” (*ibid.*). Carson himself defines culture as “the set of values broadly shared by some subset of the human population” (2008:1). What is clear from the above is the intimate link between belief and behaviour, between community and identity.

Sire defines the concept of a worldview in similar terms as “a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions which we hold about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being” (Sire 2004:17). Culture and worldview are the critical code through which we understand the world and engage with it. In order to engage someone from a particular worldview or culture, we must understand it in order to communicate what we intend, our message, not simply our own culture and worldview.

According to Sire (2004:20-21), the presumptions of a world view or value system can be obtained through asking a series of seven questions covering the topics of (1) foundational reality, (2) our understanding of the world around us, (3) our view

of humanity, (4) our thinking concerning death, (5) our concept of knowledge, (6) people's method for discerning right and wrong and (7) the import of history (Sire 2004:20-21).

The answers to these foundational questions give insight into the values that shape a given society and therefore their activities and symbolism.

### **3.3. The demographics of the southern suburbs of Cape Town**

The Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) at the University of Stellenbosch in partnership with Transformation Africa recently conducted research into the southern suburbs of the Western Cape<sup>3</sup> (Erasmus *et. al* 2004). The data for the research was drawn primarily from the 1996 and 2001 national census (*ibid.*).

From the URDR research the following information is pertinent to our study:

The southern suburbs consist of a majority White people (49.4%) with a significant number of Coloured people (39.5%). The dominant language is English, with 72.6% of people speaking English as a first language; Afrikaans being spoken as a first language by only 20.4% (Erasmus *et. al* 2004). The Catholic and Anglican denominations were the primary religious denominations in the southern suburbs at the time the research was conducted (*ibid.*).

---

<sup>3</sup> The suburbs that are seen to make up the southern suburbs region are Bel Ombre, Bergvliet, Bishopscourt, Claremont, Constantia, Dennendal, Diep River, Dreyersdal, Elfindale, Heathfield, Hohenort, Kenilworth, Kirstenhof, Meadowridge, Newlands, Plumstead, Pollsmoor, Retreat, Rondebosch, Rosebank, Southfield, Steenberg, Sweet Valley, University of the Western Cape, Westlake, Wittenboomen, Wynberg Central (Erasmus *et. al* 2004).

Unlike the rest of the Western Cape, the southern suburbs has a very high tertiary education level with 30.5% holding post-school qualifications, as compared with the average in the Western Cape of only 11.2% (Erasmus *et. al* 2004). Employment statistics in the southern suburbs are high with only 5.5% of adults unemployed as opposed to the 17% average in the greater Western Cape (*ibid.*). Not only are the employment statistics above the provincial average, the income average is significantly greater with an average income of R 170,060 per household, compared with the provincial average of R 76,000 (*ibid.*). It should be noted that the suburbs of Meadowridge, Bergvliet, Diepriver and Constantia (the suburbs in specific focus to this study) have even higher household income averages and even lower unemployment statistics (Erasmus *et. al* 2004).

It is also significant to note that more than half of all employed people in these areas are managers, professionals or associate professionals, compared with the Western Cape average of 23.9% (Erasmus *et. al* 2004).

### **3.4. Why we need to learn from western culture in the southern suburbs of Cape Town**

Transnationalism is a field of study that is receiving increased interest partly due to the phenomena of global media and internet based communication (Howard 2011:15-17). Transnationalism, the phenomena of cultural “border crossings” (Clavin 2005:423) has led to a unique cultural situation within the southern suburbs, which has been significantly influenced by global megatrends and a western worldview within an African context (Hendriks 2004:20).

The role of the media cannot be underplayed and as Howard explains: “Given the number of hours that many people spend in front of computer and television screens every day versus how much time they spend in face-to-face interactions, it is obvious that cultures are increasingly shaped by what we view and hear through such media” (2011:17).

Whereas before transnationalism and the exchange of culture depended on physical travel, media on the internet, satellite television and any other source of international media that is accessible in foreign countries has “greatly reduced the importance of distance along with physical contact” in order to pass culture across country borders (Howard 2011:32).

This access to foreign media as well as international travel is significant in an area that is one of the better educated and most affluent in the Western Cape and hence most affected by global cultural megatrends (Hendriks 2004:20).

### **3.5. The elements of Western culture: Modernism and Postmodern thinking**

One cannot effectively address Western society without mapping the transition from modernism to postmodernism (Erickson 1999:14). There is, however, a measure of difficulty in defining the new postmodern paradigm of thought; as Sire notes, “how does one define the indefinite?” (2004:212). Sire explains that the challenge in defining postmodernism relates to an incoherent centre, there is no singular unified substance to the theory (*ibid.*). Sire quotes Nietzsche’s parable ‘The Madman’, stating that God is dead and that we are the perpetrators of the crime (2004:211); he then explains further that “a culture cannot lose its

philosophic centre, noting that God has been the centre of western culture, without the most serious of consequences” (2004:211). These consequences are not just felt in the world of philosophy but even shake the “superstructure of culture” (*ibid.*).

How, then, does one define a philosophy that has no unified centre but rather a “plethora of philosophical possibilities”? (Sire 2004:212). According to Erickson, one begins with an understanding of that which was premodern, from there proceeding to map the transitions of thought through the turning of western worldviews one is able to trace the development and change (1999:14). In essence we understand postmodernism in light of its differences to the premodern and modern periods, as postmodernism is essentially a development and reaction to these preceding philosophies (*ibid.*).

We will show (in 3.6 below) that the church can be made up of multiple generations at any given time, so too the church’s members as individuals will have been influenced differently by modernist and postmodernist thinking. The resulting balance of primary world views may therefore be different from one congregation to the next, especially in a South African context.

### **3.5.1. Western world view – Premodernism**

Premodernism, which reached its zenith in the West in the thirteenth century with thinkers such as Aquinas and Bonaventure, believed in essence, that reality is orderly, “even hierarchically orderly” (Drilling 2006:3). Though the range of thought that predates modernism is varied, according to Erickson, it is not without “certain common elements” (1999:15). These are, according to Erickson, a belief in the

“rationality of the universe” and additionally that what is observed was not all that existed (Erickson 1999:15). There was, according to Erickson, an essential duality of thought about reality. Above and beyond that which was observable and measurable was, for the religious, the realm of the supernatural and divine and for those who were not religious, there was still a transcendent reality, a “pure essence” (*ibid.*).

Along with a belief in a rational universe that was not absent of hidden reality was the concept of an underlying purpose of which all humanity was a part. Within the western society, this was expressed in the belief that an all-powerful, all-knowing God had created the universe and was busy outworking his plan for his creation (*ibid.*). This base belief effected the interpretation of history, which itself was to be seen in light of these hidden transient purposes (*ibid.*).

An important aspect of the premodern period was, according to Erickson, the “correspondence theory of truth,” where there is a necessary correlation between propositions and observable reality. An example of this strain of thinking can be seen for example in Descartes who notes that “the word ‘truth’, in the strict sense, denotes the conformity of thought with its object” (Marian 2009).

### **3.5.2. Western world view - Modernism**

Although modernism was not a complete rejection of premodern thought, certain salient features were rejected. While rejecting final causes, correspondent truth remained, along with its associated linguistic parallel, the “referential theory of language” (Erickson 1999:16). The natural world and social history were no longer

seen to be at the mercy of a higher power; rather “efficient causes,” whether material or societal, were the agents of change (Erickson 1999:16). According to Erickson, this shift away from a dualistic reality that incorporates a transcendent purpose and power and an emphasis on efficient causes gave rise to the primary tenets of modernism which can be summarised into ten categories (*ibid.*).

First is naturalism (Erickson 1999:16), the sentiment of which, Papineau accredits to the likes of Dewey, Nagel, Hook and Sellars, all of whom expressed the limits of reality being the boundary of nature (Papineau 2009). This observable reality encompasses “nothing ‘supernatural’” and further “that the scientific method should be used to investigate all areas of reality, including the ‘human spirit’” (Papineau 2009).

Second is humanism, the belief that humanity expresses the “highest reality and value” and not as the servant of a deity (Erickson 1999:16), as for the humanist, there is “insufficient evidence for the belief in the existence of the supernatural” (Sire 2004:63).

Third is the scientific method, which defines the value of knowledge positively and the method of reaching it as a series of observations and experiments (Erickson 1999:16). Closely associated with the scientific method is Erickson’s fourth tenet of modernism, reductionism (*ibid.*). Reductionism, which may be defined as the belief “that a complex system is nothing but the sum of its parts” (Polkinghorne 2009), is the result of the scientific method, which had been the preferred means of

attaining knowledge, becoming the only means of attaining knowledge during the modernist period (Erickson 1999:16).

Fifth is progress (Erickson 1999:17), which is perhaps best summed up in the opening paragraph of the 1973 Humanist Manifesto II which states: “Dramatic scientific, technological, and ever-accelerating social and political changes crowd our awareness. We have virtually conquered the planet, explored the moon, overcome the natural limits of travel and communication; we stand at the dawn of a new age, ready to move farther into space and perhaps inhabit other planets. Using technology wisely, we can control our environment, conquer poverty, markedly reduce disease, extend our life-span, significantly modify our behaviour, alter the course of human evolution and cultural development, unlock vast new powers, and provide humankind with unparalleled opportunity for achieving an abundant and meaningful life” (AHA 2009). We see in the above statement the positive optimism in humanity’s ability to, in every sense; ‘overcome’ the limits and challenges facing humanity in that time.

Sixth is the developed concept of a dynamic natural environment which too is able to develop and evolve (Erickson 1999:17). Seventh is the ability to be certain and objectively quantify foundational or first principles upon which truth and reality can be built. As knowledge can be regarded objectively, scientifically, knowledge can attain the status of certainty (*ibid.*).

Eighth is determinism (*ibid.*), the belief that “every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of nature” (Hoefler 2008).

This system of thinking is based upon the “Principle of Sufficient Reason,” that which ‘is’ exists for a reason and for that reason is not different (Hoefer 2008).

Ninth is individualism (Erickson 1999:17). According to Hicks (1995:481), the essence of individualism can be summarised as “an approach to social and ethical theory which advocates the right and freedom of each individual to make decisions and implement actions independently of others”. According to Bhaskar (2002:74), the ego of individualism, once lit, continued to power modernist thought. Where the above tenets are believed, where knowledge is good, attainable through a scientific method of objectivity, discoverable by those who seek it, the natural conclusion would be a sentiment of self reliance and the importance of self.

This in turn gave rise to the tenth and final of Erickson’s tenets of modernism, anti-authoritarianism. A system built on individualism, where the “human was considered the final and most complete measure of truth”, understandably resulted in scepticism for and a critical approach to external authority (1999:17). Festenstein (2009) remarking on John Dewey, recognises his anti-authoritarian sentiment as based in his concept of individualism, in which the “ethical ideal requires that individuals find their own way, and not have particular doctrines or social roles imposed on them”.

Erickson (1999:17) notes that these tenets of modernism were held by people on a scale from moderate affiliation to a hard and extreme adherence. The latter, hard modernism, is characterised primarily by a more radical view that completely

disregards anything supernatural and views reality only through what can be reasoned and experienced (Erickson 1999:17).

### **3.5.3. Western world view - Postmodernism**

Erickson outlines seven principle developments and departures from premodernism and modernism, again recognising that within the broader society there are harder and softer versions of postmodernism, as people adhere more or less strictly to the outlined principles (1999:19).

First, objectivity is denied (1999:18). As Netland notes, “postmodernism denies the transcendence or objectivity of norms such as truth” (2001:60). It is important here to deal with a major role-player in the makeup of what Erickson terms “hard postmodern” thought: deconstructionism. Erickson describes the essence of deconstruction as the rejection of objectivity (*ibid.*). Within deconstruction there is a denial that language has any “extra linguistic reference”, essentially an abandoning of the premodern referential perspective of language (*ibid.*). Within the sphere of deconstruction, all views are built upon “equally true valid perspectives,” the meaning of a statement is not found in the intention of the author or originator, but in the minds of the reader, thus moving deconstruction, according to Erickson, beyond relativism and into a pluralism of truth (*ibid.*). Further, within the persuasion of deconstructionism is the belief that theories are devised with the purpose of empowering those who promote them (*ibid.*).

Second, knowledge is seen as uncertain (Erickson 1999:18). As the concept of first principles is questioned, the certainty of knowledge diminishes. The concept

of foundationalism, the structure and justification of knowledge, can be seen in the following statement: “To be justified in believing *P* on the basis of *E* one must not only be (1) justified in believing *E*, but also (2) justified in believing that *E* makes probable *P*” (Fumerton 2008). When ‘*E*’ is questioned or disbelieved, *P* can no longer be held with certainty; therefore the absence of absolute foundations has therefore given rise to scepticism of truth (*ibid.*).

Third, “all inclusive systems of explanation” are criticised (Erickson 1999:18). As mentioned above, Lyotard’s basic definition of postmodernism is simply “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Sire 2004:214). Carson quotes Meek, noting that postmodernism is simply a new scepticism in that it proposes there is “no absolute truth, no metanarrative, no single grand story, no single way things are” (Carson 2008:93).

Fourth, the intrinsic positive value of knowledge is questioned and then denied (Erickson 1999:18). The sentiment expressed in documents such as the Humanist Manifesto II (above) have been wholly rejected as the prophecy of modernism was proved untrue (*ibid.*). This demotion in the intrinsic value of knowledge has led to the fifth tenet, a pessimistic belief in humanity’s progress (Erickson 1999:19).

Sixth, the individual’s ability to discover knowledge in isolation is rejected and community models take primacy (*ibid.*). Linked to the move away from the individual’s ability to recognise truth alone is the last tenet of postmodernism, according to Erickson (*ibid.*), the method of reaching ‘truth’ conclusions. There is no simple single exercise or avenue to truth. Rather, as Carson explains,

postmodernism “insists that there are many methods, all of which produce distinguishable results and none of which are more or less true” (2005:97).

Greer (2003:205), after examining the various ways in which the church can approach postmodernism, concludes that if the church fails to help people “work through the implications of postmodernism,” the church will eventually lose altogether its voice in society, being able to engage only those who are already within its field of influence.

### **3.6. An introduction to Strauss and Howe’s Generational Theory**

We turn now to an approach to cultural study from a slightly different perspective. According to LifeCourse Associates, founded by Strauss and Howe, the most effective way to know people is to know their generation (LCAa 2009). Further, the best means of predicting the future of a culture is to understand the generational turnings and the implications of a new generational mix in society (LCAa 2009). As the church is one of the few social groupings that are always seeking to engage all current generations at one time, it is pertinent to give attention to generation study (Gibbs 2005:30).

Every person is born into a generation and then has the potential to live a life course throughout all four phases of life; childhood, young adulthood, midlife and elderhood (LCAa 2009). As each generation ages, it transitions from one life phase to the next. As a generation grows, it experiences world events at the same life stage serving to cement the similarities of the generation. At the time an entire generation has entered a new life phase, a “turning” takes place and the “attitudes

and behaviour we associate with each life phase,” for example, the characteristics of teenagers, change (LCAa 2009:2).

Table 4.1 (Types of generations according to birth year in the USA, Europe, Japan and South Africa, adapted from Codrington & Marshall 2005 & LCAb 2009 see explanation below)

Generation (Archetype)	USA	Europe/UK	Japan	South Africa	Current ages in S.A.
GIs (Hero)	1900/1– 1923/4	1900-1980	1900-1925	1900 - 1929	82 - 111
Silents (Artist)	1923/5 – 1942	1918-1945	1925-1945	1930 - 1949	62- 81
Boomers (Prophet)	1943 – 1960/2	1946-1965	1945-1965	1950 - 1969	42 - 61
13 <sup>th</sup> /Xers (Nomad)	1961/3– 1981/3	1966-1984	1966-1985	1970 – 1989	22 - 41
Millennials (Hero)	1982/4 – 2001	185-2001	1986-2001	1990 - 2005	6 - 21
New Silents (Artist)	2002?- ??	2002?- ??	2002?- ??	2006?- ??	0 - 5

According to Strauss and Howe, each generation, though it has its own specific profile can be placed into one of four archetypes, each having a distinctive mood and profile of its own. Additional to the study of individual generations are the relations between them and the impact a particular generation will have on society at a different life stage. There are four life phases and as a result four turnings, each of which has a unique temperament as the position of the archetypes change

within the society (LCAa 2009). This pattern of rotating archetypes through a pattern of turnings allows space not simply for evaluation of societies present but predictions for the mood of society in the future.

Above is a table (Table 4.1) that indicates the birth years and age of the differing generations. Codrington & Marshall (2005:1) note that people who are born on the “cusp” become generational mediators, usually adopting the characteristics of the generation they find most desirable.

### **3.7. The fourth turning of the Millennial**

According to generational theory, the shape of society in Western Culture, particularly in the United States and Europe, has now transitioned into the ‘fourth turning’ known as the Millennial phase (LCAa 2009). We shall therefore provide a very brief sketch of the proposed societal shape in the immediate future, as seen from a generation’s theory perspective (Codrington and Marshall 2005). The mood of the Millennial phase should transition from exhaustion to relief to optimism and preparation for a turn into the high of a new age (LCA a 2009). Following are important general trends to be aware of when leading, communicating, facilitating community and applying timeless ecclesiology for the generations in the fourth turn.

#### **3.7.1. Engaging with generational understanding in the millennial turn**

When engaging the Silent generation<sup>4</sup>, changes need to be announced well in advance of when change is due to take place, recognising that when

---

<sup>4</sup> Those born between 1930 and 1949 in South Africa (Codrington & Marshall 2004 & LCA b 2009)

communicating with the silent generation, letters that show thought and advanced consideration will be appreciated more than, for example, an sms on the eve of an event (Codrington & Marshall 2005:218). The Silent generation still appreciate credentials that highlight a person's capacity to lead and these should be made known where possible in appropriate ways (Codrington & Marshall 2005:219).

The Silent generation in church tend to have a "frugal approach" to church life, the generation tends to be loyal to church denominations and find change that appears to undermine the achievements of the past difficult (Codrington & Marshall 2005:239). Worship and study is best received in a structured environment (*ibid.*).

When engaging the Boomer generation,<sup>5</sup> the decision making processes must be transparent and where possible democratic (Codrington & Marshall 2005:169). Boomers have grown up with escalating communication systems and therefore expect greater quantities of communication (Codrington & Marshall 2005:123.) Boomers respond well to team work, partly as a "reaction to their bossy, domineering parents and bosses" (Codrington & Marshall 2005:153). Boomers recognise the need to sacrifice for the team in order to attain success, understanding that there is a cost to achievement (Levy in Bryson 2006).

The Boomer generation, said to be the "most God-absorbed living generation" in America is looking for a visionary church that create space for team involvement (Codrington & Marshall 2005:243). Key values of the generation are optimism,

---

<sup>5</sup> Those born between 1950 and 1969 in South Africa (Codrington & Marshall 2004 & LCA b 2009)

work, involvement, team orientation, personal gratification, personal growth, health and wellness (Salkowitz 2008:57).

When engaging the X generation<sup>6</sup>, much effort needs to be made to earn and prove oneself trustworthy, with rewards for their achievements all building into an atmosphere of fun as work and service are seen as a part of life, not the means to it (Codrington & Marshall 2005:141). Generation X looks for balance in life, put off by workaholic attitudes modelled by their parents (Zemke *et. al* 2000:99). Generation X will generally respond well to emails and smses with an even higher expectation of communication than Boomers, though they are put off by unnecessary, irrelevant information (Codrington & Marshall 2005:54).

Consensus is not the goal of the X generation and differences of opinion are encouraged, recognising that people on a team have differing strengths and weaknesses and therefore people should work as individuals in niche areas (Codrington & Marshall 2005:154-155). The X generation are looking to find their unique point of contribution (*ibid.*).

The form of spirituality that is desired is more emotionally engaging, with worship that has a mystical focus compared to analytical sermons. Teaching needs to incorporate a range of mediums, with a focus on “comfort, compassion and acceptance” (Codrington & Marshall 2005:247). Key values of the generation are

---

<sup>6</sup> Those born between 1970 and 1989 in South Africa (Codrington & Marshall 2004 & LCA b 2009)

diversity, thinking globally, balance, fun, technoliteracy and pragmatism (Salkowitz 2008:57).

When engaging the Millennial generation,<sup>7</sup> recognise the importance of the older generation; they enjoy being mentored and need to be challenged. According to Kaye, Scheef and Thieboldt (2003:30-31), the Millennial and Silent generations will make perfect mentoring partnerships as the generations have a natural affinity for one another. The greatest challenge leading the Millennial generation is boredom; they don't want to waste their time (Codrington & Marshall 2005:220). Millennials have grown up being connected to their friends at any time of the day; on the internet anywhere that they can take their cell phone (*ibid.*). They expect and need regular communication, which they will receive outside of a church environment.

The Millennial generation functions best together when the group is not homogenous (in age, culture or gender). Millennials, who have been brought up as empowered and involved children, will expect to be active in any community setting but will require a holistic understanding of both what needs to be achieved, and the reason that objective is necessary (Codrington & Marshall 2005:154).

The Millennial generation, sometimes referred to as the "why generation," want to be able to ask hard questions and be allowed to discover the answers (Codrington & Marshall 2005:249). The Millennial generation is not looking for a seeker sensitive approach to church, if the church is worth being involved in, it should be unique, though cultural sensitivity is still important (*ibid.*). The Millennial generation

---

<sup>7</sup> Those born between 1990 and 2005 in South Africa (Codrington & Marshall 2004 & LCA b 2009)

is used to high levels of communication and will find a church that only communicates with them once or twice a week frustrating (Codrington & Marshall 2005:124). Key values of the generation are optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement, sociability, morality and diversity (Salkowitz 2008:57).

### **3.8. Summary**

In this chapter we have seen and explored some of the broad tenets of western society, the generations that are currently making up western society and how they will most likely change in the near future. We have looked at the philosophical worldviews that are informing the thinking and practice of our society at this time.

We have seen above the variety of perspective that may be present in a church from the silent generation to the millennial generation. We have also seen in western society most notably the transition from modernism to postmodernism and the significant changes in the way people approach knowledge, truth and authority (Erickson 1999:14-20). All this exploration should inform the church as to appropriate forms of the church's activities, so as to be missional in its context.

The task remaining is to begin the conversation between applied timeless ecclesiology and this current culture, the task of the leader being the effective application of the kingdom demands in culturally accessible, if not culturally acceptable, forms (Gibbs 2005:48-50).

## Chapter 4

### **The role of leadership in applying timeless ecclesiology**

#### **4.1. Why Leadership**

As has been suggested in the introduction, the role of Christian leadership in the redesign of church form in order to apply timeless ecclesiology is of critical importance. As Gibbs explains, outlining the activities of leaders, it is the leader's role to initiate and implement the essential vision of the church (2005:131-143). If change is necessary, it is the role of the church leader to recognise it and provide the strategy for change (Gibbs 2005:135-137). The current state of the global church cannot be blamed entirely on changing cultural values and ideology. Christian leaders must accept a measure of responsibility for the position the church is currently in, as well as taking the necessary steps to move her forward, not into a place of compromise, but into forms that are able, again, to meaningfully engage our society (Guder 2000:146).

In this chapter we will engage with a range of topics. First, we will briefly look at a definition of Christian leadership that can frame our discussion. Second, we will explore the current challenges of Christian leadership, which are great at this time (Regele and Schulz 1996:80). We will also attempt to show how these challenges relate to the task of applying the proposed timeless ecclesiology within the church, a response to kingdom demands (Ladd 1981:97). Third, we will look at the development of leadership style and structure within the New Testament to allow ourselves a framework for assessing potential change and diversity within the form of local church leadership. In this section we will challenge the concept that the

New Testament promotes a fixed or ideal leadership form, and will highlight that the New Testament precedent is in fact a precedent of varied forms (Giles 1997b:220). This allows a measure of freedom for Christian leaders to give practical expression to timeless ecclesiology within a given context. Fourth, in keeping with the previous chapters on ecclesiology, we will unpack the practical implications of the kingdom demands on the character and priorities of Christian leaders in our time.

#### **4.2. Defining church leadership**

There is a need at this point to provide a definition of leadership from which to work. This is not an easy task. As Gibbs explains, it is easier to define the absence of leadership than its presence (2005:18). Gibbs, referring to Cloke and Goldsmith, notes that the absence of leadership can be seen with two marked results, “zombification and atrophication,” something sadly evident in much of the western church (Gibbs 2005:18).

Taking up the challenge of a theologically appropriate definition of leadership, we find many ways in which the role may be defined. Some definitions, such as that provided by Everist and Nessian (2008:40), focus on the outcome or objective of leadership. Everist and Nessian look to Ronald Heifetz’s definition of leadership, stating that “leadership is the art of ‘mobilizing people to make progress on the hardest of problems’” (*ibid.*).

Gibbs quotes Clinton that 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

towards God's purpose for the group" (Gibbs 2005:20). Within this definition we see a greater regard for the leader themselves, a person with both capacity and recognised responsibility. The weakness of this definition is that Christian leadership is limited to leading 'God's people,' whereas in fact we live in a time that urgently requires Christian leaders who are able to influence those who are not yet a part of God's people into a right response to the message of the kingdom; missional leaders (Gibbs 2005:20).

George Barna's timeous definition of Christian leadership is quoted by Gibbs and Coffey as being "someone who is called by God to lead and possesses virtuous character and effectively motivates, mobilizes resources, and directs people towards the fulfilment of a jointly embraced vision from God" (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:114). Within this definition we see both a focus on the individual, 'someone called' as well as the character of the individual, and the direction of the leader's mandate, to direct people towards God's vision. Two aspects of this definition deserve additional treatment here, namely, calling and character.

"A Christian leader is called by God to lead..." (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:114). It is not possible to read Paul, indeed the Old and New Testaments, without recognising the vital aspect of God initiating a person's transition into leadership. According to Campbell, Paul's sense of call provided more than a simple vocation, but founded his very identity (Campbell 2006:87-88). Other examples stand out alongside Paul. Jesus was not without the affirming call of the Father towards the task of sin bearer and saviour for humankind, to be the leader and head of the church. Outside and before the New Testament, we find in Noah and Abraham,

Moses and Samuel, Isaiah and Jonah God calling individuals to the specific task of leadership within their given context.

There is undoubtedly a precedent for God calling out individuals to serve and prophetically lead within his world as he directs and outworks his plan for humanity. However, as Gibbs notes, up to 50% of those who study and prepare for church leadership, “are no longer serving local churches ten years later” (2005:79). The challenge of responding to calling, and living from the identity it provides, is therefore a great challenge for Christian leaders today (*ibid.*).

“A Christian leader is called by God... to possess virtuous character...” (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:114). It is integrity, according to Mark H. Senter III in his epilogue to ‘Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church’, which the postmodern generation is seeking above all things from its leaders (2001:156). The credibility of the entire church’s witness, which transcends theory and includes all of the Christian life, must, to be effective, be an apologetic of integrity (Senter 2001:156). Assuming this is true for the entire body, those within a leadership position surely have a greater responsibility in this regard in this new church epoch.

Lamb explains with great conviction that the Christian leader today must prioritise personal integrity (2006:30). According to Lamb, the only credible foundation for effective Christian ministry in a postmodern world is moral and private consistency (*ibid.*). Three primary areas of integrity concerning the Christian leader can be identified from Paul’s defence in 1 Corinthians; our motives, the consistency of our life and ministry, and our reliability before God and man (*ibid.*). Paul clearly

understands the potential impact a loss in his trustworthiness would have upon his ministry. This can be seen in the urgency of his writing. The “credibility of the gospel message,” not only his apostleship, was at stake if there was a perceived loss in his integrity (Lamb 2006:30).

The above definition from Barna does not limit the scope of Christian leadership to those within the church, but simply focuses the attention of those called of God and qualified in God, to engage the people who need to be influenced by God (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:114). For the purpose of this thesis we will, therefore, borrow from Barna’s definition, though modify it in the following way to limit the study to leaders within local churches. Thus the definition we will use is as follows: Christians who lead from within the church are people who should recognise God’s mandating call to mobilise all available resources to holistically influence people to respond positively to the present and coming kingdom of God as they do themselves. This definition for leadership is intrinsically missional and also fundamentally a response to the activity of God in the leader.

#### **4.3. Challenges currently facing Christian leaders**

What are the challenges these leaders, people who from within the church are attempting to influence communities around the demands of the kingdom of God, are dealing with? Regele and Schulz highlight the enormity of the challenge facing such church leaders during this time of massive cultural change and upheaval, a challenge that they recognise the church has a relatively poor track record in overcoming (1996:23). Regele and Schulz (1996:196) note further that “Church leaders work harder and harder, yet with diminishing returns.” Gibbs explains that

“the casualty rate among church leaders has reached disturbingly high levels,” precisely as a result of outdated, inflexible models of ecclesial leadership (Gibbs 2005:19). The effects on the leaders themselves, according to Gibbs can be seen in their levels of fatigue, dissatisfaction and poor health (*ibid.*).

As noted above, many of the tenets of the cultural change that has been experienced in the west have a significant impact on leadership style and the reception of authoritative figures within a community; a scepticism in metanarrative, foundational truth (see Erickson 1999:18-19 ‘Seven principle developments and departures from premodernism and modernism’, as outlined above) and the “democratization of knowledge” (Gibbs 2005:47) all add additional challenges for the church leader. Gibbs outlines, discussing the pressure within which young church leaders are forced to lead, that a lack of finances for ministry, dwindling volunteer support and the contradictory priorities of those within the church add to the pressure of outdated leadership structures which create a climate that makes change and growth and the practical application of the essence of the church difficult (Gibbs 2005:80).

According to Gibbs, discerning fluid and reproducible methods of leadership will be a primary goal of the successful leader in this current climate. Functioning within a state of “apparent chaos” while still discerning patterns and systems is the new organisational challenge for the Christian leader (Gibbs 2005:92). Without clear understanding of the church’s heart, its timeless ecclesiology that must always be applied, facilitating that change will become increasingly difficult, and even theologically dangerous.

What are some of the specific challenges facing church leaders, as they relate to the proposed centre of the church, the timeless ecclesiology informed by kingdom demands, if leaders within this new age of ministry are required to serve in a constant 'chaordic' state (Sweet 2001:81)? The question for those seeking to engage in this chaordic context of ministry, must, according to this thesis, revolve around the timeless and biblical leadership principles that flow from practicing timeless ecclesiology with a prophetic understanding of the changing culture.

#### **4.3.1. The challenge of leaders applying timeless ecclesiology**

The culture, then, of the church leader, who desires to lead within a society affected by western mega trends (culture such as is found in the southern suburbs of Cape Town), is hostile in many respects for the average church leader. It is a culture where objectivity (Erickson 1999:18) and norms that have been part of western culture for decades, such as quantifiable truth, are questioned (Netland 2001:60).

What can be known with certainty is called into question (Erickson 1999:18). Carson notes quoting Meek that attempts to show a broad framework that explains the workings of the world are received dubiously (2008:93). The pursuit of knowledge is questioned and seen as being of little benefit in a society where information on any topic is disputable (Erickson 1999:18). To speak of better things to come is regarded pessimistically (Erickson 1999:19). A person's ability to realize facts alone is discarded for communal learning (*ibid.*). Lastly, there are no 'right' methods but "there are many methods, all of which produce distinguishable results and none of which are more or less true" (Carson 2005:97).

Yet into this culture Christian leaders must lead, and as Barna explains, motivate and mobilise (Gibbs and Coffey 2001). The modified definition of leadership in this thesis defines the focus of local church leadership as directing people to faithfully response to kingdom demands (see Ladd 1981:97 and above) within the church. This implies the understanding of the broad metanarrative of the kingdom of God, the communication of the gospel (which is propositional in its very essence: see Erickson 2001:1070). These leadership activities seem to run against the very grain of the mega themes of western culture; though they are not impossible obstacles to overcome (Gibbs 2005:131-143).

The question we propose leaders should now be asking is: how can I inspire, marshal and lead people into right responses to God, understanding that the context of the church has changed profoundly in recent years? To aid the answer to this question, we must look now at leadership form as found within the New Testament. The purpose of this survey is to illustrate what was and what was not prescriptive concerning the form of leadership in the New Testament, so as to know what can and cannot be changed about the way and shape of Christian leadership.

#### **4.4. Timeless ecclesiology applied to leadership methodology in the early church**

The early church's methodologies of leadership are not new topics of discussion, nor are they without controversy. Giles (1997:219) recognises this is due, at least in part, to the limited scope and treatment of the topic within the New Testament and a constantly "ahistorical and uncritical" approach to evaluating the content that

it does contain. Recognising that this venture must be undertaken with a degree of humility, the purpose remains to outline the fundamental leadership developments contained within the New Testament canon. It is also worth noting the developments in leadership methodology and form as they are taken up by the early church fathers (Hansen 1997:109-110) though that will not be treated in detail here.

The twin contexts within which the New Testament methodology and form of leadership developed, initially a Jewish culture, later a Greco-Roman, are both undoubtedly influential (Giles 1997b:229). Important to our quest to understand how leaders apply timeless biblical ecclesiology, of which church leadership forms a part, is an understanding of how leadership shape changed and developed through the New Testament. Whether the developments were a move towards a godly and prescriptive form or simply a response to a changing context is a question we must seek to answer.

#### **4.4.1. The developing form of leadership in the New Testament church**

Within the earlier writings of Paul (the non pastoral letters), there seems to be reflected a flatter, less developed model of church leadership (though authority structures are not absent, see Giles 1997b:222-223). The Pastoral Epistles, however, written in the mid 60's AD, just before Paul's death (Carson *et. al.* 1992:372-373) suggest a far more rigid role for deacons and especially elders within the life of the church (Dunn 1997:891). Dunn (1997:891) explains that the metaphor of church as the human body with Christ at the helm, organised with an informal though recognised leadership, is seemingly replaced by a new emphasis

on offices and hierarchy in Paul's pastoral epistles (Dunn 1997:891). In Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, we see for the first time a focus on elders and deacons playing a monarchical role within the local church and highlighting a shift in thinking about the ecclesia (*ibid.*).

According to Giles this can be seen in a greater focus on Paul as the centre of the newly establishing hierarchy, a feature that causes some to recognise the pastorals as unique in the canon (1997b:223), which has led some to dispute the authorship of the pastoral letters (as noted in the introduction and Hansen 1997:105-106).

The book of Acts, written at a similar time to the pastorals and a time where the order of the church was becoming more formalised, presents an interesting perspective on church leadership (Giles 1997b:219-226). The mention of the three offices in the book of Acts, apostle, elder and deacon, form a significant part of the basis for the Roman Catholicism's support of strict hierarchical structures of bishops, priests and deacons within the church, though Hansen recognises this reads too much into Luke's text (Hansen 1997:106). According to Hansen, the function of these offices were "primarily prophetic", and not yet administrative (1997:106). It is, however, difficult to see the function of this early leadership in a solely prophetic role, as Giles (1997b:222) remarks that the elders in Acts were already functioning within an oversight role (Acts 20:28). Likewise, the deacons of Acts undoubtedly played an administrative role in the life of the church (Acts 6). There can also be seen, as Giles (1997b:222) describes, a broader oversight

exercised by the more established church such as Jerusalem's initial involvement with God's work in Antioch (Acts 11:22).

It appears, however, that not all the churches were seeking to develop a formalised system of church governance. The books of Hebrews and 1 Peter walk a more moderate road, while the Johannine literature seems focused on a flatter leadership model (Hansen 1997:108-109).

Within Hebrews there is present a purposeful holding together of the pastoral role of leaders and the community's free fellowship with God through Christ, the ultimate leader of the church, who is the sole "office" bearer within the church (Hansen 1997:107-108). Hansen recognises in Hebrews a protest of sorts to the growing hierarchy in the church (*ibid.*). Within the book, Christ is seen as the ultimate authority, the high priest through whom there is no need for human mediation (*ibid.*). Certain functions are open to all; teaching is not limited to those in office but a responsibility of all mature believers. At the same time, the role of the leader is recognised and affirmed and the church is called to submit to leaders as they are recognised as caring for the faith of the community (Heb 13:17). 1 Peter, written at a similar time to the Pastoral Epistles, Acts and Hebrews (Carson *et. al.* 1992:438-439), likewise represents this tension between formalised leadership and the role of the whole community under Christ (Hansen 1997:105). Concepts such as the priesthood of all believers and living stones are held alongside the need to submit to elders, as God opposes the proud (1 Pet 5: 5-6).

If the hierarchy of leadership is stressed more in the later Pauline letters, then the writings of John provide its balance (Hansen 1997:109). According to Giles, the emphasis of John's writings, from a leadership perspective, focuses not on the organisation of the church but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1997a:199-200). Giles (1997b:224) points out that the Johannine writings have "no interest" in titles and the structural organisation of the church, rather, for John, the emphasis is on the direct leading of the Spirit of Christ. According to Giles, both in John and Matthew's writing, there is a move away from formalised titles (1997b:223-224). This can be seen in Matthew 23:10, where, despite the dialogue concerning Peter's leadership role, titles are seemingly reserved for Christ.

The letter of 1 John indicates that the truthfulness of the church's doctrine cannot be maintained through rigid systems of control (Giles 1997b:224) - "As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him" (1 John 2:27). According to John, it is rather through the inner working of God that comes as a result of his anointing that God's people are led into and kept in the truth, "This radical understanding of authority in the church removes the need for any offices or special leadership ministries" (Hansen 1997:108). We see then, not a development towards one model of shape of church leadership, but rather a developing variety of leadership forms (Giles 1997b:225).

#### **4.4.2. Implications of diverse leadership form in the New Testament and early church**

What conclusions can be drawn from the brief survey of leadership development? First, it would be overly simplistic to search for a New Testament form of leadership, as the leadership landscape of the New Testament is broad and varied (Erickson 2001:1094).

Erickson (2001:1094) highlights the two problems we face when trying to reach a biblical form of church governance, stating that, “There is no prescriptive exposition of what the government of the church should be like,” and further that “When we turn to the descriptive passages, we find a second problem: there is no unitary pattern”. Erickson notes that there may be found, for all the major governmental forms in existence today, some form of biblical precedent, though Erickson himself sees the congregational form of governance as being most consistent with the New Testament principles (2001:1096).

#### **4.5. Leaders, inspiring a form that responds to timeless ecclesiology and engages prevailing culture**

We have attempted to indicate that from the perspective of the New Testament there is no prescriptive shape or form to the local church (see Erickson 2001, Giles 1997b, Guder 2000 and chapter 4 above). The New Testament church did not refine a biblical form but adapted form to fulfil a mission and apply the kingdom demands on the church. What the New Testament does promote, however, is a mandatory ethic for leaders of the Christian church, a moral code that is to influence all forms of governance (Episcopal, Presbyterian, congregational,

nongovernmental) and method (mega church, multisite, simple church) the church may choose to adopt (Ladd 1979:129). The leadership of the church in the twenty-first century is a leadership that is committed to kingdom morality and purpose; leaders must be appliers of timeless ecclesiology, personally and corporately.

Below we will attempt to highlight some examples of what implications a kingdom ecclesiology and western culture may have on leadership with regard to church shape. As church shape applies to every activity of the church, the following must be seen as a selective sample.

#### **4.5.1. Leaders inspiring a form that promotes submission to Christ and the kingdom**

A primary area to which the church leader must give both time and energy is in applying the demand for personal submission to Christ (Ladd 1981:101), and modelling a life of submission to the church.

The concepts of submission and authority as kingdom characteristics do have a bearing on for example, the style and format of church meetings as well as church governance, when we understand that form and shape, though not prescriptive in scripture, form part of the message of the church to its community (Chapell 2009:18-19). Over the centuries, God's people have chosen to administer and oversee the church in a number of ways. Erickson (2001:1080-1097) elaborates on four primary streams of church governance: Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational and Nongovernmental. Erickson notes further, however, that there is no prescriptive or unified description of church governance in the New

Testament (2001:1094), though he makes recommendation as to which is the strongest.

A question for the local church leaders in the southern suburbs would be, knowing that God's kingdom is one of submission to the authority of God (Guthrie 1981:409), and knowing that the culture of the southern suburbs has been profoundly affected by postmodernism (Hendriks 2004:20) which undermines authority figures and idolises human choice (Erickson 1999:17), which form of governance will best display the message of the kingdom? This places a responsibility first on the leader to be studied in the biblical teachings concerning God's will for individuals and for communities. The leader's role is then to ensure that just as he has become practiced in submitting to God's will personally through the scriptures, so too the congregation is becoming skilled and practiced in submitting to God as they follow his lead (Lawless 2002).

The leaders' criteria for evaluating the shape of the governance of the church should therefore be measured, not simply through the effectiveness of the church's administration nor simply through the biblical precedents, but also in the community's perception of the church's response to God.

#### **4.5.2. Leaders inspiring a form that responds to the ethics of the kingdom**

As has been expounded in chapter two above, applied timeless ecclesiology demands social responsibility. The twenty-first century church requires leaders

who are able to recognise where the people of the church can engage the injustice of the world to reveal the character of God and the nature of his kingdom.

Leaders need to become aware of the social issues that make up the context of their ministry and be able to communicate God's will for his people in relation to those challenges, thereby "putting the church back into the community" (Hammet 2005:127). The leader need not be an expert in humanitarian law, but the leader should be able to facilitate the members of the church or people within the community with the required niche skills to outwork God's instruction in a given situation, while at the same time creating a sense of communal responsibility for what God has said to the church.

Hence the role of twenty-first century leadership is broader than the boundary of the church members and will require skills that extend beyond the traditional skills of scriptural interpretation, prophetic utterance and the overseeing of the church (Roxburgh, Romanuk and Gibbs 2006:184). The Christian leader must, if one were to relate back to the metaphor of redesigning the shape of the church, act as the architect, not simply in creative (prophetic) design, but as a project manager creating dialogue between people in a variety of vocations and disciplines in order to accomplish a specified goal.

In this way the ministry of the church both responds to the ethical demands of the kingdom (Ladd 1979:128-129), and empowers and equips the body of the church on a broad level to be involved in the ministry of the kingdom of God, a true application of timeless ecclesiology. The form and shape of the church's response

to the social needs in its community will be significant in realising a church shape that is appropriate in its culture.

Further, as Gibbs (2005:27) notes, it is character that is most often the cause of leadership failure, not the making poor leadership decisions. The public accounts of Christian leaders who have fallen morally have had a profound impact on the state of the church (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:95-96). In the United States, aside from the military, the trust and respect for the 'clergy' that used to exist has been diminished, along with other forms of institutional leadership, in light of leadership failures across the board. Leaders cannot be expected to be morally perfect. However, they must be radically committed to the values of the kingdom of God and those include a demand for moral purity (Gibbs 2005:114).

The fact that so many leaders have fallen in moral areas is perhaps due to a range of issues, all of which the leaders of the twenty-first century church must rally to remedy. First, it must be recognised that training in morality and personal character is harder than training people in systematic theology (Gibbs 2005:114-116). Second, accountability is crucial for the growing of leaders committed to timeless ecclesiology. Many young leaders are thrust into positions of authority but then isolated from authoritative oversight (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:77). The leaders of the twenty-first century church are required to live at a higher moral standard but require great moral support in the process (Blackaby 2001:177).

#### **4.5.3. Leaders inspiring a form that encourages experiencing the kingdom**

We have shown that while the kingdom of darkness, with its pain and suffering, is a reality of this world, “God has made it possible for us to experience a new power that we might thereby prove what is God’s will” (Ladd 1981:41). We have seen that where God reigns, there is joy and peace. This is not to be seen as a denial of the ‘realities’ of life, as the kingdom of God acknowledges the kingdom of darkness. It is the leader’s role then to lead people towards the reality of the kingdom, realities of love, unity, peace and fellowship (Swanson and Williams 2010:76).

The church of the twenty-first century needs leaders who have grasped the balance and the tension of the great commission, to ‘go for’ and to ‘be with’ the Lord, a missiology that incorporates the presence of God as a value (Langmead 2004:134). The application of timeless ecclesiology requires the leader to focus on both the presence of God and the mission of God (Guder 2000:66-67). The church leader would therefore be required to lead the shape of the church to reflect the priority of experiencing God; this may impact the nature of services, small group ministry and even outreach, specifically with regard to the allocation of time for the different activities within a meeting.

Blackaby and Blackaby (2007:128) explain that leaders cannot teach, lead or take people beyond their own knowledge and experienced boundaries with God. Leaders are required therefore, to prioritise experiencing God as we serve him in ministry, if we are to effectively engage the future generations.

#### **4.5.4. Leaders must inspire a form that encourages the proclamation of the gospel and the kingdom**

Ladd and Hagner (1993:113) explain that the mission of the church is to “witness to the gospel of the kingdom in the world.” We have seen further that it is only through new birth and a response to Jesus that entrance into the kingdom is made possible (Ladd 1981:71). Christian leaders must therefore grapple with the content of the message of the gospel (see above chapter 2) and how that message can be prophetically and contextually communicated in the context of the church.

Guder, in exploring the implications of a conversion in the institutional church, notes four key characteristics of a church that has truly placed the gospel at the heart of its ministry: (1) the church’s identity will reflect the mandate of “incarnational witness”, (2) the church’s activities will reflect the message of the gospel, (3) as product of a past tradition, the church will have inherited and will continue to inherit beliefs and practice that may be at odds with the message of the gospel and will therefore endeavour to challenge and re-challenge its beliefs and values against the scriptures, (4) the church will remain open to a continued process of repentance and conversion over inherent gospel inconsistencies (2000:202). Much of this change and positioning rests on the leadership of local churches, to be prepared to re-evaluate essential aspects of the church’s activities, both their heart and their form.

#### **4.5.5. Leaders must inspire a form that encourages church growth**

As mentioned in chapter three, the kingdom of God is, in its very nature, dynamic and growing. If the church is truly to respond to the demands and nature of the

kingdom of God, it must recognise that, as the community of the kingdom visible on earth, it must be a growing community. Leaders in the twenty-first century church must therefore be leaders who are passionate to see the growth and extension of the kingdom of God. This is not, however, synonymous with wanting to see ‘their’ churches grow bigger. Nor does it mean that the leader is solely responsible for the growing church (McNeal 2009:21). We have shown that the responsibility of the church is not to make itself bigger but to respond rightly to the demands of the kingdom. Growth, not the migration of Christians from one church to another, should, however, be evident as the kingdom is one that is growing (McNeal 2009:22).

In the book, ‘Evaluating the church growth movement: 5 views’ by Towns, Engle and McIntosh, McIntosh notes that though there are differences of opinion over how the church should be growing and what exactly constitutes true church growth, all are in agreement that that the “church should grow” (McIntosh in Towns, Engle and McIntosh 2004:266). For this reason there is need to define the type of growth that the kingdom demands from the church. How can church growth be evaluated? The point of evaluation that is proposed in this thesis is that church growth takes place when there is a growing positive response to the demands of the kingdom within a given community, both numerically and qualitatively.

With this goal in mind, leaders must learn to be flexible networkers who are able to support and acknowledge the varied works of God in a particular area. A specific question that church leaders must ask is this: are there forms to the church’s

activity that in any way hinder the church's growth, or reduce the permeable nature of its ministry?

#### **4.5.6. Leaders must inspire a form that anticipates the parousia**

The early church was a church pregnant with the hope of Jesus' return. The apparent delay of the parousia has received much theological attention since Schweitzer first raised the issue in 'The quest for the historical Jesus' (Kreitzer 1997:872). From the time the question was introduced in 1906, there has been much debate concerning the role of Jesus' 'delayed coming' on the church and particularly the writing of scripture, more notably Luke-Acts and the later letters of Paul and 2 Peter. Scholarship today, however, is less unanimous in its thinking that the 'delayed parousia' did in fact influence the writing of, for example Luke's gospel (*ibid.*) and that "early Christians were able to believe in the imminent arrival of the Lord Jesus at the parousia while recognising fully the difficulties posed by the lapse of time between the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and his future coming" (Kreitzer 1997:873).

This inspired tension between eager anticipation of Jesus' return, which recognises the reality of his delay, is healthy for the body of Christ. Properly understood, the parousia's imminence keeps the church active and our fervour for pleasing the Lord high, not leaving space for the apathy that characterises large portions of the western church (Ballard and Penny 2002:133-134).

Jesus explains in the parable of Matthew 24 that when the master of the household returns at his undisclosed time, the servants' actions, as motivated by

the state of his heart - wicked and unjust or faithful and true, will form the basis of Jesus' judgment (Matt 24:45-51) and according to Luke 12:47-48, those who know of his coming will be held to higher account.

The leader's character and service within the community is therefore to reflect the servant who waits in eager readiness for the master's return, thus providing an example for the church not simply in doctrine and teaching, as elders must (1 Tim 3:2), but as with Paul's charge to Timothy, to strive for righteousness "without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord" (1 Tim 6:14).

#### **4.6. Summary**

Within this chapter we have provided a definition for leadership that has been derived from the timeless ecclesiology presented in chapter two above and the definitions of Barna (see above) that: Christians who lead from within the church are people who should recognise God's mandating call to mobilise all available resources to holistically influence people to respond positively to the present and coming kingdom of God as they do themselves.

We have further indicated the challenge that raises for Christian leaders in light of the current western culture that has significantly influenced even the southern suburbs of Cape Town (see chapter 3 and above).

We have endeavoured to show, as Erickson notes (2001:1094), that there is not much concerning the form of leadership that is either prescriptive or descriptively consistent within the New Testament. It is rather the purpose of the leader that is

to provide biblical continuity through the ages. We ended this chapter by beginning to explore how to answer the question: how then, does a Christian leader, as defined in this chapter, understanding the prevailing culture outlined in chapter 3, and implement the timeless ecclesiology proposed in chapter 2?

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### 5.1. Church shape can and must change

Within the introduction we noted that it is critical to distinguish between church shape and church activities, from church form and timeless ecclesiology. We have proposed that the foundation of the church's ecclesiology should be based in people's response to the kingdom of God (Ladd 1981:97). We have further proposed that understanding the cultural context of the church is vital in understanding the appropriate shapes church activities must take in order for the medium to communicate the message (Chapell 2009:18-19).

As we have seen from Sweet (1999), church shape creates handles from which the community around the church can grab onto our theology. As Stetzer (2006:4) explains, the church needs a variety of forms to reach a variety of people with the church's message.

When designing a building, there is nothing more valuable than a well defined brief; it provides purpose and a point by which the final product can be evaluated (Lavers 2003:22-28). An architect hopes for a brief that encapsulates not only the direct qualitative requirements but the character of the person or people that require the building to be designed, so as to allow the product to reflect not simply the need but also the client's personality. For the church, this brief is found in the DNA of the kingdom of God (Guthrie 1981:702-703).

A skilful architect understands that there is an art to transforming the demands of a client brief into a satisfactory finished product; consideration must be given to cost, aesthetics, environment and function while also being realistically possible to construct. One may find that cost is in tension with, for example, aesthetics, or function with the environment, yet it is not a compromise that is needed, but rather a design process that synergises all the required demands.

There is a similar art to transformational leadership within the church. According to Lewis (1996:106-213) in his book “Transformational leadership: a new model for total church involvement,” the transformational leader needs to lead through three critical stages, first an awakening, second an envisioning and third the re-architecting. The first stage involves understanding the reason change is required. The phase requires an ability to take stock of the current situation and present the facts that spell out the need for change. This is a crucial phase as people find change difficult when it is perceived as unnecessary (*ibid.*). The second phase involves discovering the potential of new options; new paths to address the challenges raised in stage one. This phase, according to Lewis, must be done aware of the potential technical, political and cultural changes to the church (*ibid.*). The last phase is the design phase where the details of the new opportunities are fleshed out. Three boundaries need to be crossed during this last phase, the boundaries of power, internal communities and external perceptions (Lewis 1996:21-32.).

There are the purpose demands of the kingdom, timeless ecclesiology that must be applied. There are the people, the materials from which the church is made,

and there is the context in which the church exists. The leader must be aware of all these elements as the shape of the church is determined. The context cannot be sacrificed in the design tension and as Roxburgh, Romanuk and Gibbs explain, one of the primary gifts of leading through this process is that of discerning the contextual component of the brief before new solutions are attempted (2006:93).

The context determines the most appropriate shape to respond to the kingdom demands on the church. As Stetzer notes (2006:4), “The rapidly changing church landscape requires that we use different methods to reach different communities”.

## **5.2. Evaluation of the hypothesis**

Within the introduction we proposed that the articulated problem (*Weaknesses within the western, suburban church’s ecclesiology have deflated the church’s impact in their local communities*) could be addressed by: *Rediscovering the timeless nature of the church and empowering leaders to begin a process of redesigning the shape of the church in light of the church’s nature and the current prevailing culture.*

The above hypothesis required the answering of three basic questions: (1) Does the church have a discernable unchanging centre? We have shown that it does and is found in understanding the demands of the kingdom on the people of God (Ladd 1981:97). (2) What characteristics of prevailing culture must be understood in order for the local church to better engage its local community? We have shown that although the focus area of this thesis is the southern suburbs of Cape Town, due to transnationalism and cultural border crossings, this wealthier suburb has

been significantly affected by global trends, western postmodernism being a significant one. (3) The last question, flowing from the above, is what role can local church leaders play in the necessary church change? We have shown that it is a significant role, and that leaders must “shape an environment in which God’s missional imagination, which is available to the members, can be discerned and entered into” (Roxburg and Romanuk in Branson and Martinez 2011:74).

It is the position of this thesis that the church is facing extreme challenge in our time where western culture is prevailing (Gibbs and Coffey 2005:20-22). Furthermore, it is the position of this thesis that the church is not responding well to this challenge for the above mentioned reasons. There is confusion around God’s demands upon his people (Köstenberger 1997:219). Churches are challenged to change as culture changes but are at sea as to what permissible changes may be made. Church leaders are failing and dropping out of ministry because they are not fully prepared for the challenge the church is facing (Sweet 2001). Western culture is in a constant state of flux, and “society is changing rapidly and drastically” (Brinkman 2003:103).

The proposed solution to the problem, the hypothesis of this thesis, is that there does exist a timeless ecclesiology and timeless demands for God’s people and that the reaffirming and application of that timeless ecclesiology will always form the foundation of continually changing shape of church ministry that is solid enough to engage our world (chap. 2). Second, the thesis proposes that understanding the context, in this case a fluxing western culture, is required in order for leaders to adapt methodology while not succumbing to cultural trends

that may oppose the demands of the kingdom on the church (chap. 3). Further, the hypothesis proposed that redefining the role of the church leader, as aiding the church in a right response to the demands of the kingdom through transformational leadership, does enable the church to engage in the constant process of redesigning its shape to better engage our society (chap. 4).

### **5.2.1. Evaluating the first goal: is there an applicable timeless ecclesiology?**

As we have outlined in chapter two above, the church does have a timeless purpose and foundation (chap. 2.2), though the church has no prescriptive form (Chapell 2009:18-19). Jesus did indeed intend to found the church, his community on earth and has revealed to that church his intended purpose for it (Guthrie 1981:702-706). God has placed demands on his people. They are the demands of the kingdom and its king. As they reflect the demands of God's kingdom, they stand above culture and time and are therefore always applicable (Ladd 1981:97).

### **5.2.2. Evaluating the second goal: To survey and evaluate the current prevailing western culture to inform accessible new expressions to timeless ecclesiology**

In chapter four we saw that every given society is in a constant state of transition from one generation to the next (Codrington & Marshall 2005:10-24), each with its own set of broad values and 'world event shaped' thinking. Interwoven within the generational differences are transitioning worldviews and philosophical systems, in the west most notably the transition from modernism to postmodernism (Erickson 1999:17-20). It was noted that people have varying degrees of adherence to those

broad cultural views (Erickson 1999:19) and generational types; however, they paint for us a broad cultural landscape and provide insight into potential opportunities and challenges for God's people when responding to God as they should.

No cultural system is exempt from God's purpose, as every person and created thing is wrapped up in God's redemptive history; as Avis quotes Bosch "the *Missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world" (Avis 2005:6). The activity of designing a church's shape must, therefore, as with any good piece of design, be executed with the context in mind.

### **5.2.3. Evaluating the last goal: redefining the role of church leaders in light of applied timeless ecclesiology**

In chapter three we saw that as God has a timeless purpose for the church, there is a timeless responsibility upon the leaders of the church to ensure that the church not only responds rightly to this call from God, but that in doing so, it effectively engages the context of its society. As such, the primary role of the church leader is in aiding the church to respond rightly to the demands of the kingdom.

As that society is always in flux, church leaders are required to be always prophetically transformational, in that the missional strategy of the church, as it responds to the demands of the kingdom, should likewise always be in a state of growth and change.

We saw from the New Testament that though the role of the church leader is fixed by the demands of the kingdom, the forms of church leadership (as with the other activities of the church) are not fixed (Hansen 1997:109) and may be adapted to suit a given situation.

### **5.3. Areas for further study**

There are a number of questions and areas of further study that have been raised by this thesis. In defining an applied timeless ecclesiology, this thesis has focused, due to the nature of the study, on the broad demands God has for his people. There would indeed be merit in working these demands through on specific theological questions. Two such questions could be, for example, the role of women in leadership in changing culture and the role of the apostolic ministry in church oversight in an African context.

### **5.4. Final Remarks**

This thesis began with the words of Nehemiah:

*“Then I said to them, ‘You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach’.” (Nehemiah 2:17)*

The church is currently facing challenge. Although the specifics of those challenges may be new, God’s people have always endured challenge and God has always been faithful in the past. We can expect him to be so in the future. It is hoped that the above information will take leaders a step closer to being able to lead the church in the direction in which God desires her to be led. It is further

hoped that our preconceived ideas of form do not hinder us, as God's people, from engaging the issues of our society by responding to the primary demands of God's kingdom. The church is not a thing of set form but unified devotion. Form is flexible but God's kingdom demands on his people are not. Let us strive together to apply timeless ecclesiology in our context to see once again the restoration of the church's health and witness.

## 6 Appendix

### Appendix A: Additional terms to ecclesia in the book of Acts

#### **The “Those who...” formula, applying kingdom demands**

There are titles found within the book of Acts that identify the church by the activities and beliefs of those within the community (Giles 1997a:196-197). We see Luke speaking of this community applying the kingdom demand to submit to Christ, in Acts 2:41 as “those who accepted his message”, in Acts 5:32 as “those who obey him” and in Acts 18:27 as “those who by grace had believed”. These responses to God’s authority and revelation represent the basic heart of the church community (Ladd and Hagner 1993:79).

We see Luke name the community in ways that tie the people to a history and journey with Jesus, and therefore the church are “those who had travelled with him” (Acts 13:31). We also see Luke speak of the church in terms of their situation as “those who had been scattered” (Acts 8:4), or their current status before God in “those who are sanctified,” (Acts 20:32 and 26:18) a reflection of the kingdom demand of holiness and as “those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

The church or community is named by its beliefs, actions and context, all of which are intrinsic to the definition of the church (Giles 1997a:196-197).

## Early Titles

A second category of names that Giles (1997a:196) describes as being “almost historical fossils” are the terms that reflect the thinking of the earliest Palestinian church. Some terms they were given include “men of Galilee,” used by the angels at the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:11) or the “Nazarene sect” used by those accusing Paul (Acts 24:5). The name that the believers received in Antioch has remained in usage to this day, that of the “Christians” (Acts 11:26, 26:28).

Some terms were accepted into use by the early believers themselves, “those who... believe... call on the name” (Giles 1997a:196) as in Acts 9:2, to which Giles ties links with the Qumran community who would use the term “figuratively of living in a manner pleasing or not pleasing to God;” (*ibid.*) this a response to the righteous demand of the kingdom (Ladd 1981:97).

Luke also uses generic terms such as “the whole group” (Acts 6:5) or “the whole assembly” (Acts 15:12) - a reflection of the unity and community of the church. As Giles (1997a:196) explains, though *πλήθος* is general in its nuance, the term is none the less used in the Septuagint to refer to the Jewish covenant community and in that regard synonymous with *ἐκκλησία*.

## The saints, the people of God

Luke’s use of the terms “the saints” and “the people of God” can be understood to carry greater theological weight. Giles sees this in part due to the use of the term in the Septuagint where the “*hoi hagioi*” (the saints) or the “*ho laos*” (the people [of God]) are used to denote Israel (1997a:196). The concept of being God’s people

in the Old Testament is intimately tied to being separated unto him. In Exodus and Leviticus the standards of holiness that God demands for those in covenant relationship were spelled out to the nation of Israel as they became his people (Coppedge 2001). Luke speaks of the new Christian community as a sanctified community, a community separated unto God, the new people of God (Giles 1997a:196). This self understanding of being a holy community is critical in reflecting the essence of the character of God and his kingdom (Ladd 1981:89).

### **Disciples and Brethren**

It must be noted that although the above titles are used of the new community, those following Christ, the titles 'brethren', 'disciples' and 'church' are the more common (Giles 1997a:197). The terms brethren and disciples indicate two facets of this new community, their relationship to God and their relationship to each other, both expressing application of kingdom centred ecclesiology. They are followers of Christ and they are family together. Giles notes that Luke uses the phrase "the brethren" twenty-five times in relation to Christians, though it is also used of the Jewish community, thus indicating an intrinsic similarity (1997a: 197). The term "disciples" is used only slightly less frequently and shows an important dynamic of this new community, it learns from and is lead by the risen Jesus Christ.

## **Appendix B: Developments in leadership form within the early church, post the canonical writings**

As has been mentioned above, there is a relative scarcity concerning the specifics of New Testament leadership (Giles 1997b:219). However, in turning to the apostolic fathers, we find additional material that is helpful in understanding the development of leadership function within the early church (*ibid.*). These changes provide useful information in understanding the timelessness of leadership form for the church today. Writings such as the Didache, 1 Clement and the letters of Ignatius of Antioch all provide further insight to the mechanics of the early church.

The leadership feel of the Didache does not appear to reflect the hierarchical direction 'leadership form' would develop in throughout the early church (Giles 1997b:225). 1 Clement provides a different perspective (Giles 1997a:201). The context of 1 Clement narrates the tension that was felt within the early church; younger leaders had tried to assert a charismatic authority over the current eldership within the church at Corinth (*ibid.*).

Clement writes into the situation attempting to re-stabilise the hierarchy of the church. According to Hansen (1997:109), this defence of formalised leadership comes through two appeals, one to the formation of the Roman army, an institution founded upon discipline and rank order as well as an appeal to the order and structure of nature.

Though the letter comes from Rome, as Renwick and Harman (1999) explain, the letter does not arrive assuming Clement's authority over the church in Corinth but rather as an appeal. The appeal is not without force, however, and the message to the Corinthian church is clear, "submit to the presbyters" (Hansen 1997:109).

The scale seems to finally tip in favour of a hierarchical form to church leadership with the writing of Ignatius (Giles 1997b:225). The primary thrust of the letters which Ignatius penned as he travelled to his execution was a retort of docetism (Frend 1989). However, the topic of leadership and specifically the authority of the bishop was a feature of Ignatius' address. Within the letters of Ignatius is found the belief in the "absolute" authority of the bishop. The church is to recognise that just as "Christ followed the Father," the church was to follow the instruction of the bishop (Hansen 1997:109). Ignatius developed the form of the office of bishop further to the point where his authority stemmed not from the outworking of a gift or in his ministry, but by virtue of his position and was to be referred to as "lord" as he stood "in the place of God" (*ibid.*)

Within the early church, and specifically by the end of the second century, the structure of bishops, deacons and elders had been established almost universally (Hansen 1997:110). This structural form was, however, different to that which would follow under the "Frankish reordering of the church" nearly four centuries later (Giles 1997b:225).

## **Appendix C: Phases of transitional leadership**

### **The awakening**

In chapter four, we saw that the role of the church leader was to aid right responses to the demands of God on his people. Assuming the key elements of timeless ecclesiology have been accurately articulated in this thesis, the first stage in this process of change is to establish how effectively they are being applied within the church.

Critical questions must be asked of each kingdom demand. In this way church leaders drive the process of shaping the church as a response to timeless ecclesiology, as the church must focus on its responsibility to respond to the kingdom of God, not the production of the kingdom itself (Van Gelder 2000:88). See Appendix D for a questionnaire which may be used by the leadership of the church to facilitate this phase.

### **The envisioning**

The differences between the brief and the current situation require the transformational church leader to ask specific questions in order to ascertain the new potential shape of the church. God has given his people a brief; this brief should inspire certain critical questions. As we respond and attempt to answer those questions, we formalise new options that ultimately determine the new shape of the church.

After the process of critical thinking, potential changes in shape will begin to become apparent. These options need to be tested against the cultural context of the church, both inside and out. See appendix E for a series of questions to aid this second stage in the process.

### **The re-architecting**

Those ideas that connect the demands of the kingdom with the cultural context of the church now need to be refined (Lewis 1996:33). It is in this stage that the church moves from conceptual design to practical outworking and form is given to vision. It is critical to remember at this stage what in the church is timeless and what can change.

Standing outside of the timeless demands of the church are, for example, the days the church meets together, times of meeting, duration and frequency, the format of meetings and programs (these would include worship services, youth focused ministry etc). See appendix D-F for example worksheets to facilitate these phases of transition as they would relate to the kingdom demand of God's authority.

## Appendix D: Example planning for awakening phase

Kingdom demands			
1. The authority of the kingdom demands submission			
Generation	Response		Reason for positive response (Cultural/theological/ leadership)
	Positive	Negative	
<b>GIs – Hero</b> Age: 80 - 109			
<b>Silents – Artist</b> Age: 60 - 79			
<b>Boomers – Prophet</b> Age : 40 - 59			
<b>13<sup>th</sup>/Xers - Nomad</b> Age: 20 - 39			
<b>Millennial's - Hero</b> Age: 4 - 19			
<b>New Silents - Artist</b> Age: 0 - 3			

## Appendix E: Example planning for envisioning phase

Kingdom demands submission			
1. The authority of the kingdom demands submission			
Potentially new conceptual method (shape):			
Kingdom demands	Generation	Potential advantages for this generation	Action that would be required for change in this generation
	<b>GIs – Hero</b> Age: 80 - 109		
	<b>Silents – Artist</b> Age: 60 - 79		
	<b>Boomers – Prophet</b> Age : 40 - 59		
	<b>13<sup>th</sup>/Xers - Nomad</b> Age: 20 - 39		
	<b>Millennial's - Hero</b> Age: 4 - 19		
	<b>New Silents - Artist</b> Age: 0 - 3		



## 7 Reference List

1. Adair J 2004. *Creative church leadership*. Norwich, England: Canterbury Press.
2. Advance the Church [advancethechurch.com] 2011. *Tim Keller, Interview Session #3*. Online video. Accessed from: < <http://advancethechurch.com>> 2011-05-11.
3. American Humanist Association [AHA] 2009. *Humanist manifesto II*. Accessed from: <[http://www.americanhumanist.org/who\\_we\\_are/about\\_humanism/Humanist\\_Manifesto\\_II](http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II)> 2009-09-02.
4. Anderson RS 2001. *The shape of practical theology: empowering ministry with theological praxis*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
5. Avis PDL 2005. *A ministry shaped by mission*. New York, USA: T & T Clark International.
6. Ballard HW and Penny DN 2002. *A journey of faith: an introduction to Christianity*. USA: Mercer University Press.
7. Beasley-Murray GR 1986. *Jesus and the kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
8. Bhaskar R 2002. *Reflections on meta-reality: transcendence, emancipation, and everyday life: the bhaskar series, theory, culture & society*. California, USA: Sage Publications.
9. Blackaby HT and Blackaby MD 2007. *A God centered church: experiencing God together*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group.
10. Blackaby R 2001. *Spiritual leadership: moving people on to God's agenda*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group.

11. Branson ML and Martínez 2011. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
12. Brinkman ME (ed) 2003. *Theology between church, university, and society volume 6 of studies in theology and religion*. Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.
13. Broyles CC 1992. *Gospel (Good news)*. In Green JB and McNight S (eds), *Dictionary of Jesus and the gospels*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press,
14. Bruner FD 1990. *Matthew: The churchbook, Matthew 13-28*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
15. Bryson J 2006. *Managing information services: a transformational approach*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.
16. Campbell WS 2006. *Paul and the creation of Christian identity*. London: T&T Clark.
17. Caragounis CC 1992. *Kingdom of God/heaven*. In: Green JB and McKnight S (eds), *Dictionary of Jesus and the gospels: a compendium of contemporary biblical scholarship*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
18. Carson DA 2008. *Christ and culture revisited*. Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ 2005. *Becoming conversant with the emerging church: understanding a movement and its implications*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.
20. Carson DA, Moo DJ and Morris L 1992. *An introduction to the New Testament*. Leicester, Great Britain: Apollos.

21. Casurella A 1997. *Gospel*. In: Martin RP and Davids PH (ed), *Dictionary of the latter new testament & its developments*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
22. Chapell B 2009. *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Publishers.
23. Clavin P 2005. *Defining Transnationalism*. Accessed from: <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/stable/pdfplus/20081278.pdf?acceptTC=true>> 2011-07-12.
24. Clapp R 1996. *A peculiar people: the church as culture in a post-Christian society*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
25. Codrington G and Grant-Marshall S. 2005. *Mind the Gap*. London: Penguin Books.
26. Coppedge A 2001. *Portraits of God: a biblical theology of holiness*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press.
27. Drilling P 2006. *Premodern faith in a postmodern culture: a contemporary theology of the trinity*. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield.
28. Dunn J 1990. *Unity and diversity in the New Testament: an inquiry into the character of earliest Christianity, Second Edition*. Albans Place, London: SCM Press.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ 1997. *Pauline Legacy and school*. In: Martin RP and Davids PH (ed), *Dictionary of the latter new testament & its developments*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
30. Eifird JM 1980. *The New Testament writings: history, literature, and interpretation*. USA: Westminster John Knox Press.

31. Erickson MJ 1999. *Postmodernizing the faith: evangelical responses to the challenge of postmodernism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.
32. \_\_\_\_\_ 2001. *Christian theology: second edition*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.
33. Erasmus J, Mans G, Nel M, Davids A, Macrae J [The Unit for Religion and Development Research] 2004. *Southern Suburbs, Transformation Research Project*. Accessed from: <<http://stbweb02.stb.sun.ac.za/urdr/downloads/SouthernSuburbs.pdf>> 2011-08-05.
34. Everist NC Nessian CL 2008. *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
35. Farley E 2003. *Practising gospel: unconventional thoughts on the church's ministry*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
36. Festenstein M 2009. *Dewey's political philosophy*. In: Zalta EN (ed), *The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*. Accessed from: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/dewey-political>> 2009-09-03.
37. Fumerton R 2008. *Foundationalist theories of epistemic justification*. In: Zalta EN (ed), *The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*. Accessed from: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/justep-foundational>> 2009-09-03.
38. Gibbs E 2005. *Leadership Next, Changing leaders in a changing culture*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
39. Gibbs E and Bolger RK 2005. *Emerging churches: creating Christian community in postmodern cultures*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group.

40. Gibbs E and Coffey I 2001. *Church next, quantum changes in Christian ministry*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
41. Giles KN 1997a. *Church*. In: Martin RP and Davids PH (ed), *Dictionary of the latter New Testament & its developments*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
42. \_\_\_\_\_ 1997b. *Church order, government*. In: Martin RP and Davids PH (ed), *Dictionary of the latter New Testament & its developments*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
43. Gledhill R 2010 .*Church of England congregations fall again, and half are pensioners*. Accessed from: <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/fair/article6999268.ece>> 2011-05-24.
44. Greer RC 2003. *Mapping postmodernism: a survey of Christian options*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
45. Grenz SJ 2000. *Theology for the community of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
46. Grudem W 2003. *Systematic Theology, an introduction to biblical doctrine*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
47. Guder DL 2000. *The continuing conversion of the church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
48. Guder DL and Barrett L 1998. *Missional church: a vision for the sending of the church in North America*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
49. Guthrie D 1981. *New Testament theology*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
50. Hagner DA 1995. *33b Word biblical commentary: Matthew 14-28*. In: Metzger BM (ed), *Word biblical commentary*. Columbia: Thomas Nelson.

51. Hammett EH 2005. *Spiritual leadership in a secular age: building bridges instead of barriers*. Danvers, Massachusetts: Chalice Press.
52. Hansen GW 1997. *Authority*. In: Martin RP and Davids PH (ed), *Dictionary of the latter New Testament & its developments*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
53. Hemphill K 2008. *Eternal impact: the passion of kingdom-centered communities*. Nashville Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group.
54. Hendriks HJ 2004. *Studying congregations in Africa*. Wellington South Africa: Lux Verbi.
55. Hendricks P 2006. *Hungry souls, holy companions: mentoring a new generation of Christians*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Church Publishing.
56. Hesselgrave DJ 1992. *The role of culture in communication* In: Winter R (ed.), *Perspectives on the world Christian movement, a reader revised edition*. California, USA: William Carey Library.
57. Hicks PA 1995. *Individualism*. In: Artkinson DJ (ed), *New dictionary of Christian ethics and pastoral theology*. Leicester England: Inter-Varsity Press.
58. Hofer C 2008. *Causal determinism*. In: Zalta EN (ed), *The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy (Winter 2008 Edition)*. Accessed from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/determinism-causal> 2009-09-02.
59. Hoge DR, and Wenger JE 2005. *Pastors in transition: why clergy leave local church ministry, pulpit and pew series*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

60. Howard MC 2011. *Transnationalism and Society: An Introduction*. North Carolina & London: Mc Farland & Company Inc.
61. Kaye B, Scheef D and Thieboldt D 2003. *Engaging the generations*. In: Effron M and Gandossy RP and Goldsmith M (eds), *Human resources in the 21st century*. New Jersey, USA: John Wiley and Sons.
62. Köstenberger AJ 1997. *The missions of Jesus and the disciples according to the fourth gospel: with implications for the fourth gospel's purpose and the mission of the contemporary church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
63. Kreitzer L 1997. *Parousia*. In: Martin RP and Davids PH (ed), *Dictionary of the latter New Testament & its developments*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
64. Ladd GE 1979. *A theology of the New Testament*. Grand Guildford and London: Lutterworth Press.
65. \_\_\_\_\_ 1981. *The gospel of the Kingdom of the kingdom, Popular Expositions on the kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
66. Ladd GE and Hagner DA 1993. *A theology of the New Testament, Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
67. Lamb J 2006. *Integrity, leading with God watching*. Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
68. Langmead R 2004. *The word made flesh: towards an incarnational missiology*. American Society of Missiology Dissertation. Maryland USA: University Press of America.

69. Lavers AP 2003. *Communication and clarification between designer and client: good practice and legal obligation*. In: Nicholson MP (ed), Architectural Management. London: E & FN Spon.
70. Lawless C 2002. *Discipled warriors: growing healthy churches that are equipped for spiritual warfare*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications.
71. Lewis PV 1996. *Transformational leadership: a new model for total church involvement*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group.
72. Life Course Associates [LCAa] 2009. *The lifecourse method*. Accessed from: [http://lifecourse.com/assets/files/lca\\_insight\\_all.pdf](http://lifecourse.com/assets/files/lca_insight_all.pdf)> 22-08-2009.
73. \_\_\_\_\_ [LCA b] 2009. *Generations in history*. Accessed from: [http://www.lifecourse.com/assets/files/gens\\_in\\_history.pdf](http://www.lifecourse.com/assets/files/gens_in_history.pdf)> 2009-08-22.
74. Longenecker RN 1996. *Patterns of discipleship in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
75. Marian M 2009. *The correspondence theory of truth*. In: Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition)*, Accessed from: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/truth-correspondence>> 2009-09-02.
76. McIntosh G 2004. *Afterward*. In: Towns EL, Engle PE and McIntosh G (eds), *Evaluating the church growth movement: 5 views*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.
77. McNeal R 2009. *The present future: six tough questions for the church volume 42 of J-B leadership network series*. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons.

78. Netland HA 2001. *Encountering religious pluralism: the challenge to Christian faith & mission*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
79. Osborne GR 2006. *The hermeneutical spiral: a comprehensive introduction to biblical interpretation*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
80. Papineau D 2009. *Naturalism*. In: Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy* (Spring 2009 Edition), Accessed from: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/naturalism>> 2009-09-02.
81. Patzia AG 2001. *The emergence of the church: context, growth, leadership & worship*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
82. Polkinghorne JC 2009. *Reductionism*. In: Tanzella-Nitti G and Larrey P and Strumia A (eds), *Interdisciplinary encyclopaedia of religion and science*. Accessed from: <<http://www.disf.org/en/Voci/104.asp>> 2009-09-02.
83. Rainer TS and Rainer SS III 2008. *Essential church?: reclaiming a generation of dropouts*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing group.
84. Regele M and Schulz M 1996. *Death of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
85. Roxburgh A and Romanuk F and Gibbs E 2006. *The missional leader: equipping your church to reach a changing world*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.
86. Salkowitz R 2008. *Generation blend: managing across the technology age gap: volume 3 of microsoft executive leadership edition*. New Jersey, USA : John Wiley and Sons.
87. Senter MH III (ed) 2001. *Four views of youth ministry and the church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

88. Sire JW 2004. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog 4th Edition*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
89. Smith KG 2008. *Academic Writing and Theological Research: A Guide for Students*. Johannesburg: South African Theological Seminary Press.
90. Stetzer E 2006. *Planting missional churches*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group.
91. Swanson E and Williams S 2010. *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
92. Sweet L 1999. *AquaChurch 2.0, Piloting your church in today's fluid culture*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishers.
93. \_\_\_\_\_ 2001. *Soul tsunami: sink or swim in new millennium culture*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.
94. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism [TLCFWE] 1992. *The Willowbank report*. In: Winter R (ed.), *Perspectives on the world Christian movement, a reader revised edition*. California, USA: William Carey Library.
95. Van der Merwe CN and Gobodo-Madikizela P 2008. *Narrating our healing: perspectives on working through trauma*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
96. Van Gelder C 2000. *The essence of the church: a community created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.
97. Vanhoozer KJ 2007. *The Triune God of the Gospel*. In: Larsen T and Treier DJ (eds). *The Cambridge companion to evangelical theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

98. Viola F 2008. *Reimagining church: pursuing the dream of organic Christianity*. Colorado Springs, USA: David C Cook.
99. Warren R 1995. *The purpose driven church: growth without compromising your message & mission*. Grand rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.
100. Westcott FB and Hort FJA 1981. *Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament*. In Mayers 2008. E-sword: version 7.9.8. Program available from: <<http://www.e-sword.net>> 2011-04-20.
101. Zemke R, Raines C and Filipczak B (ed) 2000. *Generations at work: managing the clash of veterans, boomers, xers, and nexters in your workplace*. New York: AMACOM Books.