

**The relationship between ministerial tenure and Identity development
in local churches, in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa –
Northern Free State and Lesotho District.**

by

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CONTENTS:

DEDICATION & THANKS:	10
SUMMARY:	11
OPSOMMING:	12
KEY WORDS:	13
LIST OF FIGURES:	8
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:	8
LIST OF TABLES:	9

CHAPTER 1: Introduction:

1.1. Theme selection and conceptualization:	14
1.2. The Research problem:	14
1.3. The Hypothesis:	14
1.4. The scope of the research:	15
1.5. Methodology:	15
1.5.1. The hermeneutical perspective:	15
1.5.2. The empirical perspective:	16
1.5.3. The strategic perspective:	17
1.6. The context of “Building up the local church”:	18
1.7. Chapter outline:	18
1.8. Conclusion:	20

CHAPTER 2: Building up the Local Church and the fundamental importance of identity

2.1. Introduction:	21
2.2. Understanding “Building up the Local Church”:	21
2.3. Core concepts from Identity Theory:	23
2.3.1. Core concepts from Individual identity theory:	23
2.3.1.1. Identity refers to one's essential nature:	23
2.3.1.2. Identity refers to providing unity of meaning and purpose:	23
2.3.1.3. Identity-finding occurs over time:	24
2.3.1.4. Identity is dynamic:	25
2.3.2. Core concepts from Social Identity Theory:	25
2.3.2.1. Categorization:	25
2.3.2.2. Knowing “who are we” requires group membership:	26
2.3.2.3. Personal self & Social self:	26

2.3.2.4. The importance of intimate dyadic relationships:	26
2.3.3. Core concepts from Organizational Identity Theory:	27
2.3.3.1. Identity provides understanding of who we are and how we behave: . . .	27
2.3.3.2. Organization's seek to preserve their identity:	27
2.3.3.3. Organizational identity is dynamic:	28
2.3.4. The dynamic nature of Organizational Identity and its possible implications for congregational identity and identity-finding:	28
2.4. An understanding of Congregational Identity:	29
2.4.1. What Congregational Identity entails:	29
2.4.2. Congregational Identity core concepts:	33
2.4.2.1. Discovering the congregation's "eidosis":	33
2.4.2.2. Discovering God's mission for the congregation in the world:	34
2.4.2.3. Understanding the Congregation's theological framework:	35
2.4.2.4. A Christological identity:	35
2.5. How is congregational identity developed?:	36
2.5.1. A Process of Identity-finding:	38
2.6. The importance of congregational identity to Building up the Local Church: 40	
2.6.1. The outcomes of a process of identity finding:	42
2.6.1.1. Congregational identity provides understanding of "who we are":	42
2.6.1.2. Congregational identity provides understanding of "why we are here": . .	42
2.6.1.3 Congregational identity promotes Congregational unity:	43
2.6.1.4. Congregational identity provides guidance & direction:	44
2.6.1.5. Congregational identity provides understanding of their unique call: . . .	44
2.6.1.6. This all helps a Congregation remain faithful to God:	45
2.7. Conclusion:	45

CHAPTER 3: Leadership influence, tenure and change.

3.1. Introduction:	47
3.2. What is leadership:	48
3.3. Characteristics of Christian leadership:	51
3.3.1. Qualities of Christian leadership:	51
3.3.2. Functions of Christian leadership:	53
3.3.3. Servant Leadership:	54
3.3.4. Contributions from Systems Theory:	57

3.4. Leadership and congregational identity finding: the importance of leadership in Building up the Local Church:	58
3.5. How the leader influences the congregation:	60
3.6. Regulations and practice within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa: .	61
3.7. Leadership influence and tenure:	62
3.7.1. Leadership influence requires acceptance and trust:	64
3.8. Change theory and tenure of leaders:	66
3.8.1. Definition of change as it refers to Building up the Local Church:	66
3.8.2. Appropriate leadership response required:	67
3.8.3 An open systems model for Organizational change:	71
3.8.4. Three levels of acceptance of change:	73
3.8.5. Various models of change:	74
3.8.6. Change is a 3 phase process:	75
3.9. Conclusion:	76

CHAPTER 4: An empirical research survey.

4.1. Introduction:	78
4.2. The research process:	79
4.2.1. Developing the questionnaire:	79
4.2.2. The sample:	80
4.2.2.1. Analysis of total membership per congregation, including breakdown of small group grouping:	82
4.2.2.2. Language distribution of the sample:	84
4.2.2.3. Age distribution of the sample:	84
4.2.2.4. Respondent's level of participation in their local church:	85
4.2.2.5. Gender distribution of the sample:	85
4.2.3. The data analysis:	86
4.2.3.1. A new variable:	87
4.2.3.2. Analysis of clergy tenure across the group MIN:	87
4.2.3.2.a. Association between the length of current minister's tenure and the group MIN:	87
4.2.3.2.b. Association between the length of very effective minister's tenure and the group MIN:	88
4.3. Empirical research findings:	88
A note on missing results:	89
A note on the process of interpreting the Chi-squared test:	89
A note on the process of interpreting the Kruskal-Wallis test:	90

4.3.1 The affect of clergy tenure on understanding “who we are” and “why we are here”:	90
4.3.1.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and widespread understanding of the unique Congregational identity:	90
4.3.1.2. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregational understanding of its mission in the community:	90
4.3.1.3. The relationship between widespread understanding of the unique Congregational identity the longer a good minister stays in the congregation and the groupings of congregations in MIN:	91
4.3.1.4. The relationship between “my congregation has a clear understanding of its mission in the community" and the groupings of congregation's in the group MIN:	91
4.3.2. The affect of clergy tenure on congregational vitality:	92
4.3.2.1. The relationship between “more congregation members participate in midweek activities the longer a good minister stays in the congregation" and the tenure of very effective minister:	92
4.3.2.2. The relationship between “more spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation" and the tenure of very effective minister:	93
4.3.2.3. The relationship between “Sunday attendance increasing the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in MIN:	93
4.3.2.4. The relationship between “More congregant's participating in midweek activities the longer a good minister stay in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN:	94
4.3.2.5. The relationship between “More community focus or outreach occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN:	94
4.3.2.6. The relationship between “More spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN:	95
4.3.2.7. Differences in measures of location between Congregation members` observations on the four areas of congregational growth the longer a good minister stays and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN:	95
4.3.3. Congregation members opinion on longer clergy tenure:	96
4.3.3.1. The relationship between “It is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time” and the groupings of congregation's of MIN:	97
4.3.3.2. Differences in measures of location between congregants' opinion whether it is better for longer clergy tenure than shorter clergy	

tenure and the groupings of congregations in MIN:	97
4.3.4. The affect of clergy tenure on the willingness of congregant's to accept and to trust minister's:	98
4.3.4.1. The relationship between how important it is for congregant's to trust the minister and the tenure of incumbent minister:	98
4.3.4.2. The relationship between the respondents need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with in order to participate and the groupings of congregations in MIN:	99
4.3.4.3. Differences in measures of location between Congregation members' need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with and the categories of MIN:	100
4.3.5. The effect of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's regulations regarding clergy tenure on congregation members ability to accept and to trust a new minister:	100
4.3.5.1. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” and the tenure of current minister:	101
4.3.5.2. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” and the tenure of a very effective minister:	101
4.3.5.3. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” and the groupings of congregation's of MIN:	102
4.3.5.4. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” and the groupings of congregation's of MIN:	103
4.3.6. The relationship between clergy tenure and recognition of leadership attributes:	103
4.3.6.1. The relationship between the length of tenure of the clergy identified as an effective leader and each of the 7 leadership attributes:	104
4.3.6.2. Differences in measures of location between the 7 leadership attributes and the tenure of an identified effective minister:	104
4.3.6.3. Differences in measures of location of the very effective minister's spiritual warmth where significant differences were observed between the tenures of the identified very effective minister's:	104
4.4. Interim findings:	104
4.5. Conclusion:	106
 CHAPTER 5: A way forward:	
5.1. Introduction:	107
5.2. The relation between theory and praxis:	107

5.2.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregational identity:	107
5.2.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregational vitality:	107
5.2.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and acceptance/trust:	108
5.2.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and recognized leadership qualities:	108
5.3. Research implications for the practice of ministry:	108
5.4. Research implications for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's stationing practices:	109
5.5. Research implications for the training of Christian leadership:	109
5.6. Further research required:	110
APPENDIX 1: English questionnaire:	111
APPENDIX 2: Afrikaans questionnaire:	117
APPENDIX 3: Breakdown of Circuits & clergy distribution:	123
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	124

LIST OF FIGURES:

Figure 1: Heitink's relation between theory and practice: 78

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1: Bar graph showing Total number of questionnaires sent and returned per congregation: 81

Illustration 2: Bar graph showing Total membership per congregation, with their respective MIN designation: 82

Illustration 3: Pie chart showing language distribution amongst respondent's: . . . 84

Illustration 4: Histogram of age distribution amongst the respondent's: 84

Illustration 5: Pie chart of respondent's participation level in their local church: . 85

Illustration 6: Pie chart of gender distribution amongst the respondent's: 85

Illustration 7: Frequency of observations of tenure of current minister across the group MIN: 87

Illustration 8: Frequency of observations of “How long was tenure of very effective minister” across the group MIN: 88

Illustration 9: Frequency of observations of “change in widespread understanding of congregational identity occurs the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN: . 91

Illustration 10: Frequency of observations of “my congregation has a clear understanding of its mission in the community" across the group MIN: 91

Illustration 11: Frequency of observations of “more congregation members participate in midweek activities the longer a good minister stays in the congregation" across the tenure of a very effective minister: 92

Illustration 12: Frequency of observations of “more spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation" across the tenure of very effective minister: 93

Illustration 13: Frequency of observations of “Sunday attendance increasing the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN: 93

Illustration 14: Frequency of observations of “More congregant's participating in midweek activities the longer a good minister stay in the congregation” across the group MIN: 94

Illustration 15: Frequency of observations of “More community focus or outreach occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN: 94

Illustration 16: Frequency of observations of “More spiritual growth occurs in congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN: 95

Illustration 17: Frequency of observations of “It is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time” across the group MIN:	97
Illustration 18: Frequency of observations of the respondents need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with in order to participate across the groupings of congregations in MIN:	99
Illustration 19: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” across the tenure of current minister:	101
Illustration 20: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” across the tenure of a very effective minister:	101
Illustration 21: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” across the group MIN:	102
Illustration 22: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations on clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” across the group MIN:	103

LIST OF TABLES:

Table 1: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the areas of growth where significant differences were observed between the different groupings of MIN:	96
Table 2: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the respondent's opinion whether it is better for longer clergy tenure than shorter clergy tenure where significant differences were observed between the different groupings of MIN:	97
Table 3: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the respondent's need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with where significant differences were observed between the different groupings of MIN:	100
Table 4: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the very effective minister's spiritual warmth where significant differences were observed between the tenures of the identified very effective minister's:	104

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Summary:

“The relationship between ministerial tenure and Identity development in local churches, in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa – Northern Free State and Lesotho District.”

This thesis was born from my experience of two local churches I was serving simultaneously in Riebeeckstad and Odendaalsrus. After a year of being their minister I began to reflect on my experience in their midst especially because I had begun to recognize that they treated me, as their minister, very differently. Amongst other things I discovered that they had experienced vastly different clergy tenure over an extended period of time. The journey these reflections began, along with my passion for the local church, has led to this dissertation which investigates the relationship between clergy tenure and the development of Congregational identity in local churches.

Strong and healthy local churches have a clearly defined and understood congregational identity that overcomes uncertainty, builds unity, provides guidelines and direction, and increases member participation, excitement and energy. This sense of knowing “who we are” and “why we are” generates great momentum and focus in the local church which translates into participation with the Triune God in making the Kingdom of God a reality.

For this to happen, strong and capable leadership is required. But, more than that, building up a Local Church to participate in the work of God's Kingdom requires continuity in the leadership of the local church. Long-term clergy tenure over an extended period is a vital part of leading a local church into a fuller participation with the Triune God in making the Kingdom of God a reality.

Sadly, the importance of long-term clergy tenure is not always recognized and the result is that not only the local church suffers, but ultimately, the work of the Kingdom of God struggles. As we consider this absolutely vital aspect of Building up the Local Church I hope that local church leaders are encouraged to think long-term and strive for continuity in clergy and lay leadership.

It is my hope and prayer that greater numbers of my colleagues will recognize that their call to serve God and His Kingdom in pastoral leadership requires long-term tenure.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Opsomming:

“Die verhouding tussen die predikant se dienstermyn en die Identiteits ontwikkeling in plaaslike gemeentes in die Metodiste Kerk van Suidelike Afrika – Noordelike Vrystaat en Lesotho Distrik”.

Hierdie verhandeling is gebore uit my ervaring van twee plaaslike gemeentes waar ek gedien het ter seldetyd in Riebeeckstad en Odendaalsrus. Na 'n jaar van bediening het ek begin nadink oor my ervaring by hierdie gemeentes deurdat hulle my as predikant, 'anders' behandel het. Onder andere het ek uitgevind dat hulle uiteenlopende ervarings gehad het van die dienstermyne van hul predikante oor 'n lang tydperk. Tesame met my voorliefde vir die plaaslike gemeente, het hierdie reistog begin waardeur ek die verhouding tussen die dienstermyn van die predikant en die ontwikkeling van Gemeentelike Identiteit in plaaslike gemeentes ondersoek het.

Sterk en gesonde plaaslike gemeentes het 'n duidelik gedefineerde identiteit wat onder andere onsekerheid oorkom, eenheid bou, riglyne verskaf en rigting hou, ledetal verhoog; energie ontwikkel en entoesiasme bevorder. Hierdie kennis van “wie ons is” en “waarom ons bestaan” ontwikkel groot dryfkrag en fokus in the plaaslike gemeente wat vertolk word deur die meelewing saam met die Drie-Enige God in die werklikmaking van die Koninkryk van God. Sterk leierskap is nodig om hierdie ideaal 'n werklikheid te maak, maar selfs belangriker as dit, is die ononderbrokenheid van die dienstermyn van die leierskap van die plaaslike gemeente. 'n Verlengde dienstermyn is 'n kardinale aspek in die opbou van plaaslike gemeentes se volgehoue betrokkenheid om die Koninkryk van die Drie-Enige God 'n werklikheid te maak.

Ongelukkig word die voordele van verlengde dienstermyn van 'n predikant misken en die plaaslike gemeente ly verlies, buiten dat die Koninkryk van God ook verlies ly. Terwyl ons nou die voordele van verlengde dienstermyn van die predikant bedink, hoop ek dat plaaslike gemeente-leiers aangemoedig sal word om dit te oorweeg om aaneenlopende dienstermyn van predikante en ander lidmaat leierskap te implementeer. Dit is my gebed en hoop dat 'n groot meerderheid van my kollegas sal besef dat verlengde termyn dienslewering vir God en Sy Koninkryk 'n noodsaaklikheid is.

KEY WORDS:

Building up the Local Church

Identity

Congregational identity

Process of Identity finding

Leadership

Servant leadership

Systems thinking

Change processes

Tenure

The relationship between ministerial tenure and Identity development in local churches, in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa – Northern Free State and Lesotho District.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction.

1.1. Theme selection and conceptualization:

I began serving the Riebeeckstad and Odendaalsrus Methodist congregations simultaneously in January 2002. One of the first things I noticed in Riebeeckstad was that there had been a succession of nine ministers in the past twenty years. The situation in Odendaalsrus Methodist church had been very different with only two ministers in the same period.

In my experience I felt a difference between the two congregations in many areas. Some of the more visible areas have been the relationships between the leaders, the leaderships' relationship with the other members of the congregation, my relationships with both those in leadership and other members. In Riebeeckstad I found it more difficult to establish open and trusting relationships with the members of the congregation, and the leadership, and have found more strained relationships and division amongst the Riebeeckstad leaders than in Odendaalsrus. The quality of these relationships has in turn impacted on other areas of the two congregations.

1.2. The Research problem:

I have observed that there are local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues. I have observed that these Congregational identity issues are exacerbated by a lack of long-term ministerial tenure.

1.3. The Hypothesis:

This has led me to the hypothesis that long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period will have a significant impact on a congregation's identity development and thus on the congregation understanding and expressing its “identity”, as opposed to many short-term ministerial tenures in the same period.

1.4. The scope of the research:

The scope of the observed problem is very wide and so it is necessary to set some limitations. There are many variables which influence the ability and willingness of a congregation in the process of identity finding and in the influence a Pastoral leader is able or willing to exert in this process. The scope of this research will thus focus primarily on the impact of ministerial tenure on congregational identity and congregational identity-finding ability.

I will restrict the research to a random sample of church members within a selection of the Methodist Churches in the greater Matjhabeng area of the Northern Free State.

1.5. Methodology:

This research needs to be understood in the scope of Practical Theology that is "the empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society" (Heitink 1999: 102). Heitink (1999: 103) outlines the practical theological approach employed in this research as a method that "is (a) interpreted by means of a hermeneutical theory, (b) analysed by means of an empirical theory, and (c) translated in terms of action through a strategic theory." This method involves "the interpretation of human action in the light of the Christian tradition (the hermeneutical perspective), the analysis of human action with regard to its factuality and potentiality (the empirical perspective), and the development of action models and action strategies for the various domains of action (the strategic perspective)" (Heitink 1999: 165).

1.5.1. The hermeneutical perspective:

A descriptive approach is used through the use of literature to help us understand the concepts and role of:

- Practical Theology in guiding this research
- The theory of Building up the Local Church as it relates to Practical Theology and provides sharper focus for the research
- Congregational Identity and identity-finding in Building up the Local Church
- Leadership theory in general and particularly as a mode of ministry in Building up the Local Church
- Tenure of Pastoral leadership in the ongoing process of facilitating congregational identity
- Change theory as it relates to tenure of leaders.

1.5.2. The empirical perspective:

It is vitally important to consider the criteria with which to evaluate the relative appropriateness of the different research paradigms to any given research problem.

An important criterion is the appropriateness of the methodology to the aims of the research. “All research methodology rests upon a bedrock axiom: *The nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research methodology*” (De Vos, Schurink & Strydom 1998: 15). “Quantitative studies are more highly formalised as well as more explicitly controlled; their ranges are more exactly defined. . . . Qualitative analyses and data refer to the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (Hendriks 2004: 226). Thus, “the key tasks at the research design stage in relation to method are to decide upon appropriate methods and data sources, and also to develop some understanding of the methodological implications of your choices. This means being clear about how and why a particular method and data source are going to help you to address your research questions” (Mason 1996: 19; see Schurink 1998: 239 – 251 for fuller descriptions and comparison of quantitative versus qualitative research methods).

The research process employed in this research will use quantitative questionnaires to a random sample of congregational members in 22 local Methodist congregations in the Majhabeng area of the Northern Free State.

Bryman (1999: 49) states that the sample survey is an appropriate and useful means of gathering information under three conditions: when the goals of the research call for quantitative data, when the information sought is reasonably specific and familiar to the respondents, and when the researcher himself has considerable prior knowledge of particular problems and the range of responses likely to emerge. The survey “offers greater possibilities for replication. Its results can be generalized, and the survey provides a representative picture in a way that the participant observer cannot do” (Bulmer 1993: 18).

Having chosen this research process I understand that Heitink believes that from a theological perspective, empirical research [based on observation & experiment] through quantitative methods is not enough. The reason that this is limiting is because all the elements of any Practical Theology study; description, interpretation, explanation

and action, are not addressed. Researchers have to restrict themselves to data that are quantifiable and can be expressed in statistics. One may set out in percentages which groups share particular convictions, or which beliefs are held by certain groups of people. “The concepts and theories utilized in this type of research are not suitable if one wants to penetrate to deeper levels of consciousness. At this point assistance is needed from qualitative methods, employed from a hermeneutical [interpretive] angle” (Heitink 1999: 232). This would involve participatory observation and in-depth interviews which would seek to understand and interpret the theological understanding of the people being interviewed or studied from their perspective.

In seeking to be as appropriate, reliable, valid, and representative as possible and because research questions can be approached from a variety of angles or conceptualized in a variety of ways, it would seem best to build up an analysis using data derived from different sources, and generated using different methods. However, this is not plausible for the scope of this research because using both paradigms in a single study can be expensive, time-consuming and lengthy.

1.5.3. The strategic perspective:

Heitink (1999: 152) elaborates on the relation between theory and praxis as dialogic. The relation between theological theory and ecclesiastical praxis is determined by a bipolar tension-filled combination based on the premise that theory is in constant need of verification or falsification through praxis, while praxis must constantly be transcended by theory. Theory is constantly tested by empirically oriented practical-theological research, while praxis receives an ongoing critical review from hermeneutical theory.

Heitink (1999: 238) thus summarises the method of research as follows: “observation - description - analysis - reflection - suggestions for action.”

In this section I will seek to offer concrete suggestions for:

- the procedure that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa uses when stationing its ministers. Refer to chapter 3.6 of this paper.
- conscientizing Bishop's, minister's and stationing committee's (composed of lay leaders) to the importance of long-term ministerial tenure and its impact on congregational identity.
- educating student minister's in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa as to the importance of long-term tenure and congregational identity

1.6. The context of “Building up the local church”:

Practical Theology as an academic discipline is “a theory of the epistemological foundations, ethical norms, and general strategies of religious praxis in its various contexts. . . Practical theology should be understood as an empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practice” (Browning et al 1999 : xvi).

The ministry of “Building up the Local church” or “oikodomics” is one of the disciplines of Practical theology. “For the most part the dimension peculiar to this discipline and ministry is to lead the congregation effectively to become involved in building itself up and function accordingly” (Nel 2004 : 15) According to “Building up the Church” theory, all of the facets of congregational health can be linked back to the congregations foundational understanding of its identity and its identity-finding/building ability.

Building up the local church is the ministry whereby a local church is trained and led to

- **Understand** its own nature (identity) and reason for existence (purpose) (**Herneneutical dimension**)
- **Evaluate**, as a body of believers, its own functions, formulate objectives accordingly, and reach these objectives in a planned manner. (**Agogical-Teleological dimension**)
- **Develop**, as required and on a continued basis, structures for congregational life that will serve the Triune God and his Salvific acts in His church and in the world - to the Glory of HIS NAME. (**Morphological dimension**).

(Nel 2004: 17)

This research focuses primarily on the first dimension of “building up the local church”, that is, in leading a congregation to understand and find its corporate sense of identity. In fact Nel (2004: 368) states that the “concept building up the local church wants to be understood as a concept of understanding and finding identity. In accountability towards God and in a responsible encounter with Scripture this identity should be rediscovered and understood.”

1.7. Chapter outline:

In order to understand the research problem more fully it is necessary in chapter 2 to discuss the concept of Building up the Local Church with specific reference to the fundamental importance of identity and what the process of identity finding entails.

- Section 2.2. will offer a brief definition of Building up the Local Church, and highlight the focus for this research.

- Section 2.3. highlights some core concepts relating to Identity Theory.
- Section 2.4. will then seek to gain an understanding of Congregational Identity, showing how the core concepts from Identity Theory add to our overall understanding of Congregational Identity.
- Section 2.5. then seeks to understand how Congregational Identity is developed.
- Section 2.6. will address the importance of Congregational Identity, showing that Congregational Identity is fundamental to Building up the Local Church and thus vital to the Research problem as outlined in sections 1.2. of this paper.

Chapter 3 then synthesizes the concepts of leadership influence, tenure and change theory in order to show that Building up the Local Church requires long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period.

- Section 3.2. “What is leadership” seeks to highlight a few key insights into the characteristics and functions of leadership.
- Section 3.3. “Characteristics of Christian leadership” will focus on those functions and characteristics that make Christian leadership unique. Special attention will be paid to servant leadership and systems theory.
- Section 3.4. will then focus our learning by addressing, specifically, the importance of leadership in Building up the Local Church.
- Section 3.5. “How the leader influences the congregation” highlights the leaders personal example and teaching, showing the need for long tenure, and then offers guidelines regarding leadership responses during congregational identity-finding.
- Section 3.6. will show what current rules and regulations are in place regarding ministerial tenure in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.
- Section 3.7. addresses the importance of tenure on the influence of leadership and shows how longer tenure increases leadership influence, arguing that longer pastoral tenure is absolutely vital for Building up the Local Church and specifically for guiding the process of congregational identity-finding.
- Finally section 3.8. seeks to define change as it refers to Building up the Local Church, highlights leadership response to change, focusses on an open systems model for Organizational change, and then highlights aspects of Change theory and relates these to the pastor as “change agent”, thus strengthening the argument that longer tenure increases the influence of congregational leaders.

Chapter 4 describes the empirical approach taken in this study and then shows the results of the data analysis.

- In Chapter 4.2. the empirical research process that was followed is outlined, including discussions on the development of the questionnaire, the research sample and the methods of data analysis.
- Section 4.3. discusses the analysis of the empirical research data with respect to the key concepts operationalized in the questionnaire
- Section 4.4. will then present the interim findings from the empirical perspective as a summary and preparation for chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents some follow-up comments and conclusions from the research.

- Section 5.2. engages the empirical analysis with the descriptive research seeking to confirm or revise the accepted theory.
- Section 5.3. highlights the research implications for the practice of ministry.
- Section 5.4. shows the research implications for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's stationing practices.
- Section 5.5. offers suggestions for the training of Christian leadership.
- Section 5.5. offers suggestions for further research.

1.8. Conclusion:

It is important to note that this thesis does not argue for long-term ministerial tenure per se. It is recognised that in some cases long-term tenure can be pathological for various reasons. The argument of this thesis assumes that the minister is intentionally focused on Building up the Local Church and is engaged in the identity -finding process that Building up the Local Church entails. Thus, the contention of this thesis is that an integral part of Building up the Local Church is the need to have long-term ministerial tenure.

CHAPTER 2: Building up the Local Church and the fundamental importance of identity.

2.1. Introduction:

In seeking understanding regarding the observation that there are local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues due to the observed lack of long-term ministerial tenure, it is necessary in chapter 2 to discuss the concept of Building up the Local Church with specific reference to the fundamental importance of identity and what the process of identity finding entails.

Section 2.2 will offer a brief definition of Building up the Local Church, and highlight the focus for this research before focusing specifically on Congregational identity and its importance for “Building up the Local Church”

Section 2.3 will highlight some core concepts relating to Identity Theory.

Section 2.4 will then seek to gain an understanding of Congregational Identity, showing how the core concepts from Identity Theory add to our overall understanding of Congregational Identity.

Section 2.5 then seeks to understand how Congregational Identity is developed while section 2.6 will address the fundamental importance of Congregational Identity to Building up the Local Church and thus to finding answers to the Research problem as outlined in section 1.2. of this paper.

2.2. Understanding “Building up the Local Church”:

As stated previously in section 1.8. this thesis assumes that the minister is intentionally focused on Building up the Local Church and the identity -finding process that it entails. Building up the Local Church is a ministry of renewal or revitalization of the local Church. Nel (2004: 18ff) shows that this is something only God can do because it requires new insights into God and His work in and through the local Church. It is important to stress that Building up the Local Church is a work of God. It originates with, is initiated by, directed by and overseen by God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. “Building up the local church therefore asks for a new vision of God - a vision that will painlessly free the Church from the often desperate way in which she clings to the past at the risk of present renewal.... To guide spontaneous and organized change (renewal) in line with the nature and purpose of the Church is not merely to act as an agent for social change within the Church. It is in the most profound sense a confession that God

is in the move; that he is constantly at work in this world, and that to be the Church is to be part of this renewing activity of God” (Nel 1990: 5). These insights into God's will should inspire the congregation to keep in step with God who is purposefully preparing the Church for and leading it toward its fulfilment.

The process of guiding the renewal with its spontaneous and organized change keeps the nature and purpose of the congregation in mind. Heitink (1999: 285) quotes Firet (1986: 590) in defining Building up the Local Church or *oikodomics* as "the theological theory of the initiation and guidance of processes directed toward the functioning of the congregation in a particular situation, in accordance with its possibilities and its calling, and of processes aimed at the creation of adequate structures for this functioning”. The overall purpose of renewal is to lead the congregation into its God given identity and purpose. It is leading the congregation to become what it is and should be under the mighty hand of God.

As stated before, in section 1.6. in order for this to happen Nel (2004: 17) shows that Building up the Local Church is a ministry whereby the Triune God, through his Word and his office bearers, teaches and trains his church to understand its own identity and purpose; then to evaluate, together, its own functions, formulate objectives accordingly, and reach these objectives in a planned manner, and finally to develop, as required and on a continued basis, structures for congregational life that will serve the Triune God and his work of Salvation in His church and in the world - to the Glory of HIS NAME.

A fundamental consideration in discovering a congregation's identity is the centrality of the congregation itself. Nel (2004: 135) makes this point emphatically when he states that building up the local church is always about the congregation, and this congregation has to come quite clearly to understand, under the guidance of God and his Word and through service to people, its own nature and *raison d'etre*. The congregation itself (and not a number of managers on behalf of the congregation) must operate on the basis of its conscious awareness of its own identity, and evaluate, draft and achieve its objectives accordingly (see Nel 1990: 56). Richards & Martin's (1981: 148) understanding of the identity of Christians as the *laos* of God emphasizes the full participation of each member of the congregation in every aspect of the life of the congregation. “We can only conclude that as each one of the *laos* is a full participant in the Identity that underlies all ministry, *each part of the body of Christ in our local congregations must be guided to live out its identity in ministry!*” (Richards & Martin 1981: 149).

2.3. Core concepts from Identity Theory:

Identity literature does not offer a single concept or theory in order to understand identity, but includes a diverse set of ideas, modes of analysis, questions and propositions, depending on one's point of reference. It is beyond the scope of this paper to interrogate this diversity, as this paper simply seeks to highlight the core concepts as they may relate to Congregational identity.

2.3.1. Core concepts from Individual identity theory:

2.3.1.1. Identity refers to one's essential nature:

“Identity in philosophy refers to at least two separable questions — first, what gives a thing or person its essential nature, i.e., its *eidōs* or form, and thus its continuity through time, and second, what makes two things or two persons the same” (Zaretsky 1994: 199-200).

Baumeister (1986: 14) makes two points regarding understanding individual identity. First, it is easy not to know the self because the self cannot be known directly but can only be glimpsed in the process of doing something else. This means that the "phenomenal self" or “*eidōs*” can only be inferred or deduced (mirrored) from other perceptions or cognitions. The second point he makes is that the unity of the self over time (which is so important to any identity formation) is not guaranteed or built in but is rather created somehow, somehow stitched together across time. “A sense of identity is understood to connect different experiences and to reduce fragmentation in feelings and thinking” (Alvesson & Willmott 2002: 443).

2.3.1.2. Identity refers to providing unity of meaning and purpose:

“Identity is people's source of meaning and experience. By identity, as it refers to social actors, I understand the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning. . . Roles are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society. . . Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation. . . In simple terms, identities organize the meaning, while roles organize the functions” (Castells 2004: 6-7).

2.3.1.3. Identity-finding occurs over time:

Baumeister (1986: 15) says that an experience is a set of events spread out across time and united by a common meaning. Therefore, if knowledge of self is derived from experiences, then knowing yourself can also be spread out across time. Moreover, unity of meaning seems important in producing unity of identity. This means that the sense of identity is not just based on the physical self but depends on continuity of meaning found in these experiences over time. Further, as meaning is found only within a contextual network of relationships, it would seem that *identity is a linguistic construction*.

Baumeister's (1986: 18ff) Model of Identity provides help in understanding how an individual's identity is developed.

This model has four components.

First component: there are *two defining criteria of identity*, ie. continuity and differentiation. Continuity is a special case of unity, unity across time. Continuity entails being the same person today as yesterday or last year or next week. One's sense of identity is strengthened by things that require one to be the same person across time. Differentiation entails being different from others. One's identity must contain some elements that distinguish it from others. (cf Alvesson & Willmott 2002: 443).

Second component: There are *three functions of identity*. First, a clear sense of one's identity helps one make choices. Second, relationships to other persons are impossible without identity and difficult if one's identity is in transition or is poorly defined. Finally, a sense of identity furnishes one with a sense of strength and resilience, so that the impact of a specific misfortune or setback is diminished, and one's life can be oriented toward specific goals that include the fulfillment of certain potentialities.

Three functional aspects of identity may be inferred from these three functions.

The first functional aspect of identity is the individual's own structure of *values and priorities*. Self-definition involves aligning oneself with certain values that determine how people ought to behave and what they should strive for. It also involves finding personal goals that provide direction, in one's own life. The structure of values and priorities enables the individual to make choices in a steady and purposive fashion.

A Second functional aspect of identity is the *interpersonal aspect*, consisting of one's social roles and personal reputation. Relationships with other persons are conducted on the basis of this functional aspect of identity.

The third functional aspect of identity is a sense of *individual potentiality*. To an extent, this aspect consists of having a realistic personal goal and sufficient self-esteem to believe one can reach that goal. It includes the belief that personal fulfillment can be achieved by reaching the goal.

Third component: there is an *aggregation of components of identity*, which are the basic units of self-definition. Each identity contains an indefinite number of components. These are the units of self-definition. The unity of these units is a unity of meaning. Any partial definition of the self is an identity component—any valid answer to "Who are you?" The components constitute identity by fulfilling the two defining criteria of identity: They provide the individual with differentiation and continuity of self-definition. Identity components also contain the three functional aspects of identity. (cf Alvesson & Willmott 2002: 443)

Fourth component: there are *five basic types of self-definition processes*. Self-definition is a matter of acquiring identity components. These components fulfill the defining criteria of identity, and normally each component has all three functional aspects of identity.

2.3.1.4. Identity is dynamic:

“Identity is not static, but dynamic. Value communication underlines that one is always learning. Being committed to a learning process will continuously transform one's identity. In fact, identity is identity-in-transformation” (De Roest 1998: 330).

2.3.2. Core concepts from Social Identity Theory:

2.3.2.1. Categorization:

“Social identity theory begins with categorization, the cognitive process that allows humans to streamline perception by separately grouping like and unlike stimuli. Tajfel demonstrated that people categorize social as well as nonsocial stimuli and that people use social categories to identify themselves and others. He defined social identity as that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional

significance attached to that membership” (Thoits & Virshup 1997: 114; see Tajfel & Turner 1979: 56-63).

2.3.2.2. Knowing “who we are” requires group membership:”

“As suggested by Tajfelian theories (social-identity theory and self-categorization theory), the collective answers to the "Who are we?" question involve group memberships. Individual identity is determined, in large part, by who these various we's are and what we stand for” (Jussim & Ashmore 1997: 223).

2.3.2.3. Personal self and Social self:

Brewer and Gardner (1996: 67) help us to understand that the various Individual Identity theories draw some kind of distinction between the individuated or personal self (those aspects of the self-concept that differentiate the self from all others) and a relational or social self (those aspects of the self-concept that reflect assimilation to others or significant social groups). However, it seems that “an adequate view of identity must synthesize both parts, the inner self and the outer context” (Baumeister 1986: 247).

2.3.2.4. The importance of intimate dyadic relationships:

Brewer and Gardner (1996: 67) make the important point that there is a further distinction between two levels of social selves—those that derive from interpersonal relationships and interdependence with specific others and those that derive from membership in larger, more impersonal collectives or social categories. Prototypic interpersonal identities are those derived from intimate dyadic relationships such as parent-child, lovers, and friendships, but they also include identities derived from membership in small, face-to-face groups that are essentially networks of such dyadic relationships. Collective social identities, on the other hand, do not require personal relationships among group members and the impersonal bonds are derived from common identification with some symbolic group or social category. This aspect of Identity development is important because De Roest (1998: 134) taking his cue from Habermas (1976: 24f), highlights challenges facing individuals living in modern societies (collective social identities) due to the drastic changes occurring (cf Baumeister 1986: 247). The development of identity in modern society is determined by the necessity to identify oneself increasingly with more and more abstract entities, themselves continually changing, putting individuals under extreme pressure to

integrate and re-integrate these universalist orientations in order to preserve a continuity in oneself. The result is that both individual and collective identity are becoming increasingly abstract.

2.3.3. Core concepts from Organizational Identity Theory:

Daft (2004: 11) defines organizations as (1) social entities that (2) are goal directed, (3) are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems, and (4) are linked to the external environment.

2.3.3.1. Identity provides understanding of who we are and how we behave:

Elsbach and Kramer (1996: 469) provide a good foundation when they say that an organization's identity reflects its central and distinguishing attributes, including its core values, organizational culture, modes of performance, and products. We might also add statements of ideology; management philosophy; culture and ritual. For members, organizational identity may be conceptualized as their cognitive schema or perception of their organization's central and distinctive attributes, including its positional status and relevant comparison groups

Bennis and Nanus (2003: 103-104) use the term "social architecture" and show that it governs the way people act, presenting a shared interpretation of organizational events, so that members know how they are expected to behave. It also provides the values and norms that are subtly transmitted to groups and individuals and that shape behavior in any organized setting, generating a commitment to the primary organizational values and philosophy—that is, the vision that employees feel they are working for and can believe in. Social architecture is that which provides context (or meaning) and commitment to its membership and stakeholders. Finally, "social architecture" implies change and tractability and that leaders can do something about it, whereas "culture," as ordinarily used, implies an unbridled rigidity or intractability.

2.3.3.2. Organization's seek to preserve their Identity:

Schein (1992: 70-92) working within a systems framework shows that the organizational culture is continually integrating its internal systems to make sure that the assumed culture survives and continues. He summarizes six processes by which a group seeks to develop and maintain its identity (cf Parsons & Leas 1993: 6-7)

2.3.3.3. Organizational Identity is dynamic:

Albert and Whetten (2004: 90 & 116) offer a definition of Organizational identity that satisfies three criteria: 1. the criterion of claimed central character. This refers to identifying features that are arguably core, distinctive, and enduring. 2. the criterion of claimed distinctiveness. This refers to aspects of an organization that set it apart from others. 3. the criterion of claimed temporal continuity. This third criterion is very interesting with important consequences for our understanding of Congregational identity. Gioia, Schultz & Corley (2000: 353) make the point that organizational identity is not only a complex phenomenon but also one that can vary with varied contexts. They observe that a sense of continuity in the self-interpretation of an organization in relation to its context might prevail, but identity is nonetheless inherently dynamic. Such observations raise questions about the typically assumed durability of identity.

Hatch and Schultz (2002: 385ff) have developed an Organizational Identity Dynamics Model which seeks to define the processes by which organizational identity is created, maintained and changed, and explains the dynamics by which these processes are inter-related. It further shows the relationships between these processes and culture, identity and image.

“The way that we have drawn the identity dynamics model is meant to indicate that organizational identity occurs as the result of a set of processes that continuously cycle within and between cultural self-understandings and images formed by organizational 'others'” (Hatch & Schultz 2002: 390). This means that Organizational identity cannot be a static collection of core concepts and values held by the organizational members or others for that matter. Rather, organizational identity is a dynamic set of processes by which an organization's understanding of itself is continuously formulated and reformulated.

2.3.4. The dynamic nature of Organizational Identity and its possible implications for congregational identity and identity-finding:

“Organizational identity, contrary to most treatments of it in the literature, is actually relatively dynamic and that the apparent durability of identity is somewhat illusory. Therefore, we re-conceptualize organizational identity as a potentially precarious and unstable notion, frequently up for re-definition and revision by organization members. We argue that the instability of identity arises mainly from its ongoing inter-relationships with organizational image, which are clearly characterized by a notable degree of fluidity. Perhaps most important, we argue further that the instability of

identity is actually adaptive in facilitating organizational change in response to environmental demands” (Gioia et al 2000: 350 for further discussion and explanation see Gioia et al 2000: 349-372)

In examining the fluid nature of identity, it is useful to differentiate between an enduring identity and an identity having continuity. “The notion of an identity that is enduring implies that identity remains the same over time - that it has some permanency. An identity with a sense of continuity, however, is one that shifts in its interpretation and meaning while retaining labels for "core" beliefs and values that extend over time and context” (Gioia et al 2000: 350).

Understanding Organizational identity as dynamic and fluid has some important consequences for Congregational identity. Firstly, Identity theorists have worked with the understanding that core aspects of identity are stable and unchanging, and that if some aspect of identity is changing then it is peripheral and unimportant. “We need to be careful of this presumption because even the core can shift, not only because of altered beliefs and values but also because of changing interpretations of persistent labels. Because identity is not a "thing" but, rather, a concept constructed and reconstructed by organization members, it is theoretically important to avoid its reification” (Gioia et al 2000: 368). Secondly, Identity is developed from expressed norms and values, but it is important to realize that interpretations change. “There is a reassuring continuity for members (and also for interested external constituents) in saying that their mission or central values stay the same, but the representations and translations into action take different forms over time. Thus, even though the core appears stable, it is effectively in flux because of its practical ambiguity and its complexity” (Gioia et al 2000: 352). Thirdly, “Organizational identity is a negotiated, interactive, reflexive concept that, at its essence, amounts to an organizational work-in-progress” (Gioia et al 2000: 369). This means that we can no longer say "This is who we are as an organization!" Instead, much more useful questions are "Is this who we are becoming as an organization?" or even "Is this who we want to be?"

2.4. An understanding of Congregational Identity:

2.4.1. What Congregational Identity entails:

Before considering the importance of Congregational Identity to Building up the Local Church (section 2.6.) it is important to understand what Congregational Identity entails.

“In psychological terms, identity is the singular sense of who one is. The concept of identity becomes more complex when it describes a quality possessed by a group. Here identity again refers to a reflexive awareness, but now meanings are communicated not merely within a single person but within a group. The web of meanings—the network of natural awarenesses, beliefs, values, goals—is a way of speaking about the culture of a local church. The identity of a congregation is the perception of its culture by either an observer or the congregation itself” (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney 1986: 22).

Tucker (1990: 69ff) presents a summary of principles regarding congregational identity derived from the writings of Erik Erikson and Andras Angyal in the field of individual psychology; from the work of Terrance Deal, Alien Kennedy, and Edgar Schein in the field of organizational psychology; and from the analysis of Denham Grierson, who has applied some of these insights to the church. In this summary he says that the concept of congregational identity is illuminated in the following observations:

- The identity of a congregation may be understood as a complex set of beliefs and values deeply held by its members. These convictions basically define the congregation's view of itself; they are potent beliefs and values that result from the congregation's history of relating to its external environment while maintaining its own inner life (cf Carroll et al 1986: 21; Carroll & Roozen 1990: 352; Carroll 1991: 125; Hendriks 2004: 105). This identity consists of a deep structure of meaning that is frequently beyond the members' capacity to articulate clearly. This observation is contained in the core concepts from Individual Identity theory (2.3.1.1. and 2.3.1.2.) and Social Identity theory (2.3.2.1. and 2.3.2.2.). Dudley (1988: 90-96) has clustered the many congregational identity images, from various disciplines and sources, into 8 images that provide “centres of meaning”. He groups these 8 images into 4 pairs of questions, highlighting issues of faith. This work provides an insightful way of engaging with the question of meaning for a congregation.
- The identity of a congregation is frequently revealed as one seeks to change it. The change effort gives rise to resistance that reveals underlying identity elements. (These first two principles suggest that a change in congregational identity occurs more readily when that change is less threatening). Again we find this observation in the core concepts of Organizational Identity theory (2.3.3.2.). (cf Stevens & Collins 1993: 48; Germond 1995: 174; Marais 1995: 141. see Schein 1992: 70-92).

- The identity of a congregation has a vital connection with its own history. In changing a congregation's identity, it is crucial to take this history into account and to uncover the connections between the congregation's past and its new future (cf Carroll et al 1986: 24-25).
- The identity of a congregation, like that of an individual, is closely tied to its sense of mission; a change in identity is almost synonymous with being captured by a new sense of mission (cf Nelson 1988: 7; Shawchuck & Heuser 1993: 211; Hendriks 2004: 25).
- The identity of a congregation, like an individual's, must be approved by significant others. What we see in ourselves needs to be congruent with what significant others see in us.
- A healthy congregational identity will be marked by flexibility and openness to change (cf De Roest 1998: 330). This observation is echoed in the core concepts of Organizational Identity theory (2.3.3.3.).
- A healthy congregational identity cannot be considered a permanent possession; it is constantly lost and regained (cf Hatch & Schultz 2002: 390; see Gioia et al 2000: 349-376). The Individual Identity core concept outlined in 2.3.1.4. and the Organizational Identity core concept 2.3.3.3. can be seen to be carried into our understanding of Congregational Identity theory.
- The identity of a congregation will include both positive and negative elements. Even when things look most bleak, there is an underlying, healthy core upon which any movement toward change can build.
- Congregational health is strengthened when positive identity beliefs and values are broadly held and prized by the large majority of its members (cf De Roest, 1998: 372). The core concept 2.3.3.1. from Organizational Identity theory helps us to realize that this is a reciprocal relationship where Congregational Identity in turn gives the congregational membership understanding of the congregation's central and distinctive attributes and thus provides them with meaning and something to commit to.
- Congregational identity is determined by the convictions of that congregation's significant leaders, especially the pastor; this formation process is heavily influenced by worship and preaching (cf Birch 1988: 32; Robinson 2003: 47-49). Chapter 3 will deal with congregational leadership and identity in more detail.

Carroll et al (1986: 22-45) describe seven multi-faceted elements of congregational identity and show how they individually and collectively contribute to congregational identity. An in-depth description and evaluation of these elements and how they variously contribute to congregational identity is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to offer a brief description of these 7 elements in order to understand why they are important to congregational identity.

- History. Carroll et al (1986: 24) say that a community is by definition a sharing together of significant happenings, the substance of which comes largely from remembering. It is not every event that contributes to congregational identity, but rather the 'historic' happenings that add to a congregation's understanding of itself.
- Heritage. This represents a congregation's sacred deposit and is “a congregation's acknowledgement of the inheritance of beliefs and practices about the Christian faith and life and purposes of the Church that it has by virtue of being a Christian church and standing in that particular historical stream” (Carroll et al 1986: 25).
- World-view. This “is the perspective we use to make sense of our total life . . . it provides our lives with ordered significance. It is one of the major forces that binds a congregation, thus effecting its identity, because members will hold roughly common patterns of world-views” (Carroll et al 1986: 32).
- Symbols stand for something else. They are important for congregational identity because “built largely on words, gestures, and their combinations, a congregation is in one sense constituted by a highly complex system of symbols” (Carroll et al 1986: 35).
- Ritual. A ritual is a repetitive action through which a group acts out meanings and relationships that are significant to its life. Ritual is important to congregational identity because “they communicate meanings and relationships that express a congregation's identity – either what its identity actually is, or what its identity is becoming” (Carroll et al 1986: 37).
- Demographic picture. This includes the age, gender, marital status, race, ethnicity, or socio-economic characteristics of the aggregate of members of a congregation. Our understanding of congregational identity needs “both the distribution of the various demographic characteristics across the congregation – how homogenous or heterogenous the congregation is – and a picture of the typical or average member” (Carroll et al 1986: 41).

- Character embraces the previous 6 elements but also specifically identifies “the moral dimension of congregational life, its ethos, its corporate integrity. . . and refers to the capacity of a congregation to engage in moral deliberation” (Carroll et al 1986: 43).

2.4.2. Congregational Identity core concepts:

Even though identity has been found to be fluid and complex, congregational identity needs to be founded upon certain core concepts without which congregational identity will fail to be Christian.

2.4.2.1. Discovering the congregation's “eidos”:

As stated before, identity and identity development is complex, depending on many factors and including various components. However, central to our understanding of Christian identity and identity development must be the realization that identity finding is the discovery of who God has already made us to be (see Psalm 139). Sellner (1975: 48) understands the search for identity as including the willingness, the courage, the conscious decision to become who one already is. It means embracing one's life, one's personality, one's conscious and unconscious elements, one's flesh and humanity, muteness and sinfulness and guilt, gifts and talents and goodness. The discovery of one's authentic identity begins by looking within the existing-self and discovering that our authentic identity is to be found in who we already are and not in some off-the-shelf clone that our social context may expect us to be. The key to understanding our unique identity is the ability to both embrace and celebrate who we already are, who God has created us to be. In this sense, as Individual Identity theory points out, it is the discovery of our *eidos* (see 2.3.1.1.), which reminds us that identity -finding in a congregation is a process of discovery over time that seeks to discover how and why God has created the local congregation. The unique *eidos* of each local congregation is emphasized by Finzel (1997: 267) when he says that organizational culture is like a unique corporate fingerprint, unique face and unique personality that is part of your organization. Each organization has a totally unique and distinct composition. We may think one church is like the next, but in reality each has its very distinct culture, built on the heritage of its leaders. To understand the culture is to learn what makes this group unique in its contribution to the world. These values form the bedrock for developing mission statements, vision and momentum. “The driving assumption about congregations today is that they each have a unique call to ministry, a call very much determined by the

congregation's location and ministry with a specific and unique group of individuals, who have specific and unique needs and interests within the greater framework of the faith tradition” (Rendle 2001: 6).

2.4.2.2. Discovering God's mission for the congregation in the world:

An important factor in congregational identity, which many authors seem to neglect or take for granted, is the congregation's understanding of “God's presence and activity in the world” (Smit 1995b: 114). Nelson (1988: 7) reminds us that congregations are unique because they are a gathering of people who share beliefs and seek to understand and do God's will in the circumstances of their lives. Their constant reference to God - who is in but also beyond life - is what gives congregations a unique status among all groups to which a person belongs. Specifically congregational identity must be rooted in the Bible and Christian tradition “or it will lose touch with those traditions that make the church Christian and not just one of many volunteer associations in society. The Bible contains the record of the origin of the church and witnesses to the God who called that church into being. All that we know of God rests on scriptural foundations, for even our discernment of divine activity in our own time is dependent on knowing who God revealed the divine Self to be in biblical tradition. In fact, sharpening our understanding of the God who called Israel and the church into life can give us new eyes to see the grace of God in our midst (Birch 1988: 30 cf Robinson 2003: 48)). Nel (2009: 5) adds that God's original purpose is still on track, despite the many hurdles and stumbling blocks in the coming of the Kingdom. The congregation is his plan. It is important to understand that the congregation never takes over the plan. The plan is God's. The congregation is the plan, God's plan. One might say that this is the/our very reason for existence: to be his plan. God has created himself a showcase of the new creation. Or even better: He has a new way of showing what creation/his world was intended to be all along: the fulfilment of being created to take care (on his behalf) of the whole of creation. The congregation is the continuation of God's plan for the unfolding of the Kingdom come and coming. An important point that Dick (2007: 74) makes in this regard, that needs to be emphasized, and which is very strong in retrogressive churches, is that there is a correlation between the belief that the vision comes from God, and the membership's commitment to the congregation's sense of identity and purpose.

2.4.2.3. Understanding the Congregations theological framework:

Shawchuck and Heuser (1992: 211) state that the congregation's theological beliefs and values also give it its sense of "call" to be God's people in the community and in the world (cf Smit 1995b: 116). The mission of the church is a matter of both being and doing, which means congregational identity must explore what it means to "be" in order to "do" God's calling. Alongside the concern for congregational "doing" ("What are we to do?") must be concern for the congregation's "being" ("Who are we to be?"). "The character of Christians and Christian congregations becomes as important as their conduct" (Birch 1988: 30).

2.4.2.4. A Christological identity:

Even more pointedly, congregational identity needs to be understood as Christocentric. Iverson (1985: 7) points out that the most fundamental and important doctrine for the Church is the doctrine of Christ. The constant message (kerygma) of the apostles was the teaching (didache) about Christ. McGrath (2001: 407-408) points out that salvation is not only linked with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but that salvation is shaped by Christ. This means that the Christian life is shaped by Jesus Christ. Kung (1968: 15) states that the church "stands or falls by its links with its origins in Jesus Christ and its message; it remains permanently dependent, for the ground of its existence, on God's saving act in Jesus Christ, which is valid for all time and so also in the present." Moltmann (1977: 5) says that "the Lordship of Christ is the church's sole, and hence all-embracing, determining factor." Snyder (1977: 13) points out that the gospel call is a call to something, and that something is not even, exclusively, Jesus Christ. Rather Christians are called to the body of Christ, the community of believers where Jesus Christ is the essential and sovereign head. When referring to the church as the 'body of Christ' Paul is speaking about "an organic unity, in which Christians not only belong to Christ and to one another within his body; they also abide in him and find life in him" (Watson 1978: 97)

This means that the local congregation needs to be "led on the way to understanding who it really is *in Christ*" (Nel 2004: 151). Whilst many members may understand this already on an individual level, Building up the Local Church must focus on building a corporate sense of belonging to and being in Christ. A Christocentric congregational identity understands that successful "doing" does not establish identity, rather healthy congregational identity is founded on the salvatory work of God in Jesus Christ through

the Holy Spirit. “Primarily the congregation is different because it is *in Christ*. The congregation consists of people who share in the salvation God has wrought. They differ from the world in that their minds and lives are continually changed through renewal. Because they are *in Christ*, and belong to the Father through him, and because the Spirit lives in them, they keep on being renewed” (Nel 2004: 152).

This call to live out a biblical identity is discomfiting “since it calls us to the difficult task of alternative life amidst the constant cultural pressures on the church to conform. It is, however, the biblical understanding that this tension is the creative one from which the church's mission arises and is empowered. That mission is to mediate the grace of God we have already experienced to a broken world in need of healing grace. The model of the congregation's own life as an alternative community in the covenant model is one of the significant ways in which that mission is carried forward” (Birch 1988: 29; cf Bosch 1991: 168-179; Smit 1995b: 116).

This understanding of belonging to God and being guided by Biblical precepts and Christian tradition is foundational to the ministry of Building up the Local Church as it seeks to lead the congregation to live out a transformative or prophetic witness in the world. In this sense congregational identity must differ sharply with Organizational identity theory in the sense that congregational identity cannot be predominantly influenced by the prevailing cultural settings. “The biblical congregations formed around memory and vision have a distinctive character. In both Old and New Testaments, congregations are called to model life as alternative communities in the midst of their prevailing cultural settings” (Birch 1988: 26; cf Smit 1995b: 115).

2.5. How is congregational identity developed?:

I suggest that an appropriate way of understanding how congregational identity is discovered and developed is to understand that “a congregation is formed in response to God's initiative of grace: Thus, the agenda for congregational life is always set by God's will, prayerfully and reflectively considered, rather than the congregation's own self-interest” (Birch 1988: 23; see Bosch 1991: 389-393). Specifically congregational identity-finding must be centred on the Bible and Christian tradition.

Although his terminology differs, Birch (1988: 23) shows that congregational identity is shaped largely by the qualities of memory and vision. Memory (in his terminology this constitutes identity) is oriented to activities of remembering what God has done and

how faithful response has been made to God's action. We are shaped as community by what we call to memory from our biblical and historic tradition. There are also “significant events and relationships in its unique history and heritage that have shaped the congregation and continue to be remembered and interpreted in the present. Sometimes this is referred to as its “little tradition”: in contrast to its “great tradition” - the history and heritage that a congregation shares as a part of the church universal and of the particular denominational stream of which it is a part” (Carroll 1988: 62).

Carroll (1988: 62) also highlights that congregational identity is shaped from the congregation's present - both its relationships to its social context and the character and characteristics of its present members (including their social worlds). Additionally, a congregation's identity is shaped from the hopes of its members - “their images of the future of their congregation which play an important role in the interpretation of the congregation's present” (Carroll 1988: 62).

For Birch (1988: 23) vision (in his terminology this is something in the future, distinct from identity) is oriented to activities of anticipating what God is yet doing in the world and aligning congregational life to serve that action of God's grace. I understand God's indicative “blueprint” to be as much a part of congregational identity as its biblical and historical tradition. “An analysis of identity must bear in mind both identity's integrative function of *being* in the present and its transformative function of *becoming* as it moves into the future. A sense of both being and becoming must accompany any congregation's apprehension of its identity. A group's perception of itself involves both what it finds itself to be and what it determines to become” (Carroll et al 1986: 23).

The arenas of congregational remembering are worship, religious education, and the life of the congregation as a community (Birch 1988: 32-41). It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate or discuss these three arena's, however it is important to stress the arena of worship, not because it is more important than the others, but because it is the one arena where most of the congregation is together at one time most often. “In many ways Christian worship can be considered a ritual act of congregational remembering. Although its central purpose is celebration, it is celebration based on the remembrance of what God has done in Jesus Christ and on the remembrance of who we are called to be as God's people, Christ's church” (Birch 1988: 32). Robinson (2003: 48) says it emphatically when he states that if the primary issue at stake for worship today is the presence of God, the second issue at stake is the formation of congregational identity, the formation of the church. In the New Testament we find the apostle Paul, founder and

nurturer of congregations, especially focused on this task. Paul was forever reminding the early Christian congregations of their baptism into Christ, of its significance, of their new identity, and that they were no longer the people they had once been. Only after his labored explanations about identity, about who we are, does Paul turn to ethics, to how we are to act. “Mission begins here in worship with the naming of a new identity, the creation of a new people. Thus worship, at least in part, is the constant reiteration of a new identity, a new vision” (Robinson 2003: 49)

This brings us to an important point for this paper regarding Identity development in general and Congregational Identity-finding specifically. The point is that Congregational Identity-finding and development is a long-term and ongoing task. Without the long-term cultivation of a particular Theological framework in the life of the congregation, through remembering the Biblical tradition, particular images of congregational life, or a particular historic tradition, congregational identity will be fractured and incoherent. However, if “nurtured over the course of a congregation's ongoing life, the images and insights of biblical and historical memory will be available as part of the identity that the church carries with it into every decision on priorities or action in behalf of missional calling” (Birch 1988: 31).

2.5.1. A Process of Identity-finding:

Castells (2004: 7) says that it is easy to agree on the fact that, from a sociological perspective, all identities are constructed. The real issue for him though is how, from what, by whom, and for what. He states that who constructs collective identity, and for what, largely determines the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it.

As we have stated previously, “building up the local church is always about the congregation, and this congregation has to come quite clearly to understand, under the guidance of God and his Word and through service to people, its own nature and *raison d'etre*. The congregation itself (and not a number of managers on behalf of the congregation) must operate on the basis of its conscious awareness of its own identity, and evaluate, draft and achieve its objectives accordingly” (Nel 2004: 135).

De Roest (1998: 365-373) describes 5 factors that need to be considered in order to facilitate the participation of every member of the congregation in the process of identity development. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss nor evaluate

these factors. However, some remarks are necessary in order to understand his contribution as to how congregational identity is developed.

- Leadership. This factor will be dealt with more comprehensively in chapter 3. Simply to say at this point that De Roest, following Hendriks (1990: 55f), calls for a type of leadership as service that understands its function as helping and supporting the members in the process of decision making. This leadership will stimulate the congregation to engage in the process of identity development. “They offer 'reflection-in-action’” (De Roest 1998: 365).
- Structure. Facilitating the participation of every member requires a structure that is stable. This requires an equal focus on the relations between members in the collective, the relationship between the institution and the individual, and the relationships between groups within the institution. “Such a structure is stable, since it does not only offer opportunities for the realization of the 'general' interest of the collective, but also for the legitimate interests of the individual members, provided that the actualization of those interests occurs in accordance with rules that guarantee acceptance of each other” (De Roest 1998: 368 cf Shawchuck & Heuser 1993: 139). A Christian church is born where Christians engage in the discourse of identity. *Koinonia* contributes to the genesis of a communicative identity” (Heitink 1999: 278; see Richards & Martin 1981: 144-149 and Bosch 1991: 467-474).
- Goals. De Roest (1998: 370) makes 4 observations regarding goals. *First*, goals should be manifest. Losing sight of its goals destroys a congregations vitality. The resulting loss of dynamism results in reduced member participation, which is counter-productive and contrary to the spirit and purpose of Building up the Local Church. *Second*, goals have to be made specific. What is the purpose of the activities? How are they related to the collective identity? *Third*, goals have to be commonly shared. If goals are not common, mutual consultation and an orientation towards consensus are unthinkable. Leadership should further the formulation of common goals, and that process should be commonly performed. *Fourth*, goals have to be inspiring. Goals can inspire if they are connected to the awareness of fulfilling a mission. In addition goals can be inspiring if they are *relevant* to a specific problem. They have to be realizable, too. Goals have to be manifest, specific, common and inspiring.
- Climate. Two observations are made regarding what contributes towards a positive climate within a congregation. “*First*, it is important that 'ordinary’

members are regarded as subjects” (De Roest 1998: 371). Not only are they expected to apply congregational policies, but they are to be involved in decision making and definition of its policies. Also, characteristic of a positive climate is that the whole congregation formulates goals. Further, every member needs to be informed with all the information that is present within the congregation. “*Second*, according to the sociology of institution, taking people seriously is necessary for the well functioning of an institution. Their needs should be known, and their knowledge of the institution should be used in order to improve the activities of the institution” (De Roest 1998: 371). He makes the point that neglecting the perspectives of its members (pastoral) and becoming businesslike also leads to a diminishing motivation to participate.

- Conception of identity. The analysis of a congregation's identity is “stretched out across the three types of discourse, theoretical, normative-evaluative and translational” (De Roest 1998: 371), and is conducted by leadership and members together as they become engaged in a learning or enlightenment process in which the collective identity of the congregation can be renewed. De Roest (1998: 372), following Hendriks (1990: 140), states that clear and commonly shared conceptions of collective identity enhance the attractiveness of the institution, particularly if its content can be appreciated as well. A clear and commonly shared answer to the question "Who are we?" and "What should we do?" or "What do we want?" is the basis of realizing that the collective forms a "We". It makes it possible for people to enjoy participating, and as a result their participation will be efficient as well. A vital institution needs a clear and commonly shared concept of identity.

2.6. The importance of congregational identity to Building up the Local Church:

Dick (2007: 9-14), in his research within the United Methodist Church of USA, found that his research data fell into two sets of criteria – namely **growth**, measured by growing/declining and **sustainability**, measured by stable/unstable. These two sets of criteria were integrated and four church “types” emerged, namely Decaying, Dystrophic, Retrogressive and Vital. Although a full analysis of his work is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that Decaying churches show disturbing signs of decline and instability, Dystrophic churches show signs of growth but are inherently unstable, Retrogressive churches show signs of stability but are declining, while Vital churches show signs of stability and growth.

Having the local church members understand and embrace their congregational identity is absolutely fundamental to Building up the Local Church. Dick (2007: 17) states emphatically that “of all the stability criteria, a strong sense of identity – who we are as a congregation of God's people – is perhaps the most important. 'Who are we?' rests at the heart of our entire walk of faith. Individually, we wrestle with this question on a regular basis, but it is every bit as important that we wrestle with it corporately as well”

Dick (2007: 18-19) points out that congregational members in “Decaying churches” have no definite understanding of their corporate identity and a definite lack of shared clarity of purpose. He says that Decaying churches are inward looking and consumeristic, existing to meet the needs of the members.

In fact, Dick (2007: 41) makes the point that Decaying churches are declining and unstable because they have forgotten who they are and why they exist. He says that any decaying church can rebuild a sound foundation by attending to the questions of identity, purpose, focus, discernment of God's vision, and core values.

Within Dystrophic churches Dick (2007: 45-46) shows that the sense of identity is not widely shared amongst the congregation, and in fact points out that it is the vision, drive and ambition of the senior pastor that defines the identity of the congregation.

Retrogressive churches, although declining, are still very strong with significant focused outreach ministries. They have high membership standards and an equally high membership participation. Dick (2007: 69) points out that members in Retrogressive congregations have an incredibly strong sense of identity. The sense of community, connectedness, and commonality is deep in retrogressive churches. Membership means something in retrogressive churches. “A church with a simple, clear, concise purpose finds it much easier to get everyone on the same page” (Dick 2007: 72).

Vital churches also have a very strong sense of congregational identity. “We' is the word spoken most frequently in vital congregations. The community of faith comes first. It is striking to be in a large group of people where agendas are set aside for the common good, but that is the norm in vital churches. Unity, connection, oneness, and communion are defining terms for these congregations. That is not to say there is not disagreement or conflict in these churches, but where disagreement exists, there is a healthy, respectful way to address it” (Dick 2007:92).

2.6.1. The outcomes of a process of identity finding:

The importance of congregational identity in the process of Building up the Local Church is underscored when we realize the outcomes of the identity-finding process.

2.6.1.1. Congregational identity provides understanding of “who we are”:

As stated earlier, it is fundamental to Building up the Local Church that we understand the nature, purpose and functioning of the local church because Building up the Local Church is a ministry that is entirely concerned with leading and guiding a congregation (as the empirical subject in a given time and place) to an understanding of her true nature (as the defined subject according to the intention of God as revealed in the Bible)” (Nel 1990: 4; cf Nel 1990: 25). “This identity is a given, a metaphorically defined given. The local church must be helped to understand, increasingly and continuously so, who they are *in Christ*. Many members of local churches know that, but building up a local church is about building a corporate sense of identity. . . In finding identity it is all about this corporative self-image of the local church. It is this God given self-image or understanding that should be rediscovered” (Nel 2004: 367). “A congregation's identity reflects at "rock bottom" the basic assumptions that members hold about their particular congregation and its purpose. These basic assumptions in turn reflect the meanings that the congregation has developed over time, and they are the means by which members interpret the congregation to themselves and to others on the outside” (Carroll 1988: 61).

2.6.1.2. Congregational identity provides understanding of “why we are here”:

De Roest (1998: 372) points out that congregation's are not always certain about their identity. He says there is a growing uncertainty on faith in God, on the relation between church and society, on the task of the church, etc. “As a result individual Christians find it difficult to form an individual identity, and the socialization of young members is severely obstructed. . . Various responses to the uncertainty in Christian identity can be distinguished: 1) withdrawal; 2) turning to another collective that does have a clear identity; 3) making a virtue out of necessity by stating that one has to learn to live with uncertainties” (De Roest 1998: 372).

Nel (2004: 10) provides a summary of God's purpose in building His church. He states that God's purpose is to shape an enthusiastic community of disciples of Jesus Christ, in which the believers together and individually use their gifts for mutual service and

salvation, and then as equipped and trained people, reveal God in such a way that the world will get to know him through Jesus Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit, and so themselves then be built into the Body of Christ.

A strong, clearly defined, well-articulated Congregational identity provides individual Christian's and congregations with the certainty of “who they are/mean't to be” and “what they must do”. "The church's purpose is not its own. The church is present in the world on behalf of the God by whose grace it has been called into existence. Thus, at the heart of the church's act of self definition is a basic theological question: What is the nature of Gods presence in the world?" (Nel 2004: 32).

Nel (2004: 32) helps us to remember that each congregation, which came into being through the *missio Dei* must be focused on mission in all it says and does. In fact congregational identity is intrinsically and fundamentally missional. The missionary initiative of God in any local context must influence and shape the local congregation's sense of identity (who are we and why are we here). It is fundamentally important for all the members of a congregation to understand their missional identity, of participating with God in His Salvific plan, because this will provide the local congregation impetus to intentionally become who they already are in Christ, and to fulfill their part in God's missionary activity in the world (see Bosch 1991: 372, 390)

2.6.1.3. Congregational identity promotes Congregational unity:

“Strong and compelling congregational self-images bind members together, expressing their shared identity and delineating the ways they differ from others. . . . When a congregation discovers symbols that articulate its identity, it can build on its strengths and address its weaknesses. The best self-images affirm the values that bind the members, give sharpness and meaning to areas of disagreement, and provide a context for change and growth” (Dudley & Johnson 1991: 104). Such unity around a congregational identity will help overcome what De Roest (1998: 373) refers to as a so-called “split identity” and also the existence of two or more identity concepts within one congregation.

This increased sense of unity will further help to provide a place of belonging and promote inter-personal interaction and relationship. This place of belonging will counteract the challenges facing individuals living in modern societies who are under

pressure to identify with increasingly abstract entities (see Social Identity theory core concept 2.3.2.4.). Hopefully, this sense of belonging and inter-action will prevent Congregational Identities from becoming abstract and thus meaningless.

2.6.1.4. Congregational identity provides guidance and direction:

A strong, clearly defined, well-articulated Congregational identity will implicitly or explicitly interpret and guide its common life. De Roest (1998: 373), quoting Hendriks (1990: 145), states that a clear and commonly shared answer to the questions "Who are we?" and "What should we do?", i.e., the two questions of theoretical and normative-practical discourse, will facilitate the determination of goals, will enlarge the chances for a clear structure, and, finally, will clarify the criteria for judging and evaluating the policy of the collective. Carroll (1988: 62) makes the point that if a congregation's leadership desires to be intentional about its ministry and mission, then it is necessary for them to develop clarity about the congregation's identity. Carroll (1988) writes that only systems with identity can be autonomous, acting for themselves, and deciding on the basis of who they are or were, what to do and to be.

The clearer the meaning an organizational system has for its members, the greater its potential for self-direction. . . . [l]oss of meaning or weak identity increases entropy (the loss of energy) for the organizational system, just as it does for the individual. . . . The implications of this for congregations seem clear. Where leaders-lay and clergy-are aware of their congregation's identity and can affirm it positively, they will very likely be able to act "in character" as they make decisions and seek to shape their future. There will be an integrity about the decisions they make and the goals they pursue, even when those decisions are tough and the attainment of goals is uncertain. They will have a sense that some things are appropriate to their identity, and others are not.

(Carroll 1988: 62)

2.6.1.5. Congregational identity provides understanding of their unique call:

Organizational culture is like a unique corporate fingerprint, we may think one church is like the next, but in reality each has its very distinct culture, built on the heritage of its leaders. To understand the culture is to learn what makes this group unique in its contribution to the world. It is important for a congregation to realize that God is working a purpose through them that is larger than any one of them could imagine. "It is important that we develop a vision by recognizing what God wants of us" (Buchanan 1995: 81). This is very important for a congregation because the "congregation's corporate vision becomes a path where there is no pathway; it brings clarity when there is obscurity and provides the impetus to keep going no matter how formidable the

roadblocks. Vision transcends; it lifts the entire congregation to new realizations of possibilities; it generates enthusiasm and power; it aligns the thoughts, emotions, and actions of the people in pursuit of a common and compelling purpose” (Shawchuck & Heuser 1993: 140; see Blackaby & Blackaby 2001: 56-72).

2.6.1.6. This all helps a congregation remain faithful to God:

“The identity of the local church plays a major and determining role in the understanding and process of building up or developing missional congregations” (Nel 2009: 1). Nel is helping us to understand that helping a local congregation to understand and embrace their God-given identity in Christ – which is fundamental to Building up the Local Church – will encourage them to remain faithful to God's plan and purpose for that local congregation in its context. “At the heart of the issue is a very important question: Who do we think we are? . . . Certainly the church is *for* us, and at its very best it *is* us, but it isn't *about* us. It's about God and God's vision for all creation. If any church is truly vital, its vitality comes from God, and it is the unrelenting focus on God that keeps it vital” (Dick 2007: 126). In other words, in line with the ministry of Building up the Local Church, Congregational identity-finding must help all the members of a congregation to understand their corporate identity, who they are created to be in Christ, and what they are called to do for Christ in the world. Knowing “who we are” and “why we exist” informs each local congregation's ministry and mission, allowing each church to make the Kingdom of God tangibly visible in their context. Another way stating this is to say that guiding the members of a local church to understand and embrace their Congregational Identity ensures congruency. Congruency exists when there is consistency between how we live and behave and what we say we believe. It is “walking the talk” and “talking the walk”. Building up the Local Church seeks to lessen the discrepancy between the empirical and the defined subject “church” by leading the congregation through a process of identity finding.

2.7. Conclusion:

This chapter has sought to understand the dynamics of Congregational Identity by first seeking understanding from the other Identity theories. These core concepts have provided helpful insights and have proven to be congruent with many Congregational Identity dynamics. Throughout this chapter the absolutely fundamental importance of Identity to local congregation's has been shown, and in the final analysis a strong,

clearly defined, well-articulated Congregational identity overcomes uncertainty, builds unity, provides guidelines and direction, and increases member participation, excitement and energy. In short, the on-going process of congregational identity-finding lays a foundation for ever increasing congruency within the congregation as it becomes empirically more and more like the defined subject “Church”, and encourages participation in the fulfillment of God's purpose of coming to the world to save and renew and transform.

In the next chapter I will address the importance of long-term ministerial tenure and its effects on a local congregation's Identity-finding ability.

CHAPTER 3: Leadership influence, tenure and change.

3.1. Introduction:

Leadership Theory has gone through significant developments over the last 60 years. An in-depth discussion of Leadership Theory is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to highlight some of the major developments of Leadership Theory and some of the key characteristics of Leadership as they relate to Christian Leadership theory.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note that Christian Leadership Theory over the last 60 years in the West has generally followed secular (business and societal) Leadership Theory, incorporating developments and insights of secular Leadership thinking into its theory and practice. There are parallels between Secular and Christian Leadership theories in terms of leadership principles and functions, however there has not been enough discernment in implementing the insights from Secular Leadership theory, resulting in much Christian leadership exercised along “Christianized” secular principles. This has not always been beneficial to Christian leaders. Gibbs (2005: 21) notes that much of the leadership literature of the 1980s focused on high-powered, entrepreneurial leadership exercised by larger-than-life 'charismatic' personalities. In its secular usage *charismatic* does not apply to spiritual gifting but to fast-talking persons with magnetic personalities, inflated egos and the big ideas necessary to provide them with a sense of personal fulfilment. Thankfully, this understanding of leadership has been strongly challenged in recent years. Sparks (2007) has taken a different approach and argues that leaders seeking to be exceptional should ignore the sacred/secular and spiritual/business leadership differentiations and should rather recognize, accept, develop and live by Christ-like leadership principles. These principles found in Jesus Christ's leadership practice transcend the differentiation between sacred and secular.

There are various aspects of secular leadership theory that apply to Christian leadership theory, especially the functional aspects of leadership. However, there are very important distinctions made between Christian and secular leadership when it comes to the qualities and characteristics of leadership. This is very important and has eternal consequences because Congregational leadership in the context of Building up the Local Church is specifically concerned with guiding the local congregation to

participate in its own identity-finding processes, helping the congregation understand and live out its identity as the body of Christ in a particular time and place.

Therefore section 3.2. “What is leadership”, seeks to highlight a few key insights into the characteristics and functions of leadership.

Then section 3.3. “Characteristics of Christian leadership”, will focus on those functions and characteristics that make Christian leadership unique.

Section 3.4. will then focus on the Research Problem (section 1.2.) by addressing, specifically, the importance of leadership in Building up the Local Church. Special attention will be paid to servant leadership and systems theory.

Section 3.5. “How the leader influences the congregation”, highlights the leader's personal example and teaching, showing the need for long tenure, and then offers guidelines regarding leadership responses during congregational identity-finding.

Section 3.6. will relate the Research Problem to the current rules and regulations regarding ministerial tenure in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Section 3.7. relates specifically to the Research problem by addressing the importance of tenure on the influence of leadership and shows how longer tenure increases leadership influence, arguing that longer pastoral tenure is absolutely vital for Building up the Local Church and specifically for guiding the process of congregational identity-finding.

Finally, section 3.8. seeks to define change as it refers to Building up the Local Church, then highlights aspects of Change theory and relates these to the pastor as “change agent”, thus strengthening the argument that longer tenure increases the influence of congregational leaders.

3.2. What is leadership:

“Leadership is a complex issue; it cannot be defined in one short sentence. It takes on different forms in diverse situations in which individuals demonstrate contrasting leadership traits” (Gibbs 2005: 18; cf Barna 1997a: 21 and Bennis & Nanus 2003: 3-4). Rosenbach and Taylor distinguish between two basic types of leadership: Transactional and Transformational leadership

Transactional leadership clarifies the role followers must play both to attain the organization's desired outcomes and to receive valued personal rewards for satisfactory performance, giving them the confidence necessary to achieve those outcomes and rewards. Transactional leadership is the equitable transaction or exchange between the leader and followers whereby the leader influences the followers by focusing on the self-interests of both. The self-interest of the leader is satisfactory performance, and the self-

interests of the followers are the valued rewards gained in return for good performance. Used well, and in appropriate situations, transactional leadership will result in good performance. Transactional leadership is simply good management and might be considered managerial leadership.

Transformational or *transforming* leadership involves strong personal identification of followers with the leader. The transformational leader motivates followers to perform beyond expectations by creating an awareness of the importance of mission and the vision in such a way that followers share beliefs and values and are able to transcend self-interests and tie the vision to the higher-order needs of self-esteem and self-actualization. Transformational leaders create a mental picture of the shared vision in the minds of the followers through the use of language that has deep meaning from shared experiences. In addition, they are role models: In their daily actions they set an example and give meaning to shared assumptions, beliefs, and values. Transformational leaders empower or, better yet, enable the followers to perform beyond expectations by sharing power and authority and ensuring that followers understand how to use them. These leaders are committed to developing the followers into partners.

(Rosenbach & Taylor 2006: 3)

(cf Lee 1989: 31-32 and Bennis & Nanus 2003: 202; see Burns 1978 and 2003).

Barna (1997a: 23) includes five key attributes in his definition of leadership. Thus, a leader is one who **mobilizes**; one whose focus is influencing **people**; a person who is **goal driven** (cf Kouzes & Posner 2002: 112); someone who has an orientation **in common** with those who rely upon him for leadership (cf Kouzes & Posner 2003: 1); and someone who has people willing to **follow** them.

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (2003) interviewed 90 effective and successful leaders - 60 from business and 30 from the public sector. Their goal was to find the common traits in the 90 leaders. Amidst all the diversity “four major themes slowly developed, four areas of competency, four types of human handling skills, that all ninety of our leaders embodied: Strategy 1: attention through vision; Strategy 2: meaning through communication; Strategy 3: trust through positioning; Strategy 4: the deployment of self through (1) positive self-regard & (2) the Wallenda factor” (Bennis & Nanus 2003: 25).

- Strategy 1: “Management of attention through vision is the creating of focus. All ninety people interviewed had an agenda, an unparalleled concern with outcome. Leaders are the most results-oriented individuals in the world, and results get attention. Their visions or intentions are compelling and pull people toward them. Intensity coupled with commitment is magnetic. . . . Vision grabs. Initially it grabs the leader, and management of attention enables others also to get on the bandwagon” (Bennis & Nanus 2003: 26).

- Strategy 2: managing meaning through communication; is closely related to the first, for if others are to catch the vision, leaders must communicate what it is. “All organizations depend on the existence of shared meanings . . . Leaders articulate and define what has previously remained implicit or unsaid . . . in so doing influencing and organizing meaning for the members of the organization” (Bennis & Nanus 2003: 37). “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality” (De Pree 1989: 9), and again “the only important thing leaders do may well be constructing culture” (Sashkin 2006: 13). Bennis and Nanus (2003: iii) identified the leader as the person with the primary responsibility for articulating organizational values, interpreting reality, framing and mobilizing meaning, and creating the necessary symbols and role models to communicate a coherent image of the principles that should guide organizational behavior. Leaders “help define and inculcate certain shared values and beliefs among organizational members. Values define what is right or wrong, good or bad; beliefs define what people expect to happen as a consequence of their actions. The values and beliefs shared by people in an organization are the essence of that organization's culture” (Sashkin 2006: 13, 16; cf Bennis & Nanus 2003: 37; Burns 2003: 29 and Kouzes & Posner 2003: xvi, 188)
- Strategy 3: Trust through positioning; This does not mean that everyone else always agrees with the leader. It means rather that the leader's position is clear, and that it is consistent with the overall vision and plan. Bennis and Nanus (2003: 45-49) point out that this management of trust results in organizational integrity and constancy – staying power. Kouzes and Posner (2003) highlight that leadership is personal and show the extreme importance of the leader's personal credibility. Their research shows that credibility is foundational to leadership. Broken credibility destroys trust. However, if leaders practice what they preach, we're more willing to entrust them with our career, our security, and sometimes even our life
- Strategy 4: The deployment of self through (1) positive self-regard and (2) the Wallenda factor. These leaders display (1) a strong emotional wisdom (Bennis & Nanus 2003: 61-62). Friedman (1985: 220-249) calls this "self-differentiation": it is the capacity for self-definition, the ability of a leader "to define his or her own goals or values while trying to maintain a non-anxious presence within the system" that is critical. Leaders need to know who they are and what their convictions are. And they require the ability to be clear about their goals without

becoming so anxious that they seek to force their goals on others” (Robinson 2003: 122; cf Lee 1989: 90-91; Kouzes & Posner 2002: 44-45). (2) The Wallenda factor is the “capacity to embrace positive goals, to pour one's energies into the task, not into looking behind and dredging up excuses for past events” (Bennis & Nanus 2003: 66).

3.3. Characteristics of Christian leadership:

Just as in secular Leadership Theory, there are many definitions of Christian leadership (see Blackaby & Blackaby 2001: 16-20). Due to many of the functions of leadership being similar, whether secular or Christian (see Lee 1989: 28-31), this section will focus on those functions and characteristics that make Christian leadership unique and then offers a critique of some secular thinking which has been “Christianized”.

3.3.1. Qualities of Christian leadership:

Sanders (1994) includes many qualities in his description of spiritual leadership, including discipline, vision, wisdom, humility, integrity and sincerity, humour, patience and executive ability. However, it is appropriate to highlight that Sanders (1994: 79-92) includes as pre-eminent and paramount to Christian leadership the need for the leader to be Spirit-filled and a person of prayer (cf Blackaby & Blackaby: 2001: 148-153).

Barna (1997a: 24) highlights three distinct but related qualities of Christian leadership. He says it is the combination of these qualities that enables them to do what leaders do. Remove any one of these qualities, and the person would be a valued member of a group, but not a leader.

- First, a Christian leader is called by God. They are called to servanthood, but a unique brand of servanthood. This is one who serves by leading. The vast majority of God's human creation are followers. Those who have been anointed by Him to lead are most valuable to the Body of believers—in functional terms—by their willingness to follow their call and do that which followers so desperately need. Importantly, Barna (1997a: 25) adds that if you have not been chosen by Him to lead His people, it does not matter how wonderful your character or how well skilled you are for the task, you will never become a great Christian leader. . . The difference is that we are not talking about leading God's people to higher profitability, or to greater efficiency, but to superior godliness and to spiritual truth. Further, we are not talking about meddling in human

affairs to make incremental gains for worldly purposes, but about investing in people such that they recognize and maximize the ways God has called, gifted and seeks to refine them”.

The concept of “servant leadership” will be discussed later in section 3.3.3.

- Second, a Christian leader is a person of Christ-like character. Because the central function of a leader is to enable people to know, love and serve God with their entire hearts, minds, souls and strength, the leader must possess the kind of personal attributes—characteristics of the heart, manifested through speech and behaviour—that reflect the nature of our God. (See section 3.5 for fuller treatment of the importance of the leader's character for Christian leadership)
- Third, a Christian leader possesses functional competencies that allow them to perform tasks and guide people toward accomplishing the ends as God's servants. These are the abilities that receive prolific attention: inspiring people, directing their energy and resources, casting vision, building teams, celebrating victories, delegating authority, making decisions, developing strategy, accepting responsibility for outcomes and so on. In Christian circles, we often think of this package of elements as “the spiritual gift of leadership.”

As stated earlier, central to a local congregation's sense of identity must be the discovery of its *eidos*. Further, because a local congregation belongs to God and serves God, it is vital for a local congregation to understand God's presence and activity in the world. This means that “the primary task of leadership is to help the people of God discern the mind of God and respond to God's promptings . . . because if Christ is head of his church then he alone is its leader” (Germond, 1995: 178).

“Church leaders minister by calling for repentance, by working for reform and new life. Leadership in the church is rooted in what we believe about God and the church, the body of the Son, Jesus Christ. The church may have much in common with organizations of various kinds, and it may operate in similar ways, but its beliefs about leadership are rooted deeply in the faith. In the church we believe leadership is one of God's gifts, given for the sake and welfare of the church's life and mission. We believe also that leadership is a calling from God and a ministry through which we serve God” (Lee 1989: 25; cf Gibbs 2005: 20; see Blackaby & Blackaby 2001: 20-23).

3.3.2. Functions of Christian leadership:

Carroll (1991: 125-138) points out that congregational leaders need to give constant attention to their congregation's faithfulness in living out its identity and calling. He thus proposes three broad leadership functions as a way of understanding this key leadership task, namely meaning interpretation, community formation, and support of the congregation's public ministry (cf Smit 1995b: 117; see Carroll 1991: 125-138).

- Meaning interpretation: “Much of what a pastor does in specific pastoral roles - preaching, designing and leading the liturgy, teaching, counseling, and organizational leadership - is aimed at assisting others to reflect on and interpret their personal and social experiences in the light of God's purposes in Jesus Christ” (Carroll 1991: 126). When congregations face crises of meaning it is important for Christian leaders to stand “with individuals or the congregation as a corporate body in these experiences, helping them to face them and give meaning to them in the light of the gospel. The pastor helps members reflect on these experiences, framing or reframing them in terms of the gospel and exploring responses to them in ways that express their Christian identity” (Carroll 1991: 126). Another way of saying this is that congregational leadership is responsible for the en-visioning process within a congregation. “A crucial task for leaders and a key first step in practical theological thinking is helping a congregation gain a realistic picture of itself, its situation, and its possibilities in the present and immediate future” (Carroll 1998: 173). “A second leadership task is helping your congregation develop a vision for its ministry that is faithful to its understanding of God and God's purpose for it in this particular time and place and that is commensurate with its size and resources” (Carroll 1998: 179; cf Carroll, 1998: 183; Hendriks, 2004: 205; Dick, 2007: 101-102; see Rendle, 2001: 14-19). It is important to note Blackaby & Blackaby's (2001: 56-72) warning regarding a Christian leaders source of vision/revelation.
- Community formation: helping to shape the congregation as a community of belonging. “There is a close relationship between this task and meaning interpretation. Each task reinforces the other in the service of preserving Christian identity. Telling the gospel story helps to define the character and contours of Christian community. Participation in a community that offers fellowship, expresses caring and support, and seeks justice in the relationships of its members is an eloquent example in action of the meaning of the gospel story” (Carroll 1991: 129), thus helping it maintain its identity as the body of Christ.

- Support of the congregation's public ministry: The aim is empowering members, collectively and individually, to live as the people of God in the world for two reasons. “One is the ease with which we come to subsume the meaning of the church in terms of its gathered life. Emphasizing the task of supporting public ministry focuses attention on the life of the people of God in the world as the primary arena for ministry. Secondly, clergy too belong to the laos, God's people in the world. In spite of the priority attention that clergy must give to the gathered life of the church, they have vital and important roles in the broader community, modeling what it means to live as Christians in public life and acting as symbolic representatives of religion in public affairs” (Carroll 1991: 133)

3.3.3. Servant Leadership:

It seems to me that the contemporary secular understanding of “servant leadership” began with secular leadership scholar Robert K. Greenleaf. From an excerpt from Greenleaf's original 1970 essay (2004: 1-3) it seems that it was born out of his dissatisfaction with the prevailing (at the time) practice of autocratic and unjust leadership in secular circles which had developed into a leadership crisis. His idea for “servant leadership” came from reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East* and reflecting on the central character. The servant-leader is “servant first Becoming a servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are served Do those served grow as person? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants; will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?” (Greenleaf 2004: 6). “Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making” (Spears 2004: 12). Spears (2004: 13-16) also summarizes ten characteristics of servant-leadership (see Burkhardt & Spears 2004: 72-89).

Although Greenleaf's secular understanding of “servant leadership” has influenced much Christian leadership thinking, it has been “Christianized”, without sufficient thought and discernment being given into the kind of servanthood required by God. Zaragoza (1999: 82) points to some significant problems in the current paradigms for ordained ministry, servanthood, and servant leadership (cf Gibbs 2005: 23-24). The

problem we have identified with the servanthood paradigm is its understanding of who Jesus is and how His ministry is to be used. The servanthood paradigm typically makes Jesus as servant the norm for pastoral ministry, with an emphasis on his self-emptying. Stevens & Collins (1993: 110) show that if the desire to serve originated in the needs of people, the leader could easily be overwhelmed by needs that he or she cannot meet, and the leader would have no criterion for making the selection. Often such leaders exhaust themselves or become messianic. Some people, thinking they are servant-leaders, are actually functioning as doormats, thinking they are doing God's will by doing everyone else's will.

Zaragoza (1999) offers a different paradigm for Christian leadership – Friendship. “With this new theology of ordained ministry, the pastor can now see himself or herself as a friend rather than a servant or servant leader. This means that the pastor befriends God, other people, and himself or herself. There no longer is an emphasis on self-emptying or the diminishing of the person. Instead, the new emphasis is on being fully engaged with God, others, and one's self” (Zaragoza 1999: 83). This paradigm is relational (cf Nel 2004: 89), focusses on the pastor “being” with the congregation before “doing”, depends on authority from God, requires deep levels of trust, and leads by example.

Nevertheless, Jesus was certainly a living demonstration of servant leadership the way it should be. Jesus never tried to please everyone. Nel (2004: 72) highlights that servant leadership is the identity of a Christian leader and does not imply that a leader is unable or unwilling to provide, or help people discover, direction. Servant leadership is strong, humble leadership that is able to stand alone when necessary as well as initiate and take decisions that have far reaching effects. For followers of Jesus, servant leadership is to be a living statement of who we are in Christ, how we treat one another, and how we demonstrate the love of Christ to the whole world. Nel (2004: 74) further shows that servant leadership, modeled on Jesus Christ, is completely different from the typical pyramid structures and power models that often influence leadership. Christian leadership points to the leadership of Jesus Christ and their authority arises out of the example of the leader (this is dealt with more fully in section 3.5.) Servant leadership must always be “exercised in and for the sake of the Body of Christ” (Nel 2004: 72) in seeking to do the will of God. The Christian servant-leader is first of all a servant of God. (Stevens & Collins 1993: 110; cf Sanders 1994: 21-25; Gibbs & Coffey 2001: 107 and Nel 2004: 79)

Osmer (2008) situates Leadership theory within the four core tasks of Practical Theology. He thus shows how each of the four tasks, namely the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretive task, the normative task, and the pragmatic task, find practical expression in Congregational leadership. This is important for our discussion on Servant leadership because the pragmatic task of “determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted” (Osmer 2008: 4) finds expression as servant leadership. Osmer (2008: 176-178) describes three forms of leadership, namely, task competence - as performing the leadership tasks excellently well, transactional leadership - as the ability to influence others through a process of trade-offs, and transformational leadership - as leading an organization through a process that fundamentally changes its identity, mission, culture and operating procedures. He then shows how these three forms of leadership inform the practice of servant leadership and are in turn shaped by the understanding of servant leadership. “Servant leadership is leadership that influences the congregation to change in ways that more fully embody the servanthood of Christ. It is not primarily a matter of personality traits, like being self-effacing, mild-mannered, or overly responsible. To the contrary, leading a congregation to change in ways that more nearly approximate its mission as a contrast society and social catalyst will take courage, resolve, and the ability to empower others” (Osmer 2008: 192).

Task competence requires commitment, hard work and experience, yet for servant leadership task competence requires humility. Osmer (2008: 193-194) points out that task competence pursued with humility requires both allowing the concrete needs and well-being of the community to direct the leaders skills-development program, and calls for the leader to acknowledge their limitations.

The trade-offs of Transactional leadership need to be shifted from “the model of contract-as-fair-exchange to the model of covenant-as-service-of-God” (Osmer 2008: 194) Osmer (2008: 194-195) shows that Servant leadership does this by helping their congregation respond to the needs of others, not just their 'felt' needs but their real or deepest needs, in two ways, namely (1) they offer members a discipleship path where the needs of others become as important as their own and (2) they guide their congregations to care for people who are different from themselves.

“Transforming leadership is the sort of leadership most needed in mainline congregations today. Such leadership is costly and risky. It will encounter resistance and conflict, failures and disappointments. But leaders who give themselves to this sort of

leadership come closest to the sort of servant leadership found in Jesus” (Osmer 2008: 196). Osmer (2008: 196-199) then describes three paradoxes of this kind of servant leadership, namely (1) finding your way only by getting lost requires trusting God in the midst of losing control and not knowing, (2) you will gain power by empowering others requires servant leaders to risk marginalization and to give power away, (3) the less you are attached to the congregation, the deeper your relationships asks servant leaders not to become dependant on nor attached to the congregation in order to put the needs of fulfilling God's mission first. This 'un-attached' approach also fosters mutual care and commitment. (cf Parsons & Leas 1993: 8-9, Steinke 1996: 43)

3.3.4. Contributions from Systems Theory:

From a Systems Theory perspective “leadership equals the function of the leader, the followers, and the situation, with the purpose of this gift in the congregation being to release ministry in others. Christian leadership is the God-given ability to influence others so that believers will trust and respond to the Head of the church for themselves, in order to accomplish the Lord's purposes for God's people in the world (Stevens & Collins 1993: 109; cf Smit 1995b: 116). Stevens & Collins (1993: 109) further point out that the concern is more for *leadership* than leaders. In other words, we should work toward the widest possible release of leadership rather than the equipment of a few official leaders in positions of influence (cf Parsons & Leas 1993: 30-37). The Bible is more concerned that the congregation have leadership than leaders (cf Gibbs 2005: 21). 2. In contrast to secular definitions, the litmus test of Christian leadership is not whether the leaders have followers, but whether the Lord is getting followers (cf Smit 1995b: 116). 3. The goal of leadership should conform to the goal of the church: mission in the world not ecclesiastical self-enrichment (cf Lee 1989: 27-28, Tucker 1990: 68-69 and Gibbs 2005: 32; see Callahan 1990: 3-34, 80-88 and Kallestad 2001: 145-164)

Another important insight is that “to lead is to depend upon the cooperation of other persons. It raises questions about how people are motivated and what might be the most effective way to work with a group (cf Gibbs & Coffey 2001: 111) . . . To be effective as a leader requires understanding how one's leadership behavior affects the people to be led—the followers. . . . Further, a leader *in a system* must recognize multiple sources of influence upon the members of the group: family, vocation, wife or husband, events in society—all are forces that influence, for good or ill” (Stevens & Collins 1993: 9).

“The systemic nature of Christian leadership has another dimension. The gift of leadership emerges in the context of the people's relationship with God. The group by itself is not the womb of the leader, it is the group in dynamic relationship with the Lord that evokes leadership. So leadership is not merely something done for God as an activity undertaken on behalf of an absent monarch; it is something done in God in the context of relationship with a present Lord” (Stevens & Collins 1993: 110; cf Buchanan 1995: 85).

Armour and Browning (2000) build on the work of Graves (1974: 72-87) and offer a systems-sensitive frame of reference for understanding diversity within local congregations and for coping with it. They provide a model for understanding this diversity by describing eight systems, or “eight different ways of thinking about our place in the world. They are 'thinking systems' as much as they are 'value systems” (Armour & Browning 2000: 18). These systems have developed in response to the ever-increasing complexity within our world. They are “a cogent neuro-psychological structure with which our values are arranged, prioritized, and interrelated, so that there is a general consistency in our response to stimulus or change” (Armour & Browning 2000: 40). An example that relates specifically to this paper is how the various thinking/value systems respond to change. System Four builds their personal identity around a particular form of religious expression. Thus, “change in the life of a congregation is often quite unsettling . . . because their sense of identity is so closely tied to the way we do church, a change in polity or worship may be sensed as a change in personal identity” (Armour & Browning 2000: 69). System Six sense of identity has little connection to any particular congregation of Christians. In fact, “System Six is suspicious of organizations to begin with. . . . and anywhere you see System Six, it is probably working to minimize institutional structure” (Armour & Browning 2000: 168). They are also very focused on a local congregation advancing their own spiritual journey. It is therefore obvious that System Four and System Six respond completely differently to congregational change.

3.4. Leadership and congregational identity finding: the importance of leadership in Building up the Local Church:

The Research Problem states that I have observed that there are local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues, and I have observed that it is due to lack of long-term ministerial tenure.

In this section I address this observed problem by seeking to understand the specific importance of Leadership in Building up the Local Church

“Drawing insights from anthropology (especially Victor Turner), psychology (W. R. Bion and John Bowlby), and developmental theory (D.W. Winnicott), Reed (1978) analyzed the role of clergy in relationship to the spiritual life of the individual Christian and the life of the institution. In short, the 'religious person' carried great emotional authority. The role of the person or place habitually associated with the presence of the holy had a critical part in how a believer appropriated the benefits of any renewed sense of identity and purpose” (Mead 1996: 11). Few would dispute the fact that the pastor, as one of the key office-bearers in the local church, has a vital role to play in Building up the local church. Wagner (1984: 61) suggests that the primary catalytic factor for growth in a local church is the pastor. Tucker (1990: 71) points out that congregational identity is determined by the convictions of the congregation's significant leaders, especially the pastor, and he notes the powerful influence of leaders on organizational identity. Malphurs (1993: 119) adds that as the pastor of the church goes, so goes the church, or perhaps a better expression: As the pastor of a church grows, so grows the church (cf Carroll 1988: 67; Lee 1989: 97-98; Barna 1991: 143; Smit 1995a: 36; Finzel 1997: 264; Robinson 2003: 122; Nel 2004: 68; Nel 2009: 11).

However, it is important to stress that Congregational leadership in the context of Building up the Local Church is specifically concerned with guiding the local congregation to participate in its own identity-finding processes. “In a certain sense the local church is built up by everything that is being done for the benefit of the existence and functioning of the local church, as the Church of Christ, by the office-bearers (servers) and the other believers. Nevertheless the subject, discipline and ministry of **Building up the local church** is not simply the **sum total** of what is done to build up the local church through preaching, pastoral care, catechism teaching, evangelism and diaconal endeavours. The personal dimension of Building up the local church lies in **guiding the local church** to effective participation in its own building up. It is this very dimension which is not always brought sufficiently into discussion in the other sub-disciplines of Practical Theology” (Nel 1990: 56; see De Roest 1998: 365-367).

Carroll (1988: 68) speaks about 'reflective leadership' as necessary for articulating a congregation's identity, developing strategic information about the context of the congregation, and, thus, helping to shape the congregation's programs and processes in

ways that honor its identity as the body of Christ in its particular time and place.

This process of guiding the local congregation to effective participation in its own building up requires relationships of trust, acceptance and love. These inter-personal relationships between the ministerial leader, other leaders and the congregation require time to develop and deepen. The issue of ministerial tenure will be addressed in section 3.7.

3.5. How the leader influences the congregation:

This section highlights the leader's personal example and teaching, showing the need for long tenure, and then offers guidelines regarding leadership responses during congregational identity-finding.

Shawchuck & Heuser (1993: 78) point out that congregational leaders lead primarily by example, not by precept. There are tools and concepts, but they are nothing compared to the influence of the minister's example (see 1 Pt 5: 3 NIV). "The leader's identity at the core of his or her being has much greater influence on the congregation than what the leader *knows* or *does*. . . . The inner qualities of the leader are of no small importance in a discussion of religious leadership, because the tone of the congregation's life and ministry, is, to a significant degree, a mirrored reflection of the interior qualities and condition of the leader. The congregation reflects the leader's inner, secret life. If the leader is broken, **duplicitous**, angry, then the congregation will reflect these qualities. If the leader is collected, complete, at peace, then the congregation will (eventually) reflect these qualities" (Shawchuck & Heuser 1993: 111)

Systems Theory takes this further and helps us to realize that if the leader is going to influence the congregation as they lead by example, then the leader needs to join the system/congregation. "For synergy to occur, a pastor must interact with the people so they can work together, support one another, avoid unhealthy conflict, and realize their potential as the people of God. . . . [G]roups must allow leaders to change them, and leaders must allow groups to change them. . . . Using the systems ideas of wholeness, synergy, and isomorphism, we conclude that a systemic approach to church leadership implies that a pastor can never make a difference in the system if the pastor is outside the system or attempts to make the system fit him or her" (Stevens & Collins 1993: 5). As can be realized, this influence by "being" requires time and patience.

“Change within pastors themselves is the first dynamic of altering the identity of a congregation. A second principle of congregational change is closely associated with this first: The inner convictions of the pastor are heard repeatedly in sermon and sacrament. The role of worship and preaching in congregational change cannot be overemphasized” (Tucker 1990: 76). Added to this is the equipping/teaching task of the congregational leaders. “Though this task has received more attention over the past decade or two it has lone been one of the most neglected areas in the building up of the local church. . . The onus is on the office-bearers to provide this foundation and task-orientated equipping” (Nel 1990: 36). It is important to recognize the intimate connection between this task of influencing the congregation and the leader's example. Groome (1980 : 267) says that if we are to teach the Word as effective models for the formation of others in living it, then we ourselves are to embody the Word in our way of being with people. Because of the modelling principle' our representing Jesus Christ as teachers must be grounded in our own attempts to live the Christian faith (cf Hendricks 1987: 104; Downs 1994: 160). Creating a Theological Framework or “new theological direction” (Callahan 1990: 122) through teaching and modelling does not happen quickly, but rather happens gradually through consistent and intentional focus. Again, we note that this requires long pastoral tenure.

3.6. Regulations and practice within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa:

In this section I am seeking to show the relationship of the Research Problem - where I have observed that there are local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues, and I have observed that it is due to lack of long-term ministerial tenure - to the current rules and regulations regarding ministerial tenure in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

There are various categories of minister recognized within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

- Full time non-itinerant ministers are not available for stationing (placement) on an itinerant basis. They are in the full time work of the ministry, being ordained after selection and training, and are allowed to minister only in the circuit where they are appointed, remaining in one congregation for the duration of their ministry. Paragraph 4.116.8.2 applies to length of tenure. It states that “they shall be appointed for one year at a time. The approval of the Connexional Executive via Synod shall be required annually” (Laws & Discipline 2007: 51).

- Part-time “tent-making” ordained ministers are in secular employment but who are ordained after selection and training, and are allowed to minister only in the circuit where they reside and are appointed. Paragraph 4.117.8.2 applies to length of tenure. It states that “they shall be appointed for one year at a time, without exception. It shall be incumbent upon these ministers to apply to the April Quarterly Meeting each year for recommendation to be appointed by the Connexional Executive to continue to labour in that Circuit” (Laws & Discipline 2007: 53).
- Full-time itinerant ministers are in the full time work of the ministry, being ordained after selection and training, and are available for stationing (placement) throughout the Methodist Church of Southern Africa connexion. Paragraph 7.11.9 applies to length of tenure. It states that “an invitation is for an initial period of 5 years. It may be extended by the Quarterly Meeting for a further period of up to 5 years, whereafter further extensions shall be for 1 or 2 years at a time as the Quarterly Meeting may decide” (Laws & Discipline 2007: 79).

Paragraph 4.69 of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa Laws and Discipline states, “The Connexional Executive (composed of Bishops and senior lay leaders) reviews all appointments, as published in the annual directory, for 12 calendar months from the 1st January following their appointment, subject always to the Laws and Discipline. Any invitation of a minister or recommendation at the instance of the Church about any appointment, shall not derogate from the authority of the Connexional Executive to decide the annual appointments of all ministers” (Laws & Discipline 2007: 38).

3.7. Leadership influence and tenure:

This section relates specifically to the Research problem by addressing the importance of tenure on ministerial influence and shows how longer tenure increases leadership influence. I argue further that longer ministerial tenure is absolutely vital for Building up the Local Church because of the implications for guiding the process of congregational identity-finding.

A vital aspect of congregational leadership not yet addressed is the ability to endure, to be patient and constant; to stay the course. “Effective leaders stay in a ministry as long as necessary to get the job done. The ability to plan, to make decisions and to envision a ministry's future requires a willingness to see yourself in the scenario for a long time” (Gangel 1997: 43). “Many clergy give up too soon. While it probably varies some

depending on the size and setting of a congregation, it seems generally to be the case that a clergy person does not really become the pastor of a congregation until he or she has been there about five years. Often it is seven, eight or nine years in a congregation before fruit begins to appear. Moreover, many clergy tend to underestimate the need for creative repetition of key themes . . . Especially if you are engaging people in authentic cultural change, it takes time and experience to get under people's skin and into their hearts and lives” (Robinson 2003: 132; cf Kouzes & Posner 2003: 195).

The United Methodist Church in the USA, like the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, operates on a connexional system with an itinerant appointment system that re-allocates pastoral leadership throughout the system. It is pertinent to this thesis that Dick (2007: 124-125) highlights one of the strongest mitigating factors for growth as being the length of the pastoral appointment. He observed that no congregation reached vitality with a pastoral appointment of less than seven years. Although the success of a vital congregation does not rest on the pastor's shoulders pastoral changes are incredibly disruptive to the overall momentum of a congregation. The journey toward vitality takes time, and having a positive, productive partnered relationship between congregation and pastoral leader is a great asset. Many decaying churches are locked into a downward spiral because they have pastors for only a year or two at a time. The healthiest churches in his research sample were those with pastors in place for seven to ten years.

Schaller (1981: 53-56) points out that short ministerial tenure as one of many possible reasons for unhealthy, passive congregations. Callahan (1990: 162), addressing missionary pastor's leading missionary congregations, states that one of the problems on the current scene is the 'ancient custom' of pastors moving every three to four years. Ott (2002: 30) highlights that real change in the culture of the congregation, real transformation, will require the application of a consistent vital vision for ministry over several years. . . . Some positive change can come quickly to a congregation whose leaders trust God to help them make key changes in direction; other facets of revitalization require patience (cf Rendle 2001: 9; Bennis & Nanus 2003: 49; Nel 2004: 80, 372; and Sashkin 2006: 16).

Barna (1993: 36-37) has found that where churches grow, challenge and support people spiritually and make a discernible and lasting difference in people's lives, the pastor has stayed for a prolonged period of time. He states that the frequency with which pastors

change churches is of great significance. According to his research among churches in the USA, during the decades of the 70's and 80's, the average tenure of senior pastors had dropped to about four years from seven. He says this is alarming for several reasons:

- In their research on user friendly churches, (i.e., churches that grow, that challenge and support people spiritually and that make a discernible and lasting difference in people's lives), they learned that the pastor stays for a prolonged period of time. In fact, most of those pastors believed that the church they were serving would be the final church in their pastoral career. The practice of changing churches frequently is not a characteristic of a leading or effective pastor (cf Nel 2004: 95).
- Because viable churches are based upon relationship and because a strong community takes time to build, the possibility of a pastor creating a strong relational network within the congregation is minimized by a short tenure (cf Stevens & Collins 1993: 4). More will be said as we address the important issue of acceptance in section 3.7.1.
- Many pastors experience their most productive years in ministry between their third and fifteenth years of service. Leaving after four years or so removes the prospect of exploiting the prime years of influence (cf Wagner 1984: 69; Malphurs 1993: 118; Gangel 1997: 42).
- When churches experience a revolving door pastorate, they are less likely to be trusting, communal and outward oriented. A major influence of short pastoral tenures causes the congregation to assume a protective, inward-looking perspective (cf Steinke 1993: 107; Nel 2004: 6).

3.7.1. Leadership influence requires acceptance and trust:

Understanding that acceptance by the congregation is an absolute prerequisite to influencing the congregation Stevens and Collins (1993: 10) state that the Christian leader can never assume they are an integral part of the group (system) until they have passed through several stages of negotiating acceptance by the congregation. They state that negotiating acceptance takes a minimum of three years in a local church. Using Pattison (1977: 21) Stevens and Collins (1993: 10-13) outline four stages of acceptance in which the leader will negotiate acceptance in the group and an appropriate leadership style at each stage in the development of the group. The key word is *negotiation*, a word that represents the intricate nature of the unending interaction between a pastor and

congregation that results in leader-acceptance. These four stages of acceptance are pictured in terms of a movement from "storming," to "forming," to "norming," to "performing"

- Stage 1: Storming. In this stage you have a group of individuals not yet systemically related to one another, except on an ad hoc basis. . . The pastor is off to one side existentially and emotionally. . . The group has not yet given the leader full authority. The congregation does not yet manifest the properties of wholeness, synergy, and isomorphism. Basically the pastor is functioning to bring the group together at stated times—for Christian service, a Bible study, prayer, or worship. That's all that is happening. A pastor in this new position should listen, observe, and not start many new things. It is probably wise for a pastor to do little that is new in a first year of ministry, except that which the people themselves might want to initiate. This stage has been called storming because the new pastor-leader is a "disturbance" in the group. The pastor's presence introduces new dynamics that have yet to be processed by the church. If the new pastor initiates a new action, its acceptance may not be forthcoming or may come very slowly.
- Stage 2: Forming. In this stage the congregation moves toward forming its own identity and purpose. Having a new leader, the congregation is moving toward the formation of a new system. Between pastor and people there is a growing sense of common identity and shared goals, yet the pastor-leader is still perceived as an outsider, as a person negotiating the way "in". It is a strange paradox: The church is forming as much by the leader's function as by its own, yet, it is still holding the pastor at arm's length.
- Stage 3: Norming. As the congregation gets down to work, members feel a heightened tension between personal self-fulfillment and the church's corporate achievement. Some members, protesting against the "tyranny of the group," assert their individual identity. Some of these "deviants" may withdraw from the church to protect their own individual freedoms. Sometimes the church excludes them and conflict ensues. . . Pastor-leaders are very vulnerable at this stage of leader-group development. Though they might think of trying to exercise stronger leadership, it is too soon for this. The pastor who asserts leadership will be seen as threatening the identity of the group. . . During this stage the pastor is gradually moving steadily toward full acceptance by the church. She will soon be able to persuade, to influence, and to change behavior—soon able to lead!

- Stage 4: Performing. In this stage the system achieves "resolution" or at least considerable reduction of the conflict between individuals and the church as a whole. . . Out of this comes mutual recognition of, and commitment to, the congregation. Everyone's unique individuality is recognized and accepted. Some of the most awkward people in the church become warmly accepted. The pastor-leader is recognized as a member of the group, a full-fledged partner in the common enterprise. Once the church both recognizes and gives the pastor authority, that pastor has awesome influence and power. Remembering that the power is symbolic, such a pastor-leader must never abuse it or, for that matter, deprecate it.

Another way of speaking about “negotiated acceptance” is the process of developing trust. “Before people will be willing to follow a leader's vision or act on a leader's initiatives, they must trust their leader. This trust cannot be demanded. Leaders must earn it before they can expect their diverse constituents to accept and act upon their messages” (Kouzes & Posner 2003: 110). “Leaders establish trust by taking actions that are consistent both **over time** and with what the leader has said. Leaders must also be sure to follow through on commitments, to do what they say they will do. Trust, of course, exists in the minds and hearts of followers and is not a directly observable leader behavior. But it is *consistency over time* and between words and actions and *credibility* in terms of fulfilling commitments that *produce* feelings of trust in followers”(bold mine) (Sashkin 2006: 12; cf Kouzes & Posner 2003: 25). Thus, before a minister can lead a local congregation the congregation must accept and trust them and the minister needs to prove their credibility and integrity, all of which takes time. This means that longer ministerial tenure increases leadership influence, which in turn improves the minister's ability to guide the process of congregational identity-finding, which of course is fundamental to the process of “Building up the local church”.

3.8. Change theory and tenure of leaders:

3.8.1. Definition of change as it refers to Building up the Local Church:

Change/reformation/renewal is described with the word “agogy” which means “intentional motivation, intentional change, or intentional guidance” (Nel 2004: 137-138). Bennis (2003: 135) says that learning to lead is, on one level, learning to manage change. As we've seen, a leader imposes (in the most positive sense of the word) his or

her philosophy on the organization, creating or re-creating its culture. The organization then acts on that philosophy, carries out the mission, and the culture takes on a life of its own, becoming more cause than effect. But unless the leader continues to evolve, to adapt and adjust to external change, the organization will sooner or later stall. (cf Wagner 1984: 194; Towns 1997: 185; see Germond 1995: 175-180).

However, change as it is understood in *Building up the Local Church* is not manipulation. Rather, Nel (2004: 138) aligns with Firet (1977: 299) in understanding agogy as the change in the spiritual functioning of a person in order to actively involve that person in the constant process of renewal so that the person becomes (and remains) actively involved in his own and others' continual renewal. Change is aimed at actively involving the whole congregation in becoming actively involved in the continuing process of change, in order to reach self-reliant spiritual functioning. "The congregation is not changed "into the image" of some or other leader or social model. The congregation has intentionally to be guided to change and to become "transformed into the likeness of Christ" (Nel 2004: 138).

3.8.2. Appropriate leadership response required:

"Leading change in the congregation requires leaders to respond appropriately to the needs of the congregation. This is much more critical than knowing the answer to the questions or problems, or being able to fix the perceived problems of the congregation. The issue of "appropriate leadership response" asks whether leaders are doing what the congregation needs" (Rendle 2001: 117) and not what the leader wants to see happen.

During the process of congregational identity-finding a congregation will experience significant emotional stress due to the challenges being identified and the changes required to be more faithful to Jesus Christ. "a common source of resistance to change at the individual level: the experience of loss. Many individuals experience congregational change as a kind of loss. ... It is important for leaders to acknowledge these feelings of loss by individuals and the resistance they often engender. Such feelings are a natural response to change. A helpful perspective comes from the field of grief work" (Osmer 2008: 204)

Steinke (1993: 109-116) offers seven responses that congregational leadership can focus on in anxious emotional systems, as they seek to influence a congregation that is dealing with the changes identity-finding entails.

- Focus on self, not others: A self who stays focused on one's own beliefs and acts on them lives to the max and is attractive to many. (cf Friedman 1985: 18)
- Focus on strength, not weakness
- Focus on process, not content. This gives time to the situation. By focusing on process, I take my time and stay goal-directed. I know that eventually we can discuss "content," but not until the reptilian regression recedes and the panic softens.
- Focus on challenge, not comfort. Here the focus is on asking questions versus providing the answers (cf Robinson 2003: 25).
- Focus on integrity, not unity because there is no true unity if integrity is compromised.
- Focus on the system, not the symptom. When we focus on a symptom, we are preoccupied with its cause or relief. At the same time we are not attentive to the system—the structure, patterns, and processes—behind the symptom.
- Focus on direction, not condition.

So focused, leaders can be stewards of themselves and therefore stewards of the vision. Being self-defined, they can be trusted with the community's definition of itself. Where there is little self-definition, there is a vague vision. Where there is an unclear vision, the people perish in their own anxious reactivity. They have no head and are headed nowhere. Where there is self-definition, there is a clear vision. Where there is a clear vision, there is a response to the future. . . Leaders oversee by seeing beyond. Being stewards of themselves, leaders can also be stewards of the relationship system. They stay connected to others and invite them to be responsible stewards of themselves and of the corporate purpose.

(Steinke 1993: 116)

Approaching change systemically, Parsons & Leas (1993) help us to understand change has a multiplicity of causation. “The way a system changes is for part of it to change. . . . [W]e handle the parts we can, knowing it will be inadequate and incomplete. When we change any of the caused factors, it is likely we will impact every part of the system” (Parsons & Leas 1993: 20).

Robinson (2003: 19-24) also provides guidance for congregational leaders involved in guiding congregation's in a process of identity-finding. Identity-finding relates very closely to Robinson's “adaptive challenges”, which require learning, authenticity, depth, risk, and change, and thus his guidance for leaders during times of “adaptive change” is very relevant.

Robinson (2003: 19-22) refers to five characteristic roles and functions of leaders, which are *direction*, *protection*, *orientation*, *dealing with conflict*, and *establishing norms*. While these roles and functions of leaders continue whether one is dealing with adaptive challenge or not, the way leaders go about them changes radically.

- **Direction:** In more stable times, or when one is dealing with routine or technical problems, leaders typically provide direction by giving answers and furnishing solutions. In the midst of adaptive challenges, leadership requires more than providing solutions to technical problems. It also requires a quite different, and more challenging, skill: asking questions.
- **Protection:** The role of a leader is often to protect the body or group from external threat. Leaders in the midst of adaptive change may offer a thoughtful critique of different options, but they will do something else as well: they will allow their congregations to feel what Heifetz (1994) terms "the pinch of reality", rather than protecting the congregation from it by ignoring such new realities or simply judging them.
- **Orientation:** Leaders orient people to their roles and to the expectations of the group and its culture. But, when facing adaptive change, it is the role of the leader not only to orient but to disorient people, to challenge the accustomed roles and expectations, and to dislodge people from their well-known roles.
- **Dealing with conflict:** Many leaders believe that a good church is one where everyone gets along, everything goes smoothly, and no one is ever upset. Human groups, even churches — perhaps especially churches — have conflict. In the midst of adaptive change, leaders will not simply manage or quell conflict, they will draw it out. . . the point being that, in the midst of adaptive change, conflict can be a way to do important learning and changing.
- **Establishing norms:** Leaders interpret, establish and reinforce group norms. But in times of adaptive change, leaders will do something else as well. At least on occasion, they will question the norms, the status quo, the "way we've always done it."

Understanding the maze of competing viewpoints that exist due to the various thinking/value systems contending for influence in the local congregation empowers the leaders to respond appropriately to the different needs. "Systems-sensitive leadership allows you to maintain congregational harmony, even in the face of pronounced diversity. It makes you adept at effecting change without raising undue potential for

conflict. And it helps you anticipate dissension and defuse it before it strife secures a toehold” (Armour & Browning 2000 : 20). “To avoid disarray, churches must harmonize emerging dominant systems with those that have long existed. Leaders must learn to maintain healthy partnerships among these competing systems, recognizing that each system has unique strengths and drawing on those strengths appropriately” (Armour & Browning 2000 : 29).

Armour & Browning (2000 : 39-40) make the point that thinking-systems govern the affective domain as much as the cognitive one. They mold our values, our motivations, our sense of self, and even our highest emotions, and have more to do with what shapes our thinking than with what we think. Because these systems operate so powerfully on the subconscious level it is nearly impossible to change these thinking systems within people. That is why the appropriate leadership response in helping congregation members deal with change is to work with them within the context of their own preferred thinking/value systems.

Armour & Browning (2000: 104-107) provide congregational leaders with some general guidelines and priorities in order to promote health and pre-empt conflict. The four principles are:

- View the congregation as several systems flowing side by side, and work toward an environment where the systems flow harmoniously alongside each other.
- Focus on keeping all the system streams in the congregation healthy.
- Know when and where to adjust the balance of systems-flow by structuring ministries and functions around natural systems alignment.
- Create numerous islands of expression and affirmation for the systems in their congregation.

The three priorities to promote congregational health are:

- Value each system personally and overcome the systems clashes among themselves.
- Continually teach a healthy respect for all major systems in the congregation.
- Work to make each system healthy.

Armour & Browning (2000: 115-116) provide 5 principles to minimize disruption in a congregation caused by change. (1) It is imperative to promote the health of each system in the congregation, (2) Measured change creates less conflict than sudden change, (3) Change made necessary due to exceptional circumstances is more palatable than change from other factors, (4) Changes to accommodate Systems Five and Six

create less tension when those initiatives receive visible leadership from someone System Four considers 'one of our own', (5) The more rapidly Systems Five and Six expand in a congregation the more pronounced intense tension within System Four.

Carroll (1988: 188-189) offers some generalizations about Embodying Change in order to remind change agents that visions and the changes they imply do not fall full blown into congregational life. Changes require the hard work of infusing the vision with value and building it into the congregation's life. That is an ongoing key task of leadership. Tucker (1990: 74-84) discusses eleven important dynamics of changing congregational identity.

3.8.3. An open systems model for Organizational change:

Open systems theory is part of a family of theories in the "new synthesis" of the life sciences based on the concept of the web of life. It portrays living organisms as open systems that interact with their external environments in order to survive. "Open:" thus, indicates the way all forms of life are dependent on and in continual interaction with the environment in which they reside. They draw energy and resources from the environment, transform them to maintain themselves, and turn them into output.

(Osmer 2008: 199)

Daft (2004: 14) highlights that open systems must interact with the environment to survive and therefore must continuously adapt to the environment. Open systems can be enormously complex with organizations needing to find and obtain needed resources, interpret and act on environmental changes, dispose of outputs, and control and coordinate internal activities in the face of environmental disturbances and uncertainty. "To understand the whole organization, we must view it as a system. ... Interacting elements mean that people and departments depend on one another and must work together" (Daft 2004: 14).

"When open systems theory is applied to organizations, attention is given to the internal system of the organization, composed of interrelated subsystems, and the organization's interaction with its context, composed of other systems with which it exchanges resources" (Osmer 2008: 200). Change in an open system may be caused by internal or external factors. As internal sub-systems grow out of alignment with one another, the need for change is created and the organization must develop new structures and feedback loops before a new state of equilibrium is achieved. Osmer (2008: 200) also shows how change in an organization may also be due to external factors, provoked by

changes taking place in the systems with which it exchanges resources.

“Open systems theory is helpful in our understanding of leadership and change theory because it “situates leadership within the congregation as an organizational system, composed of subsystems and interacting with other systems in its environment. It offers a model of change that takes account of factors internal and external to the organization, as well as their interaction” (Osmer 2008: 201) Leadership is encouraged to think contextually with the understanding that the congregation's mission will take concrete shape in relation to its context. Osmer (2008: 201) highlights a key part of leading change needs to be forming a vision of what the congregation would look like if it focused its mission endeavours in contextually relevant ways.

Another issue that open systems theory brings to leading change in congregations is that “Organization change theory commonly distinguishes two patterns of change: revolutionary and evolutionary. Both can result in deep change in the congregational system” (Osmer 2008: 202). Osmer (2008: 202-203) contrasts these two patterns of change by showing that revolutionary change is a major jolt to the system and involves significant and rapid change, with structures changing; new groups and leaders come to the fore, and visible change occurring in the identity and operating procedures. Revolutionary change normally involves a major crisis marked by a clear transition from 'before' to 'after'. Evolutionary change, on the other hand is incremental. It normally begins with changes in a sub-system of the organization which create small changes throughout the other sub-systems it interacts with that are continuous with the past. These small changes build on, improve, and modify the current system. “One of the questions leaders face, thus, is which of these paths will work best in their particular congregation. Does the system need a major jolt? Or can small, incremental changes in one subsystem impact the entire congregation over time?” (Osmer 2008: 203)

Osmer (2008: 203-207) also shows how Organizational change theory helps leadership support change at the different levels of an organization. The individual, groups, and total system levels are all affected by a comprehensive process of change, with resistance and support found in all three levels. It is important for leadership to engage the congregation at all three levels because each level engages with the processes of change differently.

3.8.4. Three levels of acceptance of change:

Malphurs, using Dickson (1982: 52), identifies three levels of acceptance of change within individuals which helps the change agent understand the effectiveness of their proposed change efforts.

The first level is compliance. Change through compliance is forced change. People change because they feel they have to, not because they want to. Compliance change is caused by someone in authority or by an event beyond a person's control. The change takes place on the surface, not in the heart; therefore, its results are minimal. If it is to last for any length of time, it requires someone in authority to maintain it, or people soon revert back to their old ways. Thus it is very difficult to refreeze this change at the new level.

The second level is identification. Identification change involves both individual initiative and the efforts of others. Dickson says that in identification change we identify two things: Our own wants and needs for change, and attractive models (examples) who exhibit the change in which we are interested. Identification change is usually moderate change and much more preferable to compliance change. The tenure of identification change is in direct proportion to the change agent's abilities to implement the new ministry principles.

The third level of change is internalization. It does not depend on either an external authority to keep it frozen in place or a significant model to motivate its presence. It takes place below the surface in the heart. Internalization change accomplishes maximum change and takes place because people want it and incorporate it into their lives. Those changing believe in, feel strongly about, value, and decide to change to the new condition. They act out of our own inner commitment to the change.

(Malphurs 1993: 153-154)

“Leaders of intentional change work with both the tools of identification and internalization change. Consequently, as they lead their ministries through the transformation process, a knowledge of these levels of change within individuals will help them to determine if they are accomplishing their desired results. They also serve as tools of quality control. Most likely, change will occur on all three levels. However, the majority of change must reflect identification and internalization, not compliance, if quality change is to occur. Otherwise, the entire change process, like an automobile engine, must be overhauled and adjusted accordingly” (Malphurs 1993: 155).

Nel (2004: 161-162) identifies three levels within individuals on which the process of change has to take place.

- The level of the heart relates to what the congregation believes about itself. This refers to the nature, identity, reason for being and mission of the local congregation.

- The level of the mind relates to what the congregation understands it has to do and focuses on questions of function in a specific situation.
- The level of actions relates to how specified tasks of the congregation are to be executed and focuses on resources, techniques and structures required.

“These levels are closely linked. . . . all three levels , the whole trio – heart, mind, and hand – that needs to be considered and considered not alongside one another, nor in sequence, but in the closest possible conjunction” (Nel 2004: 162).

Nel (2004: 164) further emphasizes that there is a clear link between the nature of the change process, the 5 phases of the change process, and the levels of the process.

The challenge that Nel (2004: 163-164) highlights is that not only must there be synchronization on the three levels – heart, mind and hands – but this synchronization needs to be followed through the 5 phases of the change process with the same nature being applied throughout the whole process.

3.8.5. Various models of change:

There are various models of change to help us understand the processes of change

The “Roller coaster of change” explained by Rendle (2001: 108-114) helps the change agent/s gather information regarding what a congregation is experiencing emotionally. Rendle (2001: 115-116) also highlights another model of change, with a high degree of overlap with the “Roller coaster of change”, namely the “Eight stages of change” developed by Susan Campbell (1995: 69-71). This model outlines the tasks that need to be addressed, the skills that need to be developed and used, what needs to be let go, and what needs to be learned at each stage of the change process (see Brock & Salerno 1994).

Scherer's (1991) model of chaotic change outlined by Rendle (2001: 82-98) acknowledges chaos – resulting from deeper, more confusing change that does not present clear problems or solutions – and offers a way to understand what congregations need to go through in order to deal creatively and faithfully with deeper levels of change, such as those faced in times of large paradigmatic swings or adaptive challenges.

Quinn's (1996) transformational cycle as outlined by Osmer (2008: 206) is a four stage model of organizational deep change. (1) Initiation – where leadership develops strong sense of the need for change, forms a vision of the desired future and takes risks in acting on this vision; (2) A period of uncertainty follows; (3) Transformation – innovation gradually spreads throughout organization leading to deep change in its

identity, mission, culture, and operating procedures; (4) Routinization finds the organization in a new state of equilibrium.

Osmer further provides the eight steps of an organizational deep change process and their potential errors that John Kotter (1991) identified in his research:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency (error: failing to persuade others that change is needed or the organization faces a crisis situation).
2. Forming a powerful guiding coalition (error: failing to assemble a group to lead the change effort and to allow them to use their gifts and creativity to shape this process).
3. Creating a vision (error: failing to develop a compelling and realizable picture of the desired future that is relatively easy to communicate).
4. Communicating the vision (error: failing to use every means possible to communicate the vision; failing to embody this vision in the actions, not just words, of the guiding leaders).
5. Empowering others to act on the vision (error: failing to support active participation in the change process by equipping people with the knowledge and skills they need, by rewarding them in appropriate ways, and by removing obstacles to change they may face).
6. Planning for and creating short-term wins (error: trying to change everything all at once or starting with a particularly sticky problem instead of small changes that generate confidence in the process).
7. Consolidating improvements and producing still more change (error: declaring victory too soon; changing the culture of an organization takes time, and declaring victory prematurely kills a sense of urgency and momentum).
8. Institutionalizing new approaches (error: failing to develop leadership beyond those people involved initially in the process of change, new leaders who understand and embody the paradigm shift that has occurred).

(Osmer 2008: 206-207)

3.8.6. Change is a 3 phase process:

“There is little doubt that the process of renewal or change takes place in phases. The simplest way of describing it is to say that this process of change has *a beginning, middle, and an end.*” (Nel 2004: 144) Malphurs (1993: 129) states that studies of the methods of change find that the simplest and most influential method has three steps. Using Schaller (1972: 86) Malphurs names the steps as 1. Unfreeze the present situation. 2. Move to a new level. 3. Refreeze at the new level. Nel (2004: 144) further states that three phases are also distinguished in the functioning of the group as a whole. First of all it *becomes aware* of a problem and this leads to the *motivation* to want to start to the process of change. Then follows the real *change in terms of a movement towards* new attitudes and behaviour. In the third phase the changes are *integrated and stabilized* (see Malphurs 1993: 127-141).

Change, as it relates to Building up the Local Church, is aimed at actively involving the whole congregation in becoming actively involved in the continuing process of change, in order to reach self-reliant spiritual functioning. Further, we have observed in the 3 levels of change and in the various models of change the fact that change is an emotionally disruptive process that needs to take time. Thus, once again we recognize the need for long-term ministerial tenure for appropriate change to occur so that the local congregation may be built up.

3.9. Conclusion:

In the **Research problem** I have observed that there are local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues, and I have observed that it is due to lack of long-term ministerial tenure. This has led me to the hypothesis that long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period will have a significant impact on a congregation's “identity-finding” ability and thus it's understanding of it's “identity”, as opposed to many short-term ministerial tenures in the same period.

In this chapter on leadership and tenure I have focused on those functions and characteristics that make Christian leadership unique. As I addressed the importance of leadership in Building up the Local Church I found that the process of guiding the local congregation to effective participation in its own building up requires relationships of trust, acceptance and love. These inter-personal relationships between the ministerial leader, other leaders and the congregation require time to develop and deepen. Section 3.5. showed that leadership influence increases as pastoral tenure lengthens. Influencing congregations through personal “being” and example, along with creating a new theological direction requires time, which translates into long tenure.

Section 3.6. highlighted the current rules and regulations regarding ministerial tenure in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Section 3.7. addressed the importance of tenure on the influence of leadership and showed how longer tenure increases leadership influence, arguing that longer pastoral tenure is absolutely vital for Building up the Local Church and specifically for guiding the process of congregational identity-finding.

And finally in section 3.8. we understood change as an ongoing process of renewal guided by change agent/s which again points to the importance of pastoral tenure on congregational leadership influence. “Remembering that building up the local church is

basically about the renewing of people, and not mere adjustments to structures and/or programmes, helps to remain patient. Building up the local church is about building relationships, people, the body. Each person who is honest about the process of renewal in his own life, will know that it takes time, and will honestly be able to own that building up the local church is a long-term process of renewal” (Nel, 2004: 138).

CHAPTER 4: An empirical research survey.

“The relationship between ministerial tenure and Identity development in local churches, in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa – Northern Free State and Lesotho District.”

4.1. Introduction:

Before considering the hypothesis, a number of comments must be made concerning the relationship between praxis, theory and scripture. "Theory is in constant need of verification or falsification through praxis, while praxis must constantly be transcended by theory" (Heitink 1999: 152). “Practical theology starts from the situation, the praxis. An experience people have (praxis) becomes the object of reflection on the basic theological statements (theory)” (Heitink 1999: 153). Heitink (1999: 153-154) then highlights an ongoing three step process of Practical Theological reflection, namely: (1) a situation causes discontent with current accepted theory, (2) critical questions are asked of the existing praxis which leads to (3) a revision of the theory. Heitink (1999:154) depicts this relationship in Figure 1:

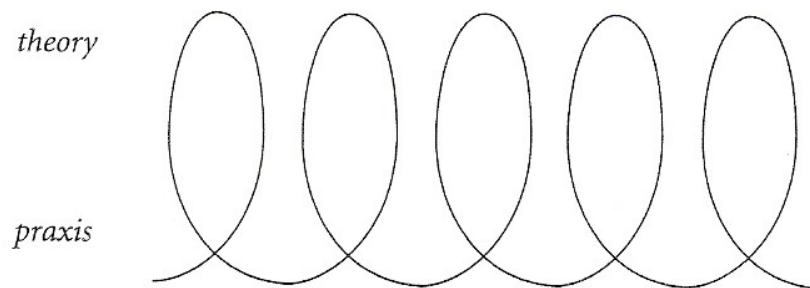


Figure 1: The relation between theory and praxis.

This diagram clearly illustrates how the process starts with praxis. Praxis becomes the object of reflection for theory and thus theory itself is the result of theory (thinking) and praxis (action of the past). Since both these elements are influenced by the times in which they take shape, a re-reading of scripture may lead to the subsequent revision of theory (Heitink 1999: 154). With this new theoretical insight questions are again asked of the existing praxis which leads to new questions being asked of theory, the answers to these questions again having an impact on praxis, and so it goes on. In this chapter praxis and theory will be tested through quantitative analysis.

To do this it is important to return to the research problem and hypothesis outlined in the

introduction, remembering that the research problem is that I have observed that there are local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues. I have observed that these Congregational identity issues are exacerbated by a lack of long-term ministerial tenure. With this in mind the following hypothesis was made: Long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period will have a significant impact on a congregation's identity development and thus on the congregation understanding and expressing its “identity”, as opposed to many short-term ministerial tenures in the same period.

4.2. The research process:

4.2.1. Developing the questionnaire:

At the outset a decision had to be made regarding the process of data collection, and a measuring instrument had to be formulated. The questionnaire was created with the help of the Department of Statistics, University of Pretoria. Because this dissertation focuses on the relationship between ministerial tenure and Identity development in local churches certain key concepts discovered during the literature research (Heitink's Hermeneutical perspective), were operationalized in the questionnaire.

- The issue of clergy tenure was addressed directly by seeking to ascertain how long it took congregants to accept and to trust a new minister. One of the questions asked for their opinion on clergy tenure. The questionnaire also sought to investigate the effect of the MCSA regulations regarding clergy tenure (see 3.6.) on congregation members ability to accept and to trust a new minister.
- The affect of clergy tenure on local church vitality was operationalized by investigating congregant's level of participation in the local church and their level of satisfaction with the local church, growth in Sunday worship attendance and midweek activities, and deepening spiritual growth. The affect the tenure of the minister/s have had on interpersonal relationships, sense of unity, sense of belonging, and sense of feeling accepted within members of the local church was also investigated.
- The affect of clergy tenure on Leadership issues of such as trust, integrity, acceptance and leadership impact on a congregation were also operationalized. The importance of clergy example was also investigated. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregant's recognition of

leadership characteristics was also investigated.

- The affect of clergy tenure on the local church's understanding of “who we are” and “why we are” was investigated by assessing congregant participation in mission. Respondent's we re also asked to comment on the local church's understanding of “who we are” and “why we are”.
- The questionnaire also sought to gauge the emotional turmoil/climate in a congregation when there is a change of minister.
- Issues around change management as they relate to clergy tenure were addressed by asking respondents to clarify their expectations of and from the minister during times of change.

4.2.2. The sample:

The research process employed in this study used quantitative questionnaires to a stratified random sample of congregational members in 22 local Methodist congregations, distributed in four circuits – Virginia & Hennenman (Circuit 603), Goldfields (Circuit 605), Welkom (Circuit 604), and Kutlwanong (Circuit 611) in the Majhabeng area of the Northern Free State. These 22 local churches represent a broad spectrum across the cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic demographic. Circuit 603 has two ministers serving 10 congregations, Circuit 604 has 3 congregations served by four ministers, Circuit 605 has 7 congregations served by two ministers, and Circuit 611 has 2 congregations served by one minister (See appendix 3 for breakdown of circuits and clergy distribution). Circuit 605 has six farm congregations which are classified as Preaching places. These were excluded from the survey because the membership is too small, they are not formal societies, and the minister does not visit very often and does not participate in leadership of the group. Three congregations in circuit 611 did not participate in the survey due to the unresponsiveness of the minister.

A stratified random sampling procedure with proportional allocation was used to generate the sampling plan where the target population was stratified (grouped into homogenous groups) according to Circuit, Local Church, and Class meeting (where applicable depending on the method of keeping membership records).

Below is an explanation of how each congregation has assigned their membership into small groups (class meetings or cell groups) where each group has their own leader.

The following congregation's have small groups that are compulsory for members and the members are allocated to them. Each Class meeting has a membership list. The

number of members in each Class, in each Local Church, was provided by the relevant minister, with membership ranging from 8 to 36. The 10% random sample was then generated according to the membership statistics provided for each Class meeting with between 1 and 4 members being identified per Class.

Congregation A: 425 members divided into 26 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation B: 140 members divided into 9 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation C: 211 members divided into 21 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation D: 129 members divided into 14 class meetings (small groups)

Congregation E: 65 members divided into 8 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation F: 412 members divided into 36 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation G: 36 members divided into 4 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation H: 32 members divided into 3 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation I: 40 members divided into 4 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation J: 47 members divided into 4 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation M: 300 members divided into 12 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation N: 1000 members divided into 50 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation O: 72 members divided into 6 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation P: 36 members divided into 2 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation Q: 72 members divided into 6 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation R: 451 members divided into 20 class meetings (small groups).

Congregation S: 360 members divided into 20 class meetings (small groups).

Each of these small groups has their own elected leader. This is important because it may help us understand the dependence/independence members have with regard to their minister.

The following congregation's have small groups, however they are voluntary for members. Those members who belong to these small groups have their own leader.

Congregation K: 944 members.

Congregation L: 36 members.

Congregation T: 208 members.

Congregation U: 94 members.

Congregation V: 62 members.

The sample size (number of elements to be selected) in each stratum is based on 10% of the total number of elements in that stratum thus resulting ultimately in a 10% sample of

the target population. This translated into 546 questionnaires being distributed across the 22 local churches with random congregation members being selected in each Class meeting. The proportionate representation ensures that the sample reflects the same profile as the target population and thus smaller churches would not have an equivalent or larger influence in the results than larger churches. The stratified breakdown of the population would enable us to do the relevant analysis at Circuit level, local church level and minister level (some local churches share a minister while other local churches have their own minister), if a sufficient number (as close as possible to the envisaged distributed number) of questionnaires were returned on local church level.

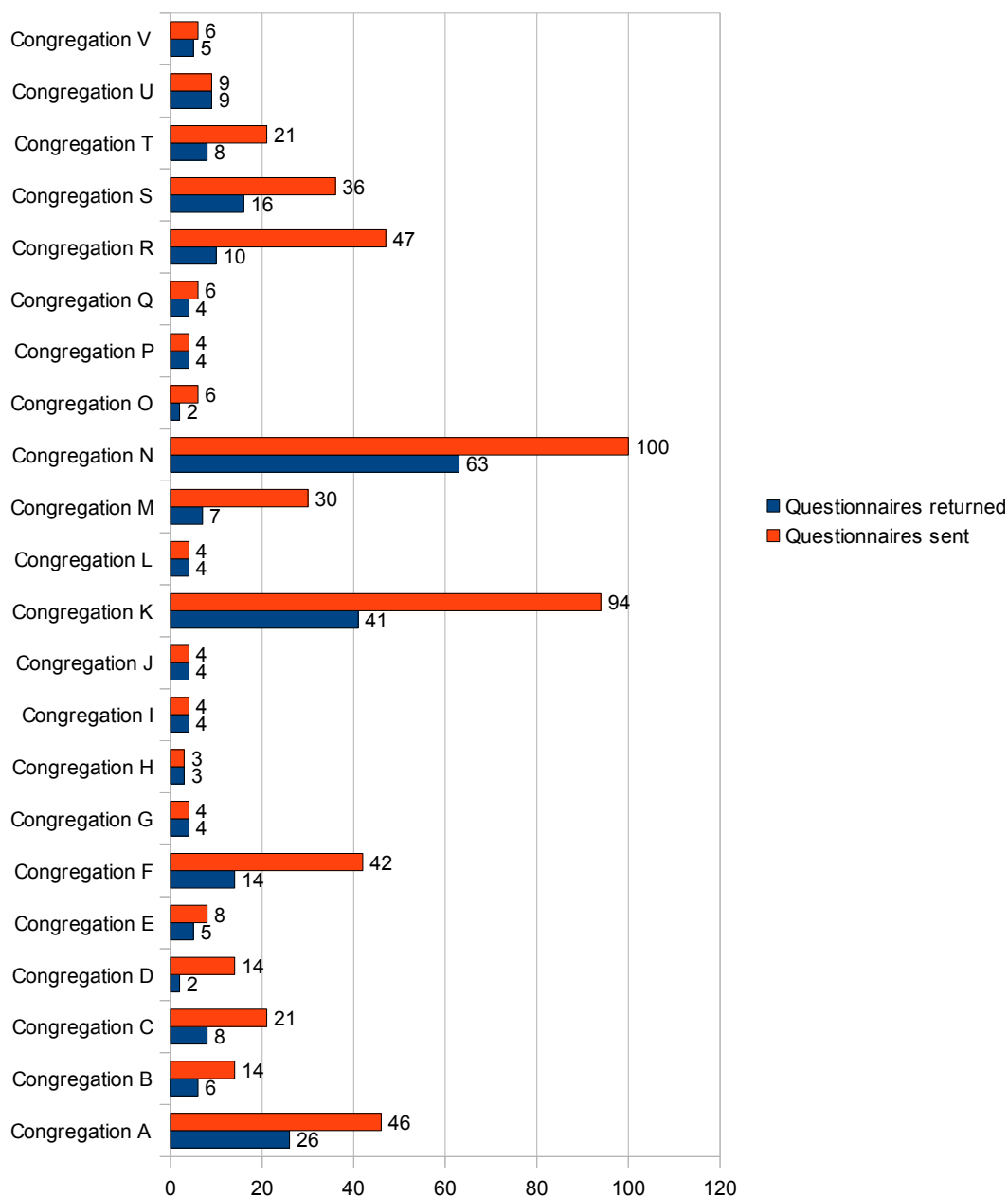


Illustration 1: Bar graph showing Total number of questionnaires sent and returned per congregation

The questionnaire, in both English and Sesotho (see appendix 1 and 2 for copies of the questionnaire), was distributed to the respondents through their ministers and Class leaders and returned by hand in envelopes. The questionnaires were filled in anonymously in order to protect the identity of the respondents and will be kept in a safe place for at least two years. In total 250 of the 546 distributed questionnaires were received back and they were coded and captured.

As with the anonymity of individual respondents, the identities of the 22 congregations in the sample are also being kept anonymous by referring to them using the letters of the alphabet. The connection between the alphabet reference and the actual congregation is known only to the researcher.

4.2.2.1. Total membership per congregation

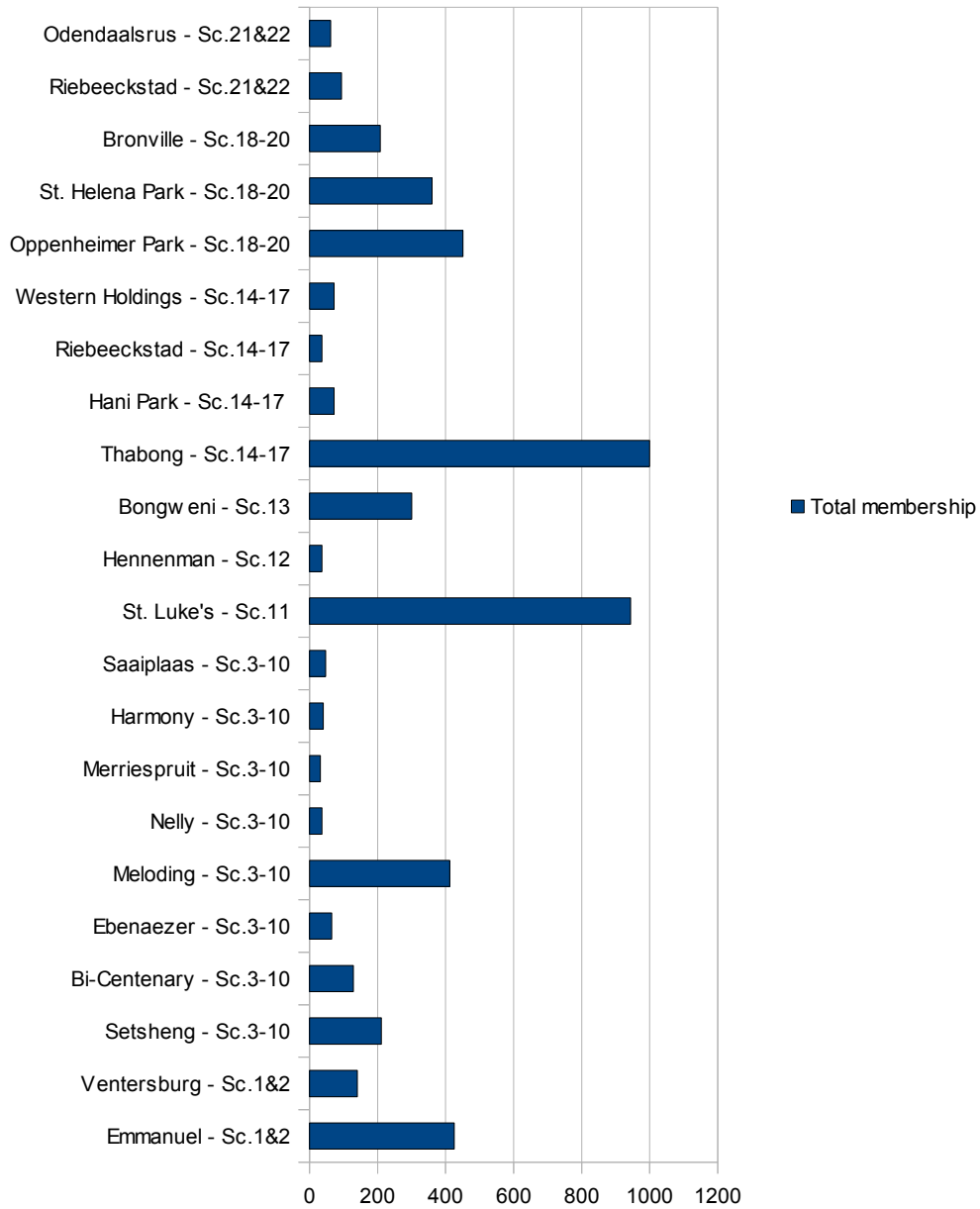


Illustration 2: Bar graph showing Total membership per congregation, with their respective MIN designation.

4.2.2.2. Language distribution of the sample:

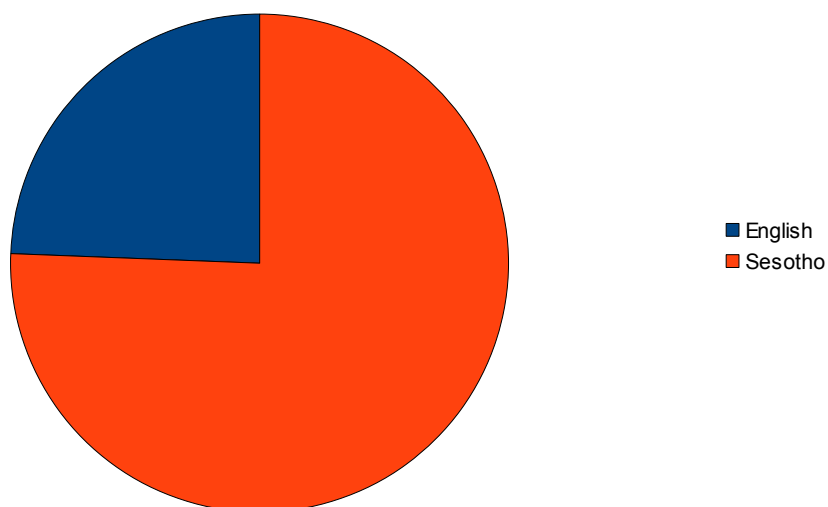


Illustration 3: Pie chart showing language distribution

The predominance of Sesotho respondents is due to the larger number of local churches in the Matjhabeng area having Sesotho and Xhosa speaking members.

4.2.2.3. Age distribution of the sample:

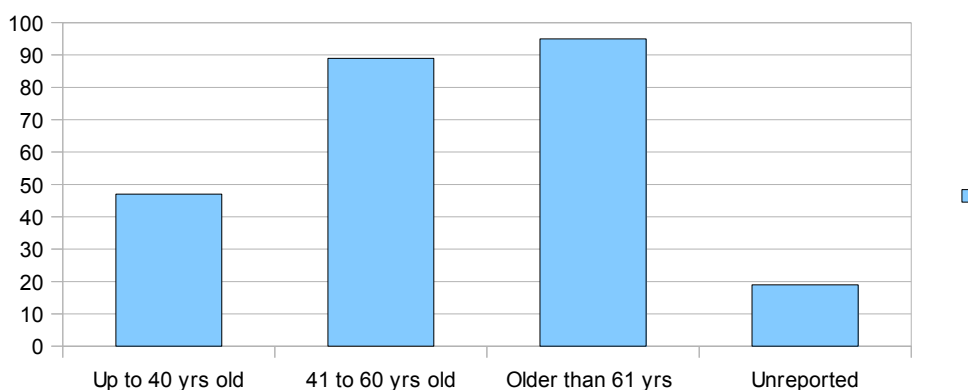


Illustration 4: Histogram of age distribution across whole sample

Amongst the 250 respondents, the youngest person to have responded is 14 years old while the oldest person to have responded is 82 years old. Although this may not be a true reflection of the age distribution of the local churches surveyed (the survey only targeted 10% of the population with less than 50% response) it is helpful for the data analysis because an overwhelming percentage of the respondents had many years of experience (both in and out of the local church environment) to draw from in answering the questions.

4.2.2.4. Level of participation in their local church:

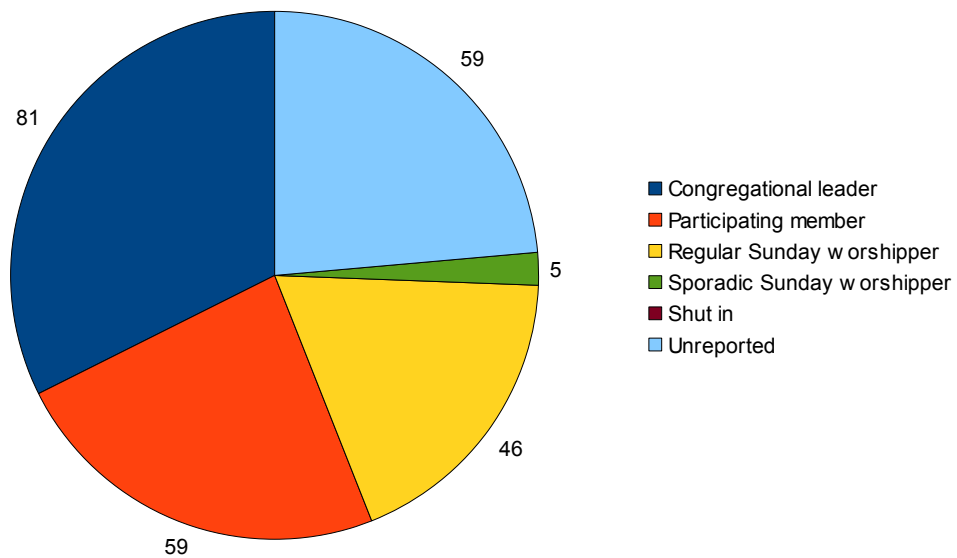


Illustration 5: Pie chart of respondent's participation level in their local church.

This is helpful in the analysis because it shows that 186 of the respondents were, at the least, regular Sunday worshippers, while 81 were leaders in their local church. Thus, a large proportion of the total number of respondent's were able to respond from their experience concerning the effect that clergy tenure has on the local church of which they are members.

4.2.2.5. Gender distribution of the sample:

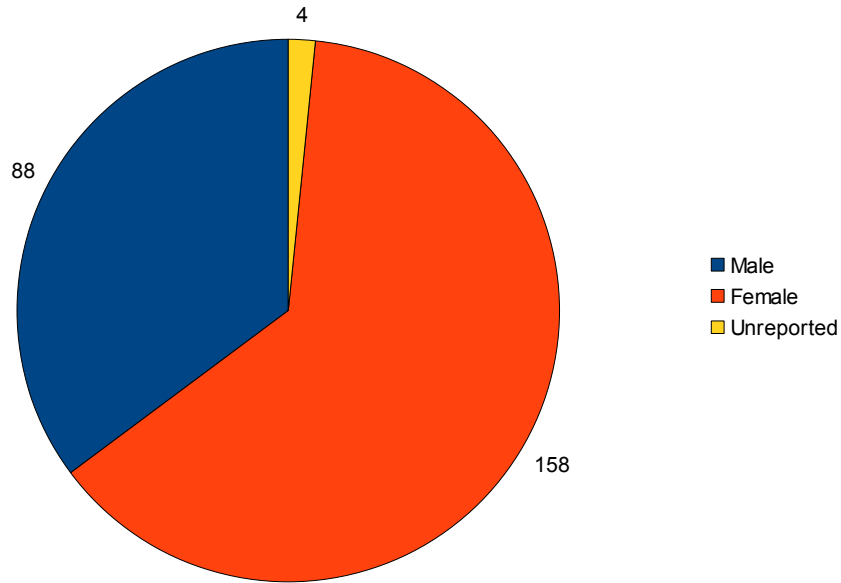


Illustration 6: Pie chart of gender distribution amongst the respondent's

4.2.3. The data analysis:

The analysis sought to shed light on the hypothesis that long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period will have a significant impact on a congregation's identity development and thus on the congregation's understanding and expression of its “identity”.

After the captured data was checked and verified with the original data the data analysis began. A number of respondents did not execute the rankings of activities or options, at questions where they had to rank the given options in a certain order, correctly because they used some of the ranks more than once in a question thus making that part of their data invalid and unusable. Furthermore, insufficient responses in some of the stratum necessitated the concatenation of some of the responses in variables where the respondents had to choose from a large selection of answers.

Most of the information obtained through the questionnaires was worked into univariate or bi-variate frequency tables for observation and analysis. Steyn and others (1994: 547) point out that such tables are summaries of a univariate or multivariate data set in the form of either a one-dimensional (one-way) or a multi-dimensional (multi-way) frequency distribution. “Although the description of a univariate or multivariate raw data set already provides valuable information when represented in a contingency table, it is usually only the first step in a statistical analysis of the data. The purpose is to draw

certain justified conclusions about the population from which the data set is derived. In this regard the Chi-squared distribution plays an important role” (Steyn et al 1994: 549).

The Chi-squared test is based on a bi-variate frequency table and “is used in two ways. . . . As a descriptive statistic, it tells us the strength of the association between two variables and as an inferential statistic, it tells us the probability that any association we find is likely to be due to chance factors” (Neuman 1991: 322). In the data analysis the Chi-squared test was used to test for independence (strength of association) and also to test whether or not the observed data set comes from a normal population (any association due to chance). Neuman (1991 : 312) points out that independence means that knowledge of one variable does not influence the outcome of the other variable. Measures of association equal zero if the variables are independent. The Chi-squared goodness-of-fit test was used “to decide whether the frequency distribution can be reconciled with an assumed theoretical distribution” (Steyn et al 1994: 549), thus inferring the normality of the various data sets.

Where we had to compare data from multiple groupings that did not justify the assumption that the data within the groups were coming from populations with normal distributions, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used “as a distribution-free (non-parametric) test for the problem if the normality assumption is not justified” (Steyn et al 1994: 603). “The Kruskal-Wallis test can be regarded as an extension of the rank sum test for two independent samples. . . . [AND] can be used only if the different samples come from populations with with the same general shape but with possibly different medians” (Steyn et al 1994: 604).

4.2.3.1. A new variable:

As part of the analytical process the various congregations (see Appendix 3), and thus the respective responses, were grouped according to clergy distribution. A new variable was created – MIN.

The congregations grouped in MIN are grouped around their minister, and according to their respective V2 numbers. The distribution is thus Sc1&2, Sc 3-10, Sc 11, Sc 12, Sc 13, Sc 14-17, Sc 18-20, Sc 21-22. (See Appendix 3)

4.2.3.2. Analysis of clergy tenure across the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

These illustrations show the spread of clergy tenure across the group MIN in order to give an understanding of the various analyses later in this chapter.

4.2.3.2.a. Association between the length of current minister's tenure and the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

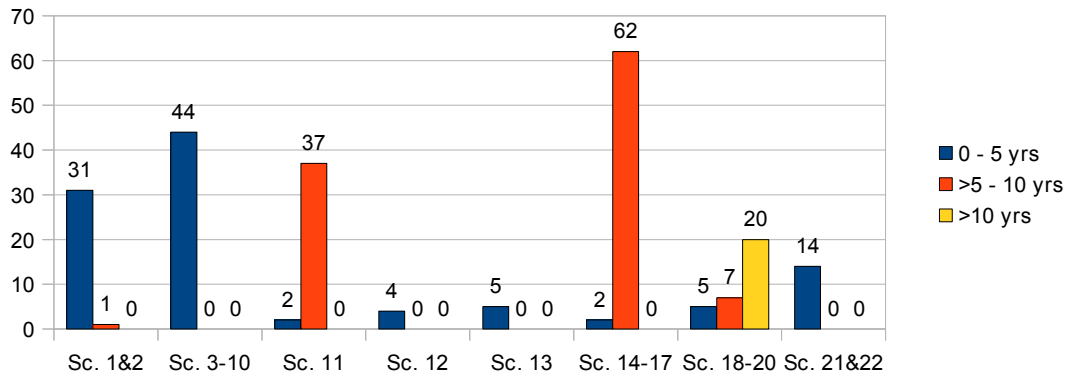


Illustration 7: Frequency of observations of “tenure of current minister” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 46% warning, with a p-value of 0.001, there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “Long term” (>10 years) and “Sc.18-20” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 108.99.

Sc. 18-20 is the only grouping of MIN that has an incumbent minister for longer than 10 years. Most of the other groupings have incumbent minister's who have tenures shorter than 5 years. This is important because having a new minister for less than 5 years may have influenced the observations of the respondent's. Sc. 14-17 and Sc.18-20 have multiple observations because 1 congregation was added to Sc.14-17 minister's care, and two congregations were added to Sc. 18-20 minister's care much later in their respective tenures.

4.2.3.2.b. Association between the length of very effective minister's tenure and the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

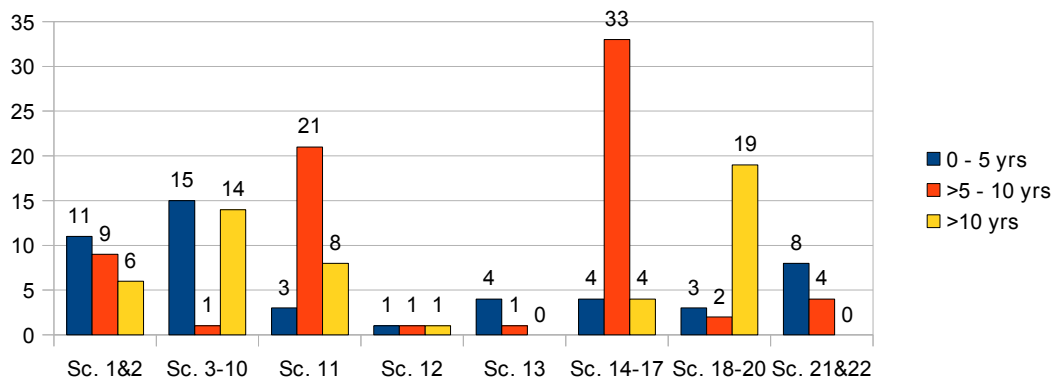


Illustration 8: Frequency of observations of “How long was tenure of very effective minister” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 38% warning, with a p-value of < 0.0001 , there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “>10 years” and “Sc.18-20” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 19.256.

Most of the identified effective ministers' had tenures in the >5-10 year category. Sc. 18-20 had the most respondent's recognizing an effective minister's tenure of longer than 10 years which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3. Empirical research findings:

During the data analysis it was also found that some of the operationalized concepts in the questionnaire yielded responses that were superfluous to the Research problem. These responses have not been commented on in this paper due to its limited scope. The data was interrogated using the methods described in 4.2.3. trying to understand the statistical relationships in order to gain insight into the hypothesis. The following operationalized concepts were interrogated and the results and deductions are given below. The relevant questionnaire V-numbers are included for ease of reference (See appendix 1 & 2 for copies of the questionnaire in English and SeSotho).

A note on missing results:

Although numerous Chi-squared and Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed, results are indicated only where the p-value was above 0,05. Where inadequate results were obtained a number of factors may have contributed to the problem.

- the questionnaire did not operationalize these areas of inquiry adequately;

- insufficient data was received;
- questions were not understood by the respondent's;
- there were too few respondent's per question to provide verifiable statistical data;
- the limited scope of this paper prohibited further data analysis.

A note on the process of interpreting the Chi-squared test:

Where the p-value is above 0,05 (5% level of significance) this means that the Null Hypothesis cannot be rejected, and that there is thus no statistically verifiable relationship between the two groups of variables.

Where the p-value is less than 0,05 (5% level of significance) this means that the Null Hypothesis can be rejected and the Alternate Hypothesis is accepted, which shows that there is a statistically verifiable relationship between the two groups of variables being tested. The next step is to look on the table for where the relationship is strongest. This Chi-squared rating shows where the two variables dependence is strongest.

(1) The Chi-square test delivers a statistic with a p-value. The statistic is determined from the actual observed FREQ per cell (OR1C1 to OR4C5 below) in an n-Way Table and the EXPECTED (calculated) FREQ from the same cell (ER1C1 to ER4C5 below) based on the Null hypothesis that NO ASSOCIATION exists between the OBSERVED/EXPECTED pairs of values (1/1 to 4/5) for the ROWS and COLUMNS of the n-Way Table. To put this diagrammatically for a 4 (ROW) by 5 (COLUMN) Table we could have the following:

		Levels of Variable B				
		1	2	3	4	5
Levels of Variable A	1	OR1C1 ER1C1	OR1C2 ER1C2	OR1C3 ER1C3	OR1C4 ER1C4	OR1C5 ER1C5
	2	OR2C1 ER2C1	OR2C2 ER2C2	OR2C3 ER2C3	OR2C4 ER2C4	OR2C5 ER2C5
	3	OR3C1 ER3C1	OR3C2 ER3C2	OR3C3 ER3C3	OR3C4 ER3C4	OR3C5 ER3C5
	4	OR4C1 ER4C1	OR4C2 ER4C2	OR4C3 ER4C3	OR4C4 ER4C4	OR4C5 ER4C5

Where the OR1C1 to OR4C5 and ER1C1 to ER4C5 would be the actual numbers (FREQ or COUNTS or TALLY) determined from the data passed to the Chi-square software

(2) The Chi-square Test keeps a count of the number of cells for which Expected values (all the E data above) is less than a value of 5 and then produces the WARNING - usually if two or more cells have E-values less than 5)

(3) To prevent/accommodate a WARNING, EITHER the levels of Variable A are re-grouped or bulked to give possibly 3 ROWS or less OR the levels of Variable B are re-grouped or bulked to give possibly 4 COLUMNS or less, to produce an appropriate n-Way Tables OR BOTH levels of

Variable A and Variable B are re-grouped or bulked - usually this approach works and a viable p-value <0.05 is obtained for the appropriate Table without the WARNING

(4) The bulking **MUST BE PERFORMED SENSIBLY** and **AFTER VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION** as to the **MEANING** of the **BULKED LEVELS**. Sometimes bulking is just **NOT** possible and we have to sit with the **WARNING**

(5) If a **WARNING** occurs for an n-Way Table it is possibly to perform **FISCHER'S EXACT TEST**. This is only done advisedly if the p-value for the Table with a **WARNING** is close to 0.05 - This is because in many cases the time involved to perform the Fischer's Exact Test is highly problematical and takes a long, long time to produce a result - So for a Table with a **WARNING** for which the p-value is much more than 0.05, re-grouping or bulking of Variable A and/or Variable B does not really work, and it would be silly to try to perform **FISCHER'S EXACT TEST!**

(6) If a **WARNING** occurs for an n-Way Table and the p-value is really close to but slightly more than 0.05 (!!!) and re-grouping is not advisable or possible we say "Although the Chi-square Test produced a **WARNING** because a number of **EXPECTED** cell values is less than the mandatory value of 5, it is possible that the Null hypothesis for **NO ASSOCIATION** between Variable A and Variable B could be rejected. Fischer's Exact Test was **NOT** performed because of computer processing constraints - a possibility that a statement on the Alternative hypothesis could be made, is tentatively possible!"

A note on the process of interpreting the Kruskal-Wallis test:

Where the p-value is above 0,05 (5% level of significance) this means that the Null Hypothesis cannot be rejected, that the medians do not differ and that there is thus no difference in location to analyze.

Where the p-value is less than 0,05 (5% level of significance) this results in the Null Hypothesis, stating median equality among the variables being tested, being rejected and the Alternate Hypothesis, which indicates that at least one pair of medians differ significantly being accepted.

In order to detect which of the medians differed from each other the results of the multiple comparisons within each test must be viewed and interpreted. In the multiple comparisons section all the possible combinations were compared to each other and differences are indicated by a double asterisk (**) if the difference was significant on the 5% level of significance and a single asterisk (*) if the difference was significant on the 10% level of significance directly after the ZSTAT value for the given combination tested. These are indicated where the ZSTAT (Test statistic) scores are higher than the critical Z value. The column containing the difference indicated by "DIF" can be used to assign an order to the difference because a positive difference would indicate that the first category minus the second category yields a positive answer meaning that the value of the first category exceeded that of the second category. A negative difference would

be the result of the value of the second category exceeding the value of the first category. In this way the variables with higher values when compared together are indicated. This not only shows where differences in median between the various variables occur, it also indicates how great these differences are.

4.3.1. The affect of clergy tenure on understanding “who we are” and “why we are here”:

This was operationalized by investigating respondent's observation of whether there is widespread understanding of the unique Congregational identity the longer a good minister stays in the congregation [V28], and further by asking their opinion on whether their congregation has a clear understanding of its mission in the community [V34]. These responses were compared to the tenure of the current minister [V8], and also to the tenure of a minister regarded as a very effective leader [V15].

4.3.1.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and widespread understanding of the unique Congregational identity:

See 4.3. a note on missing results. This is an area which would profit from further research which was not appropriate for this study of limited scope.

4.3.1.2. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregational understanding of its mission in the community:

See 4.3. a note on missing results. This is an area which would profit from further research which was not appropriate for this study of limited scope.

4.3.1.3. The relationship between widespread understanding of the unique Congregational identity the longer a good minister stays in the congregation and the groupings of congregations in MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

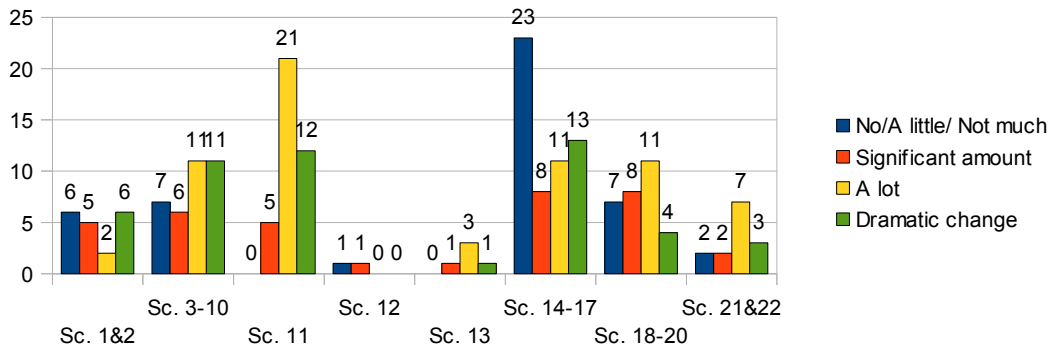


Illustration 9: Frequency of observations of “change in widespread understanding of congregational identity occurs the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 47% warning, with a p-value of 0.0039 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “No/A little/Not much” and “Sc.11” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 8.8283.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations are concentrated at “A lot” or “Dramatic change” for Sc. 3-10, Sc.11, Sc.13, Sc.21&22, while are evenly distributed for Sc.14-17 and Sc. 18-20, which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.1.4. The relationship between “my congregation has a clear understanding of its mission in the community” and the groupings of congregation's in the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

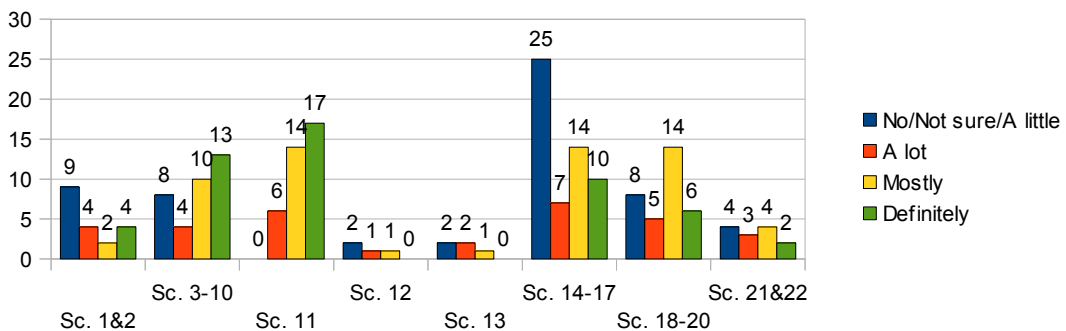


Illustration 10: Frequency of observations of “my congregation has a clear understanding of its mission in the community” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 44% warning, with a p-value of 0.0050 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “No/Not sure/A little” and “Sc.11” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 10.624.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations are not specifically

concentrated at any one side of the rating scale which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.2. The affect of clergy tenure on congregational vitality.

This was operationalized by requesting respondents to indicate their observations of congregational life the longer a good minister stays in the congregation for four areas of growth, namely Sunday attendance increases [V24], More congregation members participate in midweek activities [V25], More community focus or outreach [V26], and More spiritual growth occurs in the congregation [V27].

In order to investigate whether tenure of the clergy had any influence on these responses Chi-squared tests were done to test for association (independence) between these responses and the tenure of the current minister [V8], and also to the tenure of a minister regarded as a very effective leader [V15].

Only the outputs that had a Chi-squared p-value <0,05 are commented on. See 4.3. a note on missing results. This is an area which would profit from further research which was not appropriate for this study of limited scope.

4.3.2.1. The relationship between “more congregation members participate in midweek activities the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the tenure of very effective minister:

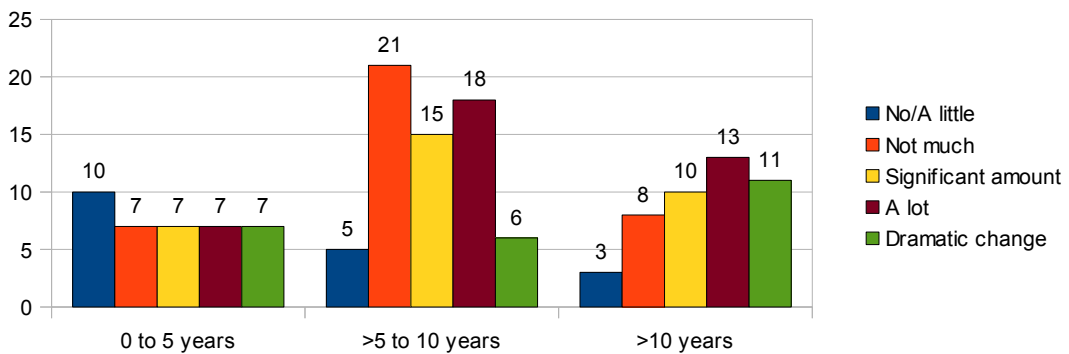


Illustration 11: Frequency of observations of “more congregation members participate in midweek activities the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the tenure of very effective minister.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 41% warning, with a p-value of 0.0329 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “No/A little” and “0 to 5 years” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 6.259.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations increase from “No/A little” to “A lot/Dramatic change” as the tenure of the effective minister lengthens. This may be

statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.2.2. The relationship between “more spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the tenure of very effective minister:

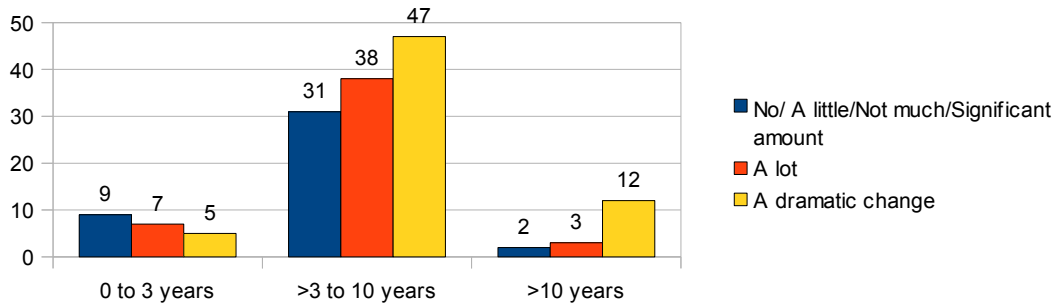


Illustration 12: Frequency of observations of “more spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the tenure of very effective minister.

This relationship is strongest between “More than 10 years” and “Dramatic change” with no warning and a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 3.4473. This shows that where the tenure of a very effective minister was longer than 10 years respondent's observed a dramatic change in the increased spiritual growth in the congregation.

4.3.2.3. The relationship between “Sunday attendance increasing the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

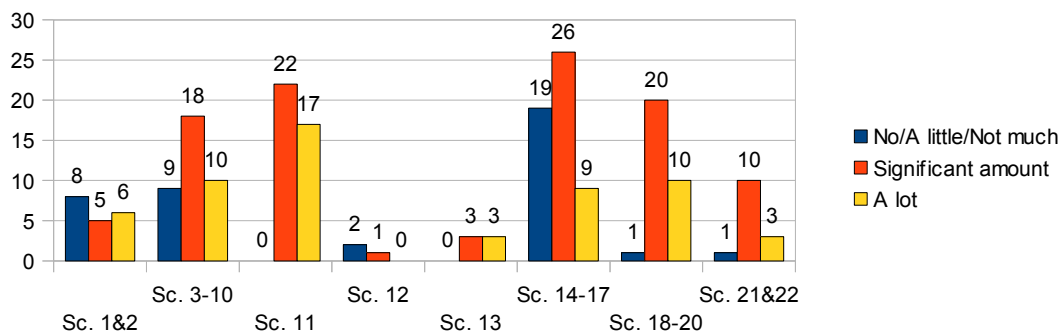


Illustration 13: Frequency of observations of “Sunday attendance increasing the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 38% warning, with a p-value of 0.0001 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “No/A little/Not much” and “Sc.11” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 7.6847.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations are concentrated at “Significant amount” which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.2.4. The relationship between “More congregant's participating in midweek activities the longer a good minister stay in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

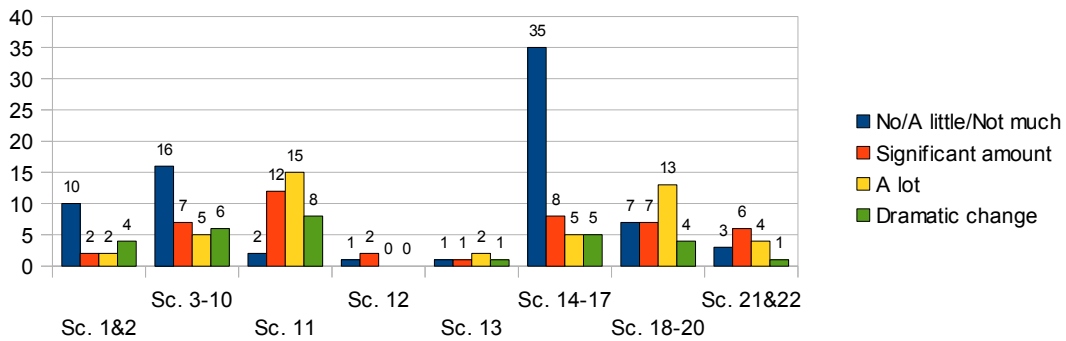


Illustration 14: Frequency of observations of “More congregant's participating in midweek activities the longer a good minister stay in the congregation” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 60% warning, with a p-value of 0.0002 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “Not much” and “Sc.14-17” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 8.9503.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “Significant amount” or “A lot” which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.2.5. The relationship between “More community focus or outreach occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

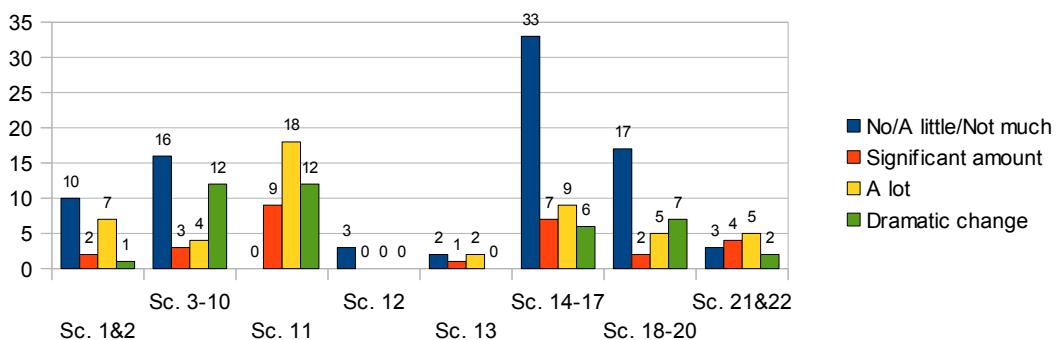


Illustration 15: Frequency of observations of “More community focus or outreach occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 58% warning, with a p-value of 0.0001 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “Not much” and “Sc.11” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 10.866.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “No/A little” and “Not much” which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.2.6. The relationship between “More spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

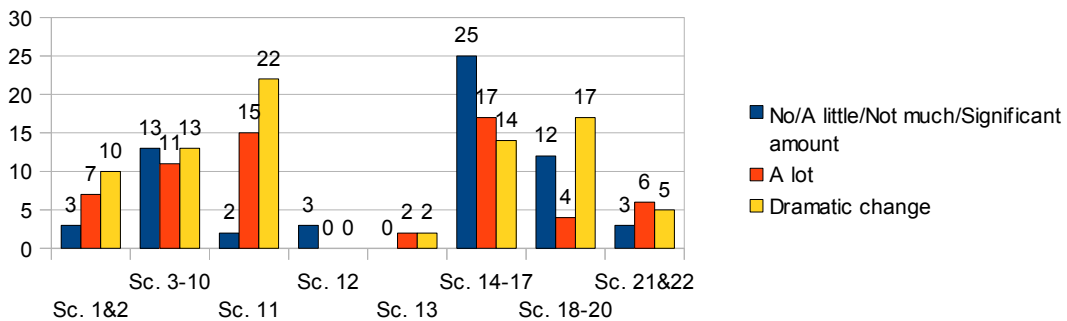


Illustration 16: Frequency of observations of “More spiritual growth occurs in the congregation the longer a good minister stays in the congregation” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 33% warning, with a p-value of 0.0008 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “No/a little/Not much/Significant amount ” and “Sc.11” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 7.8949. It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “A lot” and “Dramatic change” which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.2.7. Differences in measures of location between Congregation members' observations on the four areas of congregational growth the longer a good minister stays and the groupings' of congregations in the group MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

From Table 1 below it can be seen that Sc11 (the congregation with two ministers) yielded the most differences relative to the other congregations in all four of the congregational growth areas, with it's rating always higher. When comparing Sc11 to the remaining societies with regard to the growth areas it is observed that differences are present between Sc11 and all the other societies with the ratings of Sc11 always higher,

but these differences are not big enough to be regarded as significant.

	Sc:1&2	Sc:3-10	Sc:11	Sc:12	Sc:13	Sc:14-17	Sc:18-20	Sc:21&22
Sc:1&2								
Sc:3-10								
Sc:11	V24**V25* * V26**V27* *	V24**V25* * V26**V27*		V24*V27 *		V24**V25** V26**V27**		
Sc:12								
Sc:13								
Sc:14-17								
Sc:18-20	V24*V25**					V24**V25** V27**		
Sc:21&22	V26*							

Table 1: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the areas of growth where significant differences were observed between the different groupings of MIN.

**=5% *=10%

The results for congregation's with their own minister (Sc12 and Sc 13) are statistically inconclusive.

However, one (Sc 18-20) of the five groups of congregation's that share 1 minister also showed a positive difference in median compared to the other congregation's sharing a minister.

These results are exciting in that they show no conformity as to size of congregation, culture, ethnicity, or economic profile in the variables of MIN that scored higher or lower. However, it is significant that Sc.18-20 showed a positive difference in median compared to other congregation's sharing a minister because this is the grouping whose incumbent minister has a tenure longer than 10 years.

These overall results are quite important for congregational vitality because even amongst the groups of congregations where the membership is allocated into small groups with their own leader (see 4.2.2.1.), the role of the minister seems to be important to increased congregational vitality the longer a good minister stays in the congregation.

4.3.3. Congregation members opinion on longer clergy tenure:

This was operationalized by asking respondent's whether it is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time [V30].

On a scale of 1-6, the data shows a mean (the arithmetic average) of 4,43. This would indicate a general pattern where congregation members believe it is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time.

A further Means procedure was done on the variables of MIN.

Sc. 21&22 (Sh-1-Min) shows a mean of 5.79. Sc. 11 (Hs-2-Min) shows a mean of 5.38.

Sc. 3-10 (Sh-1-Min) shows a mean of 4.81. Sc. 18-20 (Sh-1-Min) shows a mean of 4.58.

Sc. 12 (Hs-1-Min) shows a mean of 4.50. Sc. 13 (Hs-1-Min) shows a mean of 3.83.

Sc. 14-17 (Sh-1-Min) shows a mean of 3.55. Sc. 1&2 (Sh-1-Min) shows a mean of 3.47.

4.3.3.1. The relationship between “It is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time” and the groupings of congregation's of MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

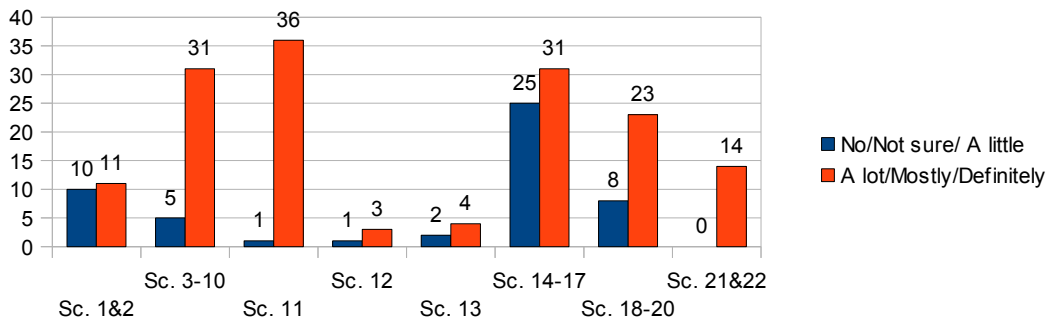


Illustration 17: Frequency of observations of “It is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 31% warning, with a p-value of 0.001, there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “No/Not sure/A little” and “Sc.14-17” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 8.2038.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “A lot/Mostly?Definitely” for all of the congregation groups which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.3.2. Differences in measures of location between congregants' opinion whether it is better for longer clergy tenure than shorter clergy tenure and the groupings of congregations in MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

	Sc:1&2	Sc:3-10	Sc:11	Sc:12	Sc:13	Sc:14-17	Sc:18-20	Sc:21&22
Sc:1&2								
Sc:3-10								
Sc:11	4.70**					4.78**		
Sc:12								
Sc:13								
Sc:14-17								
Sc:18-20	3.32**					3.09*		
Sc:21&22	5.09**	3.16**				4.99**		

Table 2: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the respondent's opinion whether it is better for longer clergy tenure than shorter clergy tenure where significant differences were observed between the

different groupings of MIN.
**=5% *=10%

From the above table it can be seen that Sc21&22 (Sh-1-Min) yielded the most differences relative to the other congregations with its rating always higher. When comparing Sc21&22 to the remaining societies it is observed that differences are present between Sc21&22 and all the other societies with the ratings of Sc21&22 always higher, but these differences are not big enough to be regarded as significant.

One of the other Sh-1-Min group (Sc 18-20) also showed a significant positive difference in median compared to Sc1&2 on the 5% level of significance and compared to Sc14-17 on the 10% level of significance.

The results for congregation's with their own minister (Sc12 and Sc 13) are statistically inconclusive.

Sc 11 (Hs-2-Min) showed significant positive differences relative to Sc 1&2 and Sc 14-17, both groups within the Sh-1-Min group.

These results are exciting in that they show no conformity as to size of congregation, culture, ethnicity, or economic profile in the variables of MIN that scored higher or lower.

4.3.4. The affect of clergy tenure on the willingness of congregant's to accept and to trust minister's.

This was operationalized by investigating how important it is for congregant's to trust the minister [V33], and how long it takes for congregant's to trust and to accept the minister. Relational issues of trust, acceptance and ministerial integrity were investigated. [See V9 and V38]

The data for the importance for congregant's to trust a minister shows a mean (the arithmetic average) of 5.40 on a scale of 1-6. This expresses very clearly how strong the need is for congregant's to trust their minister.

The Mean for accepting a new minister is 269,86 days and the Mean for trusting a new minister being 230,23 days. This indicates that it takes longer for congregant's to accept a new minister than it does for them to trust a new minister. The reasons for this may benefit from further research which is beyond the scope of this limited reasearch.

4.3.4.1. The relationship between how important it is for congregant's to trust the minister and the tenure of incumbent minister was tested. The relationship between how

important it is for congregant's to trust the minister and the tenure of a very effective minister was tested.

The relationship between how long it takes for congregant's to trust and to accept the minister and the tenure of incumbent minister was tested. The relationship between how long it takes for congregant's to trust and to accept the minister and the tenure of an effective minister was tested.

See 4.3. a note on missing results. This is an area which would profit from further research which was not appropriate for this study of limited scope.

4.3.4.2. The relationship between the respondents need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with in order to participate and the groupings of congregations in MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

The V62 output is an ordered value as it one of five possible responses in a ranked response table where 1 is “least important” and 5 is “most important”.

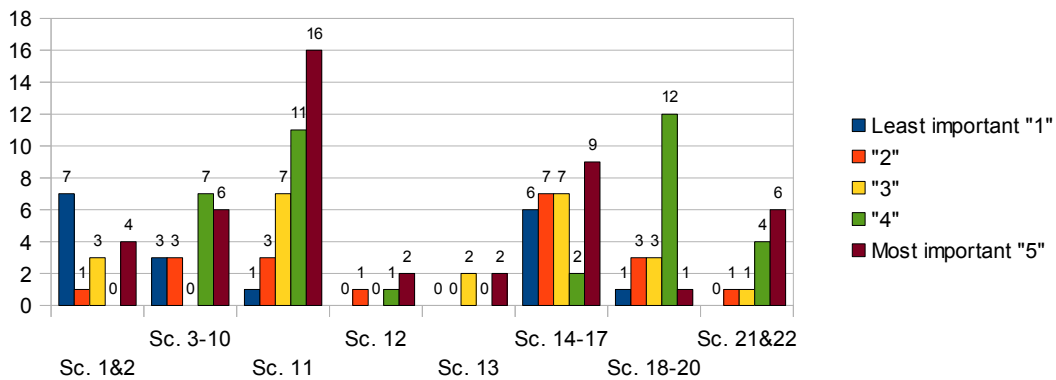


Illustration 18: Frequency of observations of the respondents need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with in order to participate across the groupings of congregations in MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 78% warning, with a p-value of 0.0002 there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “Least important” and “Sc.1&2” with a “Cell Chi-square” rating of 13.84.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “Most important” for most of the groupings of congregation's in MIN. This may indicate a connection between congregational participation and the trustworthiness of the minister which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

However, these results are exciting in that they do show no conformity as to size of

congregation, culture, ethnicity, or economic profile in the variables of MIN.

4.3.4.3. Differences in measures of location between Congregation members' need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with and the categories of MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

	Sc:1&2	Sc:3-10	Sc:11	Sc:12	Sc:13	Sc:14-17	Sc:18-20	Sc:21&22
Sc:1&2								
Sc:3-10								
Sc:11	3.97**	4.42**				5.25**		
Sc:12								
Sc:13								
Sc:14-17								
Sc:18-20								
Sc:21&22	2.94*	3.05*				3.48**		

Table 3: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the respondent's need for a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with where significant differences were observed between the different groupings of MIN.

**=5% *=10%

From the above table it can be seen that Sc11 (the congregation with two ministers) yielded the most differences relative to the other congregations with its rating always higher. When comparing Sc11 to the remaining societies with regard to the growth areas it is observed that differences are present between Sc11 and all the other societies with the ratings of Sc11 always higher, but these differences are not big enough to be regarded as significant.

The results for congregation's with their own minister (Sc12 and Sc 13) are statistically inconclusive.

However, one (Sc 21&22) of the five groups of congregation's that share 1 minister also showed a significant positive difference in median compared to the other congregation's sharing a minister. These results are exciting in that they show no conformity as to size of congregation, culture, ethnicity, or economic profile in the variables of MIN that scored higher or lower.

4.3.5. The effect of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's regulations (see 3.6.) regarding clergy tenure on congregation members ability to accept and to trust a new minister:

This was operationalized by investigating whether the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's regulation of a five year invitation tenure for minister's affected the respondents ability to accept a new minister (V11) and also to trust a new minister (V40);

On a scale of 1-6, the data shows a mean (the arithmetic average) of 2.92 for their ability to accept a new minister and 3,03 for their ability to trust a new minister. This

would indicate a general pattern where congregant's ability to accept and to trust a new minister is not significantly influenced by the regulations of the MCSA.

4.3.5.1. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” and the tenure of current minister:

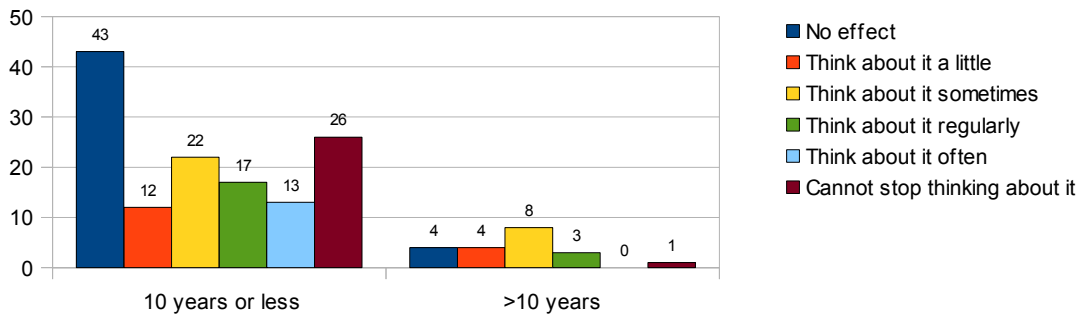


Illustration 19: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” across the tenure of current minister.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 42% warning, with a p-value of 0.0369, there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “Long-term” (>10 years) and “I think about it sometimes” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 4.2416.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations are spread across the rating scale for respondent's where the tenure of their current minister is 10 years or less. However, the frequency of observations is more concentrated between 'no effect' and 'think about it sometimes' where the tenure is longer than 10 years. This may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.5.2. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” and the tenure of a very effective minister:

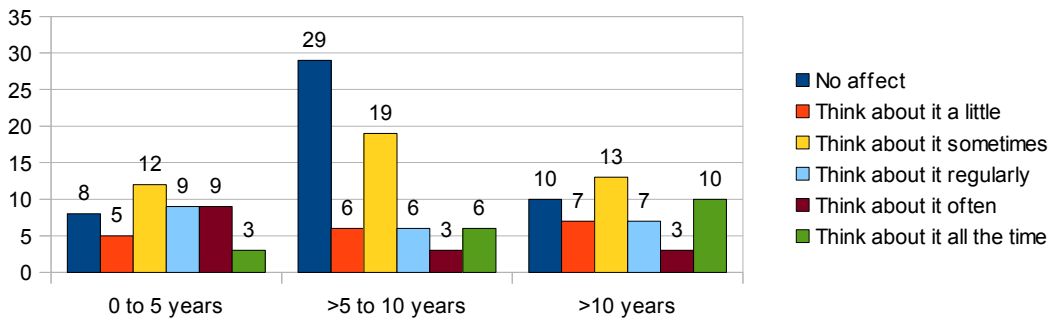


Illustration 20: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations on clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” across the tenure of a very effective minister.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 34% warning, with a p-value of 0.0096, there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “0 to 5 years” and “I think about it often” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 5.5514.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations are spread across the rating scale which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.5.3. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” and the groupings of congregation’s of MIN (see 4.2.3.1.):

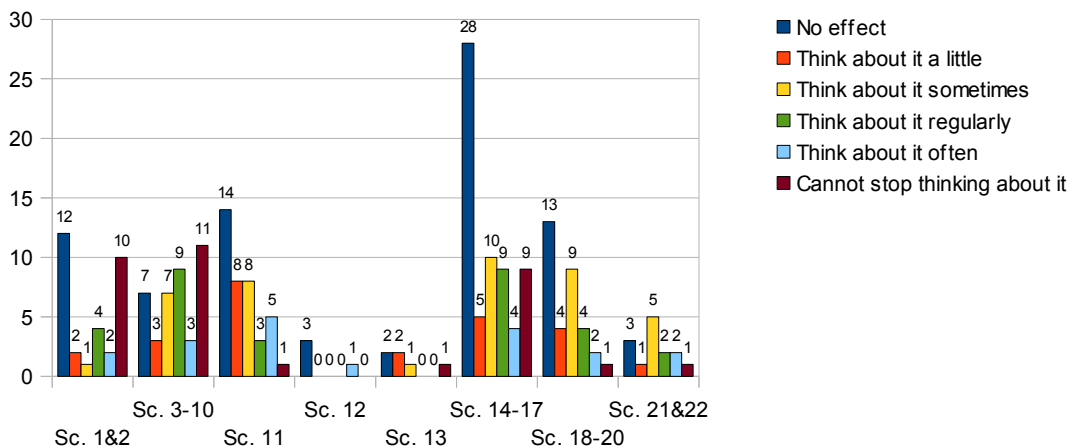


Illustration 21: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to accept a new minister” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 63% warning, with a p-value of 0.0252, there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “Cannot stop thinking about it” and “Sc.1&2” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 6.5545.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “No effect” for most of the congregation groups which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.5.4. The relationship between “to what extent the denominational regulations regarding clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” and the groupings of congregation's of MIN:

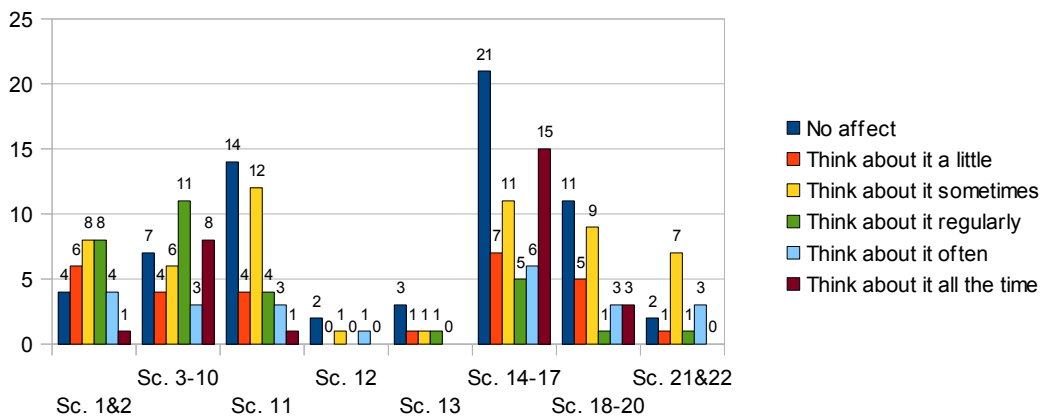


Illustration 22: Frequency of observations of “to what extent the denominational regulations on clergy tenure affect your ability to trust a new minister” across the group MIN.

Although Chi-squared test is not recommended because of a 67% warning, with a p-value of 0.0144, there does seem to be a relationship that is strongest between “I think about it all the time” and “Sc.14-17” with a “Cell Chi-squared” rating of 6.258.

It is interesting to note that the frequency of observations across the group of MIN are concentrated at “No affect” for most of the congregation groups which may be statistically significant and warrants further investigation which is beyond the scope of this limited research.

4.3.6. The relationship between clergy tenure and recognition of leadership attributes.

An important aspect of a minister's effectiveness in guiding a congregation in its own Identity-finding process is not only his/her leadership abilities, but the congregation members' recognition of such abilities.

This was operationalized by asking the respondents to rate a very effective minister with respect to 7 attributes i.e. Leadership characteristics [V17]; The trust you have with the minister [V18]; Openness with the congregation [V19]; Approachability [V20]; Integrity and trustworthiness [V21]; Spiritual warmth [V22]; and Acceptance of you [V23].

4.3.6.1. The relationship between the length of tenure of the clergy identified as an effective leader and each of the 7 leadership attributes:

The results for all these tests show a p-value above 0,05 (5% level of significance) which means that the Null Hypothesis cannot be rejected, and that there is thus no statistically verifiable relationship between the tenure of the very effective minister and the congregant's recognition of leadership characteristics in the minister.

See 4.3. a note on missing results. This is an area which would profit from further research which was not appropriate for this study of limited scope.

4.3.6.2. Differences in measures of location between the 7 leadership attributes and the tenure of an identified effective minister:

The outputs all had a p-value above 0,05 (5% level of significance) which means that the Null Hypothesis cannot be rejected, and that there is thus no statistically verifiable relationship between the two groups of variables.

See 4.3. a note on missing results. This is an area which would profit from further research which was not appropriate for this study of limited scope.

4.3.6.3. Differences in measures of location of the very effective minister's spiritual warmth where significant differences were observed between the tenures of the identified very effective minister's.

Group no	Name	Frequency	Rank sum	Average rank
2	>3-10yrs	155	12735.5	83.23
3	>10 yrs	17	1799.5	105.85

Table 4: Kruskal-Wallis test summary of the very effective minister's spiritual warmth where significant differences were observed between the tenures of the identified very effective minister's.

The average rankings show that for clergy who were effective leaders, tenure longer than 10 years has a stronger impact on their perceived spiritual warmth than for tenure between 3 to 10 years. This is important for Building up the Local Church because it shows that the congregant's ability to accept and trust a minister improves the longer the tenure of the minister is.

4.4. Interim findings:

This summary is given here because Ch. 5 will refer to these points in discussion with the descriptive research and also make strategic suggestions in regard to these.

4.4.1. On the question regarding the affect clergy tenure has on understanding “who we are” and “why we are here” [See 4.3.1.]: Most of the respondent's in four of the groupings of MIN experienced significant change in their understanding of it's unique identity the longer a good minister stays. The difference in response between the various groupings of MIN needs further research. Generally, the respondent's understanding of their congregational mission in the community was not as clearly defined. This also requires further research to understand the underlying causes of this.

4.4.2. On the question regarding the affect clergy tenure has on congregational vitality [See 4.3.2.]: It seems that the longer a good minister stays in the congregation the greater the perceived improvement in Sunday worship attendance, midweek participation and spiritual growth in the congregation. An area of growth that did not show improvement was attention on community focus or outreach. This requires further study.

It is interesting that there seems to be no conformity in the responses as to size of congregation, culture, ethnicity or socio-economic factors.

A further point of interest is that the group of congregation's sharing a minister whose tenure exceeds 10 years showed stronger results than the other groups' sharing a minister whose tenure's are less than 5 years.

It is also important to note that most respondent's level of participation in the congregation depends on their view of the minister.

These overall results are quite important for congregational vitality because even amongst the groups of congregations where the membership is allocated into small groups with their own leader (see 4.2.2.1.), the role of the minister seems to be important to increased congregational vitality the longer a good minister stays in the

congregation.

4.4.3. On the question regarding congregant's opinion on longer clergy tenure [See 4.3.6.]: All respondent's rated higher than average for longer clergy tenure against shorter tenure. It is clear that most respondent's across cultural, ethnic and socio-economic boundaries prefer longer clergy tenure. This is important for the focus of this research and warrants even further study.

4.4.4. On the question of the affect clergy tenure has on the willingness of congregant's to accept and to trust minister's [See 4.3.4.]: It was found that most respondent's felt it was 'very' to 'most important' that they have a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with in order to participate in the congregation. However, due to the lack of data analysis results and the limited scope of this research the affect of clergy tenure on the willingness of congregant's to accept and to trust a new minister could not be determined. This is an important area that would profit from further research.

4.4.5. On the question of the affect of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's regulations regarding clergy tenure on congregation members ability to accept and to trust a new minister [See 4.3.5.]: It does not seem that the regulation of a five year invitation cycle causes overwhelming distress amongst the respondent's. However, it does seem that clergy tenure longer than 10 years reduces the stress of thinking about the 5 year invitation cycle. This is an area that needs further research beyond the scope of this paper.

4.4.6. On the question regarding the relationship between clergy tenure and congregant's recognition of leadership attributes [See 4.3.6.]: Most of the tests performed were statistically inconclusive, except where it was shown that effective leaders who had tenures longer than 10 years were perceived to have greater spiritual warmth than shorter tenured clergy. However, this is not enough to base any conclusion on and thus this is definitely an area that requires much more research and analysis.

4.5. Conclusion:

This chapter has given a breakdown of the empirical research findings as they relate to the Research problem. Almost every area of this research require much more research and analysis before any firm statistically verifiable conclusions can be drawn. However,

in the next chapter the empirical research findings of this paper will be brought into conversation with the theory of clergy tenure and Congregational Identity.

CHAPTER 5 - A WAY FORWARD

5.1. Introduction:

Throughout this document the research problem considered is the observation that local churches in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that are struggling with “identity” and identity related issues. It has been observed that these Congregational identity issues are exacerbated by a lack of long-term ministerial tenure. To investigate this problem statement the following hypothesis was stated: Long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period will have a significant impact on a congregation's identity development and thus on the congregation being able to understand and express it's “identity”, as opposed to many short-term ministerial tenures' in the same period.

5.2. The relation between theory and praxis:

In engaging the empirical analysis with the descriptive research this section seeks to ascertain whether the praxis, theory and quantitative analysis confirms or denies the basic hypothesis made at the beginning of the study. (Refer to 4.4. interim findings)

5.2.1. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregational identity:

The empirical perspective (4.4.1.) seems to support the theory that longer clergy tenure enables a congregation to engage with the process of Identity-finding. Section 2.5. showed that Congregational Identity-finding is a long term and ongoing task. This process takes time which seems to be confirmed by most of the respondent's in four of the groupings of MIN experiencing significant change in their congregation's understanding of it's unique identity the longer a good minister stays.

5.2.2. The relationship between clergy tenure and congregational vitality:

On the whole the empirical perspective (4.4.2.) supports the theory that longer clergy tenure creates an environment for increased congregational health. Section 2.6.1 showed that the process of Identity-finding results in, amongst others, increased unity which promotes inter-personal interaction and relationships. One area where the empirical data did not show expected results was in mission beyond the boundaries of the congregation. Most respondent's had an inward looking perspective on congregational vitality that theory suggests should be transformed by longer clergy tenure.

5.2.3. The relationship between clergy tenure and acceptance/trust:

The empirical data (4.4.4. & 4.4.5.) only supports the understanding that trust and acceptance are vital for Congregational leaders, while showing that the denominational regulations seem to have little influence on respondent's ability to accept and trust a new minister.. The descriptive research in section 3.5. & 3.7.1. showed the fundamental importance of the leader's integrity for building trust and acceptance with the congregation. Unfortunately, due to the lack of results from the data analysis the empirical perspective could not be determined.

5.2.4. The relationship between clergy tenure and recognized leadership qualities:

The descriptive research in section section 3.7 shows that leadership influence grows with time. The empirical data (4.4.6.) only supports the understanding that effective minister's with tenures longer than 10 years were perceived to have greater spiritual warmth. However, this is because most of the analytical tests were statistically inconclusive.

Considering the preceding descriptive and empirical conclusions reached through this study it seems that the basic hypothesis - Long-term ministerial tenure over an extended period will have a significant impact on a congregation's identity development and thus on the congregation being able to understand and express it's "identity", as opposed to many short-term ministerial tenures' in the same period – is supported and confirmed. However, more empirical support is required for this hypothesis before this conclusion can be stated unequivocally (see 5.4.)

5.3. Research implications for the practice of ministry:

It is important to note that this thesis does not argue for long-term ministerial tenure per se. It is recognised that in some cases long-term tenure can be pathological for various reasons. The argument of this thesis assumes that the minister is intentionally focused on Building up the Local Church and is engaged in the identity - finding process that Building up the Local Church entails. Therefore, the following is suggested:

5.3.1. Focus on Christian leadership principles and practices against general leadership theory, more especially the approach of 'servant leadership' as espoused in 3.3.3.

5.3.2. Leaders must be aware of how they influence those being lead. The leaders character, attitudes and personal style are even more important than the skills they have have.

5.3.3. Stay in the congregation for a long tenure. The longer you stay the more healthy and vital the congregation will become.

5.3.4. Engage with the process of 'Building up the Local Church'. It will take time but the effort and sacrifice is worth it.

5.3.5. Engage with the systems approach to understanding congregational dynamics because it brings wonderful perspective and encouragement for what we do.

5.4. Research implications for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's stationing practices:

The regulations with regard to stationing hold to an initial 5 year invitation cycle for itinerant ministry while full time and part time non-itinerant ministry is appointed annually (see 3.6).

Therefore, the following is suggested:

It is important for the Bishops and others involved in the various stationing committee's to be informed of the benefit of consistent long-term clergy tenure. Wherever possible, it is important for the overall well-being of local Methodist congregation's to have continuity of leadership. Therefore, clergy should be encouraged by those in oversight to remain in their station for a longer tenure.

5.5. Research implications for the training of Christian leadership:

The Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary has a vision and purpose statement that reads "SMMS 'forms transforming leaders for church and nation' by providing the spiritual, academic, vocational and practical formation for developing skilled leaders of integrity, faithfulness and excellence. The academic faculty of the Seminary, though small, is passionately committed and qualified to develop the kind of transformational leaders the church and nation need. All are committed to teaching theology in the African context whilst retaining a sense of the international perspective - local and global worldviews - with an emphasis on empowering people for the development of our emerging society."

Therefore, the following are suggested:

5.5.1. Education regarding the fundamental importance of consistent long-term tenure over a period of years as part of any transforming leaders theory and practice needs to happen.

5.5.2. The absolute importance of the leader's character and example for any position of Christian influence needs to be emphasized.

- 5.5.3. Remind the seminarians that Christian leadership, and Building up the Local Church specifically, should focus on the work of the Kingdom of God both in the local church and in the broader society.
- 5.5.4. Introduce the seminarians to the principles and practices of the ministry of “Building up the Local Church”, particularly the foundational need of local congregation's to understanding their God-given identity.

5.6. Further research required:

There are many areas within this research where the empirical data has proven inconclusive. There is still much to clarify and understand, however these suggestions seem to be most important to gaining more understanding of the relationship between ministerial tenure and identity development in local churches:

- 5.6.1. The effect of the personality and character of the minister in relation to that same minister's tenure.
- 5.6.2. The effect of the minister's leadership style, leadership skills and practices in relation to that same minister's tenure.
- 5.6.3. The role of the minister's specific personal calling and focus in relation to that same minister's tenure.
- 5.6.4. The effect the size of the congregation has on the relationship between the minister and the membership in relation to that same minister's tenure.
- 5.6.5. The effect of long-term lay leadership to the health and vitality of local churches in relation to the tenure of the clergy.

As a way forward is found, it is important to remember that Building up the Local Church is a complex issue involving complex processes where clergy tenure is not the only factor, however, clergy tenure is a very important factor within this process. “One of the strongest mitigating factors for growth is the length of the pastoral appointment. . . . The success of a vital congregation does not rest on the pastor's shoulders, but pastoral changes are incredibly disruptive to the overall momentum of a congregation. The journey toward vitality takes time, and having a positive, productive partnered relationship between congregation and pastoral leader is a great asset. . . . The healthiest churches in this research sample were those with pastors in place for seven to ten years” (Dick 2007 : 124-125).

APPENDIX 1 – ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire: *The influence of the minister in the process of identity-finding in building up a local church with specific reference to tenure*

Respondent

Please answer each question by drawing a circle around an appropriate number in a shaded box or by writing your answer in the shaded space provided

1. What is the name of your Society?

2. What is your date of birth? (Please use *dd/mm/yy*)

3. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

4. For how many years have you been a member of the congregation?

5. Please indicate how you would describe your membership by choosing one of the following. (Please choose only a single answer)

Do you see yourself as

a leader in the congregation	1
an involved/participating member of the congregation	2
a regular Sunday worship service attender	3
a sporadic Sunday worship attender	4
shut-in and unable to attend worship on a Sunday	5

6. While a member of this congregation how many ministers have you had?

7. For how many years has your current minister been serving your congregation?

For Office Use

V1 1

V2 5

V3

 8

V4 15

V5 17

V6 20

V7 22

V8 25

For Office Use

8. How long does it take you to accept a new minister? (Please give a *value* together with *days* or *weeks* or *months* or *years*)

--

V9 28
V10 31

9. To what extent does the **Methodist Church's** regulation of a 5 year **invitation cycle** of ministers affect your **ability to accept** a new minister? (Please choose only a **single** answer)

It has no effect on me	1
I think about it a little	2
I think about it sometimes	3
I think about it regularly	4
I think about it often	5
I cannot stop thinking about it	6

V11 33

10. By making an "X" on the line below, indicate the **level of uneasiness** amongst the members of the congregation when a **new minister replaces a previous minister**

--	--

No uneasiness High emotional turmoil

V12 35

11. How long do you think it takes the **members** of the **congregation** to **settle** down after a new minister arrives? (Please give a *value* together with *days* or *weeks* or *months* or *years*)

--

V13 39
V14 43

12. Think of a minister (current or past) from your congregation who you **regard** as a **very effective leader**. How long was/is their stay in the congregation? (Please give a *value* together with *days* or *weeks* or *months* or *years*)

--

V15 45
V16 49

13. Please **rate** the minister you identified in **Question 12** with respect to **each** of the following

	None	Weak	Average	Moderate	High	Very high
Leadership characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	6
The trust you have/had with the minister	1	2	3	4	5	6
Openness with the congregation (transparency)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Approachability (friendliness)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Integrity, trustworthiness (character)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spiritual warmth (understanding and compassion)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Acceptance of you	1	2	3	4	5	6

V17 51
V18 53
V19 55
V20 57
V21 59
V22 61
V23 63

For Office Use

14. Please indicate your observations of **congregational life**, the longer a good minister stays in the congregation

	No	A little	Not much	Significant amount	A lot	A dramatic change
Sunday attendance increases	1	2	3	4	5	6
More congregation members participate in a midweek activity	1	2	3	4	5	6
More community focus or outreach	1	2	3	4	5	6
More spiritual growth occurs in the congregation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Widespread understanding about the unique congregation identity - who and what you are and what you should be doing – occurs	1	2	3	4	5	6

V24 65

V25 67

V26 69

V27 71

V28 73

15. How **many** members of the congregation are **involved** in the congregation's **mission** in the community? (Please choose only a **single** answer)

None	1
Only a few	2
Less than half	3
More than half	4
Almost everyone	5
All of us	6

V29 75

16. Indicate your **opinion** on each of the following statements

	No	Not sure	A little	A lot	Mostly	Definitely
It is better for a minister to stay in one congregation for a longer time than a shorter time	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important for the minister to be a good role model to the congregation	1	2	3	4	5	6
"The better I know the minister, the more comfortable I feel in the congregation"	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important for me to trust the minister	1	2	3	4	5	6
My congregation has a clear understanding of its mission in the community?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Our minister is leading the congregation to achieve its mission in the community?	1	2	3	4	5	6

V30 76

V31 79

V32 81

V33 83

V34 85

V35 87

17. **My level of involvement** within the congregation **depends** on my **view** of the minister

Not at all	1
A little	2
Mostly	3
Absolutely	4

V36 89

For Office Use

18. My sense of satisfaction with the congregation depends on my view of the minister

Not at all	1
A little	2
Mostly	3
Absolutely	4

V37 91

19. How long does it take you to trust a new minister? (Please give a *value* together with *days* or *weeks* or *months* or *years*)

V38 93

V39 96

20. To what extent does the Methodist Church's regulation of a 5 year invitation cycle of ministers affect your ability to trust a new minister? (Please choose only a **single** answer)

No affect	1
I think about it a little	2
I think about it sometimes	3
I think about it regularly	4
I think about it often	5
I think about it all the time	6

V40 98

21. List each of the following characteristics of your favourite minister in order of priority,

Is/was approachable		
Is/was morally suspect		
Is/was trustworthy		
Displays spiritual warmth		
Is/was impersonal		
Is/was a good preacher		

V41 100

V42 102

V43 104

V44 106

V45 108

V46 110

22. List each of the following possible events in your congregation's history which caused you the most distress where "1" is *least important* and "6" is *most important* (Please do not repeat a rank number)

A well-loved minister leaving the congregation		
A minister caught lying, cheating, or other sin		
The death of well known, well loved member of the congregation		
A financial crisis in the congregation		
Being left without a minister		
The sudden unexpected death of a minister while in service of the congregation		

V47 112

V48 114

V49 116

V50 118

V51 120

V52 122

For Office Use

23. Rate the current level of relationships between congregation members
(Please choose only a single answer)

No interaction	1
Superficial	2
Friendly	3
Good social relationships	4
Good spiritual relationships	5
Good social and spiritual relationships	6

V53 124

24. Indicate which statement best describes your sense of belonging in the congregation. (Please choose only a single answer)

I feel

like a visitor	1
Isolated	2
partly connected	3
at home	4

V54 126

25. List in order of importance, where "1" is *least important* and "5" is *most important*, what you need in order to feel at home in the congregation
(Please do not repeat a rank number)

I need

a compelling mission to join	
a warm and welcoming congregation to belong to	
a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with	
a transparent and accountable leadership structure	
to be given time to fit in	

V55 128

V56 130

V57 132

V58 134

V59 136

26. List in order of importance, where "1" is *least important* and "5" is *most important*, what you need in order to participate in the congregation
(Please do not repeat a rank number)

I need

a compelling mission to join	
a warm and welcoming congregation to belong to	
a warm and trustworthy minister to serve with	
a transparent and accountable leadership structure	
to be given time to fit in	

V60 138

V61 140

V62 142

V63 144

V64 146

27. List in order of importance, where "1" is *least important* and "4" is *most important*, what you need in times of change in the congregation
(Please do not repeat a rank number)

I need

a minister I can trust	
the fellowship of another congregation member	
consistent Sunday worship	
access to formal counselling	

V65 148

V66 150

V67 152

V68 154

28. List in order of **importance**, where "1" is **least important** and "5" is **most important**, what you **need from the minister in times of change** in the congregation (Please **do not repeat** a rank number)

I need

the minster to take note of my opinion	V69	<input type="text"/>	156
the minster to know what he/she is doing	V70	<input type="text"/>	158
the minster to help me know where we are going	V71	<input type="text"/>	160
to know how the minister is dealing with the change	V72	<input type="text"/>	162
the minister to keep the congregation informed of what is happening	V73	<input type="text"/>	164

For Office Use

Thank you for your time and co-operation

APPENDIX 2 – SESOTHO QUESTIONNAIRE

Dipotso: **Ho atisa, ho sebeletsa le ho tsamaisa kereke ha moruti a ntseng a iphumene le ho itseba boyena bakeng sa nako e itseng**

Ya Arabang

Ka kopo araba potso ka nngwe ka ho e thaleha seidika-dikwe nomorona e etshwanetseng kapa o ngole karabo ya hao lebokosong le e tshwanetseng

1. Kereke ya hao ke efe?

--

2. O hlhile neng? (ka kopo araba tjena: letsatsi/kgwedi/selemo)

--

3. Na ebe o monna kapa o mosadi?

Monna	1
Mosadi	2

4. Ke dilemo tse kae o le setho sa kereke?

--

5. Ka kopo, bontsha karolo eo o welang ho yona ho tseba tse hlano tse labelang (Ka kopo kgetha karabo e le nngwe feela)

Na o moetapele wa phutheho?	1
Ke karolo efe eo o e nkang phutheho?	2
O tla tshebeletsong ya Sontaha feela na?	3
O tshohane o tlile tshebeletsong ya Sontaha na?	4
Ha o tle hohang tshebeletsong ya Sontaha	5

6. Ha esale o le setho sa kereke, o bile tlasa baruti ba bakae ka palo?

--

7. Moruti ya teng ha jwale o na le nako e kae a sebeletsa phutheho ya heno?

--

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V1 1

V2 5

V3 8

V4 15

V5 17

V6 20

V7 22

V8 25

For Office Use

8. O ye o nke nako e kae ho amohela moruti a fihlang phuthong? (Ka kopo, ngola nako ka matsatsi/dibeke/dikgwedi kapa dilemo)

--

V9 28
V10 31

9. Molao wa kereke ya Methodist o reng baruti ba dule kerekeng bakeng sa dilemo tse hlano feela, o o ama jwang hore o amohele moruti e motjha? (Ka kopo kgetha karabo e le nngwe feela).

Ha e nkame hohang	1
Eye e fihle monahanong waka	2
Ke e nahana ka dinako tse ding	3
Ke e nahana ka dinako tsohle	4
Ke e nahana nako le nako	5
Ha etswe monahanong waka	6

V11 33

10. Ka kopo tshwaya X moleng o ka tlase, o bontshe hore maikutlo a ye a amehe jwang phuthong ya heno ha moruti e motjha a etla.

Ho se kgathatsehe maikutlo hohang	Ho kgathatseha maikutlo haholo

V12 35

11. Ha moruti e motjha a se a fihlile, o nahana hore maemo a ye a kgutlele setlwaeding ka morao ho nako e kae? (Ka kopo, ngola nako ka matsatsi/dibeke/dikgwedi kapa dilemo)

--

V13 39
V14 43

12. Hara baruti bohle (ba seng ba tsamaile le ya teng ha jwale), eo o nahanang hore e ne e le / ke moetapele ya mafolofolo, o dutse nako e kae phuthong ya heno? (Ka kopo, ngola nako ka matsatsi/dibeke/dikgwedi kapa dilemo)

--

V15 45
V16 49

13. Ka kopo, bontsha ka ho kgetha lenaneng la tse latelang ho lekanya boemo ba mafolofolo a moruti eo o mo kgethileng potsong e ka hodimo ya 12

	Letho	Fokola	Hantle feela	Bohareng	Hodimo	Hodimo haholo
Boemo ba boetapele	1	2	3	4	5	6
O ne o motshepa ha kae	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ho phutholloha ha moruti phuthong	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ho lokolloha le ho buiseha ha moruti	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tshepahalo ya moruti ho phutheho	1	2	3	4	5	6
Kutlwisiso, lerato le mofuthu	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ho amoheleha ha hao ho yena	1	2	3	4	5	6

V17 51
V18 53
V19 55
V20 57
V21 59
V22 61
V23 63

For Office Use

14. Ka kopo, lekola boemo ba phutheho ya heno mabapi le ha moruti ya mafolofolo a dula nako e telele kerekeng

	Tjhe	Hanyane	Ka ho lekana	Ka borgata	Haholo	Phetoho e kgolo	
Ho atisa ho tla ha phutheho tshebeletsong ya Sontaha	1	2	3	4	5	6	V24 <input type="text"/> 65
Ditho tsengata tsa phutheho di nka karolo haholo diketsahalong tsa kereke hara beke	1	2	3	4	5	6	V25 <input type="text"/> 67
Ho kgathalla le ho thusa baahi ba motse	1	2	3	4	5	6	V26 <input type="text"/> 69
Phutheho e hola moyeng	1	2	3	4	5	6	V27 <input type="text"/> 71
Kutlwisiso ya bothô bakeng sa bonngwe le phutheho e a etsahala	1	2	3	4	5	6	V28 <input type="text"/> 73

15. Ke ditho tse kae tsa phutheho ya heno tse teng morerong wa kereke wa ho thusa baahi ba motse? (Ka kopo, kgetha e le nngwe ya karabo tse latelang)

Ha ho le ya mong	1	V29 <input type="text"/> 75
Ba mmalwa	2	
Ke sehlotswana	3	
E ka ba halofo ya phutheho	4	
Karolo e kgolo ya phutheho	5	
Phutheho yohle	6	

16. Hlahisa maikutlo a hao ka enngwe le enngwe ya tse latelang

	Tjhe	Mohlomong	Hanyane	Haholwanyane	Haholo	Ka nnete	
Ke hantle hore moruti a dule phuthehong e le nngwe nako e telele ho feta e kgutshwanyane	1	2	3	4	5	6	V30 <input type="text"/> 77
Ke ntho ya bohlokwa hore moruti e be moetapele ya nang le boleng bo itseng phuthehong	1	2	3	4	5	6	V31 <input type="text"/> 79
Ha ke tsebana le moruti ke kgona hore ke iketle phuthehong	1	2	3	4	5	6	V32 <input type="text"/> 81
Ke ntho ya bohlokwa hore ke tshepe moruti	1	2	3	4	5	6	V33 <input type="text"/> 83
Phutheho ya heso e tseba ka ho tlaa hore morero wa yona ke ofe ho baahi ba motse	1	2	3	4	5	6	V34 <input type="text"/> 85
Moruti wa rona o etella phutheho pele ho thusa ho tswellisa morero wa yona wa ho thusa baahi ba motse	1	2	3	4	5	6	V35 <input type="text"/> 87

17. Bothô baka kerekeng bo itshetlehile ka moo ke bonang moruti ka teng

Hohang	1	V36 <input type="text"/> 89
Hanyane	2	
Haholo	3	
Ka-hohle-hohle	4	

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18. Ho kgotsofala haka phuthehong ho itshetlehile ho tsela eo ke bonong moruti ka yona

Hohang	1
Hanyane	2
Haholo	3
Ka-hohle-hohle	4

V37 91

19. O ye o nke nako e kae ho tshepa moruti a fihlang phuthehong? (Ka kopo, ngola nako ka matsatsi/dibeke/dikgwedi kapa dilemo)

--	--

V38 93
V39 96

20. Molao wa kereke ya Methodist hore baruti ba dule kerekeng bakeng sa dilemo tse hlano feela, o o ama jwang hore o tshepe moruti a motjha? (Ka kopo, kgetha karabo e le nngwe feela)

Ha nke ke amehe hohang	1
Eye e fihle monahanong waka	2
Ke e nahana ka dinako tse ding	3
Ke e nahana ka dinako tsohle	4
Ke e nahana nako le nako	5
Ha etswe monahanong waka	6

V40 98

21. Ngola dintla tse latelang ka mokgwa wa tatellano ele ho hlalosa seo moruti ya o kgahlang a leng sona

O ne a / O a buiseha	
Maitshwaro a hae a ne a / a belaetsa	
O ne a / O a tsepahala	
O ne a / O bontsa ho hola moyeng	
O ne a / O hloka botswalle	
O ne a / O tseba ho ruta	

V41 100
V42 102
V43 104
V44 106
V45 108
V46 110

22. Ngola ka bonngwe diketsahalo tse latelang tse ileng tsa eba teng kerekeng ya heno, tse kileng tsa o hlopha maikutlo. (Ka kopo ngola, ka ho lekanya ho tloha ho "1" ho ya ho "6" e le ho bontsha; mme o se phethe nomoro)

Ho tsamaya ha moruti ya ratwang ke bohle	
Moruti o tshwerwe a thetsa, a qhekanyetsa, kapa ka sebe se seng	
Ho hloka hala ha setho se tsebahalang haholo sa phutheho	
Mathata a ditjhelete phuthehong	
Ho hloka moruti phuthehong	
Ho hloka hala ka tshohanyetso ha moruti ya sebeletsang phutheho	

V47 112
V48 114
V49 116
V50 118
V51 120
V52 122

For Office Use

23. Bontsha hore hajwale boemo ba kutlwano bo jwang phuthehong ya heno. (Ka kopo, kgetha karabo e le nngwe feela)

Ha hona kutlwano hohang	1
Ha hona tshebedisano mmoho	2
Setswalle se teng	3
Kutlwano ya botho e teng	4
Kutlwano ya semoya e teng	5
Kutlwano ya semoya le ya botho e teng	6

V53 124

24. Bontsha hore o dumellana le efe ya tse latelang tse hlahosang ka ho otloloha boemo ba botho ba hao phuthehong. (Ka kopo, kgetha karabo e le nngwe feela ...)

O ikutlwa e ka o moeti	1
O ipona e ka o mong / o boweneng	2
O ipona o le emong wa phutheho ka nako enngwe	3
O ikutlwa o le hae, o lokollohile	4

V54 126

25. Ngola ka mokgwa wa tatellano seo o se hlohang hore o iphumane o iketlile phuthehong (Hlahlamisa ditaba ka mokgwa ona "1" Ha e bohlokwa, "5" E bohlokwa haholo) **Ke hloka hore ...**

Ho be le morero o itseng hore ke o kenele	
Hoba setho sa phutheho e nkamohelang ka mofuthu	
Moruti a tshepahale abe lerato	
Boetabele phuthehong bo be hlwahlwa bo tshepahale	
Ho fuwa nako ya ho imatahanya le ho itlwaetsa phutheho	

V55 128

V56 130

V57 132

V58 134

V59 136

26. Ngola ka mokgwa wa tatellano seo o se hlohang hore o nke karolo phuthehong (Hlahlamisa ditaba ka mokgwa ona "1" Ha e bohlokwa, "5" E bohlokwa haholo) **Ke hloka hore ...**

Ho be le morero o itseng hore ke o kenele	
Hoba setho sa phutheho e nkamohelang ka mofuthu	
Moruti a tshepahale abe lerato	
Boetabele phuthehong bo be hlwahlwa bo tshepahale	
Ho fuwa nako ya ho imatahanya le ho itlwaetsa phutheho	

V60 138

V61 140

V62 142

V63 144

V64 146

27. Ngola seo o se hlohang bakeng sa hore ho be le phetoho phuthehong (Hlahlamisa dikarabo ka mokgwa ona: "1" Ha e bohlokwa, "4" E bohlokwa haholo) **Ke hloka ...**

Moruti eo nka motshepang	
Ho rorisa le tshehetso ya setho se seng sa phutheho	
Tshebeletso ya Sontaha se seng le se seng	
Tokelo ya ho fumantshwa thuso ya khanseling	

V65 148

V66 150

V67 152

V68 154

28. Ngola seo o se hlokang ho moruti nakong ya phetoho phuthehong. (Hlahlamisa dikarabo ka mokgwa ona: "1" Ha e bohlokwa, "4" E bohlokwa haholo) **Ke hloka hore ...**

Moruti a ele hloko kakanyo yaka		V69		156
Moruti a tsebe seo a se etsang		V70		158
Moruti a nthuse ho bona moo re lebileng teng		V71		160
Ho tseba hore moruti sebetsa o phetoho jwang		V72		162
Moruti a tsebise phutheho diketsahalo tsohle tsa phetoho		V73		164

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Thank you for your time and co-operation

APPENDIX 3 - BREAKDOWN OF CIRCUITS AND CLERGY DISTRIBUTION

Circuit name	Congregation designation	Clergy distribution	V2	MIN Designation
603 Virginia & Hennenman	Congregation A	Minister 1	1	Sc 1&2
	Congregation B	Minister 1	2	
	Congregation C	Minister 2	3	Sc 3-10
	Congregation D	Minister 2	4	
	Congregation E	Minister 2	5	
	Congregation F	Minister 2	6	
	Congregation G	Minister 2	7	
	Congregation H	Minister 2	8	
	Congregation I	Minister 2	9	
	Congregation J	Minister 2	10	
604 Goldfields	Congregation K	Minister 3&4	11	Sc 11
	Congregation L	Minister 5	12	Sc 12
	Congregation M	Minister 6	13	Sc 13
605 Welkom	Congregation N	Minister 7	14	Sc 14-17
	Congregation O	Minister 7	15	
	Congregation P	Minister 7	16	
	Congregation Q	Minister 7	17	
	Congregation R	Minister 8	18	Sc 18-20
	Congregation S	Minister 8	19	
	Congregation T	Minister 8	20	
611 Kutlwanong	Congregation U	Minister 9	21	Sc 21-22
	Congregation V	Minister 9	22	

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