CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED MISSIONAL CHURCHES THAT EXAMINE STRATEGIES USED TO ENGAGE THE UNCHURCHED IN POST-CHRISTENDOM CONTEXT

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Examing Committee

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ABSTRACT

CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED MISSIONAL CHURCHES THAT EXAMINE STRATEGIES USED TO ENGAGE THE UNCHURCHED IN POST-CHRISTENDOM CONTEXT

Mike McDaniel
Readers: Dr. Barry Jones and Dr. Eddie Gibbs

The thesis of this dissertation is to show how established selected churches are effectively engaging the post-Christendom culture of America. The selected churches are categorized as “missional” churches because of their ability to effectively organize and mobilize their congregations to live as incarnate Christians in their communities and around the world. The selected churches demonstrate multifaceted ways and means for engaging a generation with a postmodern worldview in a post-Christendom milieu. The research format was a qualitative examination of selected case study churches from the West Coast to the East Coast of the United States. Qualitative surveys, open-ended questionnaires, onsite visits, personal interviews, anecdotal observations, and statistical analyses were employed to gain a multi-dimensional look inside the exceptional missional churches.

Post-Christendom has forced the Church of the western world to reconsider the way they “do church.” The organized churches across geographical regions, denominational doctrines, and generational epochs have suffered a steep decline. However, the missional churches that participated in this study have effectively been able to reinvent themselves, arrest the decline of the church, and adapt their historically denominational institutions to become catalysts for churches globally. They are impacting the unchurched, de-churched, or never churched of their respected context. Missional churches offer a glimmer of hope for spiritual communities that there can be a positive future for the church. Missional churches have helped realign the Church from a ‘pastoral’/‘parish’ paradigm to the ‘mission model.’ The missional model is more comparable to the first century church of pre-Christendom rather than the ‘pastoral model’ of Christendom. Let the Church arise, adapt and impact the twenty-first century
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# ABBREVIATIONS

Books of the Bible

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The magnitude of what he gave up is beyond our power to imagine, for we have never seen what heaven is like.¹

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the best example of a missional life. The God-Man, Jesus, lived contextually in the first century in Israel. He added humanity to His divinity and made earth His residence. He was only able to exercise His divine nature and attributes as the Father directed Him.² The God who transcends time became one with the people of a specific culture in a specific time. The doctrine and nature of Jesus’ incarnation speaks to a missionary strategy for life and ministry. Christ did not divide the secular and sacred. No person was so unclean that He would not touch him or too sin-ridden that He would not sit down with her at a table. Life was mission, and everything in life flowed to and from that mission. Even if the task required death, Jesus lived and died for God’s mission (Phil 2:5-8).

The incarnation is more than the story of Jesus’ birth told to a child during the Christmas season. It is one of the most profound dogmas in Christian theology, demanding tremendous equilibrium to maintain its balance. From the first verse of the Gospel of John, the Apostle boldly leaps into the doctrine of the incarnation. He describes the beauty, simplicity, humanity, complexity, infinity, and deity of Christ; at the same time, the luminosity of Jesus’ missional life to mankind was to rescue all people from darkness through the strategy of becoming flesh and dwelling among them (John 1:4-5,

¹ Millard Erickson, Christian Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), 770.
² Ibid., 771.
14). Christ’s dwelling among mankind demonstrates the missional ethos that was manifest in the passion of Christ. Five different times, the Greek word σκηνόω or “dwell” occurs in the New Testament, which means to “pitch one’s tent” and live among people.¹ In John 1:14, σκηνόω is used to describe Jesus’ coming to live and minister in the culture of the first century. Eugene Peterson paraphrases John 1:14 in an effort to communicate the personal, intimate, and contextual nature of Jesus’ life and ministry by saying that Jesus “moved into the neighborhood” (*The Message*). Jesus is the missional God-man who modeled the faith to the world. He modeled a lifestyle for His disciples, who would set the foundation of His church and be examples of missional living as well. Jesus is the best example of missional living. He inspires and gives direction to missional churches for how they can engage and make an impact in culture despite the hostilities of Post-Christendom. His model helps the church gain a perspective on how to thrive in establishing a movement that can still penetrate the culture of the twenty-first century as Jesus did the first century.

**Purpose of this Project**

Most churches, faith-based institutions, and denominations have lost their missional edge and have become protective institutional bubbles rather than selfless, engaging tent-dwellers that Jesus modeled.⁴ In an effort to avoid the ever increasing encroachment of postmodernism and the marginalization of Christianity, many Christians have morphed into protective harbors or holy huddles of “safe” environments so Christians can dwell together without fear of the world’s secularization. Major cultural shifts are occurring in every arena of life (music, philosophy, art, education,

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entertainment, business, government, religion, spirituality, etc.). Institutionalized Christian entities tend to deny or push back from the fact that the entire western culture is moving from a predominantly Christian to a post-Christendom culture. The purpose of this research project was to explore and evaluate the methods that missional churches are employing to engage the unchurched, de-churched, or never-churched of North America. These case studies focused on selected churches where many members have a post-Christendom worldview.

The Purpose and the Question

The primary issue of this project was to identify the strategies that selected missional churches used to engage the unchurched in a post-Christian culture. This project’s goal was to discover and unpack how well-established missional churches, from coast to coast were impacting their unchurched communities and beyond. The selection of missional churches for this project was intentional in that they were chosen for their geographical location and subjective in that they were viewed as established, missional churches and communities that were largely urban and post-Christian.

The Hypothesis of the Project

This project’s hypotheses were based on personal observation, initial doctoral research and seminars, and the idea that many missional churches are effectively reaching the unchurched in post-Christendom. Missional churches share some common traits that form each hypothesis in the research. Substantiating the hypotheses was the focus of the

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5 For the purpose of this paper the following definitions will be used: The “unchurched” is the larger category of breakdown constituting those who do not attend church on a systematic or continual basis. In an attempt to understand the “unchurched” fully, sub-categories must be defined. “De-churched” are those who once systematically and continually attended a church but no longer attend. “Never-churched” are those who have grown up in a home that did not attend church systematically or continually at any given time and still to the present the individual does not attend church. “Re-churched” are those who have reentered the church after a season of at least a year being out of the church.
research. The four hypotheses were: (1) Missional churches are committed to planting new churches to engage unchurched people in post-Christendom; (2) Missional churches in North America employ international mission principles, strategies, and practices; (3) Entrepreneurial leaders lead missional churches; (4) Missional churches thrive in a post-Christendom context. Each of these hypotheses has been explored fully in each case study church.

The Importance of this Project

I was interested in this study for a number of reasons. There were intrinsic benefits for me personally and for the greater work of God’s kingdom. First, with the subtle and continuous influx of postmodernism and an ever-increasing post-Christian population in Northwest Arkansas, I needed to be better equipped for leading the church I pastored. Grace Point Church (GPC) is benefiting greatly from understanding the strategies that were discovered in these selected case studies. GPC had a missional approach even before the term “missional” came into vogue. My missional approach and strategic thinking were nurtured and developed while serving as a missionary/church planter in southern Africa. We employed missionary strategies and tactics when launching GPC; however, as the culture continues to shift, GPC must continue to be dynamic in its methodologies and its message presentation.

Second, the culture of Northwest Arkansas (NWA) is becoming progressively unchurched in its worldview; therefore to successfully engage those beyond the walls of the church, the Christian community must better understand the post-Christendom perspective to ensure that their strategies are effective. Third, GPC is changing as the culture changes around the church. Consequently, the research is helping me pastor our congregation to be on mission to adjust with the evolving culture while remaining true to the faith that has been handed down from the early apostles (Jude 3). This project is helping me journey through a deconstructive process of my presuppositions and thoughts.
about ecclesiology and methodology. It will also help me reconstruct my leadership style to be more incarnational, organic, biblical and culturally attuned. GPC is committed to being a culturally relevant ministry while not surrendering our doctrines to the ever-changing philosophies in the world (Col 2:8).

Finally, the benefits of this research will go well beyond GPC. New writers are emerging almost daily engaging in conversations regarding the imminent death of the institutional church and the shift to a post-Christendom. New churches are being birthed constantly, yet many are lacking solid mentors and are left to read, research, and figure out faith on their own or by chasing the plethora of trends in the emerging church. This research has taken a penetrating look inside selected churches from the East Coast to the West Coast of North America to examine how evangelical churches are engaging the postmodern communities without compromising evangelical theology.

This project was feasible given my monetary and personal backing from GPC and my family. My wife and children have prayed for me and believed in me while I conducted this research and wrote this dissertation. When I felt like quitting, my wife would pick me back up and get me back into the study. My in-laws have financially sacrificed to make the research and study possible over the past six years. GPC has stood with me as I discovered new insights into our culture and cast new ideas for how GPC might engage our culture more effectively. They did not waver in their support of my family and me during my sabbatical. I have been able to devote multiple onsite days with each of the selected missional churches to conduct the research and interviews necessary for the project.

**Preview of Remaining Chapters**

Chapter 2 takes a glimpse at various Christian responses to the irreversible shift away from a culture centered on Christian values and studies the new strategies believers employ to reach the unchurched. The hypotheses have been given a thorough
overview through missional lenses. Chapter 2 was probably the most foundational chapter to research and write. It provided a steady diet of books, journals, blogs, and websites. Those who are writing about how the church should respond to the changing dynamics of North American culture differ in opinion. Some advocate positions are radical and can be difficult to reconcile with orthodox Christianity. Others are more theologically conservative while being somewhat unconventional in their methodology. What all of these emerging leaders agree on, however, is that the culture has changed. Christendom has passed and post-Christendom has emerged (or is emerging).

Chapter 3 takes a look at the research process. Multiple days were spent on-site at each church gathering data and conducting interviews. A questionnaire was developed and used in focus groups and individual pastoral interviews at the field and case study churches. The Southwest church was the crucible field test church for assessing the instrument and interview technique. It was evident that the questionnaire needed revision following the first focus group. It underwent numerous revisions throughout the research process.

A survey was also employed as a means to rate the quality impact the selected missional churches had in their community and on their members based on the hypothesis. The Correlation Matrix showed which hypothesis had the best correlations and support. A pilot test of the survey was conducted among the readers of this dissertation, Jerry Wofford, and a select group of people from GPC. Beyond the personal interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and other statistical information were also gathered during the on-site visits. Along with the reading of blogs, books, and personal observations, a healthy overview of missional churches in this emerging post-Christian culture was established.

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6 “Southwest church” requested anonymity in the study.
Chapter 4 unpacks the results of the study. The verbal interviews were transcribed to help in the analysis of the information. Sophisticated software was employed to help analyze the data. The data was cross-examined, integrated into the report, and compared against the surveys, questionnaires, and personal interviews. When the survey was administered, a halo effect was seen in all the churches’ surveys. Yet some opinions and variations were noticed between the assorted groups surveyed. Approximately 16-17 hours of interviews of staff personnel and church members was recorded and transcribed.

Chapter 5 details the conclusions and recommendations for further study. The study yielded valuable thought, comparisons, and theory that it only encouraged a hunger for more study and writing on the topic. The diversity of church models need further examination to know what role multi-sites play as a catalyst for independent church planting. Also a true analysis of the global mission impact that post-Christendom will have on the western church is needed.

Another question that needs further development is the relation of missional churches with denominations, networks, and agencies. The study showed a move away from denominational allegiances and brought up the following questions: What are the hopes for a denominational missional church in post-Christendom? What will be lost in a global missions effort if denominational agencies, which have been established through the decades, are in question for future generations? The research helps churches look to the future. It will help the Church as it continues conversations regarding the emerging culture and ever-changing ecclesiastical response to post-Christendom.

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7 David T Olson, *The American Church In Crisis: Groundbreaking Research Based on a National Database of over 200,000 Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 28.
Conclusion

Northwest Arkansas needs to be seen, as does the entire western world, in a state of flux, or liminality. The church is not immune from this state of change. When churches refuse to change, their end is inevitable. Churches that adopt an incarnational and contextual approach to their respective regions and ministries are missional. In so doing, they are using some of the same methodologies international missionaries used for decades when engaging a distant foreign tribe. Doing so helps the kingdom of God advance and thrive in the postmodern and post-Christendom “jungles” of North America.

Grace Point Church is committed to being on mission to the ever-changing society of NWA and to help other churches reach their respective cultures as well. This research project has the potential to help aspiring missional churches take the steps needed to make the changes necessary for greater effectiveness and relevancy in post-Christendom while still maintaining their foundational moorings to the evangelical doctrines they have inherited.
CHAPTER 2
PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The “church that aims at ministry seldom gets to mission even if it sincerely intends to do so. But the church that aims at mission will have to do ministry, because ministry is the means to do mission.”

Introduction

Change is to be expected by all people in all cultures for all time. Simple biological, educational, developmental, continual, and predictable changes are parts of everyday living. Unique rites of passage are celebrated and honored in all the cultures of the world. However, when a culture undergoes seismic shifts, values tend to fade and the lines of authority are blurred. When change becomes discontinuous, unpredictable, and faith-altering, people become uncomfortable. Apprehension, anger, revolts, and isolation can result, yet some run toward the change and embrace it with great anticipation of the new tomorrow.

Revolutionary change has come to Christendom. Christendom has shaped culture since Constantine recognized Christianity in the Edict of Milian in 313. Constantine was the ruler of the Roman Empire. By the mid-300’s church historian Williston Walker stated that “the churches awoke to find the cause of Rome and the cause of Christ had become one.” With Rome ruling the developing world and with the


marriage of Roman culture to the culture of the church, Christendom was born. Much of the western world’s governmental practices, educational systems, and societal expectations were shaped by a Christian worldview.

Fast forwarding to the present, Christendom is no longer the predominant western mold that shapes society. The majority of people no longer embraces Christianity as a worldview. Christendom was the cultural phenomenon that arose out of the institutionalization of Christianity. As a result of Christendom demise, post-Christendom has emerged. The cultural shift toward post-Christendom is not an everyday, predictable, anticipated, continuous change but rather a change that has crept in and altered the core of western society. Under Christendom the “dominion or sovereignty of the Christian religion” ruled throughout the land.\(^3\) Some theorize that the current milieu of change is as great as or greater than that of the Protestant Reformation.\(^4\) This chapter gives an overview of the relevant and widely read books, articles, lectures, and online resources that speak to the cultural shift from Christendom to post-Christendom.\(^5\) I will point out what I see as the best approach to navigating the worldview shifts through a missiological-evangelical Christian perspective. This project will move from a broad look at the greater cultural movements and their implications to a detailed response of the missional approach in post-Christendom. It will describe the four primary, societal shifts that have morphed the most recent generations and will show how one of the four shifts is credited for leading the western world into a post-Christendom milieu. This chapter will

\(^3\) Douglas Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), IX.


\(^5\) Though blogs are not typically revered as credible sources for academia, in the contemporary culture the Internet has become a credible avenue for analyzing and monitoring movements and developing philosophies. To maintain an up-to-date knowledge, the “blogospheres” have become a main artery for communication.
conclude with contrasting how emerging churches are missionally responding to post-Christendom.

**Generational Divides and Societal Shifts**

The post-Christendom swing is more than a simple generational shift defined as one generation’s reactions and adjustment to its parent’s generational ways, values, and manners (e.g. the Buster Generation reacting to the Boomer Generation). The move from Christendom to post-Christendom has been a gradual move away from a culture where church was the center and its beliefs were the core of society (education, politics, governmental policy, etc.) to a culture that has systematically alienated the church of Christendom. This evolution has been gradual yet persistent. One example of this persistent and evolutionary process is through the United States’ educational system. Teaching the Bible became illegal in public schools due to a Supreme Court ruling; consequently, in 1986, the United States graduated the first class whose education did not include the Bible as part of the student’s primary or secondary curricula. The repercussions of such actions are affecting children and how they view faith and life. It has been found “that only 3% of the nation’s 13 year olds have a biblical worldview,” according to George Barna. During Christendom, there was a strong congruent relationship between government, education and the church, all “of which [were] united in their adherence of the Christian faith.” Stuart Murray defines post-Christendom as

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7 Sherri Brown, *Becoming A Church Planting Church: Issues Pastors Address when Leading a Church to Birth a Network of New Churches* (Dallas, TX: Leadership Network, 2007), 3.


“the culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within society that has been definitively shaped by the Christian story and as the institutions that have been developed to express Christian convictions decline in influence.”

The disintegration of Christendom began with a subtle shift since before the Builder Generation. Now, it is in full bloom with Generation Y.

Post-Christendom is a broad worldview swing that has been happening slowly in North America for multiple decades. How the church can effectively adapt to these changes while maintaining a biblical and christo-centric core is foundational to the Christian faith. The changes in worldview have been gradual, painful, confusing, and difficult for the western culture; it has resulted in a state of liminality. Victor Turner was first to coin the term “liminality” after studying the rites of passage in African people groups. Roxburgh’s definition of liminality will be used in this project: a “conscious awareness that as a group (or individual) one’s status-, role-, and sequence—sets in a society have been radically changed to the point where the group has now become largely invisible to the larger society in terms of these previously held sets.” Where Roxburgh sees liminality as a temporary transitional state that the Church is going through as it passes from modernism to postmodernism, Hirsch believes liminality is a “normative

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11 Thom Rainer, *The Bridger Generation: America’s Second Largest Generation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 3-6. For this study, the generational divides that span from the 20-21st century are as follows: The Builders (born 1910-46), Boomers (born 1946-1964), Busters (born 1965-1976) Gen X (Born 1977-1994), and Gen Y (Born 1995-Present). Thom Rainer, George Gallup, and George Barna all have varying dates and names for their generational divides. These are the divisions I will use in an effort to reach a consensus between the writers.


situation and condition of the pilgrim of God.” Hirsch goes on to advocate that liminality is here to stay and that it is a healthy environment in which churches thrive. In short, liminality is the new normal.

Churches would be ill advised to fight and push against liminality and the age of transition. Hall believes resisting the inevitable change “is the single most important cause of inertia and the retardation of intentional and creative response to this great transition.” The church and culture is in this state of liminality (whether liminality is here to stay or not) as the western world moves from Christendom to post-Christendom.

Liminality should not be seen only as a season or state of flux, bewilderment, and confusion, but also as “the rich soil of prophetic imagination.” Post-Christendom is forcing the church to undergo its “biggest realignment” since the Reformation. The twenty-first century church is still in the process of adapting. Yet in its new paradigm, it will likely stay in a constant state of emergence. There are no single definitive terms to describe the twenty-first century church as it dawns. Phrases like “emerging,” “emergent,” “fresh expressions,” “future,” “Ancient-future,” “house,” “organic,” or “missional” are all terms used to describe the various twenty-first century expressions of the church. Each expression carries its own distinctive focus, narrative, course, and baggage. Some contemporary speakers and writers fail to distinguish between the forms, doctrines, and expressions and lump all contemporary models under the same heading:

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“emerging.” This practice, however, is a short-sighted look at the twenty-first century church. There are many nuances and expressions of the church in post-Christendom.

**Defining Missional**

Bishop Leslie Newbigin and Donald McGavran first introduced the missional church model espoused in this project. McGavran’s greatest contribution to a missional church was to supply the church with some mechanics for missions. There is a clear call to return to some of McGavran’s missiological approaches. Newbigin’s greatest influence was the idea that mission is what the church is to be about, not simply an activity we do. Newbigin found upon returning to England 1974 that the western society had moved beyond Christendom to post-Christendom. McGavran and Newbigin both taught the “missionary nature of the local church” by using cultural analysis techniques

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19 David F Wells, *The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 16-17. Wells sees all emergent’s as equally “postconservative and post foundational.” He sees their origins as dawning from liberalism. While some truly have become a new expression of liberalism, it is neither fair nor accurate to deduce that all leaders of missional or emerging churches are liberals.


and missional strategies for church development. Some missiologists and church growth enthusiasts later twisted McGavran’s teachings to reflect a more anthropocentric over a theocentric view. The missional expression seeks to reclaim a more incarnational and less attractional focused methodology such as is found in some church growth literature. These men shaped a movement that in the years following their death would be called missional. The missional leaders of the twenty-first century will be the “brokers of deep change” in the church of tomorrow: the church that is on mission in post-Christendom. The missional church is the best representation for evangelicalism in a diverse cultural context.

A missional church does more than commission two-week mission teams internationally, pray for, and send money blindly to support missionaries. Missional churches answer God’s initiative of sending the church to the world rather than attempting to attract the world to the church. Their mission is more than a program. Mission is the DNA from which the whole church is built. A missional church sees itself as being sent to its culture and identifies with it through understanding the worldview of the people. The missional church allows the culture to shape the ecclesiology, homiletics, and methodology of its local assembly. Missional churches even have a unique missional hermeneutic. According to Darrel Guder, the western church has an unhealthy “legacy of Christendom” that has shaped its structures and theology. He calls missional churches

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24 Ibid., 28.


27 Ibid., 11.
away from the “Constantinian system.”

Though Guder’s collective work is considered the authority or flagship work on the missional church, it lacks a concise definition of missional church. Furthermore, the British born *Gospel and Culture Network* does not provide a concise definition of missional church; they do, however, provide indicators for what missional churches may possess according to Brisco. Minatrea credits Charles Van Engen as the originator of the “missional” term.

Southern Baptist Convention, through its North American Mission Board (NAMB), has attempted to define missional. NAMB’s Missional Network defines a missional church as “a biblically faithful, culturally appropriate, reproducing community of Christ-followers who abandon themselves and are sent by God into the harvest to fulfill His mission among all people.” In this day of ambiguity and liminality, NAMB is wise to take each phrase of their definition and break it down for greater clarity. Their definition encourages contextualized, incarnational Christianity. Their definition does not limit the movement to a denominational divide but allows room for a theological conversation and diversity while maintaining a high view of Scripture.

When considering all the sources read on “missional” along with the diversity of expression, I have crafted a definition for the missional church. A missional church is a dynamic, transformative, spiritual community of authentic Christ followers who

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28 Ibid., 5.

29 Not to be confused with the *Gospel and Our Culture Network* developed in the United States and New Zealand, which was influenced by the British born *Gospel and Culture* and the British Council of Churches. “Introducing the Network,” http://www.gospel-culture.org.uk/intro.htm (accessed July 24, 2010).


31 Minatrea, *Shaped by God’s Heart*, 62.

intentionally serve their local communities through incarnational living, move beyond themselves to plant churches nationally, and mobilize globally to the under-resourced and unreached people with the gospel.

**Cultural Shifts in the Western World**

The massive cultural shifts of the twenty-first century brought more than a new millennium. Many people are wondering what the future holds for them and their faith. While there are plenty of skeptics in post-Christendom, it is more important to focus on the potential optimism and opportunity of the dawning age. According to Ron Martoia, futurist Leonard Sweet sees the present with great optimism. Sweet deems the current milieu in the West as pointing to a fourth spiritual awakening that will be led from outside the church.\(^{33}\) As a Western example, Great Britain has seen a severe decline in church attendance.\(^{34}\) However, it has also experienced pockets of spiritual awakening among some of its spiritual communities.\(^{35}\)

None of the following categories of cultural shifts are mutually exclusive of each other; they are intertwined. An attempt to separate the interconnected influence of one from the rest would cause an incomplete picture of the whole. In *The Matrix of Meanings*, Detweiler and Taylor point to many shifts happening throughout society when they state, “We’re living in a post-national, post-rational, post-literal, post-scientific, post-technological, post-sexual, post-racial, post-human, post-traumatic, post-


\(^{34}\) Murray, *Church After Christendom*, 73. There is much to be disturbed about when considering the overall health of the church in the developed first world. Murray paints a very dismal picture of the church in Great Britain with 2,000 people leaving churches every week. Some transfer to other churches; however, 1,500 simply leave the church not to return.

therapeutic, post-ethical, post-institutional, and post-Christian era.” The shifts that the West has experienced are deep and wide. A focus on the economic, sociological, philosophical, and theological “posts” of the West gives an overview of what is happening in this culture, but the most important changes in terms of this project are the philosophical and theological shifts.

*Economically: Local Living to a Global Community*

The first shift is the economical shift to a global community. While globalization is largely an economic shift, it is not limited to economics. Ted Lewellen says that globalization is comprehensive of all facets of society.\(^3^7\) The shrinking of the world has caused a breakdown in many distinctive tribal and communal economies, beliefs, and practices. Thomas Friedman’s highly influential book, *The World is Flat*, espouses three phases of globalization, beginning with Columbus and colonialism. During this phase, domination and exploration was the emphasis. The second phase of globalization was a period of 200 years spanning from 1800 to 2000. During this time, the industrial revolution was born, and travel made great strides toward joining countries and continents together and making the everyday person a traveler of the world. The third phase of globalization catapulted the world into a global economy, causing companies to collaborate with people across oceans, languages, cultures, and economies on a daily basis. Friedman writes that the “global fiber-optic network...has made us all next-door


\(^3^7\) Ted Lewellen was quoted by Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 242. Lewellen is quoted by Hiebert as saying: “Globalization is the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas and people brought about by sophisticated technology of communications and travel and by the worldwide spread of neoliberal capitalism, and it is the local and regional adaptations to and resistances against these flows.”
neighbors.” This heightened globalization has caused corporations to look at diversity as an attractive element with an acceptance and tolerance of one another’s differences. This assimilating affect can result in synchronization. Synchronization’s effect merges cultures, values, economies, faiths, and lives together to coexist or become one.

Not everyone is excited about globalization, because it has created new markets to exploit the poor and “create new forms of social and economic division across the globe.” Many mixed emotions have emerged from the effects of globalization. Michael Frost blames global corporations such as Wal-Mart for causing the devastation of small-town America and contributing to social injustice in the world rather than contributing to a better quality of life for many throughout the world.41 Leonard Sweet similarly calls his readers to “deglobalize and localize.”42 Van Gelder attributes the increase in pluralism to globalization.43 It seems that the rise of pluralism in the global community has been one of the greatest contributors to the move toward postmodernism. He even goes on to conclude that globalization brought forth pluralism in the same way postmodernism brought forth relativism.44

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40 Christopher de la Hoyde, “The End of Christendom and Mission in the Local Church,” 2.


44 Ibid., 31.
Missional churches have capitalized on the shrinking of the world through globalization as an opportunity to use their human and financial resources to engage all the peoples of the world. For instance, Mosaic Church in Los Angeles has commissioned 150 of its congregants to go beyond American borders in what missiologists call the 10/40 Window over the course of 10 years.\textsuperscript{45} The 10/40 Window is the location on the earth with the highest populations of unbelievers.\textsuperscript{46} Missional churches have responded with a greater emphasis on missions personally and financially. Churches have increased their funding of missions by nearly 4 billion dollars annually. This is an increase of fifty percent after inflation in a single decade.\textsuperscript{47} Even career missionary personnel have seen a steady increase of people going to live over seas in the same period.\textsuperscript{48} Globalization has resulted in a “glocalization” missional focus for churches to be on mission locally and globally. It is a “massive opportunity for the church,” according to Bob Roberts.\textsuperscript{49}

The influential effects that churches’ mission efforts are having on the world are clear. Churches are being planted globally at rapid rates. See the table below:
Table 2.1. Global Church Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Worship Centers</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>282,000</td>
<td>603,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>131,000</td>
<td>462,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>234,000</td>
<td>1,246,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Globalization has had a positive effect on how missional believers plan, value, and invest their resources. Many Americans’ willingness to live internationally as missionaries has reached new heights.\footnote{Robert Wuthnow, \textit{Boundless Faith}, 4.}

\textit{Sociologically: Monoethnic to Multiethnic}

Globalization is also affecting how people relate to one another. The western world is no longer made up of one ruling ethnic group. This is seen in all sectors of society. Twenty-first century neighborhoods have been transformed due to globalization through international family units and community. America has elected its first mixed race president. In the 2000 American census, seven million Americans considered themselves multiethnic.\footnote{Robert Wuthnow, \textit{Boundless Faith}, 23. In 2001, 42,787 US citizens were living internationally full-time as missionaries. This count is up sixteen percent over previous decades.} “Multiple ethnic cultures and racial traditions [are] living together in the same neighborhoods…more persons now come into direct contact with cultures, religions, and traditions other than their own…[and] this diversity challenges the

\footnote{Detweiler and Taylor, \textit{A Matrix of Meanings}, 45. It was the first census that allowed people to check two designations when considering their nationality.}
church,” according to Van Gelder.\textsuperscript{53} The monoethnic, homogenous church is no longer as popular in the current millennium. For example, 50 percent of Evangelical Covenant church plants are either ethnic or multicultural churches today.\textsuperscript{54} It seems that multi-ethnicity is replacing homogeneity in the church and home. This is a more biblical model of the way the Lord intended His Church to be according to the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{55}

Pastoral training must now equip pastors to think multi-ethnically and holistically when approaching their ministries. Ministering in a monoethnic-homogenous environment is much easier than ministering in the multiethnic context.\textsuperscript{56} Multiethnic ministries require more adaptation toward a dynamic incarnational approach to ministry that accepts the differences in people.

\textit{Philosophically: Modern to Postmodern}

A huge shift that is rippling through education, entertainment, politics, and religion is postmodernity. The shift from modernity to postmodernity has created a fluid environment in just about every arena. Postmoderns prefer mystery, doubt, flexibility, and community—all words that speak to the fluidity of postmodernity. Defining what a postmodernist believes is impossible due to the nature of its core belief to be ambiguous and skeptical. Postmoderns do not wish to be defined but to live in uncertainty and ambiguity. The term “postmodern” literally implies that the new philosophy is only moving past modernity. The philosophy is “post,” or after, the modern era. Thomas Oden


\textsuperscript{54} Gibbs, \textit{Church Morph}, 134

\textsuperscript{55} Galatians 3:28 points to a monoethnic view of humanity is a more biblical worldview. Heaven appears to be a multiethnic gathering according to Revelation 5:11-14. This trend could be pointing to a more biblical expression of the church than has ever been seen in history.

\textsuperscript{56} David Olson, \textit{The American Church in Crisis} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 169.
would prefer to rename postmodernism, “ultra modernism,” because he sees it as an elevated continuation of modernism. Terri Elton states, “The church lives in a commingling of the modern and postmodern.” Some see postmodernity as a disillusioned response to modernity; others consider postmodernity the natural evolution of modernity.

A brief history of modernity would point to its emergence as happening during the French Enlightenment, which lasted approximately 200 years (1789-1989). Some say modernism lasted from Bastille to Berlin. When people became disillusioned with the unfulfilled promises of modernism they rejected many of the Enlightenment’s doctrines out of frustration. Many have felt that the emptiness of science and technology during the Enlightenment period led to a crisis of purpose and meaning thus moving people away from the Modernist Paradigm. Postmodernism arose from the rubble of the Berlin Wall and the visible and metaphoric fall of autocratic communism. Modernism was about logic and reason requiring rational scientific proof for everything true. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was the first to begin to question the modern philosophy, which earned him the title “patron saint of postmodern philosophy.”

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Postmodernism welcomes chaos, moves with the experiential, longs for mystery and is a journey in search of truth. From this philosophy, community replaces individualism.\textsuperscript{62} Modernism led to a slow but continual erosion of Christendom pushing Christianity off the center stage of society. Postmodernity has welcomed back spirituality but not Christendom. In fact, for some people, anything but Christianity is a welcomed spirituality.\textsuperscript{63}

In the literature, two key fundamental ideas continue to be challenged by the postmodern philosophy: the theory of epistemology and the discipline of hermeneutics. Postmodernism tampers with both.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{Theory of Epistemology}

Epistemology is the study of the source of knowledge or truth.\textsuperscript{65} Epistemology is the central issue in moving from modernism to postmodernism, according to D.A. Carson.\textsuperscript{66} Postmodernism, at its core, questions whether or not a central universal truth can be known through one single source (e.g. the Bible). Some would advocate that a person’s epistemology is relative to each individual, based on his or her particular life story. “Rational intelligence, emotional intelligence, and intuitive intelligence” are all additional ways at getting at the truth, according to postmodernists.\textsuperscript{67} Guder does not

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\textsuperscript{62} Tony Jones, \textit{Postmodern Youth Ministry} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 30-37.

\textsuperscript{63} Leonard Sweet, Brian McLaren, and Jerry Haselmayer, \textit{A is for Abductive} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 267.

\textsuperscript{64} Detweiler and Taylor, \textit{A Matrix of Meanings}, 32.


\textsuperscript{66} D. A. Carson, \textit{Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 27.

\textsuperscript{67} Craig Van Gelder, “Missional Context: Understanding the Church in North America,” 40.
\end{flushright}
advocate that all truth is relative but that a person’s understanding of truth is subject to his or her presuppositions.

Epistemology [is] the question of how we discover truth ... we need to accept that our understanding of truth is always an interpretation relative to our context and cultural understanding... This recognition of a relativity of perspective is not the same thing as a thoroughgoing relativism that denies that any truth can be known.\(^{68}\)

Postmodernists desire to understand truth. The problem lies when postmodernists either accept all “truth” as equal or they do not see any truth as definitive and absolute. To say that there are “no universal, absolute principles or truth is itself a claim to an absolute principle (metanarrative).”\(^{69}\) To say there is not absolute truth is to say there is not a metanarrative. A metanarrative “is one overarching story that claims to contain truth applicable to all people at all times in all cultures,” according to Michael Frost.\(^{70}\) This is to say that there is one supra-story that speaks to every individual who has or will ever live.

Both Jim Kitchens and Lee Wyatt write that in postmodernity there is not any single metanarrative or story that can possibly address all the needs of humanity.\(^{71}\) There are many stories with many possible outcomes. Those who advocate this model see truth as less propositional while being subject to a “context theology.”\(^{72}\) Historically and in evangelical circles, Scripture and tradition determined truth at least in western culture;

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 40.


now some would say that Scripture and tradition are not enough. The particular context of the person must now be included as an element in determining truth thus bringing in a subjective factor for determining truth. Brian McLaren argues that the postmodern generation needs a new doctrine of atonement, eschatology, Scripture, and God for the new matrix. McLaren advocates that the twenty-first century will give shape to a new Christianity altogether. The debate rages in pop as well as theological culture as to the metanarrative of the twenty-first century. Where people look for their epistemology will help answer their belief about metanarrative.

**Discipline of Hermeneutics**

Christendom has shaped so much of the western church’s theology and practice. Because the laws and education of the western church’s culture originated from a Judeo-Christian history, there is a natural Christian undertone in the rhythm of daily life. Stores used to be closed on Sunday, and the Lord’s Prayer was offered in schools without objection. Christendom even shaped how the Bible was read.

The postmodern milieu has encouraged the church to re-read, re-interpret and re-apply the Bible from a missional hermeneutic. A missional hermeneutic is a willingness to read the Bible with a “multiplicity of perspectives.” It allows other cultures and worldviews to sit at the theological table for discussion and provide input as equals. Wright calls for a “plurality in interpretation” yet not for pluralism. This happens when traditional “grammatico-historical” tools are still employed while opening

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73 Brian McLaren, “Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix” (class notes at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena CA, November 10, 2005).


believers’ minds to a global view of Scripture.76 This mission-based theology, according to Eddie Gibbs, enables the church to “theologize in the cross-cultural settings of western urban societies.”77 Darrell Guder speaks as a true missologist when he writes, “The gospel is always translated into a culture, and God’s people are formed in that culture in response to the translated and Spirit-empowered Word.”78 The translated gospel is a model of a missional hermeneutic.

A missional hermeneutic also involves seeing the Bible as a missionary text with a call to follow Christ throughout the world. It is the primary thread and message throughout the Scriptures. Old Testament Professor Walt Kaiser points out that the global message of the Bible is for all mankind to all nations.79 A missional hermeneutic turns the Bible into more than a messianic textbook; it makes the Bible a mission textbook.80 Missing the call to deliver a message to the nations is missing the heart of God’s holy Word and His heart for mankind.

Theologically: Christendom to Post-Christendom

The effects of the philosophical change from modernism to postmodernism on Christendom are deep, lasting, and are yet to be fully assessed. Gone are the days of a dominant Christian worldview. The images, symbols, rights, and responsibilities of western culture are all shifting away from established Christianity to a secularized world.

76 Ibid, 40.


Christendom once reigned in western culture; Christian values, worldviews, laws, and institutions bore the fingerprints of Christendom. North America, in its early years, had harsh laws for those who did not attend church or committed other vices, such as adultery or improper dress.\textsuperscript{81} During Christendom, Christianity was at the center of the thought processes for every arena of the industrial world.

A new era has begun. No longer does the culture assume that Christians will have a predominate voice in politics, education, or other social or moral fabrics that make up American culture.\textsuperscript{82} This progression (or digression, depending on one’s perspective) does not mean that those in the established church are accepting this loss of status and influence willingly. Stuart Murray calls for a wake up to reality:

Many Christians are resisting this shift and employing familiar tactics of defending the old paradigm, denying its demise, dithering on the cusp of a new era or delaying their commitment to this new reality. But Christendom is fading. We may grieve or celebrate its passing, but we cannot revive, restore or recover it. Post Christendom is coming.\textsuperscript{83}

Carter sees Christendom as a “tool of totalitarianism” and its death an opportunity for a more authentic and pure form of Christianity to emerge.\textsuperscript{84} There are at least four evidence markers that point to a depreciation of Christendom.

**Church Attendance has Decreased**

Under Christendom most people went to church by law, cultural pressures, or choice; under post-Christendom more people are expressing their customized faith


\textsuperscript{83} Murray, *Church After Christendom*, 7.

\textsuperscript{84} Craig A. Carter, *Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 19-20.
beyond the four walls of the church. Of the 58 million Americans who do not attend church weekly, 34 million of them are in the Gen Y and X population segment. Getting a comprehensive number on how many North Americans actually attend church without asking people and getting the “halo effect” is difficult. George Barna and George Gallup report that between 37 percent to 47 percent of Americans attend church weekly. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler published a study in which they took an alternative approach to assessing church attendance. They backed into their survey. Rather than asking people what they do weekly, they asked the churches what people did weekly. Compiling data from 300,000 Christian congregations in the United States, they found that 52 million Americans attended church regularly. This means that less than 17.7 percent of the American population attended church regularly in 2004. Hirsch cites the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, when he states that “111 million Christians were without a local church” in 2001. It is a new day in America with more people than ever not affiliating with any particular faith. Though the exact numbers may differ, church attendance is declining and has been decline for decades resulting in an ever increasing number of never-churched people in the West. With millions of Christians abandoning institutional Christendom, the church must wake up. Not only are fewer and fewer people attending church, but the ratio of churches per person is not keeping pace with the

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86 Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 28. The “halo effect” is when people want to view themselves behaving at a socially higher standard than they actually are.

87 Ibid., 26.

88 Ibid., 28.


population. The largest Christian communities are now found in the southern hemisphere, in Africa and Latin America.\textsuperscript{91}

**Church Existence has Decreased**

The increasing de-churched culture has created a hostile feel toward established churches that is leading to shrinkage in the number of churches that assemble across America. The ability of churches to survive in the un receptive environment is forcing the elimination of many churches. There are now fewer churches per capita than in previous decades in America. The following is a table showing the number of churches in America per 10,000 citizens. It shows the continual decline in churches throughout the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{92}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ratio</td>
<td>27:10,000</td>
<td>17:10,000</td>
<td>11:10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With 3,700 churches disbanding annually and only 4,000 churches starting, there is a net gain of 300 new churches in America annually.\textsuperscript{93} Yet the rate of population growth to church addition is not keeping pace. Phillip Jenkins points to a global shift toward the Southern Hemisphere as the new center for Christianity. He writes that the “center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa, Asia and Latin America.”\textsuperscript{94} Walter Buhlmann, in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, coins the

\textsuperscript{91} Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom* (New York: Oxford Press, 2002), 2

\textsuperscript{92} Ed Stetzer, *Planting Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 7.

\textsuperscript{93} Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 146.

\textsuperscript{94} Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 2.
phrase “Third Church” to describe the southern shift of Christendom. Jenkins says that the “phrase [Third Church] suggests that the South represents a new tradition comparable in importance to the eastern and western churches of historical times.”\footnote{Ibid., 3.} This “third church” movement is so noticeable in part because the Church in America is suffering so much. Americans have fewer churches from which to choose, and more Americans are not choosing a church at all.

**Loose Spirituality Has Replaced Structured Christianity**

While post-Christendom has led to fewer churches and fewer church attenders, it does not mean that America is less spiritual. Spirituality is blossoming. Eddie Gibbs defines neo-spirituality as the “inner quest for meaning and the exploration of options.”\footnote{Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 49.} Spirituality has a much more open and tolerant appeal; thus, it is becoming mainstream in post-Christendom. National surveys show Americans wanting to distance themselves from institutionalized Christianity. Detweiler and Taylor cite the following:

The 2001 *American Religious Identification Survey* reported that more than 29.4 million Americans said they have no religion, more than double the number in 1990 and more than the total number of Methodists, Lutherans, and Episcopalians in the US. Sociologists from the University of California also found that the number of Americans who claim to have no religion has doubled in the last decade.\footnote{Detweiler and Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings*, 56; Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey* (Hartford, CT: Program on Public Values, 2009), 3. The latest 2008 ARIS report confirmed the trends of the 2001 report, dropping an additional 1% from 2001-2008.}

Fewer Americans affiliate with any identifiable or organized faith in America. In fact, Detweiler and Taylor also cite a study conducted by the University of Washington. Though they do not quantify the number of people in the study, sociologist Rodney Stark
claims that many people who took the University of Washington’s religious survey and chose no affiliation with organized religion still claimed to pray and believe in God. Many chose spirituality without any attachment to an institutionalized faith.98

**The Margin of Separation between Church and State has increased**

America came into existence in the heart of the modernist worldview when a clear line of separation between Christendom and western culture was beginning to emerge. The first “official” move that began the disestablishment of Christendom from the center of American society was when Congress began to govern the United States with a “separation of Church and state” philosophy in the eighteenth century.99 Churches appreciated the freedom of political influence, but they had no desire to abort their influence on the state in public policy, morality, and institutions. The margin of separation has become more and more defined and solidified in culture and law over time. One of the latest high profile examples on this journey of separation was the Supreme Court battle with Alabama Judge Roy Moore and the forced removal of the Ten Commandments from public display.100 This is one more example of the disconnection between Christianity and mainstream life in the United States.

As stated earlier, post-Christendom is more a rejection of organized religion than a rejection of spirituality. The explanation for this is more complex than the answers to survey questions about church attendance. It is the total move away from a moral and spiritual compass based on historical Christian values and a shift away from institutional religion to a more self-identified faith. Stuart Murray when stating, “Post-Christendom is

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98 Ibid., 57.


100 The Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court was forced to remove a 2.6-ton granite monument of the Ten Commandments. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson stated the display violated the principle within the Constitution of separation of church and state.
the culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within society.”

Leonard Sweet likens post-Christendom to “the sporting analogy of ‘playing away.’” The Christian is forced to “play” on a foreign field with different rules while the audience in the stands jeers at them. The new millennium has left Christendom behind in the twentieth century. Christians must learn to play under a new set of rules and rule keepers in a new and sometimes hostile arena.

**Post-Christendom’s Effect on the Western Church**

The cultural shift to a post-Christendom worldview has had a ripple effect reaching deep into the Church. It has rattled the foundations of the institutional Church. Metaphors like “liquid” and “dynamic” now describe the Church rather than “foundational” and “solid.” The Church is being forced to emerge and evolve through the shifts of the twenty-first century. The reactions of some strong evangelicals have been to point fingers and level accusations without a thorough understanding of the cultural shifts and various responses and opportunities. There are many voices and shared influences in the emerging church. Few have earned Brian McLaren’s level of notoriety, who has been labeled the “de facto spiritual leader of the emerging church.”

McLaren, however,

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102 Murray, *Church After Christendom*, 155.

103 “Church” when in appearing in capitalized refers to the universal church.

104 D.A Carson’s book *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and it’s Implications* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) and John MacArthur’s *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), attempt to be prophetic voices against any form of emergence or transforming of the Church for fear that established doctrines and traditions might be compromised. Yet at times they admittedly lack direct interaction with biblically grounded emergent leaders. While they do hold the banner for conservative evangelical theology, they assume all emerging churches are the same. They launch assaults from afar without understanding the doctrinal conservatism of some of the emerging leaders.

only represents a segment of the emerging church. There are at least three major shifts that need further study within the Church due to the changes happening in post-Christendom.

Static Ecclesiology to Dynamic Ecclesiology

The first change is that the greater church must develop a dynamic ecclesiology. Many times the church does not adjust well or quickly to change. History teaches that the church typically lags up to four decades behind cultural changes.\(^{106}\) The changes that culture is currently undergoing are far too radical and far-reaching for slow, incremental change. The West has moved from continuous to discontinuous and from predictable to unpredictable change. Inherited churches, as Murray calls them, or pastoral/parish churches as some refer to them, do not seem willing to adjust their ecclesiology with the changes of culture. They see “ecclesial innovations as distractions from serious discipleship and sustained mission engagement… They suspect emerging churches are parasitic, recruiting only Christians who are disenchanted with inherited churches.”\(^{107}\) Pastoral/parish churches marry their theology and methodology together. Dan Kimball, a conservative evangelical and leader in emerging church circles, writes:

Modern thinkers want things very orderly and systematic because they learn in a logical and progressive manner. They prefer, generally, to sit and listen. Emerging post-Christian generations, on the other hand, long to experience a transcendent God during worship gathering rather than simply learn about him. They want fluidity and freedom rather than a neatly flowing set program. They want to see the arts and a sense of mystery brought into the worship service, rather than focusing on professionalism and excellence.”\(^{108}\)

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\(^{106}\) Lyle Schaller, *Discontinuity of Hope: Radical Change and the Path to the Future*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 75-76.

\(^{107}\) Murray, *Church After Christendom*, 99.

\(^{108}\) Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 121.
The changes that the Church is being forced to undergo will not be of Christian orthodoxy; the culture is calling for a reformation of Church.\textsuperscript{109} An ecclesiological transformation is happening that originates from missiology, and missiology originates from Christology.\textsuperscript{110} Terri Elton summarizes it well by saying, “A missional ecclesiology in a postmodern context needs to reflect the organic nature of the emerging context.”\textsuperscript{111} The Christocentric missional church is reaching out to its community the same way a missionary would to an unreached people group.

\textit{Denominations to Networks}

A revolution is taking place not only in how churches function but also how they work together with one another. This is welcomed among new church starts and emerging churches. Denominations are not hospitable to movement-oriented approaches.\textsuperscript{112} Some go so far as to say that denominations are locked in bureaucracy mode like big government and large corporations. They are either in denial or are fighting to defend their existence.\textsuperscript{113} Though the beginnings of denominations were healthy and valuable, there is quite a bit of suspicion as to their relevance in post-Christendom in their current format. Denominations originated in European culture following the Reformation and blossomed in America with the separation of church and state. The separation of Church and state was the soil of tolerance needed to allow the differing expressions and

\textsuperscript{109} Anderson, \textit{An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches}, 74.

\textsuperscript{110} Hirsch, \textit{The Forgotten Ways}, 142. However, not all would agree with Hirsch in this. Stetzer has expressed that it has been a misrepresentation of Christology that is forcing the change and that ecclesiology must still originate in Christ.


\textsuperscript{112} Hirsch, \textit{The Forgotten Ways}, 190.

\textsuperscript{113} Hall, \textit{The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity}, 7, 20.
doctrines of faith to flourish in the New World.¹¹⁴ Denominations advanced with the development of missionary societies. They moved forward as the United States developed as a nation. Their desire was to advance a set of doctrinal beliefs to unbelievers into the dark corners of United States. James Emery White cites Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia* when he asserts that denominations have grown from thirty-six in the early 1800’s until today’s four hundred major denominations in the United States and multiplied thousands worldwide.¹¹⁵ Martin Marty believes that denominationalism was one of the greatest contributions to the early development of the church in the West.¹¹⁶

In post-Christendom denominations have not prospered but have become suspect. Jason Byassee, editor of Duke University’s *Faith and Leadership* blog, labels denominations as “big, crazy, dysfunctional families.”¹¹⁷ Due to the distrust of big bureaucratic organizations, denominations have a questionable future.¹¹⁸ In one of the latest and largest studies of over 54,000 respondents across the United States, Trinity College reported the United States is becoming less religious and less loyal to denominations than ever before. Mainline and traditional denominational churches have shown the greatest decline while the non-denominational churches are showing the

¹¹⁴ Terri Elton, “Corps of Discovery,” 137.


¹¹⁶ Van Gelder, “Defining the Center-Finding the Boundaries,” 43-44.


¹¹⁸ Schaller, *Discontinuity of Hope*, 16.
Denominations have tremendous difficulty attracting the X and Y generations. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention has seen a steady decline in messengers between the ages of 18 and 39 attending their annual convention. In 1980, 33.6 percent of the attendees were between the ages 18-39. In 2004, the same age group of attendees dropped to 13.1 percent. This is a drop in participation of more than 50 percent of generations Busters through generation Y. The long-term future of the largest protestant denomination is questionable not to mention the many other denominations whose futures are also on a similar trajectory.

The emerging model for connecting and supporting sister churches is moving from denominations to “networks” centered on affinities, theological beliefs, or missional causes. Guder argues, “A missional ecclesiology requires the church to start with biblical and theological foundations before proceeding to designing organizations or accessing the viability of our present denominations.” Networks, such as Acts 29, Fresh Expressions, Emergent Village and Mosaic Alliance are just a growing sample of networks where missional churches can go to find support, counsel, and community. Churches that were once founded with denomination monies and influence are creeping away from their origins to pursue affiliations with networks. Denominations have become disconnected gatekeepers controlling the flow of funds and hindering church

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119 Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, American Religious Identification Survey (Hartford, CT: Program on Public Values, 2009), 2.


122 Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, Church Planting Overview (Dallas, TX: Leadership Network, 2007), 3.
planting movements rather than serving as catalysts and facilitators.\textsuperscript{123} Denominations are perceived as unfriendly to innovation and entrepreneurial leadership.

It is the “nondenominational, non-structured, nontraditional churches” that are the fastest growing churches in the current milieu.\textsuperscript{124} The honest question that many growing churches are asking their denominations or networks is, “How does this affiliation help us accomplish our mission?” For denominations to have a future, Elton believes that they have to be “about creating positive epidemics.”\textsuperscript{125} Instead of static institutions seeking survival, the twenty-first century denomination has to be a flexible organic movement that explores and welcomes different forms of church and reproduces catalytic leaders.

\textit{Pastoral to Missional}

How a church responds to the post-Christian theological shift will also require the church to undergo a paradigm shift in its leadership blueprint. The paradigm is moving from a shepherding-pastoral model—where one simply maintains the care on a particular parish common in Christendom—to a missional-missiologist model for post-Christendom.\textsuperscript{126} Being a missional church means much more than simply being mission-minded. The mission-minded church views “their role as sending and supporting those

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{123}Eddie Gibbs, \textit{Church Morph: How Megatrends are reshaping Christian Communities} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 73. Gibbs relates a gatekeeper account of a denomination between an innovative church.
\item \textsuperscript{124}Frost, \textit{Exiles}, 136.
\item \textsuperscript{125}Elton, “Corps of Discovery,” 157. Elton was applying Malcolm Gladwell’s \textit{The Tipping Point} principle when the denominations become less focused on their own survival and high structure to an organization that is mission driven that will “seek vitality locally, nationally, and globally.”
\item \textsuperscript{126}Alan Roxburgh, \textit{The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality} (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 64-65. Roxburgh actually sees the current seminary trained pastoral care style of pastoral training to be a hindrance to the church recovering is missional ethos.
\end{itemize}
who have never been ‘called’ to mission service.”

A missional church is intricately and strategically involved in global missions but is more centered on doing and being on mission more than sending missionaries or supporting mission agencies. Every member of the church is considered “sent” in the missional church. “Mission is therefore participative rather than simply representative,” according to Minatrea. The demise of Christendom has forced the church to cast aside old “evangelistic models” such as Christians sharing standardized propositional presentations to complete strangers. A new incarnational approach is required today: living life with great intentionality and earning the right to share one’s faith in relationship. This marks missional living in post-Christendom.

Moving the church back to the missional posture instead of the parish pastoral model is crucial and will have a revival effect. The missional model is more in line with the mission of God than making missions a function of the church. The mission of God is for missional churches to move toward.

“Missio Dei”

The mission of God is what English missionary Leslie Newbigin sought to lead the European church toward. Upon Newbigin’s return to England after decades of ministry in India he was greeted with a post-Christian culture. The culture that had once sent him out as a missionary to the “heathen” was now in need of a missionary. Newbigin was one of the first missionaries to identify this need and begin conversations in how to re-evangelize his own post-Christian nation. The International Missionary Council heavily shaped Newbigin’s thoughts. In a 1952 conference in Willingen, Germany Newbigin had an epiphany to not limit the mission of God to the institutional church. He

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127 Minatrea, Shaped by God’s Heart, 10-11.
128 Ibid., 10-11.
129 Murray, Church After Christendom, 137.
believed that the church should submit to God’s mission for all of humanity.\(^{130}\) The church joins God in His mission to all the humanity. God’s mission existed before the Church; therefore the church is to join God in His mission. The mission is about God and is God’s mission. Emerging out of Newbigin’s experience was the Latin phrase *Missio Dei* (Mission of God).\(^{131}\) This personal revelation has evolved into a network that was birthed in Europe in the 1980s but today is global.\(^{132}\)

Newbigin catalyzed a movement that has spread throughout the western world.\(^{133}\) Captured in the phrase is the idea that mission is not something that a church does; rather “mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation.”\(^{134}\) The mission is bigger than the Church, but the Church is a vital part of the mission of God. Some even see the *Missio Dei* as an “attribute of God. The church pursues mission in response to the mission nature of God.”\(^{135}\) *Missio Dei* is seeing God on mission to redeem His creation. David Bosch felt that missions was “derived from the very nature of God” and is seen in the workings of the Triune God: “God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to in


\(^{131}\) Darrell Guder, “Missional Church: From Sending to Being Sent,” 3-4.

\(^{132}\) Brisco, “History of Missional Church.”

\(^{133}\) “Introducing the Network,” http://www.gospel-culture.org.uk/intro.htm (accessed July 24, 2010). This web site recalls the beginnings of the movement: “The *Gospel and Our Culture* programme was initiated by Lesslie Newbigin in Britain during the 1980’s. Newbigin had been entrusted by the British Council of Churches with the task of planning a major national conference pursuing Christian engagement with contemporary Western culture…Newbigin's influence Gospel & Culture networks had been founded in New Zealand (led by Harold Turner) and in North America (led by George Hunsberger).”

\(^{134}\) Brisco, “History of Missional Church.”

include yet another movement” of ultimately sending the church. Missio Dei moves churches beyond the attractional model of “come and see” and out of the safe confines of a church to where the unchurched people are. It moves the church beyond the age of doing missions (evangelism and church planting) to the age of mission, the total work of evangelism, church planting, social justice, liberation, etc. Missio Dei is doing, living, thinking, believing, developing, and pursuing people the way God does as He relates to His creation.

This new and emerging interest in the Missio Dei has generated a lot of movement and structural changes within the contemporary church. The limits and direction to discover and live in the Missio Dei has created a new debate for the new and morphing churches. Two competing views is between the emergent and the missional philosophies.

**Emergent vs. Missional**

As stated before, certain pastors and well-meaning theologians have consolidated all new expressions of the church in post-Christendom into the same classification: emergent. There are many dialects in contemporary theology and spiritual communities that make it impossible to classify all current expressions of the faith as “emergent.” All churches that are emerging, changing, and evolving are not considered

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137 Jones is quoted in Hall article. Chad Hall, “Missional: Possible Steps to Transform a Consumer Church into a Missional Church,” *Leadership*, Winter 2007, 35.

emergent, but many expressions, dialects, and labels exist to describe churches that are emerging within western culture.\textsuperscript{139}

However, there is a need to understand that there is a current movement that can be called Emergent. One of the primary dialects of the emerging church is the Emergent Village—a network of churches that can be labeled, Emergent, for short. This Emergent Village is likely the largest organized expression of an Emergent community. It has a founder, other leaders, a government recognized 501c3 status and spiritual communities that align with it.\textsuperscript{140} However, the Emergent Village movement has begun losing steam or splintering in its own deconstructive ways.\textsuperscript{141} The future for the Emergent movement is in question.

Though the future of the Emergent Village is in question, the Emergent movement is continuing to evolve. The greater Emergent movement has an aggressive emphasis on rewriting or removing the foundational center of the Christian faith. Hirsch states in an offstage interview at the 2008 Exponential Conference that emergent churches are primarily a “renewal movement. [They are an] attempt to try to find a new theology in a postmodern context and new forms of worship.”\textsuperscript{142} Emergents prefer to do away with “thoughts, systems, and ideals” developed during Christendom.\textsuperscript{143} These thoughts, systems, and ideals are seen as useless relics of modernism.

\textsuperscript{139} Gibbs, \textit{Church Morph}, 58-60. Gibbs quotes Tom Sine where he lists up to 10 dialects of emerging churches active today.

\textsuperscript{140} Emergent Village leadership page, http://www.emergentvillage.com/about/ (accessed July 30, 2010).

\textsuperscript{141} Brandon O’Brien, “Emergent’s Divergence: Leaders hope decentralizing power will revitalize the movement,” \textit{Christianity Today}, January 2009, 14. Brian McLaren founded the Emergent movement. Tony Jones became the primary voice. He has now since step back from leadership. They hope a new name will give the movement new life.

\textsuperscript{142} Exponential Conference 2008 interview, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQL1JeYxGeo (accessed on March 28, 2009).

\textsuperscript{143} Carson, \textit{Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church}, 24.
The “Emergent conversation,” as many like to reference themselves, has not been without its losses. Broken relationships have begun to occur with the growth of emergent theology/philosophy. One of the commonly referenced theologians among Emergent thinkers is the late Stanley Grenz. Grenz, at one time, was considered a theological friend of conservative Baptist thinking. Later in life, Grenz moved away from traditional evangelical theology toward more emerging theology causing a rift with some of his Baptist colleagues. David Dockery and Stanley Grenz, once lecturing side-by-side, parted ways before Grenz’s passing. Dockery and Grenz no longer shared a “kindred spirit,” according to Dockery, due to Grenz’s move away from foundational evangelical theology. Grenz’s move troubled Dockery and others. The relativism of a shifting theology synchronizes well with the relativism of many postmodernists.

The Emergent expressions are moving away from foundational beliefs and to a more evolutionary theology and toward pluralistic culture and expression. Emergents appear to be creeping closer to syncretism that aligns well with the postmodern culture with little or any defined core and no desire to maintain an evangelical center. While Hirsch may or may not consider the Emergent movement as creeping to syncretism, this author feels Hirsch’s definition of syncretism is descriptive of the Emergent conversation.

This paper focuses on two of the largest emerging post-Christian paradigms for church: missional and emergent. They are both process-oriented systems of ecclesiology. The missional model appears to focus more on a practical restructuring of

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145 Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 98. Hirsch says, “Syncretism effectively dilutes the claim of the biblical God and creates a religion that merely diminishes the tension of living under the claim of Jesus and ends up merely affirming the religious prejudices of the host culture.”
the Christian movement rather than theological shifts. While some emergent churches are lacking the momentum and direction for the future, missional churches are thriving in post-Christendom. Missional churches are emerging, but not every emerging church is missional.

**Missional Structures**

Mission has been relegated for centuries to work done by international missionaries; a work done for God in a culture unfriendly to or unknowing of Christian doctrine. Under *Missio Dei*, mission is the work of God. Not simply the work of an organized church. The church joins God in His work. With the advent of post-Christendom, churches are being forced to learn from international missionaries. They are learning how to engage their communities where the policies and views are estranged from historical Christianity. Ed Stetzer and David Putman call this international approach to North American church development “breaking the missional code.” In the missional structure, the influence from the culture on the church is so great that it may at first appear as if the church is becoming worldly. Andy Seidel says in his Bible study on training twenty-first century leaders that “in order to reach out to postmoderns, one must ‘flirt’ with selling out to the spirit of the postmodern age.” Every missional church will be different. No church should look the same as another. Worship styles, community engagement in ministries, and message content are all contextualized to the particular culture. Gibbs says, “Worship is always contextualized so that no one style should be

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regarded as normative as or more spiritual than another.”¹⁴⁹ The worldview of each respective culture will dictate the look and shape of the spiritual communities. Missional has many faces depending the context and the catalytic leader. There are some missional churches that are seeker-oriented, purpose-driven, cell, G12 cell church, clusters, and café style each with their own identity and emphasis.¹⁵⁰

Charles Van Engen coined the term “missional,” and the term has continued to evolve.¹⁵¹ Today, books and articles are employing the term “missional” in their titles. The term allows for diversity, expression, and definition. Missional allows for ambiguity and great flexibility in structure and approaches based on the context of the spiritual community. The true missional church is not meant to be another carbon copy church model structured with big hierarchies and denominational influence that beckons mass production, marketing, and distribution. Missional churches “seek to create low-investment structures…[that are] flexible, capable of adapting quickly to the changing opportunities their context brings.”¹⁵²

The many variations or streams of missional churches speak to the liminality of the age. Stuart Murray from Great Britain does the best job at reducing the movement down to four missional sets. It is safe to assume that all four sets to some degree meet John Hendrick’s litmus test of what a missional congregation looks like.¹⁵³ Between

¹⁴⁹ Gibbs, Church Next, 160.

¹⁵⁰ Murray, Church After Christendom, 75-78.

¹⁵¹ Minatrea, Shaped By God’s Heart, 62. Though some have credited Golden Gate Baptist Seminary professor Francis DuBose in his book, God Who Sends in 1983 as the first to coin the word according to an interview Andrew Jones conducted with DuBose. http://www.youtube.com/user/tallskinnykiwi#p/a/u/2/70tAOBj779c (accessed July 30, 2010).

¹⁵² Minatrea, Shaped By God’s Heart, 145.

¹⁵³ Jon Huegli, “Riding the Waves of Change: How to Facilitate Change toward a Missionary Identity,” in Confident Witness-Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 284-285. Hendrick’s six characteristics are as follows: A missional church (1) Will understand that it exists in a cross-cultural situation; (2) Will enter into dialogue
Hendricks and Murray, a solid understanding of the missional church structure can be grasped.

**Bonded-Set**

The bonded-set seeks to separate itself from the cultural influences of the world. Previously, I have referred to this model as the pastoral/parish or institutional church. These established and true-to-their-form churches would be considered bonded-set churches. John MacArthur demonstrates a bonded-set model in his writing and speaking. Steven Bevans calls the bonded-set the translation model. These churches see Scripture and tradition as “both supracultural and complete” with no need to extend themselves to make the message relevant to the culture. A bonded-set message is relevant by speaking it. Bonded-sets have clear boundaries, and they find their security by guarding those boundaries. Murray says that bonded-set communities are “refuges for some beleaguered and disoriented” believers that see their boundaries as a respite for Christians after the fall of Christendom. It seems fundamentally incompatible to classify bonded-set in the missional category.

**Open-Set**

The open-set is the most controversial. Where the bonded-set has strict boundaries, the open-set has few, if any. Murray says that an “open-set is wonderfully inclusive but undisciplined.” Brian McLaren is the notable example of the open-set. McLaren had difficulty defining many doctrines of the faith. He would rather prefer to re-

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156 Ibid., 28.
envision theology. He takes an aggressive deconstruction approach to major tenants of evangelical theology.\textsuperscript{157} MacArthur calls out McLaren’s weak view and ambiguous definition of the gospels as troublesome.\textsuperscript{158} The Scripture defines what the “gospel” is and means, yet when I approached McLaren in my seminar with him on seeking a definition for the gospel, I referred him to the Apostle Paul’s definition in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Brian pushed back and said Paul was not defining the gospel in 1 Corinthians.\textsuperscript{159} The doctrines of the foundations of the faith are all still open for discussion, negotiation, and redefinition in the open-set. Conder’s classification of the pre-reformation stream of religious expression would align with the open-set. They like “exploring sacramental theology and practice. [With] much attention…directed toward the grand narrative of God’s redemptive work.”\textsuperscript{160}

The anthropological model is another term for the open-set.\textsuperscript{161} Because the open-set does not have boundaries or a center, truth is subjective to the culture or community in which it resides. Conder again refers to a formally churched stream of people that are against gathering large crowds and prefer open house gatherings with a few people and little adherence to any one particular doctrine. This is a perfect expression of the open-set. They exist in “house-churches or informal communities of Christian

\textsuperscript{157} McLaren likened the need to strip away the layers of theology to the peeling of an onion. When I asked how far we should be willing to peel back and discard evangelical theology, he was evasive but led me to believe that all theology is up for discussion.

\textsuperscript{158} MacArthur, \textit{The Truth War}, x.

\textsuperscript{159} Brian McLaren, “Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix.”

\textsuperscript{160} Tim Conder, “Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?: How Missional Communities Differ, and How They’re Alike,” \textit{Leadership}, Winter 2007, 47.

\textsuperscript{161} Stephen Bevans, “Living Between Gospel and Context,” 150.
sojourners” rather than established churches with clearly defined doctrines. This stream allows for more freedom and flexibility in doctrines, missions, and expressions.

**Fuzzy-Set**

The phrase, fuzzy-set, insinuates lack of clarity. It has “ill-defined boundaries and builds a more flexible community.” It is fuzzy in part because it may not look like a “church” in the ways that one might traditionally think of a church. The model is less about meeting and teaching and more about doing. Thus, Bevans would classify this set as the “praxis model.” Social justice and helping the disadvantaged are common focuses of fuzzy-set churches. It is neither a static nor a content-driven model. Shane Claiborne would be a representative of this new monastic stream. These communities are more about communal living with a commitment to monastic values and similar spiritual practices.

**Centered-Set**

Two of Conder’s streams could be classified under Murray’s centered-set. The Reformation stream is seen best in Mark Driscoll, and the Transitional stream is seen best in the likes of Andy Stanley. Both models would also fit with Bevan’s Counter-Cultural Model. In this model, the “gospel must be contextualized, but it must remain prophetic” at the same time, says missiologist Paul Hiebert. The mission of the church is

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162 Conder, “Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?: How Missional Communities Differ, and How They’re Alike,” 47.


165 Conder, “Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?” 47.
“unmasked” to the context of its “anti-gospel elements” but not emasculated so that it cannot call for regeneration and life change.  

Many evangelicals prefer the centered-set model in the post-Christendom context. It is popular among emerging churches. The centered-set “resonates with the postmodern culture where notion of boundaries is uncongenial.” The centered-set has some distinctive features about it that make it appealing to contemporary evangelical faith communities. First, the centered-set provides non-negotiable core convictions. Andy Stanley states that once he knew what he believed was biblical theology and that the rest was methodology, he was freed to do ministry with unbridled creativity. He says, “Knowing the boundaries enhances the creative process.” Second, the core convictions shape the community. Third, keeping the center becomes more important than “patrolling the boundaries.” The boundaries might represent methods or preferences, while the center is the core of theology. Allow for freedom and creativity on the boundaries; yet maintain the center or core. Fourth, the church is a more fluid model once the center is established. Fifth, the center frees the church to be more inclusive. People are allowed to belong before believing without jeopardizing the center. Murray summarizes the centered-set:

Centered-set churches encourage spiritual growth, theological investigation, intellectual honesty, receptivity to new ideas and new people, and a “journeying” image of discipleship…Churches with healthy centers are secure enough to welcome those who are exploring faith and searching for authenticity. They are relaxed, non-judgmental communities where questions, doubts, dissent and fears can be expressed, and where ethical issues do not preclude acceptance. They are

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167 Murray, Church After Christendom, 26-27.

168 Andy Stanley, “Be Relevant: Creating Relevant Environments” (lecture, C3 Conference, Fellowship Church, Grapevine, TX. January 2004).

169 Murray, Church After Christendom, 29.
inclusive without compromising communities with deep convictions that are nevertheless open to fresh insights.  

The difference, many times, between a centered-set and an open-set is the difference between translating and transforming. Every culture and generation needs the message translated into their worldview and cultural context. The centered-set supports the translation of the message. However, the message is to be translated not transformed. To be transformed would mean to change the message at its core. This is the relativism and pluralism of postmodernity at work in the faith. It is dangerous to allow each generation to choose its own doctrine without regard for the history and traditions of previous generations’ theological thought and development. There is a timeless message that must be made known afresh with relevance to each generation (Jude 3). The centered-set as the missional model bridges the generations and worldviews the best without compromising the core of historical beliefs.

**The Missional Church for Post-Christendom**

The centered-set missional church brings an exciting and dynamic paradigm shift for the local church in the West. Many missional churches maintain biblical values while translating biblical orthodoxy and orthopraxy into the twenty-first century post-Christian world. Most of the shifts and changes that the missional church is moving toward are positioning them for effective ministry to post-Christendom. Some point out that post-Christendom has taken the church in the West back to a first century environment when it was pre-Christian. They are saying there is tremendous similarity between pre-Christendom and post-Christendom.

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170 Ibid., 30.


172 McLaren, “Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix.”
The church seems to function best when it is not at the center of culture. Could it be that the church functions best or missionally when in a minority status? Samuel Escobar quotes Rosemary Dowsett when pointing out: “It was only with the advent of Christendom that the church was seduced into believing that she should exercise majority control by force, not faith.” The following are shifts that missional churches are undergoing since the marginalization of Christianity. Many of the adjustments are producing a far more vibrant and healthy church for the post-Christendom context.

*From Sacred vs. Secular to Sacred and Secular*

Boundaries and compartmentalization are viruses that have developed over time in the church and culture that create unhealthy separations. The illness comes into play when a separation is created between the secular and sacred. The effects are many, but one of the greatest harms of the secular/sacred divide is that it segregates believers and unbelievers from living in community with one another. Immanuel Kant, an early modernist, was one of the first to recognize spheres that separate the physical from the spiritual. Under this dualistic model people do not integrate their faith with their work, pastimes, sports, education; they create a faith that is not fully integrated with all of life. This alignment has created pockets of subculture that subdivide life and segregate faith from everyday character, values, and decisions. Some areas of life become worldly, and some are considered holy.


175 McNeal, “Missional Leadership.”
Compartmentalizing robs the church of ideas, creativity, holistic transformation, and opportunities for influence. Nightclubs, pubs, music genres, movies, and community events are ruled holy or unholy depending on their primary context or content. Some believers refuse to approach those far from God and choose rather to build invisible walls of isolation for fear the other person’s secular ways may invade and corrupt their sacred ways. The walls become an elitist or “holier than thou” safeguard to depth and spirituality for the truly “holy ones” of the faith. Consequently, the church has segmented songs, art, holidays, entertainment, education, and symbols by labeling them “secular” like it is vulgar rather than seeing everything on the “earth is the Lord’s” and redeeming each and every area for God (Ps 24:1).

Missional churches are refusing to see life in such dual spheres. The two-dimensional approach to life is strongly rejected by the contemporary missional churches. The authors of Emerging Churches conclude after years of research that,

…emerging churches do not submit to the dualisms presented by modernity: sacred versus secular, body versus mind/spirit, male versus female, clergy versus laity, leader versus follower, evangelism versus social action, individual versus community, outsider versus insider, material versus immaterial, belief versus action, theology versus ethics, public versus private. Instead, they seek to overcome these divisions.176

Christ’s truth is neither segmented for modern versus postmodern nor secular versus sacred. Christian truth permeates all cultures, times, and spaces. The message loses its credibility when there is not congruence between one’s faith and actions.177

176 Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, Emerging Churches (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 236.

177 Minatrea, Shaped by God’s Heart, 44.
From Propagation to Incarnation

One of the greatest doctrinal emphases in the missional church is that of incarnation. Jesus Christ’s incarnation has become the prototype for ministry in the new millennium. In incarnational living, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and life flow to and from organic relationships with those not yet followers of Christ. Postmoderns are less interested in hearing about a person’s doctrinal beliefs and propositions regarding Jesus and are more interested in seeing Jesus fleshed out as a transformative ingredient of an authentic lived-out faith. Post-Christendom requires a shift away from “Copernican propositions [e.g., Campus Crusades, 4 Spiritual Laws, or Evangelism Explosion]… it requires a display of truth…a deeper understanding of salvation,” according to David Fitch. Evangelism is more of a process than an event in the twenty-first century, and it will likely take longer and be messier than it was during the twentieth century. The chart below shows Michael Frost’s paradigm for incarnational living versus propositional evangelism of old.

Sharing the Message

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Evangelistic”</th>
<th>“Incarnational”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monologue</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
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<td>Presentation with doctrinal points</td>
<td>Exchange of ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formulaic</td>
<td>Communicated through various conversations and experiences</td>
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Gibbs and Bolger, Emerging Churches, 127.

Fitch, The Great Giveaway, 50.


Frost, Exiles, 76.
Living out an authentic, congruent and fully transparent Christian faith in the community transcends every culture and time.\textsuperscript{182} Living an incarnational faith as Christ did is making inroads to dark places that previous models of evangelism were not able to touch.\textsuperscript{183} In the translation of the gospel, the message must maintain its integrity but how it is lived and expressed from the urban to the suburban, from the affluent to the under resourced will vary. John Stott says it this way: “All authentic mission is incarnational mission. It demands identification without loss of identity. It means entering other people’s worlds as Christ entered ours without compromising our biblical convictions, values, or standards.”\textsuperscript{184} Hirsch quotes Michael Frost, his teaching colleague from their Forge teaching materials, when he lists four dimensions to understanding the incarnational approach to evangelization: (1) Presence—Jesus as God was fully with mankind. (2) Proximity—he lived with the people speaking into their life. (3) Powerlessness—he was “one of us” and did not use any super human powers to control mankind. (4) Proclamation: he spoke of the reign of God and called people to repentance and faith.\textsuperscript{185} Incarnation is best seen in the messenger going to the people and living the spoken Word, not waiting for the people to come to the messenger to hear their proposition.

Before fully entering a context with the hopes of reaching and transforming the people, a clear understanding of the target culture, worldview, and the level of their knowledge of the Christian faith must be assessed.\textsuperscript{186} Once the barriers of the message have been removed, the story of Jesus can be lived and told. Eddie Gibbs proposes that

\textsuperscript{182} Stetzer and Putman, \textit{Breaking the Missional Code}, 73.

\textsuperscript{183} Murray, \textit{Church After Christendom}, 70.


\textsuperscript{185} Hirsch, \textit{The Forgotten Ways}, 132.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 56-57
Christians “introduce the gospel not as a sequence of propositions but as a series of significant ‘little’ stories, which makes up most of the Bible, leading to the story of Jesus.” Communicating the message will involve propositions that emerge from the stories, but neither can be told or proposed until the believer crosses the cultural barriers and incarnates the message. A personal narrative of God’s work of grace will give a moral authority to the propositions of the faith.

From Traditional Ways to Contextual Ministry

Until the World Council of Churches (WCC) introduced the concept of contextualization in 1972, the imperial or colonialist approach was the primary mode of operation in missions. Many evangelicals did not initially welcome contextualization due to the word’s origins with the WCC and for fear of syncretism. Contextualization allows for the culture to shape the expressions and focus of the Christian faith instead of the more imperial colonial way of dictating from a western worldview how faith is processed and expressed. The colonial model promoted indigenization, yet indigenization “implied a comparison with the West…and was static.” Contextualization allows the culture to help shape in a more dynamic and adaptive way the faith to fit one’s own context. Missiologists have confirmed in these latter days that contextualization is one of the most important concepts in doing ministry.

Every church must understand its own unique context. One huge problem with pastoral churches, which have close ties to the colonial modernist ways, is that they

187 Gibbs, Leadership Next, 59.


189 Ibid., 226.

190 Elton, “Corps of Discovery,” 149.
devalue the context of their communities and become a separate context within a larger context. The church becomes its own context. They are a micro context of church values, behaviors, traditions, and worldviews existing in a larger context (i.e. post-Christendom) for which they have little respect. Many times in a traditional church, the micro context is unfriendly and openly opposed to the macro context. They subtly and sometimes overtly express it by remaining in isolation from the greater context or by “cursing the darkness” of the world from within the church. Stetzer and Putman say it well when humorously pointing out the sub-context in their book, *Breaking the Missional Code*:

…many evangelicals live in a “Christianized” world where people listen to James Dobson tell us how to raise our children, consult Ron Blue to understand our finances, sing along with Third Day for musical inspiration, choose political candidates based upon Christian Coalition voting guides, and read Tim LaHaye to enjoy some good Christian fiction. We live in this evangelical subculture, this evangelical bubble, and we see all kinds of people just like us. Some call this the “herding effect.”

It is extremely difficult to have a contextual message and influence while living in a bubble isolated from or pointing one’s finger at the real world in accusation.

Missional churches have allowed the larger context to shape their environment, manner of presentation, format, style, traditions, and in some ways even the message. Missional churches will still be counter-cultural yet not as pronounced and irrelevant to the greater culture. This is contextualization at work. There is a process where one must first be in the culture before one can speak to the culture. There is a need when establishing a ministry “to exegete that culture in the same way that missionaries have been so good at doing with diverse tribal cultures of previously unreached people,” says Fuller Seminary President Richard Mouw in Van Gelder collection of essays. To

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exegete a culture is the work of a missionary and enables contextualization to happen. The first step of any missionary in contextualization is to “make the message intelligible and relevant to the people.” Churches must do the work of missionaries in the context in which they find themselves.

Historically it has been proven that the missionaries who made the greatest impact on cultures were those who lived incarnational lives. Contextualization influences even the dress of the missionary down to their manners. Jesuit Robert De Nobili in seventeenth-century India was one of the first recorded missionaries in history to pose as a Hindu guru and deliver the Christian message. China Inland Missions personnel wore Chinese dress with pigtails to deliver their message. Contextualizing one’s life and message has proven to be far more successful than the colonial approach to missions. The incarnational model of first century Jesus is again the model for twenty-first century America.

The colonial approach to missions is just as wrong as the polar opposite temptation of syncretism. When contextualization is carried too far it can lead to syncretism. Syncretism happens when “biblical concepts are mixed with traditional religious practices in places where the gospel has been newly proclaimed.” The gospel has been successfully contextualized when the integrity and intent of the message has been inculturated into the lives of the new believers and a new cultural worldview.

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195 Ibid., 36.

emerges from it. A failure to transform the worldview leads to a “Christo-paganism.” An inculturated message is when the integrity of the message is fully embraced and expressed in the social processes and social mores of a given people. A contextualized message that is embraced by a people and expressed in their heart language and worldview is the aim of the missional church. Walter Hobbs quotes Robert Schreiter when saying that an inculturated message is when “faith is given richness of local expression.” An authentic, personal expression of one’s faith lived out is a beautiful practice.

Each church must study and know its context and adapt to it. From a church’s context, a church’s life, ministry, and message are shaped until there is a congruency between the gospel and the specific culture. The single word to describe the fusion of a contextualized message with authentic, incarnational living is inculturation. An inculturated message is a synergy between gospel truth and cultural ethos. Inculturation is the interaction that happens between “the gospel and the way in which it is practiced and shared.”

From Informative Attractional Consumer to Transformative Missional Catalyst

Missional churches desire to see a total life transformation of believers. Teaching for transformation is more important than merely teaching for the transfer of information. Missional churches want to move believers past the eternity escapism-consumer-customized approach to Christianity toward a culture of confession and holistic transformation. Hirsch believes the consumerist approach has led the church to a
“synchronized faith” with a subtle postmodern inching toward pluralism and relativism.200

Gibbs and Bolger cite Johnny Baker at Grace Church in London as modeling a more holistic approach to the faith. Baker labels the modernist message as “escapology theology” where the focus of the faith is not in the present but in eternity. According to Gibbs and Bolger, “Baker advocates that Christians need to invest themselves in the current culture, not live on hold until time runs out. Christians must dwell in culture now and point to God from within, not from without.”201 In the missional church, the theology is more than the self-serving what-do-you-get mentality. Members understand that they are called to be the church rather than be served by it. Missional communities cut back on busy activities that only create sideways energy that rob the church of a forward motion towards its mission to allow “space for breathing and living.”202 True life equipping and transforming is accomplished through the “movement from information through contemplation to transformation.”203 Gibbs strongly asserts that missional churches must be a “transformative presence” in the community. He writes that established churches have had a greater emphasis on “decision-ism” rather than disciple-making.204 True transformation will take place when lives change at their cores.

Moving a congregation from being consumers of religious goods, services, and information to contributors to the greater mission is a huge part of the transformative process. Members in missional churches have a high threshold commitment to being a covenant community, equally serving and contributing to the mission.205

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200 Hirsch, The Forgotten Ways, 156.
201 Gibbs and Bolger, Emerging Churches, 79.
202 Conder, “Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?,”48.
203 Minatrea, Shaped by God’s Heart, 56.
205 Minatrea, Shaped by God’s Heart, 30.
the center-set missional model of Christianity moves the church past the “Sunday
Christian phenomenon wherein church attendance has very little effect on the lifestyles or
values or priorities expressed from Monday to Saturday. This version of Christianity is a
façade.” Missional churches thrive on practices that draw out purposeful, authentic,
confessional, transparent, and transformative living.

From Cliques to Community

Environments where communities can be nurtured and maintained is probably
one of the basic and core beliefs of postmodernists. Clique are small groups of
likeminded people who share common values, theology, worldviews, political thoughts,
and convictions closing them off to unique views and expressions. Uniformity and
conformity abound in a clique. Sometimes, they even dress the same. If they are activists
they might rally together around a common cause or protest. In contrast, communities
assemble people with a minimal degree of affinity while at the same time welcoming
others into community with some tolerance and acceptance for different views,
backgrounds, beliefs, races. A community involves affinity with levels of welcomed
diversity. Cliques look for safety, protection, security, and nurturing.

Alan Hirsh stretches the shift beyond “community” to *communitas*. Hirsh
identifies *communitas* as a part of the forgotten way that is now thriving in liminality and
happens when people are driven to “each other through a common experience of ordeal,
humbling, transition and marginalization.” *Communitas* represents a deeper heart-level
community, as opposed to surface level, relationships.


208 Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 221. The terms *Communitas* and *liminality* are terms
Many postmodernists appreciate an eclectic church and faith where tension without division can co-exist. They prefer interracial, intergenerational, interdenominational, and even interfaith gatherings over institutionalism, uniformity, and sameness. They want a group of people with whom they can journey together to the center of truth as much as they want to be transformed by the truth. Safe communities where transformational life conversations can occur are an absolute necessity in postmodernity.

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg is credited for classifying “Third Place.” According to Oldenburg, “Third Place” is the “core setting for informal public life.” The Third Place phenomena is where the developed world wants to have a third place, other than home and work, where they find community in which conversations and connection can take place. Starbucks has identified this in post modernity and has capitalized on the “third place” concept. Coffee shops have replaced the front porch in America. Coffee is a safe brew for mixing and communing with close friends or complete strangers. Hirsch admires spiritual communities that gather in a “third place,” because the settings tend to be more attractive for unchurched. Sixty percent of the gatherers in “third place” environments are coming with little or no connection to established churches.

Other places where community occurs are parks, pubs, community centers, gyms, and golf courses. A community can gather (with or without a church facility) wherever a person can relax and find connection and confidentiality. Frost writes, “Third places are the most significant places for Christian mission to occur because in a third

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place people are more relaxed, less guarded, more open to meaningful conversation and interaction. Followers of Christ need to create space for conversations so postmodernists can explore their faith and engage in Christian community.

*From Sustaining to Planting Churches*

Many churches across the United States are trying to keep themselves alive; survival is their unwritten goal. Yet most are either dead or are dying. Eighty to eighty-five percent of churches are on the backside of their growth curve. Sustainability and survival has been the mode of operation in most churches of the industrialized world for a number of years. Asbury Seminary Professor George Hunter points out that churches fifteen years or older many times have reached a plateau in growth, and most churches after thirty-five years of existence cannot replace members once the older members die or leave the church. When the aging of the churches is coupled with a growing post-Christendom, the church is fighting a proverbial up-hill battle to impact postmodernists. From anecdotal observation, many churches appear unable to thrive in the post-Christendom. Churches have become impotent.

The apparent impotence has led to sterility in many churches as it relates to reproducing new churches. The churches of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) support this hypothesis. Southern Baptists have prided themselves in their evangelism programs and church planting mission agencies, yet even their denomination has seen an ever-decreasing number of baptisms and church plants (typically an indicator of a church’s diminishing influence on an unchurched culture). For example, Southern Baptist

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churches did not see any growth in the number of SBC new church sponsorships from 2003 to 2005.216 The statistics are not as flattering when only 15 percent of Southern Baptist churches help sponsor a new church plant in a given year. While some might argue that the Southern Baptist denomination is the most evangelistic church planting-focused, only 4 percent of the over 15 million Southern Baptist churches were primary sponsors of new church starts between 2003 and 2005.217

Survival is not the mode of missional churches. There is a huge mission swell in the United States toward church planting initiatives. In 2007, Leadership Network commissioned a comprehensive church planting study under the leadership of missiologists Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird. They studied denominations, churches, church planting networks, and other experts in the field. They reported that approximately 4,000 new churches are being planted annually in United States.218 Church planting has become the rule rather than the exception among missional churches in North America. Intentional and aggressive church planting is the standard mode of operation for the missional church.

For emerging believers living in the post-Christendom, the primary evangelistic method is church planting. Church planting has replaced the traditional weekday revival/crusades or the door-to-door evangelism of the 1950s.219 Church planting is the predominant strategy for evangelism in post-Christendom. There is an ever-growing interest in church planting in the greater Christian community. The number of volumes published and the demand for materials to learn how to plant churches support

216 Peter Kendrick, email interview response by author, May 7, 2009 7:26AM. The SBC had 15.6% in 2003 and 15.5% in 2005 that reproduced sister churches. Their involvement varied from primary sponsorship, clustering, sponsorship, or supporting sponsorship.

217 Ibid.

218 Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, Church Planting Overview, 3.

219 Stafford, “Go and Plant Churches of all Peoples,” 69.
this claim. From 1996 to 2002, only two mainstream books were published on church planting. In half that number of years, 2003 to 2005, at least eight mainstream books were published on the same subject.\textsuperscript{220} Bob Roberts sums it up well: “In the past ten years, church planting has gone from being the ministry position of last resort to the position of first preference.”\textsuperscript{221} Many churches that emphasize planting churches have developed a system for church planting that involves internships, onsite training, and seminars where want-to-be church planters are assessed, mentored, equipped, shadowed, and commissioned for the work of starting churches. This systems approach to church planting is relatively new in North American church planting and is aiding churches to grow faster.\textsuperscript{222} The upsurge in missional church planting has given rise to many approaches that cause people to look at their ecclesiology with a new and broadening perspective.

**Church Planting Movements**

Church planting has become such an intense focus of the new millennium church that spontaneous reproduction movements have become the desired end for many. Spontaneous reproduction movements speak of church planting in an unhindered manner and with a plethora of styles. International Mission Board Missiologist David Garrison reintroduces the movement’s name with the foreign and domestic mission community in his book by the same title, *Church Planting Movements*. He believes that the rapid multiplication of churches is due to intentional efforts and strategy among missionaries.

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\textsuperscript{221} Bob Roberts, *The Multiplying Church: The New Math for Starting New Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 70.

\textsuperscript{222} Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, “The State of Church Planting in the United States: Research Overview and Qualitative Study of Primary Church Planting Entities” (Dallas, TX: Leadership Network, 2007), 31.
and missional churches: “If you want to see churches planted, then you must set out to plant churches.” He then takes it a step further by advocating: “If you want to see reproducing churches planted, then you must set out to plant reproducing churches.”

Though Garrison may have reintroduced the phrase, Anglican missionary to China, Ronald Allen birthed the idea of spontaneous reproduction among churches. He had his share of critics to the idea in the early twentieth century. He prophetically told his sons that it would not be until years later that his concepts would be welcomed. He could not have been more accurate with his statements. Neil Cole, advocate for viral church planting movements, quotes Allen when developing traction for his own paradigm for church planting that will be considered in this section. Allen says, “By spontaneous expansion I mean something beyond our control…Spontaneous expansion could fill the continents with the knowledge of Christ.”

Missional churches are redirecting resources to strategic missional works in the place of bureaucratic denominations. Missional churches are also more conscious about the efficacy of their monies and resources; they want to go for the greatest gain rather than simply giving money to a denomination and expecting them to plant churches.

Churches that start churches want to build church planting into the DNA of their daughter churches. Mark Driscoll has led the Acts 29 network to be proactive in evangelism through starting churches. All churches that the network helps to plant are led to be intentional about the planting of new churches: “They expect that at least 10 percent

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of every offering—including a church’s first offering—will go toward church planting.\textsuperscript{227} Church planting is not optional for missional churches. Another example is seen in Bob Robert’s vision to start 1,000 churches in ten years.\textsuperscript{228} Starting 1,000 churches will only become reality when the church puts into practice church planting movement principles and clear missional values with great intention. Roberts, Cole, Greear and other missional church planters do not espouse that all church planting looks the same. Three major methodologies have emerged in the twenty-first century that dominates church reproduction methodologies.

\textbf{Church Planting Methods}

Church planting is now happening throughout the West in multiple ways and through multiple means. Churches are starting and gathering in homes, pubs, schools, parks, coffee shops, and sister churches across denominational lines. There are only a limited number of rules as to how, where, and who can start churches in the current climate. For the purposes of this paper, church reproduction is the intentional reproduction of a church’s ethos, pathos, and logos into a different spiritual community. The primary components of the definition are Aristotle’s modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos is the church’s ethics, ideals, DNA, vision, and core values. Mosaic Pastor, Erwin McManus, says that ethos is “the fundamental character or spirit of a culture.”\textsuperscript{229} The pathos of a congregation speaks to a church’s passion, “feel,” and desires. Logos is a church’s doctrine, teachings, and beliefs. One can plant a church without these elements being transferred; however, most churches will seek to reproduce

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\textsuperscript{227} Tim Stafford, “Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples,” 69.

\textsuperscript{228} Roberts, \textit{The Multiplying Church}, 25.

\textsuperscript{229} Erwin McManus, \textit{An Unstoppable Force: Daring to become the Church God Had in Mind} (Colorado Springs, CO: Group Publications, 2001), 97.
\end{flushleft}
these values into the new churches to some degree if they are going to leverage their resources and time in the church plant. The closer the connection, relationship, resource investment, and long-term ties with the sending church, the greater chance the ethos, pathos, and logos transfer. Congruence is occurring when all three align. The method employed that allows for the greatest amount of independence from the mother church will transfer less ethos, pathos, and logos. Interdependence breeds greater similarity of values and alignment. There are three primary methods of church reproduction that are prominent in the church planting literature of today. This project begins with the method that is tied closest to the mother church logistically through accountability and through brand identification.

**Multi-Site Reproductions**

In twenty-first century North America, a multi-site campus is one of the more rapidly acceptable means of church multiplication. Bill Easum and Dave Travis were some of the earliest to write on the movement in their book *Beyond the Box*. They summarized the motivation for multi-site as “mission, rather than space, determines the agenda.” In an effort to preserve and multiply the mission ethos, pathos, and logos in its purest form, multi-site churches appear to be a preferred option. In 2006, 1,500 churches were using multi-site venues. In 2008, an estimated 2,000 churches were using multi-site venues. The latest report just released by Leadership Network and in 2010 the new

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230 Bill Easum and Dave Travis, *Beyond the Box: Innovative Churches that Work* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003), 85. Though my first encounter with a multi-site church was when Perimeter Church in Atlanta, GA, was multi-site and it was highlighted in Elmer Towns, *10 of Today’s Most Innovative Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990).


estimates are that there are 3,000 multi-site churches across the US with a 90% success rate.\textsuperscript{233} Seven of the ten fastest growing churches in the United States have multiple sites.\textsuperscript{234} The multi-site method is used to capitalize on already established and positive community connections with a certain name or “brand” of church. It enables the church to go into communities with a well-established name, ethos, pathos and logos, and start a missional gathering of believers within a new community. A multi-site church is one church meeting in multiple locations. The campuses share a common vision, budget, leadership, administration, accountability, and oversight.\textsuperscript{235}

The first mainstream book to be published on the multi-site movement in North America was by practitioner Geoff Surratt with the help of Leadership Network’s research team, Greg Legion and Warren Bird. They contrast the advantages of multi-site campuses in quick, succinct statements. They say the benefits of a multi-site are: “grow larger and grow smaller; brand new and trusted brand; staff with generalist and specialist; less cost and greater impact; new church vibe and big church punch; move there and stay here; more need and more support; more outreach and more maturity.”\textsuperscript{236}

A number of benefits support the multi-site approach. One is that some believe the multi-site church is a more efficient model for starting new congregations. Bill Easum quotes Dave Ferguson, another multi-site practitioner who says, “Multisite

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\textsuperscript{234} Surratt, Legion, and Bird, \textit{The Multi-site Church Revolution}, 21. The following are the seven churches in the top ten that have multi-sites: Without Walls International, Tampa, FL; Mount Zion Baptist Church, White Creek, TN; LifeChurch.tv, Oklahoma City, OK; Saddleback Community Church, Lake Forrest, CA; The Fountain of Praise, Houston, TX; Second Baptist Church, Houston, TX; Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, LA.

\textsuperscript{235} Scott McConnell, \textit{Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement’s Next Generation}, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009), 74. Dave Ferguson contributes to McConnell’s book as he states there are 4 “1’s” that keep multiple campuses aligned: 1 vision, 1 Big Idea, 1 Budget and 1 eldership.

\textsuperscript{236} Surratt, Legion, and Bird, \textit{The Multi-site Church Revolution}, 47.
strategies reach more people faster, with higher quality, greater results, and lower costs.”

Gregg Allison, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, cites in his article in the 9Marks e-journal that starting multi-sites are 30 percent more cost efficient than starting traditional churches. Even critics of the multi-site phenomena concede its efficiencies even though they still have a hard time embracing it. They question if efficiency is something the church needs to see as a primary concern. Secondly, there is the potential upside in the multi-site model in its evangelistic capability to enable churches to reach a new sector of the population. Seventy-two percent of the multi-site churches said the second location enabled them to reach a different socio-economic people than their first campus. Also, another benefit is in how rapid a multi-site church reaches sustainability compared to traditional independent church plants. Multi-sites are typically self-sustaining within a few months. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod found that their independent church plants took 3-5 years before they were able to sustain themselves. Churches become more evangelistic when they use the multi-site approach. Surveys have shown that churches who employ a multi-site approach are 69 percent more evangelistic than those who do not use multi-site. The new site typically grows faster

237 Easum and Travis, Beyond the Box, 88.


239 Thomas White and John Yeats, Franchising McChurch: Feeding Our Obsession with Easy Christianity (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 25.

240 Ibid., 22.


242 Surratt, Legion, and Bird, The Multi-site Church Revolution, 106.

243 Stetzer and Bird, “The State of Church Planting in the United States,” 44.

244 Surratt, Legion, and Bird, The Multi-site Church Revolution, 24.
than the original campus. It seems that the biggest benefit to multi-site churches is that one in five multi-site churches have reproduced themselves into a “grandchild” campus. Eight percent of multi-site campuses have started 3-self churches. This type of outward focus is one of the great benefits of the multi-site church. There is a tremendous upside to multi-sites. No matter how effective, efficient, or mobilizing the multi-site model is, there are still critics to this method.

McConnell gives a stern warning to churches considering the multi-site approach that going into it “unprepared could cause irreparable damage to” the church. Some critics of the multisite phenomena see it as franchising the church. To clarify for those opposed to the multi-site, it is more of a hybrid franchise. These churches share a common name, vision, logistical and financial administration, message, ethos, pathos, and logo; however, they allow the various campuses to tailor ministries and worship for their particular context. Advocates for multi-site might consider the multi-site churches “branding” rather than franchising.

There are many creative advantages to multi-site churches, but opinions are still being formed as to the long-term sustainability and reproducibility of this branding approach to church reproduction. Matt Chandler, a multi-site pastor from Dallas, expresses many concerns and questions that still linger with him regarding the multi-site phenomenon. He asks: “Where does this idea lead? Where does this end? Twenty years

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245 Warren Bird and Kristen Walters, *Multisite Is Multiplying*, 6. Newer campuses grow at a rate of 45% compared to 27% growth with the original campus.

246 Ibid., 21-22. The study also found that multi-site churches were more inclined to start 3-self churches.


from now are there fifteen preachers in the United States?” 249 Chandler, himself a multi-site pastor, raises a good question: “Where does this end?” For now, however, these questions do not seem to be what many churches are asking. Most churches appear to be asking, “How can we get in on this new wave of church planting?” Multi-site churches have become a viable model in the twenty-first century.

*Three-self Reproductions*

Though the multi-site movement is growing in popularity, the more classical form of planting independent, indigenous churches has been the primary mode of church reproduction for many years. Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson of the late Church Missionary Society were the first to promote independent, indigenous church planting. They called for church plants to be self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-propagating. 250 The classical form of church planting should not be thrust aside, McConnell states. 251 The three-self church planting model, as referred to throughout the remainder of this project, espouses producing churches that are independent as evidenced in their ability to govern through their own oversight structure, support their own ministries via their own operating capital, and proclaim the teachings of their faith while reproducing their beliefs into new churches. However, this model would be more accurately referred to as the neo-three-self approach because the twenty-first century version varies somewhat from the traditional indigenous church-planting model that Anderson and Venn promoted.


250 Scott Moreau, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 483-485. Venn preferred the term “self-extending” over “self-propagating” which may be more outward focused sounding to some.

The twenty-first century model is more robust and fast-moving. The literature of today places greater emphasis on networking over individualization, church multiplication not church addition, and global church planting not just local church reproduction. This neo-three-self approach to church planting has given new energy and hope to denominations. Since the 1990s, denominations have been renewing their commitment to church planting. This denominational revival in church planting may be the denominations’ only source of hope for a future.

Networks have emerged in post-Christendom for the primary purpose of viral church planting. Leadership Network interviewed ten high-capacity reproducing churches. The ten churches of the study had collectively reproduced an additional 1,093 churches with weekly attendance of 171,601. Many of the churches have begun training centers within their churches that have a laser-like focus on producing viral or reproducing churches. The networks are seeking to move churches from the goal of adding one to two church plants a year to multiplying themselves into four, eight, or fifteen church plants annually. The high-capacity churches expect their church plants to multiply from the beginning. Northwood Church’s Glocalnet encourages their new church starts to immediately make plans for planting an additional church within the first year of their existence. Glocalnet says, “Don’t plant a tree, plant an orchard.”

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253 Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 57.

254 Andy Williams, *Church Multiplication Centers: Best Practices from Churches that Do High-Yield Church Planting* (Dallas, TX: Leadership Network 2005), 2.

255 Ibid., 3.

256 Roberts, *The Multiplying Church*, 64.

have shown that the earlier churches integrate reproduction into their ethos, the more likely they will become a church planting church.258

The networks are “farm systems” for accessing, training, and providing camaraderie for church planters.259 The training networks are offering church planters hands-on church internships lasting anywhere from a few months to multiple years depending on the program requirements. The time spent with the trainees is designed to equip them to tackle the challenges of church planting. The networks push away from the Lone-Ranger approach to planting churches in an attempt to prevent the startup pastors from finding themselves in a graveyard of other church planters.260 Church planting has a higher success rate than the popularized and undocumented 70 percent first-year-failure rate.261 The greatest finding of the 2007 Leadership Network study was that 68 percent of new church starts still function after four years.262 The networks work hard providing support, coaching, encouragement and resources for their planters. The networks are striving to avoid leaving the planters alone but clustering churches together and maintaining regular contact with them.263 The networks that are formed through this have given way to a new brotherhood among churches that many denominations or associations used to fill.

258 Ibid., 33-34. “Churches that were 200 or less in attendance were 4x more likely to plant a church than churches 1,000 or more in attendance. While churches between 200-500 in attendance were 2x as likely to plant a church than their counterparts.”

259 Williams, Church Multiplication Centers, 6; McConnell, Multi-Site Churches, 71-72.

260 Ibid., 12.

261 Ron Sylvia, Starting High Definition Churches (Ocala, FL: High Definition Resources, 2004), 14.


263 Williams, Church Multiplication Centers, 12-13.
Due to the globalization of the postmodern world, there is an emphasis by some networks for new church starts to engage in global church development. Glocalnet training capitalizes on the shrinking of the world as an opportunity for world evangelization. Not only are Glocalnet church starts expected to start new churches in their first year, Glocalnet encourages them to engage an unreached people group internationally within the first year as well.\textsuperscript{264} There is an ever-growing outward and global focus among the missional churches that start churches. Missional churches are mobilizing their people to the ends of the earth young and old. Just as multi-site methodology poses some issues, so does the three-self model present challenges.

The three-self model is extremely labor intensive with a heavy cash flow requirement. To start a three-self church, the mother church must be willingly to give up key lay leaders, staff, financial resources, to the new plant with little control of the resources once they leave their hands.\textsuperscript{265} When church planting churches are sending out key leaders it makes a church planting movement more difficult and less attractive to mother churches. The mother churches are being forced to constantly develop key leadership for their own church to the new congregation. This is called hiving. Bob Roberts firmly speaks out against hiving as a form of church multiplication for Northwood. He believes that hiving will actually slow down the church planting virus instead of encouraging its spread.

Studies have shown that a church can hive one time. Some can do it twice. Rare is the church that can do it three times…it takes five years to regain the leadership group lost during the hiving process…we look for church planters to start a core group from scratch, not planters who have to have a readymade church handed to them.\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{264} Roberts, \textit{The Multiplying Church}, 125.
\textsuperscript{265} Brown, \textit{Becoming A Church Planting Church}, 8.
\textsuperscript{266} Roberts, \textit{The Multiplying Church}, 58.
Human resources are a huge demand for three-self churches whether a church starts from hiving or through people development. The larger the core membership before the church launches public meetings, the greater the chance of success. According to Malphurs, Southern Baptists have found that if the church has at least fifty people at its launch, the success rate as a church plant is three times greater than those who have less than fifty.267 “Launching large” is a common phrase and a target for any three-self church. Most new church starts are not larger than 100 people even after four years.268 If a church launches large, they can pass the 200-attendance marker much faster.269

The mother church may also be called upon to make a large financial investment into the start-up church. Three-self churches are encouraged to have up to $150,000 of liquid assets available to them at the time of launch.270 Large sums of money and human resources can cause a church and/or church planter to pause and reconsider church planting as a viable option for evangelism. Malphurs’ insightful but somewhat dated book on church planting cites a 1985 study published in *Leadership Journal* that states it will take 20-30 months for a church to become self-supporting. One-fifth will be self-supporting from day one, but they are the exception not the rule.271

The demands for resources, money and the personal physical demands on church planters and mother churches in the start-up phase cannot be overstated. Mark Driscoll says that the average church planter will gain between 15-20 pounds over the

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271 Ibid., 393.
course of starting a church.\textsuperscript{272} A high priority must be placed on the health of the family and marriage of the church planters. The three-self model with networks provides some needed coaching, support, and encouragement for the task set before them.

**Simple Church Reproduction**

Both the multi-site and the three-self forms of church reproductions have high demands and expectations on them before either can fully launch into church assembling mode. There is less of an expectation for a simple church to carry the ethos, logos and pathos of a sending church. Self-expression and individual identity is encouraged. Simple church has much lower start up requirements (i.e. financial and personnel) and prefer to stay lean, small, nimble and reproducing. The movement places a high value on relationships and affinities. There are structures, logistics, staffing, and financial demands that a simple church reproduction does not require.

Neil Cole, in his *Church Multiplication Associates* network, states that his goal is to “lower the bar on what it takes to do church, and raise the bar on what it means to be a follower of Jesus.”\textsuperscript{273} The simple church does not require all the pomp, ceremony, facilities, and personnel of a multi-site or three-self church.\textsuperscript{274} A certain standard has been established in the multi-site brand that must be maintained to fully represent the brand identity. The critical mass of the three-self church is important for potential success. Both multi-site and three-self models will need thousands of dollars to get started. Upwards of $100,000 is realistic.\textsuperscript{275} If a critical mass of 200 people and $100,000 in the bank is

\textsuperscript{272} Williams, *Church Multiplication Centers*, 13.

\textsuperscript{273} Williams, *Church Multiplication Centers*, 11.


required, spontaneous church reproduction will be hampered due to the steep demand and expectations.

The Simple church movement has as many names as it does expressions. Some call it “Organic” based on the Neil Cole book. Others call it the “House” church movement, because many of the churches gather in homes. Some people in the movement resist the house church title but prefer the classification of “Koinos Church.” Some have chosen to call it “Simple” due to its low threshold for organization. This is the term used in this project. One core value true for all Simple churches is that they have to have face-to-face relationships to be a church. If they cannot live in face-to-face community with everyone in the gathering, it is no longer a simple church.277

This movement is subtly but steadily rising in post-Christian America. Ed Stetzer found that 24.5 percent of Americans meet in small groups of twenty people or less as their primary time of prayer and Bible Study each week.278 George Barna estimated in 2006 that there were 20 million adults that attended a simple church weekly, and 43 million that did so monthly.279 Barna believes by the year 2025 that only up to 35 percent of Americans will be in large established churches as their prime spiritual place of gathering. He estimates that by 2025, up to 35 percent will be assembling in “alternative faith-based communities.”280 To translate: people are leaving the traditional

276 Ed Stetzer, Planting Missional Churches: Planting a Church that is Biblically Sound and Reaches People in Culture (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 170.

277 Stetzer, Planting Missional Churches, 170.

278 Ibid., 28-29.


for a simpler expression of faith. The numbers are advancing toward small and simple faith-based gatherings throughout America.

The post-Christendom environment shares many of the qualities of pre-Christian culture as it relates to Christianity’s acceptance in the mainstream. The early church met in homes (Acts 2:46); therefore, the simple church is meeting there as well. The simple church method is capitalizing on the similarities between pre- and post-Christendom as an effective approach for the climate of the new millennium.

Diversity reigns in the simple church movement. Mike Steele, Director of DAWN (Disciple a Whole Nation), identifies 150 networks that align with the simple church movement. Stetzer gives between five and eleven different streams of simple church networks or movements within the movement. The following table tries to summarize the major streams in the movement. Not all groups have a catalytic leader, but if they do, they are mentioned with a brief summary of their movement’s agenda. These five summaries are a compilation based on Towns and Stetzer’s list from their two books.

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281 Towns, Stetzer and Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church*, 36.
282 Ibid., 175-176.
Table 2.4. Simple Church Expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Catalytic Leader</th>
<th>Summary of Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separatist</td>
<td>Bill Gothard</td>
<td>Separatists insist on the 3 H’s: home schooling, home birth (without birth control) and home church. A highly legalistic model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>Gene Edwards</td>
<td>Rebellion against any structure, order, or leadership. They are the anti-establishment church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deeper Life</td>
<td>Watchmen Nee</td>
<td>Pursues a deeper quality of faith and life similar to a Quaker life style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Groups</td>
<td>C. Alan Martin and Sam Fife</td>
<td>Bible studies centered on issues or topics such as end-times, a charismatic doctrine, or other issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>Neil Cole and Alan Hirsch</td>
<td>Simply grew out of a response to God’s call for simpler church, not a reaction to or abandonment of the local church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of these movements, the spontaneous movement appears to be having the greatest influence on the post-Christendom. Most of the other examples of the simple church tend to isolate themselves through their extreme views.

As with all other reproduction methods, each one has its own strengths and weaknesses. Though a typical house church gathering lasts for about two hours with many of the components of worship that one would find in a larger gathering style church (prayer, Bible study, serving people, music, communion), there are some elements about the movement that could potentially weaken solid, doctrinal integrity and long-term reproducibility. 283 Towns points out, “Most house churches do not ask members to sign a doctrinal statement of faith, nor do they teach their beliefs in structured classes.” 284 Simple churches attempt to reduce the ethos, logos, and pathos of a church down to an acronym.

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283 Towns, Stetzer, and Bird, *Innovations in the Local Church*, 31.

284 Ibid., 39
A church reproduces itself through a “DNA” transfer. A church’s DNA, according to Cole, means the following: “D” equals Divine Truth, “N” stands for Nurturing Relationships, and “A” for Apostolic Mission. Cole’s model allows the churches to develop an identity, so long as there is a basic DNA agreement. As long as the church contains the basic DNA, it could call itself a church and reproduce itself into another organic church.

Many church planting leaders are excited about the simple church model as the model of the future. Others still question the long-term sustainability and reproducibility of simple churches. Stetzer says, “[The simple] church models have not been able to break through into the culture of lostness...” The Leadership Network study shows that evangelism ranks much lower than the personal value of spiritual growth for these churches. This type of ethos can create an inwardly focused church quickly and stifle viral church reproduction.

New churches, however they are formed, must be formed. The tool God has chosen to use to advance His Kingdom is His church. (Matt 16:13-20). Charles Chaney prophetically said in 1982, “America will not be won to Christ by existing churches, even if they should suddenly become vibrantly and evangelistically alive. Nor will the United States be won to Christ by establishing more churches like the vast majority of those we now have.” A new millennium calls for a new approach for the church. The new approach is addressing the new dawning of post-Christendom.

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289 Charles Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1982), 18.
Conclusion

The current milieu, which the church is waking up to in the twenty-first century, is causing tremendous disequilibrium and shock. The shock will either send many believing Christian communities to a slow but imminent death or it will awaken their souls to new possibilities and strategies. Leslie Newbigin was one of the first in the West to be awakened to this faith-altering shock called post-Christendom. This chapter concludes with the ominous words that should awaken every believer to the sober reality of post-Christendom. Newbigin as saying...

Ours is not as we once imagined a secular society; it is a pagan society and its paganism having been born out of the rejection of Christianity is far more resistant to the gospel than the pre-Christian paganism with which cross-cultural missions have been familiar. Here, surely, is the most challenging missionary frontier of our time...how can we be missionaries to this modern world, we who are ourselves part of this modern world?290

All believers should suit up as missionaries in this contemporary society as they feel the global shifts in a postmodern age with the Church suffering the rippling effect of the tsunami called post-Christendom. This reality will require the church to awaken, to re-tool, re-imagine, and reinvent the church with Christ-like, missional zeal.

CHAPTER 3
PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

“…the ‘disenchantment’ has occurred because church was never enchanting.”

Introduction

This study looked at recognized and well-established missional churches from coast to coast in North America. The goal of this study was to discover and unpack how the thriving metropolitan-based missional churches are engaging their own shifting cultures. The contemporary industrialized and informational world gives much evidence to a creeping drift away from a Christian frame of reference in societal norms, thinking, and ways of living. There is disenchantment with the institutional church. Understanding how missional churches in such a dynamic and hostile culture are maintaining a voice with ever-increasing disenfranchised, de-churched, unchurched, or never churched populations is vital to the future of Christianity in North America and the gospel’s advancement.

Research Subjects

This project’s goal was to select three missional churches from three distinct regions across North America. Their missional approaches may share some similarities and core values, yet their applications and structures may vary as vastly as the miles that

1 The last inquiry on the questionnaire used in this study for the interviewees was why organized Christianity turns people off. This was one reply given by a young attractive female who works as a Starbucks Barista and recently joined the membership or volunteer staff at Mosaic Church.
separate them. As stated earlier, a missional church is a dynamic transformative spiritual community of authentic Christ followers who intentionally serve their local communities through incarnational living, move beyond themselves to planting churches nationally, and mobilize globally to the under-resourced and unreached people with the gospel.

Under this definition, both case study churches can be defined as missional. Each church practices its faith and develops spiritual community contextualized to its respective culture. Diversity is one of the beautiful qualities of missional churches. No two contextualized churches are the same in presentation and methodology, yet their ethos and the questions they ask seem to be similar. The three analyzed churches came from different geographical locations. The three selected churches were well-established, catalytic missional churches while having historical ties to the Southern Baptist Convention. One church, Mosaic, was located in the epicenter for global trends—the West Coast. This church gathered in multiple site venues throughout metropolitan Los Angeles, California. The East Coast church, the Summit, borders the conservative southern Bible Belt region and the traditional established churches of the Northeast. The Summit is located in the high-tech Research Triangle of Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. The Summit was attempting to saturate its region with churches while at the same time intentionally reaching beyond its community into the world. The Middle America representative, “Southwest church,” is located in the Southwest region of the United States. This mega-church requested to remain anonymous in the study; therefore, it will be referred to as Southwest church. Though its ministry reaches far beyond the shores of America, it represents the Bible Belt constituency of North America. The research began in the conservative voting “red” states of the South with the Southwest church in January 2009.

All three churches have loose ties to the Southern Baptist Convention but a commitment to Southern Baptist doctrine, hold a high view of Scripture, and are well
established churches doing ministry from an externally focused approach. The following is a brief introduction to the three churches.

Southwest Church

Southwest church would only provide access to their members, staff, and overall inside workings of the church provided that it had complete anonymity. One week before the scheduled onsite visit with Southwest church, the Associate Pastor contacted me and said the Senior Pastor was no longer willing to participate in the study. It took time to instill confidence in the senior leadership that every possible action would be taken to hide their identity throughout the study. The primary motivation for their request was the delicate nature of their global work in security sensitive zones. He felt the potential exposure in a dissertation was too risky for their safety and the safety of the international believers.

Southwest church has an amazing presence in the metropolitan community in which it exists. It has helped to start churches in countries closed to Christianity and throughout the United States as well as within its own community. Several of its church plants are located only a few miles from their primary launching campus. I attended two of their assisted church plants within the region during the study. Both were located less than five miles from Southwest church. The work that Southwest church was engaging in locally spanned the entire socio-economic range. They had an ongoing ministry presence in an impoverished intercity community through health clinics, public school initiatives, and domestic makeovers. However, their primary ministry campus was in a sprawling suburban metropolitan area. They had a keen awareness of their local needs and community on a micro and macro level. They also had a thorough international strategy for missions that had been published. Multiple days were spent with the staff members and congregational members for interviews and observations.
Though a formal write up of this field study church is not included in this dissertation, a thorough review of their surveys was conducted for added perspective. The views their members expressed in the field study surveys were compared and contrasted with the two case study churches. Their opinions helped give a scientific response from missional churches. At times, the observations from Southwest church were referenced as a means of comparing and contrasting the expressions of the missional model.

*Mosaic*

Mosaic, the first case study church, has been studied, observed, and admired by many aspiring missional pastors. This project sought to go beyond the worship gatherings to understand how this neo-Southern Baptist church functions and impacts the unchurched community of the Los Angeles region (LA). It is a multiethnic church made up of people in their mainly in their 20’s, but it used to be more traditional.

Mosaic’s history was steeped in Southern Baptist denominational support and doctrine. The church began in 1943 when thirty-five white midwesterners and southerners established a gathering of believers at Carpenter’s Union Hall on Whittier Boulevard. Since 1943, the church has borne at least three different identities. They settled on the name, First Southern Baptist Church of East Los Angeles. It later became simply known as the Church on Brady. Under the leadership of its current pastor, Erwin McManus, they sold their church facilities at the Brady location with the three acres and intentionally became portable. When the church moved from its historic spot on Brady in East Los Angeles, the senior leadership and the name changed. Mosaic was born as a

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3 Ibid., 39-40.

4 Ibid., 40.
singles’ ministry in the Myan nightclub in downtown Los Angeles in 1997-98.\textsuperscript{5} It became a multi-site gathering for the Church on Brady. The transition brought some pain, loss, and disillusionment. However, the realignment and recasting of a new vision for this church was a welcome breath of fresh air in the Los Angeles community. The winds of the new, creative, missional church have not ceased to stir amongst Mosaic church.

Mosaic morphed from a largely homogenous church meeting on Brady Street to a multiethnic church gathering throughout the metropolitan area. This church’s successful journey from being a mission-minded church to becoming a holistic missional church in its post-Christian context was studied in this project. The church has experienced longevity with mission-minded leadership under its former pastor of twenty-five years and the present leadership.\textsuperscript{6} The church has only had two lead pastors in forty years.\textsuperscript{7} Observations were made in key leadership meetings as senior leaders worked with campus pastors, mission groups, and strategic leaders through ministry issues. Also, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the catalytic staff and core members within the church. The church has had a powerful influence on the evolution of churches throughout North America.\textsuperscript{8}

\textit{New York City Church}

I traveled to New York City in April 2009 for my second case study, but I found the church to be less than established. It was still dependent on subsidies from several key churches around the state and the Baptist convention to stay afloat. It was still

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 52.

\textsuperscript{6} Erwin McManus, \textit{An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God had in Mind} (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001), 5.

\textsuperscript{7} Marti, \textit{The Mosaic of Believers}, 39.

\textsuperscript{8} The church has a weekly attendance of over 3,000 throughout its multiple campus. Its budget is over $3 million annually.
struggling in new church plant mode. The North American Mission Board recommended the church to me. They considered it to be a model, missional church on the East coast. I was able to spend the weekend with some of the staff and meet some of their ministry leaders. I observed a couple of community initiatives they were doing in Manhattan. However, their insufficiency to finance their own ministries and their dependence on conventional backing, and outside volunteers were disqualifying factors for the continuance of the study. The pastor and leadership had the vision and direction but were currently lacking the human and financial resources. They lacked some of the characteristics that I was using in comparison with the field study and Mosaic church. I completed my time with them but knew that I would have to find another church on the East Coast to do a proper comparison.

**Summit Church**

The final missional church took time to procure. However, through persistent prayer and appealing to the Summit Church, they agreed to open themselves up for this project. Their congregants and pastoral team were interviewed and observed. The Summit was located in the Triangle Park area of Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina (RDU). It was a mega-church, much like Mosaic and Southwest church, with a mega vision of launching 1,000 churches in their city and around the world in the next forty years. Summit Church was formerly known as Homestead Heights Baptist Church and was established in 1961. In 2002, Homestead Heights Baptist Church called a young doctoral student from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as their pastor. Before J.D. Greear became their senior pastor, he was their college pastor. Homestead had undergone a massive downturn in attendance. However, Greear explained in his

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9 J. D. Greear, *A Pastor Defends His Multi-Site Church*, http://www.9marks.org/CC/article/0,PTID314526%7CCHID598014%7CCI1D2474264,00.html (accessed July 3, 2009). Greear’s goals will be further examined in the next chapter.
interview that the exodus from the church was actually a pruning process through which the interim pastor had led the church. It resulted in a solid gospel-centered core with which Greear could lead a church forward into the present. Prior to Greear’s pastorate, the church had a peak attendance of 600 but had dwindled to 400 members.

Upon assuming the pastorate, Greear’s first move was to organize the church for a re-launch under a new name and identity. The church has taken on a much younger demographic than its previous days as a traditional Baptist church. They, much like Mosaic’s renaming and new leadership, opted for selling their institutional campus and going portable to a local high school. At the time of this project, they had yet to develop the thirty-seven acres they had purchased for a future campus. At the time of this project, they had nine gatherings at three different locations, and as this study will reveal, the lack of a ministry campus for missional churches is not a hindrance to growth but may actually be a preferred method of doing ministry in a local community.\textsuperscript{10}

**Research Question and Hypothesis**

The key question in this research was to understand what strategies and approaches missional churches are employing to engage the unchurched with the gospel in a post-Christian culture. The following are the four hypotheses that shaped this study and research project:

1. Missional churches are committed to planting churches in order to engage the unchurched people in post-Christendom.
2. Missional churches in North America employ international mission principles, strategies, and practices.
3. Missional churches are led by entrepreneurial leaders.

\textsuperscript{10} Under Greear’s leadership the church has come to average nearly 3,000 in weekly attendance and has a $4 million annual ministry budget.
4. Missional churches thrive in post-Christendom. These hypotheses will be tested by the research in the following chapter.

**Research Method**

The problem that was addressed in the research was the ways and means selected missional churches are using to engage people not involved with a spiritual community in post-Christendom. This project was based on a qualitative approach using case study methodology to examine three missional churches in hopes of shedding light on the central problem in this research. A couple of different research instruments were used to help gather the information and process the findings. A questionnaire was the first instrument developed. The hypotheses guided the writing of the open-ended questions that were used in the following different contexts. The first context was focus groups. The focus groups collaborated on the questions through discussion groups that were assembled at the different churches. At times, due to the limitations of the participants to assemble for a 1-hour period, surveys were given to individuals who would take them home and complete them on their own and email them back. An attempt was made to create two separate focus groups among the members and to meet with core members and then a second group made up of newer members to the body. The questionnaire was also used with the pastoral staff in a collaborative discussion format.

The second instrument used was a survey built on the premise of the four hypotheses. The same participants who answered the questionnaire and participated in the focus groups also completed a total of fifty-six surveys. I felt that fifty-six surveys was sufficient for a qualitative study, especially with the other instruments and tools for analysis. These instruments were fundamental to obtaining a balanced view from the field study church and the two case study churches.

Another form of data collection came through on-site observations where face-to-face interactions helped to gain insight into the churches in their particular
contexts. Notes were made based on a subjective perspective. Ministry leaders gave me unhindered access. They were also available for follow-up conversations after the onsite visit. A sampling of each church’s regional campuses were visited to experience their extension work and to assess the diversity in which context each campus is seeking to minister. Staff meetings, strategic planning meetings, and worship services were attended. One-on-one interviews with key staff and lay leadership were conducted. Attendees of the congregations were spoken to as well. At the conclusion of the weekend, all of the interviews were compiled.

A triangulation of research was used when conducting the research and gathering data. Rudestam and Newton both advocate the value of triangulation when conducting qualitative research. They state, “Soliciting data from multiple and different sources as a means of cross-checking and corroborating evidence and illuminating a theme or theory” is pertinent to achieving triangulation.\(^{11}\) Triangulation was achieved in this study by first employing the objective open-ended questionnaire plus the subjective response survey. This allowed all the participants to express their own personal views of their church exposing their values against the hypothesis from different angles. The second dimension of triangulation was to examine statistical data provided from each church. The data helped to provide some objective scrutiny against the subjective opinions of the surveys and questionnaires. The third dimension was the interview process. When separating out the pastoral team from the members for questions and interviews, the different perspectives, positions, and motives behind the missional values and approaches of the churches were seen.

Research Instrument and Procedures

The process of arriving at the four hypotheses and research instruments emerged out of more than ten years of personal development and structured education. The hypotheses began to be formed as far back as my mission training and experience as a cross-cultural missionary starting in 1997. The clarity and conviction of the hypotheses were fleshed out further in 2001 through my experience as a church planter/pastor in North America’s emerging post-Christendom climate. However, my formal training through Dallas Theological Seminary and Fuller Theological Seminary that began six years ago formalized the hypotheses into an academic pursuit.

There were several influential sources for developing the hypotheses and instruments. The literature review played a large part in the development of the tools. About ten thousand pages have been read during this project on missions, missional, postmodernism, and post-Christendom.

Secondly, the majority of the doctoral seminars have related to cultural shifts and how to have a voice of influence within the emerging culture. A seminar with Professor Howard Hendricks, Communication in a Contemporary Culture, helped define the main thrust of this dissertation. This formal academic training has come from some of the leading thinkers and writers on the topic (Brian McLaren, Eddie Gibbs, Howard Hendricks, and Ray Anderson, to name a few). They contributed greatly to the emergence of the hypotheses. Additional conferences were attended during the past six years that provided face-to-face conversations with Leonard Sweet, Ed Stetzer, Reggie McNeal, George Hunter, Erwin McManus, and Alan Roxburgh. These are leading minds and writers on post-Christendom cultural shifts and the emerging church.

Personal observations and experiences as a church-planting pastor of a missional church contributed to the presuppositions and influenced the formulation of these instruments. Having spent four years in southern Africa with the International Mission Board, I acquired a set of skills in cultural analysis and strategic church planting
that have helped me be missional in my worldview and ministry practices. Consequently, when starting Grace Point Church in 2001, the missional perspective was in place when the church was launched. My formal doctoral research has helped hone Grace Point Church’s missional approach. The questionnaire and survey is in appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows how each question on the questionnaire relates to each hypothesis.

A pilot survey was distributed to leading professors and church members of Grace Point to help polish the validity and reliability of the instrument. Eddie Gibbs—a retired professor from Fuller Theological Seminary, Barry Jones—professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Jerry Wofford—adjunct professor at Dallas Theological Seminary were helpful in proofing the survey for errors and missing elements. Five random members of Grace Point Church were asked to also review and answer the survey regarding how they saw Grace Point to field test the instrument.

Despite all the proofing and correcting of the survey, one fault was overlooked during the pilot stage and only became known after the field study church had already completed it. This issue was that the low score of strongly disagreeing, number 1 on the scale, should have correlated with the most negative feelings, not the positive feeling. “Strongly agree” should have been number 5. I completed the field study church and consulted with Wofford, Jones, and Gibbs. They all confirmed this was true and had been an oversight by everyone. It was suggested since the field study church had been completed that the instrument be kept as is and the flaw be pointed out to each participant going forward while mentioning the error in the dissertation.

**Procedures for Collecting the Data**

One of the means of assuring triangulation in data collection was to meet with diverse sectors of people in each congregation. To start with, the senior pastors, executive pastors, campus pastors, church planters, and mission strategists within the churches were consulted. It seemed that the pastors must be the strongest carriers of the desired
missional ethos for the church to effectively “catch it.” The project questioned how well the pastors knew, embraced, and transferred their ethos. Many times, theory does not always get translated into the day-to-day routine of the church members; therefore, core members were met with separate from the pastoral leaders. An in-depth look at the membership was a valuable part of determining how deep the missional ethos ran once it was spoken and demonstrated by the pastors. Transferring this call from the pastoral team to all of the church members required saturation and total congruence in the missional DNA of spiritual community.

A part of this process included the attempt to meet with two focus groups in each congregation. Each focus group had a different makeup. The first group was designed for core members that had been members of the church for a year or longer. The following paragraph describes the criteria given to the executive pastors for selecting the “core” members:

**8-10 CORE MEMBERS FOCUS GROUP** I would like to interview some of the church’s “go to members” in a discussion format. These would be non-paid members of the (church name). I will be centering our discussion on the following questions…

1. How has the (church name) shaped how you live out your faith?
2. What are (church name) greatest contributions to your region?
3. In just a few words how would you describe (church name) to someone far from God?
4. What are (church name) greatest strengths/weaknesses? Etc, Etc. I will close out the time by having the focus group complete an anonymous survey. 

Asking the executive pastor to choose the members that best represented their church in this study afforded them the opportunity to find the members that best lived and emulated the ethos of the church. The second focus group contained members of the church who had been in the church for less than one year. It was a test to see how closely

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12 Excerpt from guidelines given to executive pastors that distinguished who could be in focus groups.
those who were new in the church aligned with the ethos and vision of the core members. The executive pastor was asked to arrange a focus group along the following criteria.

**8-10 NEW MEMBER FOCUS GROUPS** (new members to the (church name) within the past 12 month interviews) interviews could be done following Sunday’s morning worship time or anytime your assistant doesn’t have me scheduled to meet with someone on Thursday-Saturday. The following are the questions I will be asking.

1. How did you first learn about the (church name)?
2. Did you attend another church in the area before coming to the (church name)?
3. What are the (church name) greatest strengths/weaknesses? I will close out the time by having the focus group complete an anonymous questionnaire.

The focus groups provided the greatest look into the church from a non-paid personnel view. It gave a “grass roots view” and helped show how deep and wide the missional ethos ran in the congregation. It was also the most difficult to complete because of the difficulties arranging the logistical challenges and scheduling issues with the participants.

Other data collections for consideration in this project were legal documents and church historical data. The legal documents such as the constitutions and bylaws provided a window into the churches’ organizational structure, systems, and lines of accountability. The statistical questionnaire revealed how effective the church was at accomplishing its missional goals through statistics of the church. The field study church and two case study churches were asked to provide copies of their annual budgets as sources of financial funding, prioritization comparison. None of the churches gave a comprehensive church budget, but they did give enough of a budget for some broad stroke correlations.

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13 Excerpt from guidelines given to executive pastors that distinguished who could be in focus groups.

14 The statistical questionnaire is appendix 3.
Procedures for Analyzing the Data

Approximately twenty-three hours of interviews were recorded and over fifty surveys and questionnaires were brought together from key members and staff of the churches. The amount of data collected became a daunting task to navigate quickly. The sheer volume of data was paralyzing at one point to the degree that stopping the project and withdrawing from the doctoral program was considered. Once the decision was made to proceed, professors and professionals with experience in statistical and psychological analysis were consulted as outside coaches to help. Computer software was enlisted as a source of hope and help as well. Several software programs were brought into the process; they became lifesavers to the project. Each program offered help from its own processes offering diverse ways to assimilate the information.

Twenty plus hours of interviews were reduced to fifteen hours that were then transcribed into Word documents and loaded into Atlas.ti for categorizing and scrutinizing.\(^{15}\) The software helped with the coding and synchronization of information. It was used to sort through the hours of transcribed conversations, interviews, and questionnaires.

Survey analysis was a bit overwhelming as well. This was due to limited training in psychological analysis of sociological trends and human behavior assessment. For a first look at the surveys, Microsoft’s Access was used. However, Access did not provide the needed depth of analysis; therefore, a third software program was brought into the process. The information from Access was interfaced with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to go deeper in understanding the primary instrument for interviews.\(^{16}\) The software was valuable in keeping the project moving on to completion.

\(^{15}\) Atlas.ti is qualitative analysis software.

\(^{16}\) SPSS is a costly program commonly used in the corporate community to do market research that helps with predicting and anticipating human behavior based on answers to questions in a survey.
The correlation matrix within the software lens of SPSS compiled the surveys. Basically, all thirty-two answers to the questions on the survey were crossed against each other to see which ones correlated. Those questions that were answered similarly—they had larger correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficients ranged from negative 1 to 1 in score. A score of 1 meant the two variables correlated positively with one another, a negative 1 meant perfect negative, or opposite, correlation. A zero meant there was no correlation. Those questions that had the strongest correlations were highlighted. The diagnosis concentrated on correlations that ranged the highest and stood out above the rest. The third hypothesis had the greatest supporting responses according to correlations (strong entrepreneurial leaders being key factors in missional churches). The second hypothesis had the lowest number of correlations (missional churches employ international mission, principles, strategies and practices). A full discussion of each hypothesis will be the focus of the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

Having never embarked on a research project of this magnitude and with such limited training, I was overwhelmed many times. I tell everyone: I am a practitioner not an academic. This project forced me to a new level of appreciation for research, analysis, and writing. I was counseled by John Reed to take a three-month sabbatical but did not feel I could be away from the church that long, so I took two months. If everything had gone according to plan, two months would have been enough to gather the data and begin some initial analysis. But a solid third month or more was needed for writing.

This research has been enlightening and fulfilling, and the next chapter will show that all four hypotheses were tested and proven based on the limitation of the research. Some of the hypotheses were stronger than others yet all were true and provable. Triangulation was achieved by seeing the churches from different angles (member and leadership), the diversity of the instruments, and the statistical information
from the churches. Missional churches are successfully engaging the post-Christendom culture and are a viable response to postmodernism.
CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDY RESULTS

“Once the facts are clear the decisions jump out at you.”

Introduction
The Church is living in a day of decision. The changes that already established
cSUMUes will have to make are deep and may be painful for many. The adjustments that
cSUes have to make are multifaceted and involve layers of change. These decisions
determine their future. While many churches appear to refuse to decide to change, some
cSUes have stepped up and made the bold move to be the body of Christ in the
community. Churches are in socially hostile environments in western society, which were
once inclusive and hospitable to Christian thought and the established Church. Western
society used to be open to weaving Christian beliefs into the fabric of the community;
now communities are exclusive and hostile as they separate their values and social
acceptance from the church. North America is seeing a new cultural matrix emerge from
Christendom into post-Christendom. Making the necessary adjustments into a more
experiential and contextualized missional model from the protector-pastoral model is
vital to the church’s future. Start-up churches are becoming catalysts in ecclesiological
changes; however, a number of determined churches that have decades of history are
making the bold shift to a missional model with their younger sister churches. Pastor
Erwin McManus, or the “Cultural Architect” as he prefers to be called, led the 60-year-

old Church on Brady in East Los Angeles from being, in his words, a “missionary church…[where] missionaries were really idolized as a very unique category of people…from being a church that had missionaries to being a church on mission…shifting from missions to mission.”

This move from an institutionalized mission-minded church to a pioneering missional church crystallized Mosaic. The two case-study churches, Mosaic and the Summit, were well established churches with more than half of a century of history behind each of them, yet they have made the tough decisions and adjustments toward a missional model.

This chapter presents the case-study results as an attempt to prove the four hypotheses of missional churches and proposes that missional churches effectively engage a post-Christendom culture. The supporting data collected through interviews of members and pastors, multiple instruments (open-ended and closed-ended), on-site observations, and historical statistics have yielded proof that all four hypotheses are true and provable traits of the missional churches in this study. However, none of the four hypotheses are equally pronounced in each church. Some are more evident based on a number of factors. Nevertheless, all the qualities are evident in each missional church.

Of all the means for gathering data and researching each body, the survey was the most useful and consistent. It provided the greatest testing of the hypotheses in the investigative process. This instrument was most often used regardless of outside variables. On the survey, eight questions referred to each hypothesis. The answers to these questions provide the framework for this chapter. The stories, interviews, quotations, antidotal observations, and other data collected during this research support the survey’s revelations by being added to this chapter as well.

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2 Erwin McManus, interview during Leadership Advance, Pasadena, CA, January 24, 2009.
Mosaic and the Summit, the two case-study subjects, are the heart of this research project and the focus of this discussion. However, as a source of comparison and contrast, the findings from “Southwest” church will be added to the discussion as well. By including the “field study” church in this paper, a more full view of the diversity in the missional movement becomes clear. Each church’s intentional individuality in expression, methodology, and strategy is one of the most attractive and freeing qualities of the missional church environment. Both churches were less about being a trendy church and more about being a relevant church for its context.

**Missional Churches are Committed to Planting Churches in Order to Engage the Unchurched People in Post-Christendom**

Church reproduction has come increasingly into vogue among certain churches. This seems to be due to the entrepreneurial spirit of missional churches. There is a priority and commitment among missional churches to reproduce themselves. Developing believers into a spiritual community with the intention of mobilizing congregants back into their cultures is the goal of missional church planting. The hypothesis that missional churches start churches as an effort to engage the unchurched in their post-Christian communities was not difficult to establish. Church planting has become viral among some missional churches. The greater challenge was not in establishing the hypothesis but in defining it. Church planting has a plethora of expressions. A multi-site worship venue could be seen as a church plant or breaking a mega church down into smaller portions. As sure as missional churches plant churches, these new churches or gatherings are started in different ways. Regardless of the definitions of church planting and the ambiguity within church planting, missional churches start spiritual communities as a central part of their strategy. Eighty-nine percent of surveys in the case-study churches, including the field study church, said their church was so committed to starting churches that they had started one or more churches.
in the past two years. Nine of the ten pastors confirmed the history of starting churches when they were surveyed. Some of the Summit pastors had difficulty recounting the number of churches they had helped to start because there were so many. They settled on as many as fourteen churches that the Summit had been instrumental in helping to start over the past several years. J.D. Greear, the Senior Pastor at the Summit, pointed out that the first work of the Holy Spirit on the earth was to start a church, and the Summit drew their calling to start churches from this premise.

Starting churches should be a priority locally and globally in missional churches. Understanding what, how, and when a church is planted may be the most difficult element of unpacking this hypothesis because church planting in the twenty-first century is multifaceted and slippery. The strategy of church development and the methodology therein leaves a lot of room for discussion around the missional table.

_Church Planting Diversity and Angles_

Not all church planting strategies are equal for all missional churches. Some are more domestically oriented and others have more of an international emphasis. Some are 3-self church planters, and others are multi-site focused, while some are both. Some see multi-site as a catalytic move for launching 3-self churches. It seemed that the Summit and Southwest church were far more outspoken about their desire to start churches. Between 79 and 81 percent of those surveyed in these two churches strongly agreed that their church had an intentional plan for starting and developing new churches in their region. Mosaic scored significantly lower than that with only 40 percent strongly agreeing with the statement of having an intentional plan. A lead pastor at Mosaic mentioned that their emphasis was an organic process for starting churches or launching

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3 When conversing about church planting with the Summit they always include their international church plants as part of their conversations and statistics. They have truly embraced globalization of the local church.
campuses. They believed that their ministries started as grass roots’ movements initiated from within their alliance of churches or members (called “staff”). They wait for a core group of people to come to them with a desire to unite with the Mosaic Alliance before they entered into a church planting relationship. The Summit was different in that they had an on-site church planting training school working in partnership with North Carolina’s Baptist State Convention to intentionally raise up church planters.

One ironic element to the deliberate action of church planting was whether or not each church had an “intentional plan” in place. Ninety-two percent of the surveyed people at all churches either strongly agreed or agreed that their church had a plan in place to start churches. When talking to both the senior leadership of Mosaic and the Summit, they said there was not a written intentional plan and in fact chuckled at the question. The senior leadership saw the church planting effort as an organic uprising within their spiritual community that would be nurtured in their church’s ethos and included training and empowerment as a church plant. Missional churches create a climate to innovate or reproduce churches with efficiency and success. Congregants might think that church planting is a calculated move from the top, when in fact it is more of a move of the spirit within.

4 The Mosaic Alliance then requires an application and interview process that includes gift assessments; they check for educational and doctrinal alignment. They strongly want core values synergy before any type of partnership is ratified.

5 The state convention pays the church-planting director but works under the leadership and out of the offices at the Summit Church. He is in the process of developing curriculum and processes whereby to enlist people from within the church and without to enter into the church planting school and become church planters.

6 “Spirit” refers here to the ethos, however, not to exclude the calling and working of the Holy Spirit to quicken the heart in such an environment.
Local Mission Effort

Local church planting is a pivotal part of the strategy of the two case study churches. They have both helped to start gatherings, churches, and multi-site campuses on more than ten sites in their respective regions. When the field study church was included with their exclusive 3-self church planting approach, the numbers grew much higher, reinforcing the first hypothesis. Reproducing the church’s ethos was preeminent in the churches’ multiplication process. Mosaic pastors stated that reproducing the core values into its seven church plants and multi-sites was the highest aim in their reproduction paradigm. Before a church can call itself a sister church in the Mosaic Alliance an application process must be completed, scrutinized, and the core values of Mosaic must be proven to be in the fabric of their DNA. Mosaic had times when they were not as diligent at maintaining the integrity of this ethos with church plants, and they counted it a great lesson for future church plants and partnerships.

Like so much of western culture today, there are many varieties and expressions of life and faith, so there are many varieties and expressions of church planting and reproduction. Drilling down and finding how the case-study churches see and define church planting is a monumental task in itself. For example, the Summit had a published goal of starting 1,000 new churches in the next 40 years. They believed in launching and planting churches. However, some of the Summit pastors, when questioned whether their multi-site campuses would be factored into the count as part of their 1,000 new church plants, were uncertain due to the liminality of where church

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7 Mosaic’s core values: (1.) The Bible is God’s authoritative Word to us; (2.) Jesus is the only hope for a lost and broken world; (3.) The local church is God’s agent for redemptive change; (4.) Every Christian is called and gifted by God to serve the Body and seek the lost; (5.) The Church is called to whole earth evangelism.

8 J. D. Greear, A Pastor Defends His Multi-Site Church, http://www.9marks.org/CC/article/0,,PTID314526%7CCHID598014%7CCIID2474264,00.html (accessed July 3, 2009), 1.
planting was moving and how they would define a church plant. It seems the neo-church planting movement has introduced many layers and options to church reproduction.

This project was intended to explain what the irreducible minimum is to church reproduction for the target churches. It appeared to be the transference of the mother church’s DNA, ethos, and core values. A church’s core values are the central element of reproduction. Venue, worship style, leadership roles, and teaching pastors may vary, but a church’s ethos is the irreducible minimum for every church plant or launch.

The case study churches have sought to lower the threshold for church reproduction. For example, the Summit sought to define the minimum resources needed before starting campuses and churches by adopting and adapting the acronym IPOD (initial, preferred, optional, and discouraged). The IPOD list gives spiritual community goals for the future. The acronym identifies the minimal elements necessary before launching a new site or church. The “I” is for “initial items” that a new campus must have in order to exist as a new church or site. The “P” is for “preferred items” that a new campus wants to have but that are not necessary. The list is subjective as to what qualifies as an “I” or a “P.” The “O” category is for “optional items” that a church may need, but they can launch and operate for some time without. For example, a church can start without a full range of children and student ministries, but they may have a goal within the first twelve months of the launch to have a ministry in place and executed. The “D” are the “discouraged items. These items the church wants to guard against that could hinder the churches advancement.

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9 One campus pastor at the Summit distinguished launching churches as multi-site and planting churches from 3-self churches, but another campus pastor did not share the same designation.

10 I say neo-church planting because of the introduction of multi-site into the equation and with the upsurge in interest in church planting.
The IPOD list gives the church freedom and direction for starting churches with smaller threshold of requirements for launching rather than expecting and waiting for the ideal situation and circumstances before the Summit’s planters start a gathering of believers. The Summit strove to keep the “Initial” items to the basic necessities for starting a church. In other words, they attempted to lower the bar on what it takes to start a campus. The threshold is much lower to start multi-site venues. If a church has already established the name or “brand” in the community, then a new church site can start with less infrastructure, development, marketing, and overhead so long as it maintains the integrity of the original church’s ethos. The lower threshold facilitates a greater opportunity for a church planting movement to emerge.

The ambiguity in church reproduction complements the postmodern, fluid mindset. In postmodernism, there are few absolutes, and it seems to be the same way in a new millennium for church.

*Multi-Site Church Development*

One of the elements of the missional movement that is increasing across America is the multi-site model, as shared in chapter 2. A multi-site church is under one centralized leadership, name, infrastructure, and ethos expressing itself in multiple locations with diverse styles and ministries. It might have centralized logistics, administrations, and accountability while having localized and contextualized ministry and worship expressions. Missional churches prove that the unmentioned boundaries of facilities and zip codes are irrelevant hindrances to the gospel’s work. The agile nature of the missional church allows it to be more about movement than constricting structures or the institutional security built around facilities. I asked McManus, “When is a church in danger of institutionalization?” He replied with a question: “Does Grace Point Church
have a building?” Upon answering yes, he said without hesitation that Grace Point was on its way.\textsuperscript{11} Missional churches find great freedom to create and express worship in multiple contexts and venues and to conduct ministries outside the confines of a single church building. The Summit had three gathering locations for nine worship services. They did not own any of the facilities; they leased commercial buildings or declining churches. Mosaic was even more scattered within their venues. They had seven locations with nine worship gatherings weekly. Like the Summit, they did not own any of their worship facilities. Neither church even owned an office facility. Outside of the Summit owning land for future development, everything else was leased giving these churches fluidity and avoiding tendency toward institutionalization, according to McManus. McManus is not opposed to owning land and developing property, but he would see it as a center for the community to be open six days a week and closed on Sunday, keeping worship gatherings decentralized.

Being free from facilities allowed the case study churches to have freedom to venture into multiple locations and give presence into the community without being tied to one place. Consequently, they became launching churches rather than destination churches throughout their communities. There is a non-centralized ethos in the missional church that makes the church less about what happens inside the four walls of a meeting location and more about its faithful presence in the community.

The case study churches identified several benefits of the multi-site approach to church planting. First, it produces more leaders within the church. As some people rise up and leave to serve in different venues, it makes more space for new leaders to emerge in the vacancies. Potential leaders that might not have ever risen to the top are able to blossom within the multi-site church. Secondly, multi-site church plants allow those who

\textsuperscript{11} McManus went on to say that once a church has a building, they increase their chances for institutionalization by 90 percent.
have great pastoral skills but do not want to spend fifteen to twenty hours a week in message preparation to have more time for pastoring people without the time pressures of teaching every week. Also, multi-site is a greater tool for evangelism. For example, Mosaic members or volunteer staff as they prefer to be called, shared how they have friends who live far away from any of the seven campuses across the Los Angeles metro area. The church members were willing to drive thirty minutes to church but their unchurched friends were not. Therefore, having a closer campus created opportunities to invite unchurched friends to belong to a Christian community. Still another reason for the multi-site church as a missional approach is that it complements the church’s “going” ethos. Pastor Greear said that multi-sites are valuable to the missional ethos because “it gets [members] in the mindset of thinking much more missionally…we’re not just growing a Bible Six Flags Over Jesus…when the church sees people continually leaving, that’s the psyche change they need to have, whether that’s leaving for a site or that’s leaving for Afghanistan.” Members know and expect that at some point they may be called to go. Eighty percent of Mosaic and 71 percent of the Summit’s members and pastors stated they would be willing to go at some point and help start a new church.\textsuperscript{12} The multi-site model fosters a state of readiness that missional churches seek to create in their members’ worldview.

Both churches believed that the multi-site planting approach helped break up the mega church. It helped to keep a small church feel while still having the big church resources. There seems to be a lot of dissatisfaction with the mega church model among postmoderns, and postmoderns are the influencers of post-Christendom. One of the

\textsuperscript{12} The 71 percent figure is inclusive of pastors and members together. Only 42 percent of the members stated they would be willing to go and launch a new church according to the surveys. This shows a strong commitment throughout the pastoral staff for starting churches. Further study would have to be done with non-missional churches to compare the members of missional churches to non-missional churches for their willingness to go and launch churches. My hypothesis is that it would be less than 42 percent.
Summit’s pastors stated that the multi-site model takes a “jack hammer to the mega church” and makes the church more palatable. McManus points out: “Mega churches don’t require empowering lay people. They require a system that standardizes so that fewer people have to do everything in the decision-making process.” The mega church standardized top down leadership model runs counter-culture to the postmodern creative expressions. The multi-site church, however, allows more leaders to emerge, empowering them to be a part of the ebb and flow of the church community. Finally, the multi-site churches are incubators for 3-self church planting. Some might see it as a hindrance but Greear said, “I could point to success stories on this where it [multi-sites churches] actually facilitates church planting.”

Greear encouraged all his church sites to multiply themselves through additional campuses and through 3-self church planting. Multi-sites are a hybrid of maintaining a church’s identity and capitalizing on its established brand, yet allowing a local gathering to reach a new community that the sending church has not been able to penetrate. Each church has its own freedom to create and minister as it engages its culture, but they also share a rich bond with their sending church.

3-Self Church Development

A willingness to embrace a multifaceted church planting approach is necessary for the twenty-first century. This fluid and nimble approach to church planting definitions, methodology, and criteria is parallel to the relativistic worldview of postmodernism. When conducting the interviews with the churches it was frustrating when there was confusion about the meaning of church planting. Thus, the ambiguity of terms necessitates clearer definitions. My definition for a vibrant and viable independent church plant based on the research mentioned in the literature review is when a new

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13 Greear quotes from a pre-published study done by Ed Stetzer that 84 percent of mega churches with multiple campuses have planted new churches; only 74 percent of single-campus churches have planted new churches.
church is self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing. These are the qualities found in a 3-self church plant.

Mosaic had a rich history of 3-self church planting internationally. However, under McManus’ leadership there appeared to be less of an emphasis on 3-self church planting. Mosaic had the least amount of clarity in their definition for church planting. One participant member in the focus group interviews said Mosaic was more about “planting relationships” than planting churches. She said, “Mosaic views its members as the church so wherever we are, there the church shall be also.” This reductionist view of the church by a participating member could give some explanation for why the church scored low on valuing the concepts of 3-self church planting. When both churches were asked if their “church launches independent self sustaining churches,” only 15 percent of Mosaic members and pastors said they strongly agreed with the statement compared to 50 percent or higher at the Summit and Southwest churches.

The lack of clear definition for “church” at Mosaic consequently creates haziness for planting or launching churches. It also may result in Mosaic’s less aggressive approach to 3-self church planting. McManus said in a January 2009 Mosaic Alliance meeting that the way Mosaic approaches church planting is similar to the “Macedonia call.”14 As people came to Mosaic for help in church planting, they took a “flirty girl” approach to people, McManus said, by keeping those interested people at arm’s length before setting the pace and standards for the relationship.15 Once a relationship was established with a potential church planter, Mosaic stated the requirements and expectations for planters and launching cores; if the expectations were reached, they

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14 Acts 16:6-10: Paul had a vision in the night of a man requesting him to come to Macedonia and assist them. Paul did not initiate the relationship, but this man first summoned Paul to Macedonia.

15 “Flirty girl” seems to reference a posture of non-assertive yet willing to listen to potential church plant ideas.
would consider partnering with them in a church plant. They screened candidate churches through an application process involving interviews, reference checks, and an enrollment fee. A lead pastor at Mosaic said that they consulted franchise applications and processes when crafting their alliance application process. Beyond that, the greatest sign of initiative in church planting that the Mosaic leadership showed was that they looked across the Los Angeles region for “critical places in the region that we should have presence” and moved toward launching a site or plant in that region, according to McManus. Another result of Mosaic’s lesser emphasis on 3-self church planting was when the members and pastor were asked on the survey if they believed that sending out core members to help start new churches was the right thing to do. Only 45 percent said that they strongly agreed with this statement compared to the Summit’s 79 percent. Mosaic’s vision, definition, methodology, and prioritization of 3-self church planting were disheartening. Mosaic’s strategy did not show impressive reproduction results for 3-self church plants.

The Summit, on the other hand, showed an aggressive commitment to 3-self church planting. Greear coined the ubiquitous phrase that members and pastors alike kept quoting. He taught that the best way to bless a community is to start a church, because it is the only organization that can bless a community’s body, soul, and spirit. This philosophy keeps a 3-self planting mindset alive at the Summit. Ninety-three percent of the members knew the Summit had a dedicated staff member who trained and mobilized church planters. Their website listed four domestic 3-self church planting efforts with

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17 Mosaic Alliance leader could only point to one Mosaic-initiated church plant among their current Alliance membership when interviewed in January 2009.

18 Again, Mosaic was deficient in communicating this since only 15 percent of their members could with absolute assurance state they had a dedicated church planting staff member.
whom they were partnering along the Eastern seaboard. They assisted their church plants practically through short-term mission involvement and mentoring relationships with the pastoral team. Greear said all the church planters had his personal cell number and knew they could call him at anytime for support and counsel. The Summit also financially invested in each of their church plants. They gave upwards of $4,000 every month spread out strategically to their four start-up churches. The money incrementally decreased over five years to zero in an effort to move each church to be self-sustaining. Over the long run of a church’s start up, the Summit may contribute $50,000-$60,000 to each church plant. However, more had been given at times as the need warranted. In one location, they gave over $120,000 in support of a 3-self church plant.

Sizeable monies designated to church planting are a sure sign of a church’s ethos and its commitment to church planting. The table below shows the correlation, commitment, and variances to 3-self church planting and the budgets of the two case study churches. There appears to be a similarity between financial and personnel commitment to start churches compared to the church’s overall activities and commitment toward church planting.

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19 None of the church plants that they are supporting are located in the Raleigh-Durham (RDU) region. Presently, they are reaching the RDU area through multi-sites but do not intend on moving their multi-site beyond the RDU area. They will seek to establish 3-self churches in areas beyond RDU.
Table 4.1. Budget vs. 3-Self Church Planting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget vs. 3-Self Church Planting</th>
<th>Mosaic</th>
<th>The Summit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has dedicated church planting personnel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members willingness to help start churches(^\text{20})</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members who believe there is a need for new churches</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%(^\text{21})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church has intentional plan for church planting</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The church is willing to send core members to start churches</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have dedicated mission offerings</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Ministry Budget dedicated to church planting or missions efforts</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greear taught that the responsibility of church planting is placed squarely on the shoulders of the local church. He felt that to plant churches is not the job of the parachurch organizations, denominations or mission boards. The Summit was involved in diverse human need projects locally and globally, but the connection that all their works had was church development. For a mission project to be endorsed, it has to have a tie to church planting or development. Greear says, “A local church was God’s strategy…we have come to understand a local church was also God’s means of planting those churches.” This passion trickled down to church members. The core members that were interviewed in a focus group felt that the Summit church emphasis on church planting was healthy and biblically inspired. There was little doubt that church planting was pulsing through the veins of the church, staff, members, and gatherings.

**Global Mission Effort**

Though the focus of the research was to see how missional churches are engaging the unchurched of the post-Christendom, failing to mention both churches’ deep

\(^{20}\) All percentages of the responses are based on those who “strongly agree” with the statement when administering the survey instrument.

\(^{21}\) Further research needs to be done with other missional churches and non-missional churches to identify if the number of less than 1 out of 4 church members feels there is not that need for new churches is high or low. It seems low in this non-quantitative study.
and historical commitment to global missions would be incomplete and unjust. Both churches have fully embraced the globalization of the new millennium. Whether the global missions emphasis of the case-study churches was a cause or effect of the domestic missional ethos is hard to say; however, they did not limit their missional heart to the United States.

Mosaic’s global ministry started in their own backyard with the vast number of internationals living in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Minatrea cited McManus as having said that they were most effective in reaching the world by transforming Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{22} But the labor of Mosaic’s international influence reached well beyond Los Angeles. Three times a year, Mosaic sent some of their members to Ensenada, Mexico to be involved in mission efforts. The teams were involved in medical, teaching, business, construction, and art. These were five professional areas into which Mosaic categorized its members’ talents. They sought to mobilize their members on mission based on the domain in which they were gifted. Their international mission staff facilitator, Janet Sakuma said more than money, their greatest contribution to their mission work was their human resources. Along with Mexico, they had a concentrated work in Zambia with children affected by AIDS/HIV at a home and school they established in the capital city, Lusaka.

Beyond these short-term volunteer works, Mosaic helped mobilize fifty family units into worldwide ministries.\textsuperscript{23} This is comparable to the Summit’s involvement as well. Over the past seven years, the Summit helped place more than forty families internationally, yet they had as many as seventy additional units in the “pipeline” preparing to go internationally at the time of this research project. A number of members


\textsuperscript{23} A “unit” is equivalent to a family. Single men and women are considered one family unit.
boasted, though it was not substantiated, that Mosaic had more family units per-capita on international soil living and serving than any other Southern Baptist affiliated church.

One mutual value both Mosaic and the Summit shared was their sense of ownership and commitment to their members who lived on mission. They felt that they had a responsibility to train, stand with, and support those who went out from their church. The Summit approached the International Mission Board (IMB) a couple of years ago in an effort to reverse the role IMB plays in the mission process. The Summit wanted to assume the role of the sender, trainer, and advocate. This structure realigned IMB as a partner in the Summit’s calling and mission to plant churches globally. One of the ways the Summit sought to have greater connectedness to their families that they sent was by helping place them into church planting teams so they could begin praying and working together while still stateside. They believed forming them and training the teams while stateside increased the potential for success while living internationally. The IMB agreed to this approach and are seeking to replicate it throughout the Southern Baptist Convention of churches.

Mosaic showed a great sense of responsibility and care for their missionaries by caring for their families while they lived internationally. For example, they helped bring a couple back to the states for a six-month paid sabbatical. They helped with their counseling and personal needs. Once they were strong and rested, Mosaic helped send them back to the field to continue their ministry.

Church planting is multifaceted and brings with it new definitions and ideas. One thing is for sure, the expansion and development of the church into multiple gatherings and works is a common mark of a missional church. It was the first work of

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24 The culture of the greater Southern Baptist denomination has been that IMB does missions for the church and the church sends the IMB money to do it. The Summit believes it is responsible for starting churches but value the experience and expertise of IMB to add value and support to the work.
the Holy Spirit when coming to earth. Therefore, church planting is a revived work of the missional church as it advances forward locally and globally.

**Missional Churches in North America Employ International Mission Principles, Strategies, and Practices**

Missional churches own the perspective that they are living in the midst of a culture far from God, but this reality does not paralyze or frighten them. If anything, it motivates them. They desire desperately to be part of and identify with the culture in which they live. In contrast to missional churches, pastoral-conventional churches tend to be more opposed to their culture. They seek to be more isolated from the world while speaking out prophetically through their walls to the evils of the culture. Missional churches approach life and ministry as an international missionary would when living among an unreached people in a foreign country. Missionaries know the reality that they are entering a culture as a minority and might be received with hostility at times for their spiritual views; yet they have a passion to learn the language and worldview of those far from God within that culture. This passion coupled with compassion can earn them the right to speak into the culture in a spiritually transparent and transformative way. They embrace their minority status and know they are living, despite the hostility toward Christianity, to embed themselves into the culture through Christ-like living.

Missional churches should know how to build bridges across cultural barriers in hopes of engaging people through incarnational living. The ministries and message should be adapted and contextualized as they are communicated. It is not the interpretation that must change in the message but the presentation and application. The ministries and message are relevant to the culture yet rooted in sound, biblical theology.

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25 Though some emerging or missional churches feel the entire hermeneutic process must change, the case study church adapts the presentation and application while maintaining the core doctrine or interpretation of the message. Both case studies remain true to a Baptist doctrinal heritage.
that communicates to the heart of the target people consequently, linking the message to their lives. The ultimate aim of the missionary is to call his or her people to a changed life in Christ and to living on His mission. The case study churches embody the principles, strategies, and practices that inculturated missionaries employ around the world.

Engaging as a Practice

To intentionally reach out to and interface with a culture different from one’s worldview is the first step most missionaries must take. This is called engagement, which Jesus modeled in John 1:14 (see also Phil 2:5-8). Paul practiced engagement on his missionary journeys as well (Acts 17). To engage a people missionally is to know, speak the language of, and live among a people far from God. It is the intentional act of building bridges rather than barriers of isolation between believers and people outside a relationship with Jesus.

Pastoral-conventional churches tend to isolate from the world. Pastoral church focus tends to be more about safe gatherings, assimilation into the church and meetings on Sunday than involvement in the community throughout the week assimilating believers into the lost community for the sake of the gospel. The cries of the present “flock” are heard over the lostness of the separated flock. A pastoral church focuses on how to attract people into a church building one day a week. The church becomes a destination rather than a mission.

In missional churches, “church” happens beyond the four walls where the people far from God live. McManus said he wanted their weekend gatherings to “be an advertisement to what we do throughout the week.” The weekend worship services were not supposed to be the main attraction at Mosaic. Their life well lived during the week was the biggest story. An engaging church involves itself fully in the lives of the community. Seventy percent of Mosaic members, and 57 percent of the Summit members “regularly engage in spiritual conversations with the unchurched or people far from
God. Missional church members live as missionaries within their own culture engaging people. Both case study churches used this missionary call to reach across racial or ethnic boundaries to engage different cultures right where they lived. To reinforce this practice among congregants Mosaic no longer exalted and isolated international Christian workers by referring to them as “missionaries” while having a special commissioning service for them when they move out of Los Angeles to the foreign field. This approach did not seem to diminish Mosaic’s international efforts. According to former staff member Gerardo Marti, “Mosaic has sent an average of one adult per month for full-time overseas work in the last four years.” Instead, all Mosaic members were labeled and commissioned as missionaries. The physical address of their mission work was immaterial, but every member lived an engaging missional life wherever they found themselves.

Mosaic celebrated “missions” less, because they believed “mission” is the reason the church exists. The Summit still celebrated and commissioned their members when going out on mission. It was one of the ways Greear kept the mission passion alive and before the people. They allowed their church planters to speak in their worship gatherings, and they called out and celebrated the work of their missionaries locally and globally. One pastor at the Summit said that there was hardly a Sunday that went by that mission was not celebrated or mentioned in the worship gatherings. However, these

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26 The pastors were most apt to engage in these conversations (46.2 percent pastors vs. 20.9 percent members). This could be a sign that the pastors of missional churches set the example for their members.

27 Fifty-five percent of Mosaic members and 57 percent of the Summit’s members had a cross-cultural friendship. The pastors of these churches were leading this model with 76.8 percent of them having cross-cultural friendships.

28 They referenced their international missionaries as “cross-cultural workers” for security reasons and for the practical reason of wanting to identify all their members or staff as missionaries.

29 Gerardo Marti, A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in Multiethnic Church (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 54.
churches celebrated missions to different degrees. When completing the survey, only 35 percent of Mosaic’s members strongly agreed that their church “regularly emphasizes and celebrates members’ local and global missions involvement.” Meanwhile, 71 percent of Summit member strongly agreed with the statement. Southwest church scored the highest (86.4%) on this statement of their commitment to celebrate members on mission. Mission should be celebrated in missional churches as a strategic way to reinforce the value and priority of it.

Members of missional churches appear to be embracing this call to live on mission regardless of whether or not it is honored or celebrated. The philosophies of missional living has apparently been transferred to the church members, because when asked if the members considered themselves missionaries in their own society, 93 percent of them in all three churches either agreed or strongly agreed with this perspective. At Mosaic, 75 percent strongly agreed compared to 50 percent at the Summit. The best explanation for the 25 percent variance is that the Summit had a slightly older demographic. It seems that the older generation still sees conventional missionaries as a commission separate and elevated from themselves. The emerging generation’s more participative perspective of mission and social action could be the reason Mosaic scored the highest. The average age of an attendee at Mosaic from February 2002 to February 2003 was 26 years old.30 Based on anecdotal observation, the Summit average age was closer to the early or mid-30’s.31

30 Marti, A Mosaic of Believers, 55. Of visitors who attended during the same period, 90 percent of them were single with an average age of 24.

31 The Summit was unable to provide me with any hard statistics on this.
Intentional Engagement

Incarnational ministry involves a commitment from the people to engage and be a contributing part of the community. When the missional member adds value to the community, bridges are built for the gospel. When asked how they were engaging the community, the church members and pastors listed a variety of areas including but not limited to AIDS work, retirement homes, homeless shelters, working with Burmese refugees, tutoring underprivileged children, intercity poverty relief, remodeling local public schools, teaching English as a second language, men’s and women’s shelters, college ministries, Union Rescue Missions, and refurbishing homes. The members had a high level of involvement in their communities due in part to their pastors setting the pace for the members. McManus encouraged all his campus pastors to allow the members to “see them sweat” due to their involvement in ministry in people’s lives. The Summit’s members knew Pastor Greear had “his Starbucks” where he went to engage the baristas for Christ. When “Starbucks Melissa” started coming around the Summit gatherings, the staff had already heard stories of Greear’s engaging conversations with her. When she became a believer and joined the church, all those who knew of Greear’s intentional engagement tactics were rejoicing with him in her newfound Christian faith.

Structured Engagement

All the churches in this study placed a strong exclamation mark on their church’s investment in the community by encouraging personal, organic and church-structured initiatives. The human needs ministries gave a platform for engagement in the community. The Summit branded their community work, “Hope RDU.” The members had bumper stickers and t-shirts bearing the name and web address. Mosaic’s “Serve LA” work was actually birthed when a small group in the church saw a need to serve the under-resourced of the greater Los Angeles area. The ministry moved from a grass roots origin to a total Mosaic and community ministry initiative. Missional churches had a
bridge building, engaging practice and ethos through individual and corporate engagement within each context and community.

**Personal Engagement**

The lack of mixing their lives with unbelievers at the Summit Church was disturbing. Mosaic had a greater willingness to intertwine their day-to-day lives with unbelievers. When asked if the members of their respective churches mixed their non-Christian relationships with their spiritual community, both churches shared the same level of commitment to personal gospel sharing. However, they did not equally share the practice of bringing unbelievers into their spiritual community before their unbelieving friends became believers. Fifty percent of Mosaic’s congregants strongly agreed with this question compared to 14.3 percent of the Summit’s members.

**Table 4.2. Interfacing with People Far from God**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interfacing with people far from God</th>
<th>Mosaic</th>
<th>Summit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I intentionally and regularly engage in spiritual conversations with unchurched or people far from God</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Most of our members regularly mix their non-Christian relationships with people from their spiritual/church community.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eric Bryants, Navigator at Mosaic, had a mantra about how people could belong to their community before believing. This tension of “belonging before believing” shows that Mosaic seemed to take a more organic approach to engaging and welcoming outsiders when compared to the Summit. One strong element that McManus made clear in just about every meeting that I attended with him was the organic and less programmatic nature of every department of their church. He challenged the campus pastors to pour themselves into the people that “they are only going to pass on what you pass in.” The Summit, while engaging with unbelievers, may have been more
programmatic about it. Further internal studies are needed to draw a strong conclusion about this topic.

**Contextualization as a Strategy**

Contextualization is a concept often discussed among international missionaries as the ideal balance between syncretism and a disconnected gospel message and ministry. While the word “contextualization” is relatively new to missiology, within the past forty years it has taken root in missional conversation. Contextualization happens when the message, its symbols, expressions, art, practices, styles, worship, and teaching have been adapted and inculturated into a worldview without sacrificing the central message of the gospel. Missional churches have introduced contextualization strategies into their practices like the missionaries have been doing for years.

At the Summit, Greear seeks to understand and respond to culture by sifting through the various layers of culture. He counted three levels of culture: first, the general North American culture that exists throughout the states. The second level of culture is the popular culture largely handed down through the media and Hollywood. The third level is the local culture of the greater Raleigh-Durham (RDU) area. Greear dove into understanding and exploring this third level of culture through reading the local papers, blogs, and conversations with community leaders. He considered himself a “connoisseur” of his local context for ministry.

Mosaic’s senior leadership referenced websites and journals as an avenue for keeping their fingers on the pulse of Los Angeles. It seems that when a church is effectively engaging their community through multifaceted conversations, it is much easier to contextualize. This was evidenced in Mosaic’s intentional efforts to tap into the

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entertainment culture of southern California. Another example of Mosaic’s ability to contextualize ministries was how they drilled down to the micro details of the culture and adapted their ministries accordingly. Eric Bryant of Mosaic talked about how each campus shared a common, logistical base and support, but each campus was contextualized to its particular demographic. McManus compared Mosaic’s contextualization to the way a business expands through market and product research. The church must research its culture when establishing the way they do church. McManus discouraged churches outside of Mosaic from adopting across the board Mosaic’s approach to ministry. He said their methods often failed when other churches tried to “take our methodologies and our ways into new markets, unfamiliar markets…it doesn’t often connect.” Contextualization is the diligent strategy that must be identified and developed within each church.

When asking the case study churches if the “demographics, socioeconomic numbers and felt needs of our region strongly shaped how our church does ministry,” 100 percent of Mosaic respondents said they either agreed or strongly agreed compared to the Summit’s 78.6 percent. Some influences into this variance could be that Greear felt that RDU was still in the Bible Belt; consequently, the relics of a Christendom culture might have been present as compared to a Los Angeles metro church located in the epicenter of post-Christendom. Another reason for the variance given to contextualization is that Greear did not feel he needed to adjust his pastoring based on external cultural changes. When Greear was asked how pastoring has changed from Christendom to post-Christendom, he said his “job is primarily to the church” therefore it has not changed. His role to the community as an evangelist had changed; however he understood that post-Christendom ushered in a new cultural paradigm that required his relational and tactical adaptation.
Mosaic had at least two qualities in their ethos that gave evidence to the contextualized nature of their church. Change and entertainment were two driving forces that marked the southern California DNA and consequently, they marked Mosaic. First, Mosaic was about change; they embraced it and sought to shape it. McManus and Bryant both gave reference in separate interviews to the Innovator’s Scale of Adaptability as if the scale was a regular part of their conversation.

![Innovators Scale of Adaptability](image)

**Figure 4.1. Innovators Scale of Adaptability**

The scale shows the bell curve process of change from the earliest innovators to the skeptic who might be forced into the change. Mosaic felt that the discontinuous change in western culture requires the church to be in a constant state of innovation. Names, structures, roles of staff members, and approaches to ministry are all up for change for strategic reasons. Virtually nothing is sacred. The leadership at Mosaic considered their church to be one of the few churches in the nation that was in the top 2 percent of innovative contributors to post-Christendom. McManus asserted that most

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34 McManus bemoaned my eight years of pastoring one church in one location and said if he were at my church he would have ordered me to change roles. He stated change was good for the organization, and it would be good for me.
mega churches lived in the expansive middle or early majority when it came to change. The more traditional churches that pushed back on innovations and valued their established ways should be considered the “laggards” in the church arena.

The changing and adaptive nature of Mosaic kept it contextualized and a catalyst for change. One of Mosaic’s former staff members said of McManus:

For Erwin, maturity is found in missionary praxis. His theology paints a picture of a creative, catalytic God who calls out creative, catalytic leaders to nurture creative, catalytic teams in pursuit of global evangelization. His theology seeks to affirm the unique, creative contributions of individuals while also catalyzing leaders who will cultivate intentional communities that purposefully engage culture for the sake of mission. They will do whatever is necessary to serve people outside of the church and be relevant to the dominant culture.  

This ever-changing creative posture of Mosaic kept it relevant in what is probably one of the most progressive contexts in the world.

Mosaic proved to be a contextualized ministry by the way it structured itself based on the entertainment model of the Los Angeles influence. Michael Luo of the Los Angeles Downtown News estimates that Mosaic had the highest concentration of people from the entertainment industry than any other church in the Los Angeles area. Mosaic identified with the entertainment culture to shape how they functioned and organized ministry. They used “entrepreneurial groups” and structure projects in a format similar to that of the entertainment industry. McManus criticized the traditional church: “Most organizations flush out their innovators.” Mosaic, in contrast, made space for innovators to dream and expand.

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36 Micheal Luo, “A Church in a Nightclub,” Los Angeles Downtown News (July 1998): 12; Gerardo Marti, A Mosaic of Believers, 96. Some in the church estimated that as much as 30 percent of their attenders were in the entertainment business.

37 Marti, A Mosaic of Believers, 97.
The church influences the culture, but the culture also influences the church in a missional model. Contextualization means continuous adaptation in an ever-changing culture. To contextualize a ministry in the present but not scan the horizon of one’s own community for the future can force a ministry into irrelevance. Missional churches have their fingers on the pulse of their community and constantly adapt to cultural changes.

Transformational as a Principle

All missional churches want to see change in the essential elements of life while allowing for individual and cultural diversity. Pastoral-conventional churches might be able to clean up the shell of a man and promote legislation that seeks to maintain a culture of Christendom. Missional churches want authentic cultural and personal transformation that begins with individual lives and moves to culture. When lives are changed, culture will ultimately change.

To “fight against feeding the monster of encouraging consumerism” is a regular battle for Mosaic leaders, according to Bryant. Bryant stated in an interview that the invitation given every week to those who attend a gathering of Mosaic was not simply to join this church and be a member; it was to “be on staff…every week is an invitation to join the mission…mission is why the church exists.” Mission is why missional churches strive to mobilize every member to be missionaries in post-Christendom. Both case study churches were able to keep the mission alive by keeping it as a regular part of their church’s logos, ethos, and pathos.

The transformation is seen when people make mission part of their life. Three of ten Mosaic members and two of ten Summit members strongly agreed, “members are routinely bringing people to faith in Christ.” When those who simply agreed with the statement were factored in (55.5% Mosaic and 42.9% Summit), the commitment to evangelism and impact on a community was a primary goal of these missional churches.
Bryant, who grew up traditional Southern Baptist, said that he had “never been a part of a church that required more of people to follow Jesus…it’s what we can give to others. You can’t love God without loving other people.” Evangelistic outreach becomes less about counting baptisms or how many are in the church but how many changed lives are affecting lives for the good of humanity. In the Mosaic Alliance meeting, one pastor said he knew people that “chose to follow Jesus so that they could help other people discover peace and forgiveness and hope and the life of their dreams and then later found out they get to go to heaven…heaven was such an afterthought, it’s a bonus.” Transforming lives to the level of a person’s worldview is a core aim of missional churches.

There is little doubt in post-Christendom that the Church will have to see itself as the minority: sometimes unwelcome in the community and only marginally contributing to the welfare of its citizens. Bryant emphasized that a key to the transformation of community is to be “in the life” of the community. The practices, principles, and strategies of the missional church are the hardest to substantiate in part because there is no one central missiology in the mission’s curriculum; however, most missionaries would include in their missiology the minimum contextualization and incarnation with the final goal of transformation.

**Missional Churches are Led by Entrepreneurial Leaders**

Leadership is fundamental to any organization, business, movement, church, or philosophy. This reality could never be truer than when one is trying to navigate through tumultuous uncharted waters of an entire culture in motion. Leaders who are able to navigate the church successfully through the choppy waters of post-Christendom

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38 When asking the case study churches if their community saw them as an “important contributor to an improved quality of life,” only 30 percent of both churches strongly agreed.
encompass a special ability to see and craft a new future for the Christian movement. The leadership paradigm required to lead in this milieu is similar to the leadership paradigm required to lead the early church in the first century. The similarity is so pronounced that some authors call it the revitalization of an “apostolic” missional leader. The missional leader’s apostolicity is in the entrepreneurial roll of leading a mission movement to impact a culture that is hostile to its message. Therefore, the words “entrepreneurial” and “apostolic” will be used interchangeably from this point forward in this dissertation.

The attractive mega-church celebrity model form of a CEO style pastor was born in Christendom. While mega-churches continue to grow, post-Christendom missional leaders must be willing to change. There is less of a focus on gathering the masses for an event. Missional leaders want to move the masses through creatively energizing a mission movement that empowers and disperses the people back into the marketplace to live on mission. The hypothesis states and the research points to a post-Christendom model of missional leadership that is more apostolic and entrepreneurial in the way it pioneers a renewed Christian movement. Post-Christendom requires the vision, calling, and gifting of a first-century apostle and the creativity and ingenuity of twenty-first century entrepreneur.

Apostolic Leadership

Apostolic leadership is a classification in styles of leadership that links the twenty-first and first centuries together. Evidence to support the third hypothesis that entrepreneurial leaders lead missional churches came through in the research more than

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39 In contrast and comparison, first century “Christianity” was perceived as a new cult-like religion branching from Judaism. In the twenty-first century, Christianity is a relic of Christendom when the institutional church influences all of life. A purging of Christendom in the twenty-first century summons a truer biblical form of Christianity to emerge.
any of the other hypotheses. This hypothesis was validated across all research techniques employed: qualitative surveys, in-person interviews, and general observations.

Leveraging SPSS, the professional software mentioned in the previous chapter, survey data was analyzed through the creation of a correlation matrix for each question. Examining the correlation coefficients helped bring to the surface the relationships across the thirty-two survey questions that might otherwise be missed.

Questions in the survey were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with a score of 1 indicating, “Strongly agree” and a score of 5 indicating, “Strongly disagree.” Throughout the survey, questions that correlated to entrepreneurial leadership had the strongest relationships. Specifically, analysis of the correlation matrix revealed that the question with the strongest correlation to all other questions was, does “our senior pastor or leader have a clear and compelling vision for the direction of the church?” Additionally, the mean rating on this particular question across the field study and case study churches was 1.18, suggesting near unanimous agreement that all missional church senior pastors have a vision for the future of their churches that is both captivating and energizing. In fact, six of the eight questions from the survey that were tied to this hypothesis had mean scores of below two. In summary, strong entrepreneurial leadership is an irreplaceable quality of missional churches and their success in moving ahead on mission in the local context and global advancement. The quantitative and qualitative research from within churches that were studied support this conclusion.

Apostolic/Entrepreneurial Pastors

Both Greear and McManus are cultural architects and pastors for each of the case study churches. These men showed that despite their age difference of nearly fifteen years, the diverse cultural worldviews of the people they reached, and the diversity of their approaches to ministry, they both commanded a level of influence that drew multitudes to their vision. They both placed a high value on mobilizing their congregants
into their community and world for Christ. They shared some common ground as well. They both pastored historic Southern Baptist Churches that were elder led with a strong pastoral presence on the elder board, and they were the catalyst to create the change that led their churches to become strong missional bodies. Their churches’ members and staff recognized their leadership as a strong component of the church. Ninety-six percent of those surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that Greear had a strong and compelling vision for their church. One hundred percent of those surveyed said the same of McManus. When the members and fellow pastors of each church were asked about Greear’s or McManus’ greatest strength, the answers consistently reflected their lucid vision along with the ability to communicate the vision for the future of their respective church. This was affirmed consistently in nearly every interview for both leaders.

**Apostolic/Entrepreneurial Reproduction**

The reproduction of this entrepreneurial ethos is important to both churches; however, there is some variance as to how well each church fulfills this value. Based on the research, there appears to be more to gain from looking closely at Mosaic and their effectiveness to reproduce leaders. McManus said that Mosaic “tries to hire catalysts rather than pastors.” Mosaic saw a difference between the two. Mosaic valued and sought to groom entrepreneurial leaders within their spiritual community. McManus said that this aspect is an important distinction between Mosaic and other churches.

His idea of a catalyst would be close to the definition of an entrepreneurial leader who creates a future rather than chasing it. Mosaic is achieving this through their intense process of moving people from membership, to staff, to intern, to paid staff.

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40 McManus pastors in a far more progressive, entertainment driven, abstract cultural with a liberal worldview in Los Angeles, CA. Greear pastors in an progressive, technological, highly analytical and scholastic driven, scientific culture with relatively conservative values in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.
Everyone on their paid staff was first a volunteer in their church. For example, Eric Bryant, McManus’ lead navigator or executive pastor, was first a volunteer, then a student pastor, and then a college pastor before becoming a campus pastor and finally, executive pastor. The process was reinforced in the qualitative survey when 60 percent of Mosaic said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that Mosaic primarily hired staff from outside of the church. Mosaic did not hire from without: they did all their hiring from within their congregation once they moved them through a life-on-life organic discipleship process.

This practice of moving members to catalytic leaders backs up Mosaic’s sense of satisfaction when asked if they successfully moved new believers into leadership roles. Sixty-five percent of those surveyed at Mosaic felt they were successful in this task. The Summit was less satisfied with their ability to move their people into leadership. Only 43 percent of the Summit is satisfied with the ability to mobilize. A direct correlation may exist between the answers to questions 11 and 23. The Summit felt less successful at moving its new believers into ministry; at the same time, they outsourced their staff hires more than Mosaic did. The following graph shows the relation of each church’s effectiveness in reproducing leaders.

Table 4.3. Leadership Reproduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Reproduction</th>
<th>Mosaic</th>
<th>Summit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. We successfully move new believers into leadership roles.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. When hiring staff for our church, we typically hire people from outside our congregation to come in.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 The Summit’s response to question 11 was much lower than Mosaic’s at 43 percent.
The coefficient of these two questions shows a potential gap in a church’s effectiveness to disciple and reproduce leaders. Churches that raise up new believers can also produce future ministers within their church. A couple of singular observations were made during each case study that helped draw a picture of how each church approached staffing and leadership development differently.

One observation made while visiting the Summit Church was how they approached their volunteer staffing. The Summit had an intern moving from one member to the next asking people if they would be willing to serve in a volunteer ministry position for the next six months. The intern said they found it was easier to get commitments for a shorter period of time (6 months vs. 1 year commitments). This approach looked far more arbitrary and programmatic than the way Mosaic dealt with their staffing issue.

Mosaic, however, did not have a perfect volunteer ministry either, but the difference was the manner in which Mosaic dealt with its volunteer shortage. When Mosaic had a staffing need that was not being fulfilled, they shut the ministry down until sufficient members addressed the need. McManus challenged the campus pastors in staff meetings to keep the ministries alive and dynamic because once you leave something in a management mode you will lose all your volunteers. Mosaic’s approach seemed to keep the ownership of the ministries in the church members’ court, while the pastoral team encouraged and kept movement going in the ministry. The pastoral team’s role was to encourage each ministry as part of the Mosaic movement but not to prop up the ministry and keep it from falling.

These scores are based on the total responses for each church. When question 11 is broken down and the members and pastors are compared to one another, the pastors are far less convinced they are doing a good job in moving the new believers into ministry. Fifteen percent of pastors compared to 30 percent of the members felt they effectively move new believers into leadership.
Spontaneous Planning

Both missional case studies expressed a need to stay nimble in their churches’ methodologies and ministries. At the same time both churches made strong efforts to be intentional and anticipate the future as much as possible. Some people believe that McManus is a highly effective futurist in the Church. There is a certain degree of spontaneity in missional churches coupled with a certain degree of strategic planning that is required. This seems like intentional spontaneity.

Apostolic leadership goes beyond being and making entrepreneurial leaders. It also affects how one leads the spiritual community. Postmodernity advocates a deconstruction of most systems, institutions, and beliefs. Post-Christendom shares a similar mode of operation to deconstruct the systems, institutions, and beliefs expressed in religion and organized Christianity. Churches have appeared to seek to organize into unmovable and immutable systems, yet in the current liminality, the missional church allows planning and spontaneity to co-exist.

Both case study churches had spontaneous planners. They were spontaneous enough to recognize that change is discontinuous in culture; therefore, they too must be willing to change. The churches valued creativity; it complimented spontaneity. At the same time, both churches went to great efforts to strategically map a future and develop kingdom-minded methods and partnerships. They both share a common desire to have a global impact and expand God’s kingdom.

Creativity Narrative

Spontaneity is not the same as creativity, but in an environment like Mosaic where creativity was valued highly, new ideas were welcomed without restraint. McManus said they “reward creativity and breakthrough and innovation and leadership;” new ideas were welcomed. As discussed earlier, McManus believed, “Most organizations flush out their innovators” while Mosaic created a safe environment for them to flourish.
With 30 percent of Mosaic’s congregants being employed in the entertainment industry, creativity was naturally fostered, more so than in most churches. McManus said:

The reason most churches have a deficit of creativity is because creativity is not a part of their narrative. The reason they have a deficit of innovations is because innovation is not a part of their narrative. And they talk a lot about character as stability and consistency and information and knowledge of the Scriptures, and so everybody gets that narrative.

This commitment to a creative narrative is seen throughout everything Mosaic does. Eighty-five percent of Mosaic participants in the study strongly agree, and the remaining 15 percent agreed that Mosaic “encourages creativity and innovation in all aspects of worship, ministry, and missions.” Bryant accentuated this in this statement: “Everything we create needs a patent.”

The Summit did not score as high as Mosaic for creativity. Eighty-six percent of those surveyed from the Summit felt their church encouraged innovation and creativity. The Summit showed few creative elements in their worship. They had a wide variety of worship expressions based on the congregation. One worship gathering boasted of a 100-member choir while another campus had a single acoustic guitarist leading the worship. The levels of creativity were based more on the environment and the context of the community. The Raleigh-Durham area is progressive in technology and education yet holds to its cultural tradition; therefore, extreme spontaneity would not be valued as much as it might in Los Angeles.

A missional church’s goal is to strike a balance between intentionality and spontaneity. Long-range detailed plans of who, what, when, where, and how are not part of the entrepreneurial model for these missional churches. Both churches’ campus pastors were asked if they had multi-year plans, and their responses were identical: they laughed as if they did not. Not all the elements of the church are intentional (proactive); some are by necessity (reactive). One campus pastor at the Summit said the church was growing so rapidly they were having a hard time “getting their arms around the present.” They found
themselves being so spontaneous that they had to look in the rearview mirror and critique as they moved forward. Greear said the trajectory of the church had been forecasted over the next seven years but a rigid plan to get there did not exist.

**Big Possibilities**

While spontaneity and innovation are encouraged and fostered, missional churches should have a course of action and goals for the future. Mosaic was casting a vision to mobilize the staff or membership in 2009 to serve in twenty different global mission projects through their Awaken Humanity initiatives. Their greatest investment of resources was in the fourteen home orphanages built in Zambia to accommodate children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. They anticipated providing healthcare and education through this work.

The Summit’s pastor went public to say that he had a vision to lead the Summit to start 1,000 churches in the next forty years. When interviewing Greear about this huge church planting movement, they were asked about their progress. He compared the church planting approach to starting a business. Greear said:

…the way you need to see our church is like a new start-up company here in RDU and Triangle Park. When a new company starts, you spend the first several years in R & D [Research and Development]. You spend a lot of money on research and at the end of it you got nothing to show for it except for a product. Then you enter what they call the platform phrase and that’s where you spend a lot of money building the infrastructure so that you are ready for mass reproduction and then you got your expansion phrase. For about six years, we have been in the R & D phrase…Now what we’re doing is we’re raising money to build the platform stage.

The Summit was in the process of planting fourteen churches, but they were expecting to see a church planting movement born as they worked through their development and expansion phases. At the time of this project, the Summit averaged between 2,500 and 3,000 in attendance across their gatherings. Greear said the key was not to get discouraged if they did not see more than twenty church plants for some time.
Does Greear’s approach sound mechanical and programmatic? It is more intentional than Mosaic’s “Macedonian Call” approach to church planting. Yet, it fits the context of the high-tech culture of Raleigh-Durham. This is an example of the dichotomy between the two case studies in their different expressions of entrepreneurialism (Greear in North Carolina and McManus in California). There was a diversity of beauty in the two contextualized ministries. Contextualization led by entrepreneurial leaders is a piece of the magic and power of a missional church.

**Missional Churches Thrive in Post-Christendom**

Postmodernism is a worldview shift that has saturated Europe, and like a mighty wave, it is rushing ashore on the East and West coasts of America. Through various tributaries, postmodernism has been inching its way throughout the United States. Lee, a member of Mosaic for the past eight months, identified a couple of the tributaries when he said postmodernism “is the philosophy that is driven through media and taught in schools.” Postmodernism has left ideologies, institutions and even the metanarratives scrambling to survive in its wake.

One cataclysmic effect of the postmodern tsunami is the collateral damage to the organized Church. Due in part to the encroachment of postmodernism, the plummet of Christendom has occurred. Consequently, it is impossible to separate the relationship of postmodernism to post-Christendom; there is a cause and effect relationship between them. The postmodern philosophies of pluralism and relativism have helped supplant the institutionalized dogmas of Christendom. Van, a 20-something member at Mosaic, spoke to the cause and effect relationship between postmodernism and post-Christendom:

…people have steered away from organized Christianity because it has become exactly that: organized. Real life and real humanity are not organized. We are broken people, broken Christians even, and in trying to pretend that we are anything but what we truly are, we are producing a negative view of what it
means to be marked by faith and moved by love. They should call it messy Christianity.\textsuperscript{43}

The emerging postmodernist knows that the institutional faith of Christendom has not been representative of real life, real faith, and real people – maybe even real Christianity. It was energizing to be able to see in-depth thriving churches mobilizing their members to engage and evangelize people who have a postmodern worldview.

Postmodernism is elusive and difficult to grasp with its amorphous inconsistency and the overabundance of dialects and definitions.\textsuperscript{44} It was hard to make sure the same definition for postmodernism and its sister terms, emerging and missional, were understood when conducting interviews or talking with people. For speed and ease of discussion, I reduced my definitions down to two components of postmodernism when interviewing participants: relativism (no truth is absolute), and pluralism (all faiths are equal). When the participants were asked if relativism and pluralism were expressed in their local communities, they firmly agreed. Again, surveys were the primary tool to establish that the case study churches were reaching out to the postmodern community.

The table below shows that the Summit and Mosaic were making a meaningful impact on the emerging post-Christendom generation. However, there were still variances between these two focus churches.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Church & Percentage of Members with Negative Opinions of Organized Christianity \\
\hline
Mosaic & 85% \\
Summit & 28.6% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Percentage of Members with Negative Opinions of Organized Christianity}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{43} Eighty-five percent of Mosaic’s members have friends with “negative opinions of organized Christianity” compared to 28.6 percent at the Summit. This is not a small gap. It needs further study.

Table 4.4. The Missional Response to Post-Christendom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Missional Response to Post-Christendom</th>
<th>Mosaic</th>
<th>Summit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. I know a growing number of people whose religious beliefs are more tolerant of differing faiths and believe all faiths are equal.</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Our church has an increasing attendance of people in their 20’s and 30’s.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. People attend our church that has adopted a faith other than Christianity (e.g. Buddhism, Islam, etc.).</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I have friends who are not followers of Christ that also have negative opinions of organized Christianity.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. A church’s affiliation with a denomination helps it grow in today’s society.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Living in Post-Christendom

The reality of postmodern thinking leads to an ever-shrinking Christian worldview. Missional churches do not deny or curse this encroachment but tend to embrace it for its opportunity. The Mayan Campus Pastor for Mosaic said, “Pluralism is everywhere. We want to live in pluralism. We want to lead people to Jesus and let Jesus peel the other stuff off.” The nine key staff members gave this fresh look on the postmodern culture and the role of Mosaic in February 2009. Eric Bryant said, “People would say, ‘Oh, you’re a postmodern church.’ We’re not postmodern; we’re reaching postmodern. But we’re not anti-postmodern, because that represents the people we’re trying to reach. But we’re not modern, either…so we’re followers of Jesus.” Missional churches have learned to co-exist with mutual respect within a postmodern world. In a missional model, relationships are more important to the church than institutions.

45 In society, denominations are the largest expression of the church’s move toward institutionalization. Denominations are having a hard time establishing a new identity in post-Christendom. There is little doubt that the current structure of denominations does not complement missional churches based on the finding from the case study churches and field study. Further investigation is needed as to the changes denominations will need to make to increase their value and relevancy for the present and future.
The staff and members of both case study churches show ever-increasing friendships with relativists and pluralists. Mosaic, however, was more emphatic in their relationship with postmodernists than the Summit. Forty-two percent of Mosaic members are emphatic about having a growing number of relationships with postmodernists compared to only 14.3 percent from the Summit, and when comparing the members to the pastors, it seemed that the missional pastors were 24 percent more likely to have increasing relationship with postmodernists than their members. This is an encouraging find. The pastors are setting the pace for missional engagement in the world. Being in relationship with postmoderns is a priceless component to seeing life-change in the emerging culture.

Along with the deconstruction of Christendom as an institutional, organized faith, opportunities abound for the church in post-Christendom. The Summit and Mosaic capitalized on these opportunities. The emerging generations seem to be activists looking for a cause. Bryant said that the emerging generation is growing up wanting to be activists, yet they lack a cause. Missional churches demonstrate a value-added cause. They capitalize on this generation’s activist spirit and passion by seeking to channel them into the Christian movement. Whether it is the environmental or spiritual development of the world through communities, catalysts form and lead ministries. Statement 13 on the survey states, “We expect our members to live and do missions globally and locally.” Eighty percent of Mosaic members strongly felt this to be a part of their ethos, compared to 78.6 percent at the Summit. Mobilizing members is part of engaging the culture at missional churches. Campus pastors at the Summit said they believed, based on Ephesians, that the church “is the most effective agent and is God’s agent for changing

46 The church members know of the evangelistic zeal of their pastors because in statement 27 of the survey 70 percent of members said they knew their senior leadership were bringing people to faith in Christ.
the world...[They] communicate that a couple of times to a few young college students, and they are all for it” (Eph 3:10). Greear challenged every college student to spend the first couple of years out of college serving internationally on mission. The response and mobilization of the emerging generation is a powerful opportunity of living in post-Christendom.

*Communicating in Post-Christendom*

Finding a voice in a culture that is increasingly pushing the Christian faith to the side is a precarious process. Communicators and churches must work harder than ever to bridge the divide in post-Christendom. The correlations’ matrix used to process the surveys points to a strong association between the element of communicating in a post-Christendom and the leader who is doing the communicating. The case study churches had different styles, yet they both had a strong appeal to the younger generations. When asked to rate the statement, “I am confident that I can bring a friend to our church who is not a church-goer and they will find the message relevant, clear, biblical, and convictional,” 85 percent of Mosaic and 64 percent of the Summit participants strongly felt they could. One explanation for the twenty-point variance between the two responses may be the style, approach, and philosophy of roles in preaching and pastoring. Their varying approaches showed that a church can be missional and engaging for postmoderns yet have diverse views and practices. The two preaching styles will be identified based on personal observation and conversations with Greear and McManus and church members.

*Engaging Artistic Narrative*

McManus had an artistic flair to his teaching. His style is highly conversational and full of metaphors. His ability to be creative yet soft-spoken and casual makes him an artistic communicator. He does not typically hold to an exegetical approach. Rather, he is more topical and surveys Scripture to support his thesis.
There was little doubt that McManus could connect with emerging churches, but he also demonstrated that he could connect with unchurched or newly churched people when I took people with both backgrounds to a Mosaic worship gathering. I took a retired mixed-martial arts fighter who had just been released from jail and had become a believer in Grace Point Church along with his long-time outspoken lesbian scriptwriter friend from West Hollywood to Mosaic. The scriptwriter said she had not been in church since she left Catholicism twenty years before. We attended the Beverly Hills worship gathering.

In our weekend together, many spiritual conversations arose, and I invited her to join me on Sunday morning for a Mosaic service. We sat on the second row at the Beverly Hills High School auditorium. The place was filled to capacity. Following the gathering, we talked about the service. I took advantage of the relationship and event to explore what the two postmodernists felt about Mosaic. The informal interview was a perfect sampling for considering how an unchurched person might view the service: she was moved. Tears began to flow as she expressed sincere interest in talking about and exploring the Christian faith further. She planned on returning to Mosaic even after my friend and I returned to Arkansas.

The entire service was an EPIC (Experiential, Participatory, Image-rich, and Communal) worship experience geared for the emerging generation. The service included drama, message, monologue, dance, music, congregational participation, and participative confessionals. The entire collective worship experience captivated this scriptwriter to a spiritual experience she said she had never felt before in church. The creative and participative planning was effective in this small study group to prove that Mosaic had a voice into the heart of the postmodernist.

A thought-provoking critique came up in an interview with a member at Mosaic when assessing McManus’ teaching approach. She strongly complemented McManus’ creative and evocative style of communicating but questioned in the midst of the creative appeal if the messages stayed in the abstract too long and missed connecting with the life-changing elements. She said,

I’ve found that while his speaking is eloquent and evocative, it too can create a chasm between himself and his audience. I may get inspired with all the pretty parallel language, but how to apply it is difficult. I understand and believe in aiming for the stars in how we live, but sometimes the idealism can cloud out reality and further separate him from his audience.

McManus was a strong communicator both in the printed word and as a public orator. He spoke and wrote with conviction and was able to inspire movement and life change. He did not use a verse-by-verse exposition as is traditional in many Baptist churches. He was far more passionate about connecting with the unchurched than the churched. He felt that the church should assimilate the Christian faith and grow in their faith as they learn to think beyond themselves. His aim was to connect with the unchurched and bring them to faith.

**Evangelistic Equipping Apologist**

While McManus found his voice most effective for speaking directly to the unchurched, Greear used his highly trained and evangelistic voice in and outside the church to the intellectual postmodern. Both Greear and McManus were communicators with passionate convictions that inspired movement but they used two different styles. Greear said he looks at his “job as primarily to the church,” not to the community. He stated that he was an evangelist to the post-Christendom community. When it came to planning and preaching his messages, Greear saw no difference between preaching to the churched and unchurched. He believed the value of a “gospel-centered” message is the key to all of life whether one is a Christian or not. He stated that people are people, and
we all have the same problems and issues. People have wrongly developed a “dichotomy between depth and relevance,” Greear said. He firmly felt that the gospel alone will bring immediate and organic change in the heart of mankind.48

Greear’s style could be compared to that of John Piper, Tim Keller, or Mark Driscoll. During the interview with Greear, he referenced all three of these pastors as people he read and interacted with regularly. The missional model that Greear adopted is a high view of Scripture/doctrine (orthodoxy) and a lower view of creativity/relevance. Greear tended to favor the approach that biblical preaching is where one starts, and creative elements fit in second. McManus did just the opposite. Greear’s approach appeared to be more about equipping the church to be the missional agents in their culture, while McManus’ approach appeared to be more about being relevant, and as the Christian community crossed with those beyond the faith, transformation would happen through the worship experience and the ongoing relationship with Mosaic members. Both seemed effective in their own context. To summarize the two varying ways of preaching, Greear started with the Bible and took it to the people while McManus started with the people and took them to the Bible.

Reaching Postmodernist

The missional churches showed great diversity in their approaches to ministry, yet both missional churches tapped into their respective cultures to effectively reach the emerging unchurched generation. Both churches were growing in attendance of 20 and 30 year olds (Mosaic 85% versus 78.6% at the Summit). A friendly environment for exploring the faith is important to reaching postmodernists. One question missional

48 I had difficulty understanding a simple definition of what Greear meant by gospel-centered messages.
churches are asking is how well their historic denomination affiliation helps them to reach the postmodernist.

Environmentally Friendly

When the churches were asked if they felt their spiritual community provided a safe atmosphere for inviting people outside the faith to “process their faith without the pressure of conforming to the church’s doctrine,” Mosaic answered strongly with 75 percent agreement while at the Summit only 35.7 percent agreed. At Mosaic, there was a strong emphasis on “belonging before believing.” This meant that a member could be serving in the church and considered a “member” of the church but not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus. Bryant gave the example that a homosexual person could come and “belong” and serve. They could not be “over” someone spiritually, but they could belong to the community in every other way as a practicing homosexual. Bryant speculated that 20-30 percent of their weekly attendance was those outside the faith. When asking the Summit if a non-member could serve as an usher or greeter without believing, the answer was no. Conversion and church membership was a prerequisite to being able to serve.

When talking about what other faiths were represented in Mosaic on a weekly basis, the campus pastors could not give a count, because there were so many. One pastor spoke about a Hindu man who was attending their gatherings and exploring the faith. He reported that the man had taken another step closer to Christ in that weekend’s service. The pastor encouraged him not to simply pray a prayer and to receive Jesus in his heart until he was ready to realize there was only one living God. This kind of story was not an uncommon narrative at Mosaic. Forty-five percent of the surveyed strongly believed that people attended their gatherings with faiths other than Christianity (e.g. Buddhism, Islam,
etc). For the Hindu man, the journey was in the friendly environment. The pluralism of postmodernity forces the missional church to enlarge the conversation if it hopes to have a voice in post-Christendom.

**Denomination Disloyalty**

Denominations are large, visible expressions of the Church’s move toward institutionalization and Christendom. Denominations are having a hard time establishing a new identity in post-Christendom. It is questionable if the current structure of denominations will complement a missional church’s nimble, autonomous, and networking approach to mission. There was only one question on the survey that dealt with denominations since the case study and field study churches had historical ties to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). At the same time, all the churches took steps to distance themselves from their historic denomination. The survey’s question was an attempt to see the role denominations will play in the twenty-first century in the engagement of the postmodernist. The message was that denominational affiliation does not appear to help the missional church move forward according to the members and pastors.

**Table 4.5. Denomination Affiliation Value**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination affiliation value</th>
<th>Mosaic</th>
<th>Summit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. A church’s affiliation with a denomination help it grow in today’s society</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For some, the full verdict is still out on the value of denominations, but according to the answers to this question from these two missional case studies, it showed a move away

49 Only 7 percent of the Summit participants strongly agreed that they had people attending their gatherings with faiths other than Christianity.
from relying on the denomination to help accomplish their mission. Curt, from the Summit, said, “You’re no longer able to say, ‘I’m Southern Baptist’ and be proud of it.” How these churches designate their mission monies is congruent with the value they place on denominations. The table below shows the amount of money given to SBC mission causes from the operating budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBC Mission Causes</th>
<th>SBC Mission Gift</th>
<th>Total Operating Budget</th>
<th>% of Operating Budget to SBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$3,400,000</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>$17,325</td>
<td>$4,003,500</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both churches gave much more to outreach through their own community, global works, and other agencies. Both churches had specific mission offerings during the year to fund their own global advancement and agencies such as the International Mission Board and Campus Crusade. They had become dully aligned instead of exclusively aligned with their denomination. The statistical data and survey shows that the SBC played a small part in the total mission approach of these churches.

At the time of the interview with Greear, he had been asked to join a list of established, denominational leaders to help shape the future course of the SBC. He reserved his comments if the SBC would produce needed denominational changes to reestablish their relevance for the future. In short, he said denominations make great para-church organizations to help churches fulfill the mission. Denominations were never meant to take the place of and do the job the church was commissioned to do. Greear said, “The convention is a tool that a local church is supposed to use to do the ministry.” He expressed that over the years the denominations had assumed the role and place of the church in mission, and in his opinion, he considered that a bad para-church model.
When talking to the pastors and leaders of Mosaic, they removed themselves even further from SBC ties. Hank, a campus pastor, pointed out that if Mosaic was Googled, it would be obvious that Mosaic declared itself a “non-denominational church.” Most of the members did not even consider themselves a part of the SBC. It was not part of the conversation at Mosaic. When brought up in the interview, it was quickly dismissed as an irrelevant subject. They partnered with the International Mission Board (an agency of the SBC) to send out fifty of their eighty family units, according to Bryant. But the SBC as a whole was not something they looked to for help in their work. New denominational churches seemed to be more about affiliations and networking than sole alignment from the top down with any denomination.

To summarize the roles of the two case study churches in post-Christendom, Mosaic had more of an attractional missional model, while the Summit had more of an equipping missional model. A Mosaic gathering was a place to bring postmodern friends, and they would find friends ready to process with them as they journeyed towards a faith relationship with Christ no matter how long it took. The Summit’s equipping missional approach enabled believers to come for apologetic equipping for life and personal engagement. The intellectuals of the three major universities in the area could also come for an intellectual challenge; Greear was a strong, articulate communicator. At both churches, worship gatherings were a huge part of their strategy, but equal to or more than that was their commitment to see their members mobilized and impacting their cultures for Christ.


51 The Summit’s main campus is located within ten minutes of North Carolina State University, Duke University and the University of North Carolina.
Conclusion

Missional churches may be the brightest hope for the church in post-Christendom. When one considers the numerical growth, the global mobilization, and the intentional and incarnational involvement in the community, it brings a hope for the church and the twenty-first century in the western world.

No two missional churches should be the same. It goes against the nature of missional. It is not the goal of the missional church to create carbon copies of themselves in other communities. The missional church is built on the back of the Missio Dei—the mission of God among humanity. Finding where God is at work in a particular culture and then designing the teaching, worship, and ministries of the church for the community in the act of contextualization. Missional churches are contextualized within their communities. Each church is unique to whatever context it finds itself. The diversity of expression, presentation, and organization is seen boldly in the two diverse expressions of the missional church. Yet, despite the extremes of diversity between the Summit and Mosaic, one of the pastors asked if I would leverage my relationship with the other pastor to influence them to come and speak at their church. There is unity in the midst of diversity.

To use one of McManus’ metaphors regarding churches today, churches are cruising on the open sea. Many attractional mega-churches are like cruise ships that allow space on their decks for everyone to lie around and get tans. Some mega-churches discover mission and convert their cruise ships into battleships and from their massive ship, they try to affect change around the world. McManus likened Mosaic instead to speedboats: thousands of them moving together. At times, it is harder to lead speedboats and keep them moving in the same direction, but that is okay in postmodernity. They are agile, fast, able to adjust and allow for individual expression and impact depending on the needs of their culture. The flexibility and adaptability of the speedboat allows the missional church expression to adjust to the context of their work and the needs of their
people. The case study churches are influencing and impacting post-Christendom. The missional church is the model of Scripture and for the coming age.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Leaders of the future must grow and flex with a changing context. They recognize the need to respond rapidly to the unexpected...Leaders of growing organizations are committed to lifelong learning. This in turn results in a refreshing humility; rather than simply make statements, they admit the limitations of their knowledge and continually ask questions.¹

Introduction

These six-years as a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) student have been an exhilarating process of learning and discovery. This course of study has been the most rewarding and enlightening program that I have formally pursued. The D.Min. program is for ministers living in the trenches, and the necessity to continue learning is reinforced by the results of this paper. Postmodernism has brought with it liminality and discontinuous change to Western society; it has forced the Church into post-Christendom and a re-imagination process. Therefore, believers must continue learning and becoming. Believers must consider a more missional approach with the aim to rediscover and reestablish its voice in the ever-shifting milieu.

Interpretation of Results and Conclusions

The goal of this project was to understand how missional churches are strategically engaging the post-Christendom. Aspirational, missional churches were selected that had a history of sound teaching based on a high view of Scriptures; these

churches believed there was a single rather than a plural faith (Jude 3). At the same time, these churches have learned to adapt their methodology for their dynamic and complex post-Christendom world. The first chapter stated my ambition as a pastor and student to understand the Western spiritual anti-institutional views on the Church while seeing how catalytic churches were responding to such hostile environments. I sought to establish that the missional model was not the latest trendy form of church for the twenty-first century, but rather, it is the lifestyle that Jesus modeled in the first century. The start of this paper was built on the doctrinal teachings of Jesus and His admission into time and space. His incarnation gave His disciples the archetype for all disciples of Christ to follow. He came as God in the flesh and lived as a missionary incarnationally within the culture of his time. The missional movement is not so much new and innovative as it is biblical. The institutionalization of the Church in Christendom caused the missional ethos to be lost through a mission drift.

The literature written on topics such as “post-Christendom,” “postmodernism,” “emerging,” and “missional” are monumental. Chapter 2 worked to gain a grasp of key terms, movements, philosophy, theology shifts, and identification of catalytic leaders in the emerging church. The amount of material written on these topics has created many dialects in the movement and with each term. The term “missional,” for instance, is overused and under-defined. I have sought to come up with a definition that represents at least most of the dialects and expressions of missional. So many books are being written that the term “missional” is losing its distinctive value, much like the term “emerging” became overused. After researching the key concepts, ideas, movements, people, and shifts in literature, there was an “echo” in this research. Blogs, journals, conferences, and seminars became valuable sources to grasping the latest thoughts and trends even before they were published in books.
Chapter 3 explained the research process. In choosing qualitative case studies of established and missional churches, the goal was to find the churches that were effectively being missional. I wanted churches with leaders who were seen as catalytic and missional in their communities and throughout North America. To narrow the focus even more when choosing churches to study, I added the criteria that the churches needed to have, at least historically, a tie to the Southern Baptist Convention. Having grown up in a Southern Baptist Church and having lived and participated in the conservative resurgence of the convention, I wanted to see how Southern Baptist, an established denomination that is slow and sometimes skeptical embraces change and how their leading missional churches were maintaining their theological convictions in the midst of post-Christendom. The churches were selected and in January 2009, onsite visits began. The final case study was not completed until the summer of 2009. The selection and study process had some hurdles and limitations.

A survey form was established based on the four hypotheses. Each hypothesis had eight supporting questions. To avoid tainting the surveys with a “halo effect,” each of the eight questions were strategically arranged in the survey so that none of the participants would know exactly what the hypotheses were so as not to influence their answers. The second instrument used was a questionnaire, which was a template in focus group discussions. Again, the questions centered on the hypotheses. Afterwards, the hours of interviews were transcribed into manuscripts for ease of sorting through and categorizing the conversations. With the help of Atlas Ti software, I was able to organize the transcripts by hypothesis, which unveiled the nuggets necessary to support my premise.

The surveys were the most consistently helpful instrument for proving this research’s original premise. With the data research software SPSS and the help of Dan, a “psychology of marketing” analyst from Wal-Mart who attends my church, I was able to
more fully unpack the research and see the qualities of missional churches. The surveys proved that all the hypotheses were evident in the field study and two case study churches. Equally as valuable was Dan’s ability to look beyond the hypotheses into the data so as to apply and find correlations and coefficients in the research.

A total of four churches were researched for this project. First was the field study church, known in the paper as the “Southwest Church.” This name was given to the church due to its geographical location. Its true name has been omitted per their leadership’s request. All the surveys of the field study church were surveyed along with the case study churches for comparison and to look for correlations and coefficients for the hypotheses from all possible sources. In short, Southwest Church, more so than others would best be seen as an attractional-missional church. They have a mega-church campus with all the big church functions happening on that campus. However, they intentionally and faithfully involve themselves in missional work with a developing presence throughout their community. Their priorities outside the church and massive financial commitment to their campus causes some ministries within the church to suffer due to the limited availability of funds and people to do ministry.

Mosaic was the first case study church. I have spent years watching, reading, and interacting with Mosaic and growing relationships with some of their key pastors. Through my course work at Fuller Seminary, I was able to network with key leaders at Mosaic, which gave me the relationships I needed to get inside this catalytic church. Contextualization and incarnation are the best two missional words that describe their presence in the Los Angeles region of Southern California. They showed a clear and pronounced distaste for the institutional church and a desire to fight against its encroachment on them. This post-Christendom revolt against institutional religion and Mosaic’s equal distrust and disdain for Christendom makes Mosaic’s spiritual community so appealing to emerging generations and the postmodernist. Mosaic’s love for creativity
and the arts makes it contextualized in the entertainment capital of the world. Its nimble and passionate pastoral staff shows an alignment with the apostolic visionary leadership of Erwin McManus.

Through a number of sources, the Summit church in Raleigh Durham, North Carolina (RDU) continued to reappear as a viable, missional church. After being turned down once, I made the request to study them once more. The second time, they agreed. In August 2009, I traveled to North Carolina and visited the Summit as the final church and my second case study church. This was the church I needed to make a good comparison with Mosaic. The 36-year-old pastor was nearly the oldest person on staff. What Greear lacked in age he made up for in knowledge and passion. RDU is one of the most educated cities in the nation with a high number of doctors per capita. However, due to the Research Triangle and the three large universities within ten minutes of the main Summit Campus, Greear’s apologetic and more scholastic approach to ministry dialogue is a contextualized and incarnational approach much like Mosaic’s arts and creativity approach to the entertainment industry. The pastoral team at the Summit speaks of the intimidation factor they feel when called upon to speak to the congregation, because they know the level of intelligence of the congregants. The Summit fully understands that in the context of an educated and affluent region they must engage people from an intellectual perspective.

**Limitations**

A couple of limitations presented themselves during the research process that required adjustment to the approach for collecting the data. The first adjustment that had to be made was in the collection of answers for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed for a focus group setting. Ideally eight to ten participants were to sit in a

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2 Greear said it was the highest per capita in the country. The assertion could not be verified.
meeting room and discuss the questions as a group for about an hour as I recorded the meeting. However, the congregational members’ ability to participate in the focus group discussions proved to be an impassable hurdle.

Southwest church did the best job at providing members who could meet for an hour-long discussion. The timing of the scheduled focus group at Mosaic and the Summit was hindered when the churches could not enlist enough members that met my criteria to meet in focus groups. The younger generations seemed to have little interest beyond completing the survey.

I had to improvise at the first case study, Mosaic church, when I could not get core members or new members for the focus groups. I found willing participants who would fill out the questionnaire at home on their own time and return the open-ended question form the next week. I was only able to compile half the number of desired questionnaires.

Regardless of these difficulties, the case study churches were hospitable, helpful and cooperative. I think it speaks to the American lifestyle of too many things to do and too little time to do them. The pastoral team focus group times were healthy and robust. They had the advantage of taking an hour or more out of their workday to contribute to this project.

A second limitation was being able to assess from where the growth in each missional church came. Were they growing through transfers, birth, or conversion? When speaking of the “unchurched,” were they referring to the never churched or the de-churched. This was never made clear. Both churches showed steady additions in numerical growth; however, neither church scrutinized their growth enough to be able to track objectively how well they impacted the never-churched and re-churched populations versus the transplant growth population. One of the triangulation pillars for each church was to give objective data on the source of their numerical growth (appendix
3). I witnessed the churches completing the questionnaire quickly without consulting objective data. They only kept track of their attendance growth without critically analyzing it.

A delimitation of this study is that the research is confined to well-established missional congregations. The results might be significantly different in the case of more recent examples.

**Implications for Ministry**

The rewards and benefits of this study on my local ministry context are priceless. I will list in detail the value-added to my ministry in the following three ways. The academic process of writing this dissertation forced me to structure and critically think through my ideas and experiences. Though grueling and stressful at times, the D.Min. pursuit has been worth the effort. My local ministry context will be the first laboratory for experimentation. Ultimately, I hope that the profits of this labor will go beyond the local context of Grace Point Church. I hope either through continued research, writing, speaking, mentoring, advising, and consulting that this project will be catalytic for the next phase of my personal ministry and to the continued fine tuning of Grace Point Church. The following are some ways that I am already implementing ideas and systems learned through this D.Min. project.

*Development of Multi Site Gatherings and a Church Planting Strategy*

Starting in fall 2009, Grace Point Church began a strategy of planting churches and launching campuses. We commissioned our first 3-self church plant among the Spanish speaking community of NWA in 2009. In fall 2010, we launched our first multi-site gathering. Planting churches and launching campuses is an outgrowth of my family’s call to missions, but this D.Min. study has developed that call into an intentional scheme for where we are leading GPC. This progress is a fulfillment of where we
envisioned Grace Point Church moving since its inception. I must admit I was skeptical about the multi-site methodology at first until doing the research on this project and visiting some successful multi-site churches. The multi-sites did not detract from the church planting and mission efforts, but both churches affirmed that the multi-site actually helped their mission work locally and globally. Southwest church’s pastors said that they did not believe they would use the multi-site strategy. However, I have found several advantages to the multi-site approach as detailed in chapter 4. These advantages swayed my skeptical spirit about multi-site churches.

*Development of a Missional Theology*

Churches cannot wait for missionally minded, servant-leaders with a heart for planting churches to come to them from seminaries and colleges. Missional churches will have to lead the way in developing missional leaders. Both Mosaic and the Summit tailored their membership process to facilitate mobilization and leadership. The Summit has gone a step further by partnering with their Baptist state convention and bringing someone on staff with the sole aim of developing church planters with missional hearts. I want to help make Grace Point Church more intentional in developing leaders whose theology is missional.

The leadership of the case study churches taught that missional leaders must reproduce missional leaders. My goal as we add campus pastors to Grace Point Church is to spend a good deal of time developing leaders for key roles as movement leaders. It is not enough to have people in classes learning systems of discipleship. Churches have had systems for years seeking to dispense information into the minds of the members. However, little of this learning approach has developed disciples to think, analyze, and create missionally.
A missional theology and approach to leadership development moves from pedagogy to andragogy. Pedagogy is the imparting of information. Andragogy is when students take the responsibility of learning through creative and personal discipline. This is when transformation takes root. When the church creates movement makers, the gospel can continue into a new era no matter the context. Mosaic had a similar dynamic approach in their *Life in Christ* curriculum. This class was less about class time and more about movement makers and development. While I was with the Mosaic staff, McManus emphasized that it was less about what they spoke into people’s lives; it was more what the people took with them through the process.

There is a need for a leadership pipeline that must be developed to foster epic leaders. I want to avoid a programmatic pedagogy approach and move to a self-directed andragogy approach that encourages creative discipline and a conversation toward missional leadership. The pipeline process will be called *EPI(3)*. *EPI(3)* sounds programmatic, but instead of a prescribed course or study, it will be a fluid mentoring apprenticeship effort that I am already beginning to implement. *EPI(3)* stands for *Emerging Pioneers Innovating, Inspiring, and Infusing Culture*. I want to see cultural change agents formed through Grace Point Church. The *EPI(3)* apprenticeship is in the embryonic stage; we have only offered two focus groups so far at Grace Point Church. However, the results after just two groups are deeper discipleship and a more transformative end than the years of lecture-oriented pedagogy classes I have taught in the past.

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Objective Assessment of Grace Point Church Numerical Growth

At the height of growth at Grace Point Church, we grew 40 percent in four months. Every year, we have experienced double-digit growth as a church. However, the following questions need to be asked: (1) From where are the people coming? And (2) Who are we reaching? The lack of objective information from the case study churches has spurred me to develop a survey that is given to all our new members to track their route to Grace Point Church. We have declared ourselves to be a church for the unchurched, but we wonder if we are assessing our growth.

![Church Lapse Code](image)

Figure 5.1. Church Lapse Code

We ask all our new members to complete a simple survey when joining Grace Point Church (appendix 4). The survey helps assess our growth from several angles, including how well we impact the unchurched community. This question determines how much time has lapsed since the new member last attended church: How long were you out of church before coming to GPC? The results are enlightening and convicting. The surveys over the past two and half years show that only 20 percent of our membership
has been out of church a year or longer. Most had been away from church for less than six months. We deduce from this that we are largely a transfer church and not a church for the unchurched. We hope to use this ongoing analysis of our growth to truly and honestly critique how well we are impacting the unchurched. We want to grow in our influence of the unchurched and decrease in our transfer growth.

**Implications for Future Research**

The research portion of this project led to as many questions as it did answers. Through this research and analysis process, I could not exhaust the depth and breadth of each hypothesis. Due to the dynamic nature of the topic and the liminality of the cultural movement a continual emergence of new ideas and expressions continue to arise. The following are a few significant topics that need future research under each hypothesis.

*Missional Churches are Committed to Planting Churches in Order to Engage the Unchurched People in Post-Christendom*

The primary question that needs time and research is related to the future of the multi-site churches. The long-term ramifications of multi-site churches have yet to be seen. Are they a fad? Are they a new hybrid of the old attractional mega-church? Where does the multi-site take the Western world in fifteen to twenty years? Matt Chandler, a multi-site pastor with three campuses asks the question, “The problem that haunts us is the simple one. Where does this idea lead? Where does this end? Twenty years from now are there fifteen preachers in the United States? Will the multi-site idea weaken the church at large by squashing the diversity of teachers, ideas and leaders in the west? I am not sure I can answer these questions.” He is asking the right questions.

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If the celebrity pastor was the result of the mega-church, it may also be the result of the multi-site church. Another glaring question that appears when one considers the multi-site model is whether or not there can be church planting movements born from multi-sites. Neil Cole is skeptical of it. There has not been enough history with multi-sites to see their long-term benefit. There has been little evidence to support long-term church planting movements being birthed out of the multi-site model.⁶

While there are some advantages to the multisite mentioned in chapter 4, the unanswered questions remain: Will multi-sites reproduce to the third and fourth generations? Who will succeed the single teaching pastor? Do multi-site plants create synergy that encourages 3-self church planting in the future? These and other questions will have to be tested in further research.

**Missional Churches in North America Employ International Mission Principles, Strategies, and Practices**

Globalization is having an ever-shrinking effect on the world and bringing the world into one community. Distinguishing marks such as language, music, arts, entertainment, travel, and communication are changing so rapidly that worldviews are being meshed together. For example, villages in Africa far removed from modern electricity, medicine, education, and infrastructure are now accessible by cell phone with ring tones that play American hit songs.

As I have said in the previous pages, pluralism and relativism are some of the fruits of the postmodern era. Keeping the Christian worldview distinct when tolerance for relativism and pluralism is promoted will be a challenge. What does contextualization

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⁶ Neil Cole, “cmareources.org,” http://www.cmareources.org/article/multi-site-model_n-cole (accessed May 22, 2010). Neil Cole is an opponent of the multi-site model as it relates to a church planting movement. He says of the 3,000 churches that have two or more campuses, “less than ten grandchildren can be identified in the US and no fourth generation churches to date” originate from the multi-site churches. He argues that unless there is a fourth generation born from a mother church, one cannot claim it is a multiplication movement.
look like in a world that is blending together as a global society? How are seminaries and
denominations moving from training pastors to training missionaries to engage a culture
rather than simply leading and pastoring a people group?

*Missional Churches are Led by Entrepreneurial Leaders*

How do daily disciplines fit into the life of entrepreneurship? Methodology is
not sacrosanct at Mosaic. McManus becomes quite annoyed when people come around
him to figure out his “technique.” He says some people will ask questions to try to figure
out Erwin’s methods, but they will not believe there is something more spiritual that
defines him and makes him an effective missional leader. People want to emulate a
technique and start looking for technical success. This is annoying to him, and he will
retreat from the person when he senses someone is technique-driven.

Apostolic leadership is what the Church needs in post-Christendom. How are
these missional leaders reproduced without simply being carbon copies of celebrity
missional leaders (e.g. McManus and Greear)? Are apostolic leaders only relevant for this
time of liminality, and a new model will emerge once the new normal is established? Or,
has the fast-paced, ever-changing, shrinking world caused the church to have apostolic
leaders from this point forward?

*Missional Churches Thrive in Post-Christendom*

Christendom gave Christianity a thorough and organized systematic theology
and biblical theology. Postmodernism begs for something more. Postmodernists are
spiritual people who have left the church in search of a narrative to which they can give
their lives. They want an organic faith that is transparent and authentic. They are spiritual
people in search of a story. The church needs a narrative theology for postmodernism,
just like the modernists of Christendom needed a systematic theology.
The late Ray Anderson was starting a conversation about how we think of theology through the lens of the emerging mind in his book, *The Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*. The book simply introduced a need to consider a change. Missionaries have long been employing a method of teaching the biblically illiterate about the Bible chronologically through a narrative format. This methodology sees the Bible as one grand narrative with many supporting stories. Missionaries show villagers the common threads of God’s working from Creation to the present by telling the stories of the Bible. This practice enables the hearer to see the connection of God’s activity even in his or her own lives. They treat the Bible as a storybook, rather than a textbook, and pull apart its various teachings into man-made categories. With the majority of the Bible being narrative, it might be more natural and organic to see its narrative theology.

Churches are going to need to evaluate their growth with greater scrutiny. Exchanging members between churches is not going to make an impact in post-Christendom where the never-churched are born and raised outside of a biblical worldview. Re-churching the unchurched is valuable and necessary, but a deeper and more costly penetration must be made. An engagement and impact must be made and measured with those who have never been exposed to the Christian faith and have no family heritage from which to draw.

**Conclusion**

Missional churches are on the move in sync with the contextual changes of the transforming culture of post-Christendom and postmodern philosophies. The agility to adapt to the ethos of their surroundings while remaining rooted in a solid theology will not only keep them relevant but influential in the culture at the same time. The leaders of the missional churches are the central figures to maintaining a missional movement and avoiding institutionalization. As the missional churches in the industrialized Western world live like missionaries have for years in the undeveloped corners of the world,
drawing from their principles, strategizes and practices can give hope. The hope of
regaining a voice and a transformative influence in the community is not only possible, it
is probable and a flourishing move for the Christian movement through the missional
church.
APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Two primary tools for data gathering were used. Both instruments were subjective to each participant. The survey allowed the participant to grade the church, community, and church leadership on a scale of one to five. One was marked for those who strongly agreed with the statement. Five was used for those who strongly disagreed with the statement. If the participant were neutral, circling three would indicate that. Numbers 2 and 4 were available for those who were not as confident in their answers but still had an opinion.

A questionnaire was the second tool used for gathering information. There were two possible contexts for the completion of the questionnaire, dependent on the availability of the participant and the time allotments. The desired approach was in a focus group setting with the interviewer asking the questions to the focus group and recording the answers. Focus groups came to be difficult to conduct and complete with the time constraints of the participants. The majority of the participants took the opened questionnaire home and completed questions on their own.

Both instruments complimented each other and were built on the presumptions of the hypotheses of this research. I have included the survey and questionnaire below.
Survey

All the surveys were the same. They began by asking basic demographic questions.

**Personal Background**

1. Please indicate your age range…
   - 18-32
   - 33-44
   - 44-63
   - over 64

2. How many roles do you currently serve within the church?
   - 1-2
   - 3-4
   - 5-6
   - over 7

3. At what level of formal education did you last attend?
   - High School
   - Associates
   - Bachelor
   - Masters
   - Doctorate

4. Circle your gender:
   - Male
   - Female

5. How many months or years have you been a follower of Christ?
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1-3 years
   - 3-7 years
   - 7-15 years
   - over 15 years

After each question please circle the number that best indicates your response.

1. My church has an intentional plan for starting and developing new churches in our region.

   1 2 3 4 5

2. I intentionally and regularly engage in spiritual conversations with the unchurched or people far from God.

   1 2 3 4 5

3. Our church encourages creativity and innovation in all aspects of worship, ministry, and missions.

   1 2 3 4 5

4. I know a growing number of people whose religious beliefs are more tolerant of differing faiths and believe all faiths are equal.

   1 2 3 4 5

5. We believe that sending our core members to help start new churches is the right thing to do.

   1 2 3 4 5

6. Our members consider themselves to be missionaries in their own society.

   1 2 3 4 5

7. Our Senior Pastor or Leader has a clear and compelling vision for the direction of the church.

   1 2 3 4 5

8. Our church has an increasing attendance of people in their 20’s and 30’s.

   1 2 3 4 5

9. My church has dedicated personnel for the purpose of church planting and development.

   1 2 3 4 5
10. The majority of the people in our community see our church as an important contributor to an improved quality of life.

11. We successfully move new believers into leadership roles.

12. Our church has an atmosphere that is safe and inviting where people can process their faith without the pressure of conforming to the church’s doctrine.

13. We expect our members to live and do missions globally and locally.

14. The demographics, socioeconomic numbers, and felt needs of our region strongly shape how our church does ministry.

15. Our church has a clear (stated or written) multi-year plan for the future direction of our church.

16. People attend our church who have adopted a faith other than Christianity (e.g. Buddhism, Islam, etc).

17. The majority of our members believe there is a need for new churches in our community.

18. Our church regularly emphasizes and celebrates members’ local and global missions involvement.

19. Our members can clearly and succinctly state what the purpose of our church is.

20. I am confident that I can bring a friend to our church who is not a church-goer and they will find the message relevant, clear, biblical, and convictional.

21. I would be willing to help launch a new church.

22. Our members are routinely bringing people to faith in Christ.

23. When hiring staff for our church, we typically hire people from outside our congregation to come in.

24. Our church’s ministries are increasingly going to the unchurched rather than waiting for the unchurched to come to the ministry campus.

26. *Most of our members regularly mix their non-Christian relationships with people from their spiritual/church community.*

27. *Our senior leadership personally brings people far from God to faith in Christ.*

28. *I have friends who are not followers of Christ that also have negative opinions of organized Christianity.*

29. *Our church has helped to start one or more churches in the past two years.*

30. *I have an active cross-cultural friendship with someone.*

31. *The direction, leadership, and ministries of our church all function in congruence with our stated purpose.*

32. *A church’s affiliation with a denomination helps it grow in today’s society.*
Questionnaires

Much like the surveys, the questionnaire varied only slightly depending on how the question might be asked if it were used in a focus group. A digital audio recording was made of each focus group or interview. Only in the case that a participant could not meet for a face-to-face interview or a focus group, the questionnaire was given for individual completion.

Personal Questions:

Name:
Address:

How long have you been a member of the (church name)

Questionnaire

What are your personal feelings about your church's emphasis on church planting?

Have been on a mission trip/project locally or internationally with your church?

From your perspective why does your church start other churches/gatherings?

What does church planting look like at (Church name)?

What was it about your church that caused you to continue to come back and join?

How did you first learn about your church?

What does your church do to connect with the greater community and region?

List the various community projects, volunteer time, etc. you involve yourself in outside your church responsibilities.

Have you ever personally led someone to faith in Christ?

What is (Pastors’ name) greatest strength?

What is (Pastor’s name) greatest growth area?

What is the purpose of your church?

How much does the philosophies of relativism (truth is a personal opinion) and pluralism (all faiths are equal) impact the (RDU/LA) region?
How many friends do you interact with regularly that don’t consistently go to church? How does a church’s denomination affiliation help or hurt a church fulfill its mission? Is the region more or less churched today than 10 years ago? Why? What turns people off to organized Christianity today?
This appendix shows the relation of each question to each hypothesis. Each hypothesis has an equal number of survey questions to substantiate it. Every fourth question correlates to the same hypothesis. None of the hypotheses were stated during the gathering of research in an attempt to decrease the haloing of answers.

*Missional churches are committed to planting churches in order to engage the unchurched people in post-Christendom.*

1. My church has an intentional plan for starting and developing new churches in our region.
5. We believe that sending our core members to help start new churches is the right thing to do.
9. My church has dedicated personnel for the purpose of church planting and development.
13. We expect our members to live and do missions globally and locally.
17. The majority of our members believe there is a need for new churches in our community.
21. I would be willing to help launch a new church.
29. Our church has helped to start one or more churches in the past two years.

*Missional churches in North American employ international mission principles, strategies, and practices.*

2. I intentionally and regularly engage in spiritual conversations with the unchurched or people far from God.
6. Our members consider themselves to be missionaries in their own society.
10. The majority of the people in our community see our church as an important contributor to an improved quality of life.

14. The demographics, socioeconomic numbers, and felt needs of our region strongly shape how our church does ministry.

18. Our church regularly emphasizes and celebrates members’ local and global missions’ involvement.

22. Our members are routinely bringing people to faith in Christ.

26. Most of our members regularly mix their non-Christian relationships with people from their spiritual/church community.

30. I have an active cross-cultural friendship with someone.

*Missional churches are led by entrepreneurial leaders.*

3. Our church encourages creativity and innovation in all aspects of worship, ministry and missions.

7. Our Senior Pastor or Leader has a clear and compelling vision for the direction of the church.

11. We successfully move new believers into leadership roles.

15. Our church has a clear (stated or written) multi-year plan for the future direction of our church.

19. Our members can clearly and succinctly state what the purpose of our church is.

23. When hiring staff for our church, we typically hire people from outside our congregation to come in.

27. Our senior leadership personally brings people far from God to faith in Christ.

31. The direction, leadership, and ministries of our church all function in congruence with our stated purpose.
Missional churches thrive in post-Christendom.

4. I know a growing number of people whose religious beliefs are more tolerant of differing faiths and who believe all faiths are equal.

8. Our church has an increasing attendance of people in their 20’s and 30’s.

12. Our church has an atmosphere that is safe and inviting where people can process their faith without the pressure of conforming to the church’s doctrine.

16. People attend our church who have adopted a faith other than Christianity (e.g. Buddhism, Islam, etc).

20. I am confident that I can bring a friend to our church who is not a church-goer and they will find the message relevant, clear, biblical, and convictional.

24. Our church’s ministries are increasingly going to the unchurched rather than waiting for the unchurched to come to the ministry campus.

28. I have friends who are not followers of Christ that also have negative opinions of organized Christianity.

32. A church’s affiliation with a denomination helps it grow in today’s society.
APPENDIX 3

STATISTICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Additionally, each church was asked to complete a more objective statistical questionnaire. The questionnaire was meant to help me probe beyond the subjective opinions of the survey and see if there was alignment statistically to support the beliefs stated about the church. As stated earlier, however, even this exercise was subjective to the participant. Most answered questions as to their “best guess” rather than researching the figures.

1. **What is the average adult age range (18 years or older) of your congregation?**
   - 18-32
   - 33-44
   - 44-63
   - 64 or older
   - (born '77-'94)
   - (born '65-'76)
   - (born '46-'64)
   - (born '45 or earlier)

2. **What percentage of your members joined by transferring their membership immediately from another church to yours?**
   - 1-25%
   - 24-50%
   - 51-75%
   - 76%-100%

3. **Of your current membership, what percentage has grown up in the church?**
   - 1-25%
   - 24-50%
   - 51-75%
   - 76%-100%

4. **Of your current membership, what percentage of your members joined your church through a conversion experience?**
   - 1-25%
   - 24-50%
   - 51-75%
   - 76%-100%

5. **What percentage of your members joined your church after not attending a church for one year or more?**
   - 1-25%
   - 24-50%
   - 51-75%
   - 76%-100%
APPENDIX 4

NORTH POINT CLASS SURVEY

The following survey is completed the first night of each new members class to help Grace Point Church discern the churches sources of new members.

**North Point Class Survey**

*Please complete the survey to help us get to know you better and effectively serve those who are not yet a part of GPC.*

1. How long have you been attending Grace Point Church?
   - ___ # of Weeks
   - ___ # of months
   - ___ # of years

   What worship gathering do you generally attend?
   - ___ 1st
   - ___ 2nd
   - ___ 3rd

2. Where did you **first learn about Grace Point**?
   - Billboard
   - Driving by
   - Friend/Family
   - Advertisement
   - News media
   - Internet
   - Special Service (concert/guest speaker)
   - MDO
   - Other__________

3. How long have you **lived in the NWA**?
   - _____ # of weeks
   - _____ # of months
   - _____ # of years

4. Did you **attend another church** in NWA before coming to GPC?
   * If yes, what church?
   * How long did you attend there?
     - ___ # of weeks
     - ___ # of months
     - ___ # of years
   * How long was it since you attended your last church before coming to GPC?
     - ___ # of weeks
     - ___ # of months
     - ___ # of years
   * If No, have you ever attended any church on at least on a monthly basis?
     - When?
     - Where?

5. Circle the **top three** contributing factors that have influenced you the most in continuing to attend GPC…
   - Preschool/Children’s ministry
   - Student ministry
   - Global Missions
   - Small group/Body Life Groups
   - Worship service style
   - Messages
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminars/classes offered</th>
<th>Times of services</th>
<th>Women’s/Men’s ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>Personality/atmosphere of Congregation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Score us on a scale of 1 – 10 as to how effective we were in answering your questions about GPC while an attender

1 (Poorly) – 10 (outstanding)  __________

7. What areas does GPC **need to improve** in helping attenders feel at home with us? (use the back to answer this question)


Greear, J. D. *A Pastor Defends His Multi-Site Church.*
http://www.9marks.org/CC/article/0,,PTID314526%7CCHID598014%7CCIID2474264,00.html (accessed July 3, 2009).


Leadership Network. “Multisite.” PDF.


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