

**Mission in Creative Tension:
Paradigm Shifts in Relationship to Church and Mission**

by

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*The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of the
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DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

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SUMMARY

The focus of this thesis was to identify and examine the reasons for a paradigm shift in relationship to the Church in mission and to recommend ways in which this tension between Church and mission can be used creatively to further the work of Christ in the 21st century. Through the lens of the *missio Dei*, this thesis examined the theology and history of mission in order to introduce the theological, missiological, and contextual crises of mission organisations.

Arguments of major theologian/missiologists were given as they pertained to the Old Testament book of Jonah, particularly, with regards to a biblical concept of mission. In addition, the incarnational model from the New Testament formed a background to posit that mission is not a grand human enterprise, but rather a creative partnership with Christ and His Church to do mission His way.

This thesis culminates with a clarion call to the church to formulate a biblical-holistic concept of mission based on the incarnation. It must seek an understanding that God has gone before us in mission and the church exists for His mission. Mission is to be carried out by the whole church for the whole world (*panta ta ethne*). The church must be viewed as an instrument of God's mission.

To unite the relationship between church and mission will require an interdisciplinary approach with church, mission entities, and theological institutions working in harmony and creative partnership to accomplish the biblical goals of the *missio Dei*. The great task of the church for mission is to align itself with the incarnational mission of Jesus Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1:	Introduction and Aim of the Thesis	8
1.1	Objective of the Study	12
1.2	Aim of the Thesis	
1.3	Benefits of the Study	13
Chapter 2:	The Theological Relationship Between God and the Church: A Biblical Interpretation	15
2.1	The Church: A Biblical Interpretation	15
2.2	Elements of Biblical Theology	15
2.3	Old Testament Theology of Mission: A Biblical Synthesis	17
2.4	Old Testament Missions and Jonah	19
2.5	Old Testament Biblical Basis for Mission	22
	2.5.1 Universal Motif	22
	2.5.2 Motif of Rescue	22
	2.5.3 Missionary Motif	23
	2.5.4 Motif of Antagonism	23
2.6	Biblical Historical Relationship	24
2.7	New Testament Theology of Mission	25
2.8	The Church as Witness	28
2.9	The Nature of Church and Mission	30
2.10	Variables of Old Testament and New Testament Mission	31
2.11	The Gospels and Mission	32
2.12	Mission as Witness	33
2.13	A Contemporary Understanding of Church and Mission	35
2.14	Classical Biblical Definition of Mission	37
2.15	Mission of God Today	39
2.16	Bridging the Theological Relationship	41
2.17	Task of Mission	42
2.18	Missional Theology	43
2.19	Conclusion	46

Chapter 3:	The Church Working in Harmony with its Mission	48
3.1	Primary Mission of the Church	49
3.2	Task of the Holy Spirit	52
3.3	Aim of Mission	52
3.4	Mission-Church Tensions	53
3.5	Obstacles to Mission	54
3.6	Pauline Mission and Church Relationship	54
3.7	Partnership in Mission	55
3.8	Challenges of the Church Working in Harmony with its Mission	56
3.9	Interdisciplinary Approach to Mission Action	58
3.10	Role of Theological Education	59
3.11	Recommendations	61
3.12	Missiological Implications	62
3.13	Conclusion	63
Chapter 4:	Recovering the Biblical Holistic Concept of Christian Mission	65
4.1	Biblical-Holistic Mission of the Contemporary Church	67
4.2	Holistic Ministry of the Church	69
4.3	Search for Community	70
4.4	A Missional Community	71
4.5	Equipping the Church for a Biblical-Holistic Mission	72
4.6	Conclusion	73
Chapter 5:	Summary and Conclusion	75
5.1	The Theological Relationship Between God and the Church	76
5.2	God's Mission or Great Human Enterprise?	77
5.3	Recovering a Biblical Holistic Concept of Mission	78
5.4	The Incarnation: A Model for Mission	79
5.5	Mode of Mission: Power of the Holy Spirit	80
5.6	Ultimate Aim of Missions	80
5.7	Conclusion	81

Appendix 1: Figure 1: A Biblical-Theological Sketch of Mission	84
Appendix 2: Figure 2: Ten Missiological Perspectives on the Book of Jonah	85
Bibliography	87

Chapter 1: Introduction and Aim of the Thesis

The title of this thesis was selected as a result of an increased awareness that Christian mission is under attack – externally and internally. External forces against the church are challenging classical paradigms of mission to include instead, non or extra-biblical extrapolations for mission today. On the other hand, internal forces within the church itself are confused, concerned, and questioning whether classical modes of mission are relevant, or even necessary for today's church.

The last forty years of theological and missionary circles has resulted in a paradigm shift in mission and theology (Kritzinger and Saayman 1990). As a result, the church in mission is being challenged by several factors:

- (1) The West because it no longer has dominance or credibility.
- (2) Rejection of unjust structures of oppression and exploitation
- (3) Mistrust of western technology
- (4) The challenges of emerging theologians
- (5) The shrinking globe with its limited resources
- (6) Religious pluralism which challenges Christianity

(MICT, pg. 113)

This paradigm shift has resulted in a more interactive and integrated understanding of the relation between church and mission which has been developing over the past several years. One of the ways in which theology of mission has developed in the last century, according to Martinson (1999), has been through the deepening confrontation of the church and mission with

theology. As new countries became independent, liberation was a theme that gradually took hold in theology. Missiological praxis became immersed in liberation struggles, and mission theology engaged with liberation themes. Biblically, new insights emerged about reading the Word of God in the midst of present day contexts and conflicts.

Martinson (1999:276) contends that the crisis of mission is due in part to the crisis of the Christian community in the West. He sees their lack of evangelistic fervor as a key negative component: "...the will to accomplish it (evangelism) simply does not exist in most of the western churches." Communities of faith must recapture the theme that the church is an instrument of God's mission.

Theological issues involved in the contemporary debate on mission are most complex, particularly in accordance with the premise that "mission" must increasingly be interpreted in terms of "what God is doing in the world," (secularized understanding of *Missio Dei*), and theological reflection on the essence of the church.

Peters (1982:230) poses two foundational questions regarding the church-mission relationship and asserts that a serious dichotomy between church and mission is developing. First he contends, "*Has the time and usefulness of mission societies expired at least in the traditional sense?*" Second, "*What is the relationship of mission organisations to the churches they have established among different peoples and countries.*" Peters (1982) contends that in the future, if this tension is not resolved, there will be many missionless churches and many churchless mission organisations.

In 1981, Heissig wrote in a mission journal and described Christian mission as the “selfish war.” (Bosch 2004). Yet history reveals that there has always been an element of crisis and tension in the church. The premise of this thesis is to identify ways in which this tension between church and mission can be used creatively to further God’s kingdom today.

Kenneth Scott Latourette, an American missionary historian of the early 20th century, called the 19th century “the great century” due to the rapid spread of missionary fervor in the west. “Missions” became the new orthodoxy of the era. (Goheen 1999). That fervor continued for centuries as western theology and western ways were undisputed; today it is different. Younger churches in various world areas are seeking autonomy from western influence by adhering to third world theologies such as: liberation theology, black theology, African theology or Asian theology. This has contributed to profound uncertainty in western churches, many of which are questioning the validity of Christian mission. (Bosch 2004).

How can the church respond creatively to these paradigm shifts? Bosch (2004:8) contends that the harsh realities of today compel us to re-conceive and re-formulate the church’s mission and to do this boldly and imaginatively, yet also in continuity with the best of what mission has been in the past decades and centuries.

Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world: the story of the covenant people of Israel, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A theological foundation of mission is only possible if we refer back to the foundation of our faith: God's self-communication in Jesus Christ. "The church's act of mission remains an act of faith without earthly guarantees." (Bosch 2004:9).

John Piper (2003) in his remarkable book, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, proposes that the most crucial issue in missions is the centrality of God in the life of the church. Psalm 96:4 asserts the supremacy of God:

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

The biblical mandate to the church is one of many scriptural admonishments to confirm that missions should be the result of the overflow of the church's delight in acknowledging the supremacy of God. (Isaiah 48:9-11, John 16:14, IPeter 4:11, John 17:14) (Piper 2003:20).

Thus, we learn that the biblical mission of the church is rooted in God's revelation in Jesus Christ who was born in Nazareth, lived and labored in Palestine, was crucified on Golgotha, but raised from the dead. From the New Testament, mission is determined by the knowledge that the eschatological hour has dawned bringing salvation within world-wide reach for all peoples. (Bosch 2004:54).

Bosch (2004) acknowledges that mission is the church's service, made possible through Christ entering the world. Thus, church and mission cannot be compartmentalised or separated. That acknowledgment must entail recognizing that God is the Source of mission; the Holy Spirit is the Power of mission; Christ is the Message of mission and the Church is the embodiment of mission (Rheenen 1996). The contemporary world calls theology to recover its

missiological dimension. Contemporary theology must search the Scriptures in order to discern the will of God for the church and strive to recover guidance on its way toward the obedient life that must be pursued within the concrete issues of the world's concrete cultures.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This thesis will examine the ways in which tensions exist between theological and missionary circles. Reasons for the paradigm shift in mission and theology will be discussed. The development of a biblical, holistic concept of Christian mission will be proposed.

The three major objectives of this study are:

First, to show the element of tension that exists between the church's call to mission stratification. Next, to demonstrate factors causing the challenge in relationship toward the church in mission. Finally, this study will identify the reasons that Christian mission should be the primary response of the global church of Jesus Christ.

1.2 Aim of the Thesis

Several key missional insights will be considered through this study:

- (1) Chapter two of this thesis will discuss the fundamental theological relationship between God and the Church and show how the church's work of mission extrapolate these areas.
- (2) Chapter three will examine the factors which contribute to the challenge of the Church working in harmony with its mission, and will present the

reasons for these challenges. Suggestions for developing an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the relationship between church and mission will conclude chapter three.

(3) Chapter four will identify and examine ways in which the church can recover a biblical-holistic concept of Christian mission while taking care to distinguish between God's mission or great human enterprise.

1.3 Benefits of the Study

The study will provide keener insights into the total Church/mission relationship over the last forty years and recommend areas for improvement. This study will also assist cross-cultural workers and mission leaders in grasping the significance and efficacy of theology and mission working as an interrelationship for the advancement of global missions.

Additionally, this study will provide knowledge for theological education in seminaries who train students in their programmes of missiology. It will demonstrate ways in which theology and mission can complementary coexist for the up-building of the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 2:

Theological Relationship Between God and the Church

The purpose of this chapter is to identify various aspects that comprise the theological relationship between God and the church. Consideration will be given to the main tenets of theology of mission from the Old and New Testaments to establish the biblical historical relationship of God and the church; missiological reflection on this relationship will also be considered.

2.1 The Church: A Biblical Interpretation

Peters (1982:200) provides keen insight into the biblical interpretation of the word “church.” The basic meaning is ‘to call out from.’ The noun signifies “the called out ones.” The New Testament word *ekklesia* signifies an assembly of people who are related to God and who obey God. From its use in classical Greek, the Septuagint, and the New Testament we can deduce the following basic qualities of the word *ekklesia*:

- It was a called out and called unto people.
- It was a people of a special kind.
- It was a people called out and called together for a special purpose.
- It meant people who conducted their affairs on principles of equality and brotherhood.

2.2 Elements of Biblical Theology

To speak of biblical theology is to speak of far more than simply the recognition that our theology must be biblical. Biblical theology is historical; it deals with revelation as an activity or process. It approaches the Bible as a

historical Book. Biblical theology's focus on revelation as an historical activity underlines the dynamic, rather than static, character of revealed thought.

(_____ pg. 225)

Biblical theology:

- Seeks to do justice both to the diversity of the divine testimony within the diversity of human settings and to the underlying unity of that testimony.
- Studies data of revelation given in each period of cultural history.
- Reminds us of the Christ-centered heart of the Scriptures.
- Reminds us of the Bible's history as the history of redemption.

(_____ pg. 228)

McGavran and Glasser (1983) contend that the only valid test for any theology of mission is to evaluate it from the perspective of whether it meets our Lord's command to make Jesus Christ known, loved, and served throughout the world; Does it constrain Christians to carry out His final commands to proclaim the gospel to the total human family? Does it issue a call to spiritual conversion?

Finally, does a theology of mission make possible the healing, liberating, and serving presence of Jesus Christ? Mission is carrying out God's command to bring His salvation to all peoples (Isa. 49:6). World evangelization should be at the very heart of Christian mission.

2.3 Old Testament Theology of Mission: A Biblical Synthesis

(see Figure 1)

Old Testament texts, indeed, reveal God's prime concern for the future of the nations long before the birth of Christ. The idea that redemption will one day embrace the entire human world becomes evident as a divine directive.

Kostenberger and O'Brien (2001) propose that any comprehensive treatment of mission in the Old Testament must begin with God's creation and purposes for humanity. The first indications of God's plan for the world appear in the creation account of Genesis 1. The world created by God and acknowledged as good is the one in which history begins and the one that will reach its goal by fulfilling the divine purpose for which it was created.

The notion of mission is intimately bound up with His saving plan which moves from creation to new creation, and has to do with His salvation reaching the whole world. Humankind and the world, as depicted in Genesis 1, correspond perfectly to the divine intention. Creation and redemption are two major themes running through the Old Testament. That God has committed Himself to reclaiming this fallen world and rescuing sinful people can be seen throughout the book of Genesis.

A close examination of the book of Isaiah 66:18-24, reveals an eschatological vision of staggering proportions as God's reveals His gracious plan for the world. If we say the goal of mission is the glory of God, that He may be known and honored among the nations – we can clearly see that the book of Isaiah substantiates this paradigm.

How God will achieve His plan and purpose is given in Isaiah 66:19-21.

Kostenberger and O'Brien (2001) posit that this is one of the clearest Old Testament statements on the theme of mission outreach. The divine mission will know no boundaries, racial, national, or geographic – for it is to extend to all the world.

Stott (1975) posits that the theological relationship between God and the church arises – not out of the nature of the church, but rather of God Himself. The Old Testament Scriptures, particularly, attest that God is a sending God. Stott (1975:21) describes the church's mission as 'centrifugal.' This term infers that God is love – always reaching out to humankind through self-giving service.

Several Old Testament scriptures are examples of this: God sent Abraham to leave his country and kinsman and go into the unknown (Gen 12:1-3). Kane (1976) contends that Abraham and Israel were not chosen by God for their own sakes. But, for a much wider purpose – the salvation of the world (Gen 12:3, 22:18). God's plan to redeem mankind centered on Israel (Kane 1976:23). The history of redemption began with Abraham. Jesus acknowledged in Jn 4:22 That "salvation is from the Jews." Kane (1976) posits that God has a three-fold purpose in the election of Israel. First, Israel was commanded to receive and guard God's special revelation to the world (Heb 1:1-3). Second, Israel would be the means through which the Redeemer would enter human history. Third, Israel was to be God's servant (Isa 44:1-2) and witness (Isa 43:10) in the midst of the nations.

Next, God sent Joseph into Egypt to preserve a godly remnant (Gen 45:4-8). Then God sent Moses to His oppressed people in Egypt (Ex 3:10). Following the Great Exodus of the Israelites, God sent many prophets to deliver words of warning and promises to His people (Jer 7:25,26; II Chron 36:15-16). Following the Babylonian captivity, God sent them back to their homeland where new messengers ordained by God would assist them in reestablishing their temple, city and national life (Stott 1975:22).

Finally, the scriptures assert:

When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son.
After God sent Jesus Christ into the world,
they both sent the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:4-6; Jn 14:26, 15:26, 16:7;
Acts2:33).

Thus, we clearly see the essential biblical back ground to understanding God's true mission mandate for the church; the primal mission belongs to God, for He is the one who sent His prophets, His Son, and His Spirit. Of these missions, the mission of Jesus is central for He culminated the ministry of the prophets and climaxed the sending of the Spirit of God.

2.4 Old Testament Missions and Jonah (see Figure 2)

The Old Testament book of Jonah is one of the most controversial texts relating to whether or not it can be defined clearly as a missionary tract and precursor of the missionary mandate of the New Testament. Let's examine ten past and contemporary theologians/missiologists to identify their paradigm of Jonah as it relates to Old Testament theology of mission.

DuPreez (1987:18) argues that Jonah is "not an Old Testament example of a missionary sent to a far-off country in order to proclaim the good news there."

His thesis is that Jonah was clearly an unwilling participant whose divine mandate was to announce doom to the people of Nineveh. Bosch (2004:17) is in agreement with DuPreez when he asserts that Jonah has nothing to do with mission in the normal sense of the word; the prophet was sent to Nineveh to announce doom. Therefore Jonah was not concerned with mission – only destruction. Peters (1972) posits that the prophet Jonah directed his entire message of judgment to the non-Israelite nation of Nineveh. Kane (1976:26), too views Jonah's mission has one of judgment and not salvation. Prior to the captivity, Israel's missionary activity was centripetal; the nations came to Israel; she did not go out to them. Although Kostenberger and O'Brien (2001:45) contend that Jonah is not presented as a missionary whose preaching is intended to serve as a paradigm for Israel's outreach to the nations. They view the book as God's theological relationship with all of mankind in a four-part paradigm:

- 1) The Lord's kindness is extended to pagan outsiders.
- 2) God's salvation reaches to the ends of the earth.
- 3) God's saving concerns are for the world.
- 4) God intends to bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3).

In contrast to DuPreez, Kane, Bosch, Kostenberger & O'Brien's contention that the book of Jonah should not be used as a methodology of mission, several other missiologists disagree with their assertions. For example, Verkuyl (1978:96) views Jonah as an aid in understanding the biblical basis for mission and sees the book as a preparatory step to the mission mandate of the New

Testament. Verkuyl views Jonah's sin as the sin of a missionary who lacks heart in that the book portrays a deep resistance of humankind to God's mission mandate. Additionally, Verkuyl posits that Jonah illustrates that salvation must occur outside the walls of the church.

Bright (1955:162-163) argues that Jonah is a challenge to Israel to take up her world mission and embrace her task of proclaiming the true God to the nations. Oswalt (1991:87) concurs with Bright when he stated that the book of Jonah implies that the Israelites have an obligation to bear God's Word even to their enemies.

Hedlund (1991:126) views Jonah's mission as one of the grandest events in redemptive history; the mission was instrumental in the calling of the Gentiles in the last days. Anderson (1961:19) concurs with Hedlund:

..."The book Jonah is the deepest penetration into the method of the mission. We view Jonah as the Israelites who attempt to escape from God's calling of them for the important responsibility in the redemption of the world."

Although scholars present various views of whether or not the book of Jonah can be clearly established as a methodology for mission today; most of them concur that Jonah played an important role in the centrifugal understanding of mission. God's plan was to use Jonah to teach Israel that He spares and rescues; He is a God of grace and compassion – slow to anger and abounding in love (Jonah 4:2). Clearly, Jonah did not have the spiritual understanding to view the Gentiles as part of God's redemptive plan. However, God attempted to reveal to the Israelites, His limitless love for the people of Nineveh.

2.5 Old Testament Biblical Basis for Mission

Verkuyl (1978) comprehensively formulated four tenets from the Old Testament as a call to the church to participate in God's mission mandate:

2.5.1 Universal Motif:

Verkuyl evidences that God established Himself early in the Old Testament as unequivocally being the one true God of all mankind. Genesis 10 evidences God's work an activity as directed at the whole human race. The Old Testament prophets" Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah bore witness that God's promises were for all the nations.

The apocalyptic vision of Daniel (7:1-29) predicts the coming of Jesus Christ whose domain shall include all mankind. The universal lines of Old Testament history and prophecy clearly posit that the world of the nations spoken of in Genesis 10 is the last goal of all God's efforts (p 92).

2.5.2 Motif of Rescue:

Redemption and liberation is the soteriological theme of the Bible. The Old Testament prophets attest that God's acts of redemption are not exclusive to Israel – but God's plan is to restore His Lordship over the entire world of the nations. God describes vividly His proposed method for carrying out His means of salvation in Isaiah 40-55. Precisely how the servant of the Lord would carry out his mission (as victim and substitute) is graphically depicted in the moving passage of Isaiah 53, known as "The Suffering Servant."

In reference to the New Testament book of Acts 13:47, the Apostle Paul also grounds his call from God to engage in worldwide witness from Isaiah 40-55.

2.5.3 Missionary Motif

Old Testament repeatedly remind Israel that her divine election is a call to service with the duty to witness to the nations (Isa 49:6) of God's grace, mercy, justice, and power. The prophets of God reminded Israel of her mandate to live among the various people groups as a distinctly divine appointment to serve, thereby becoming a sign and witness for other nations.

The Old Testament (Ruth, Job, people of Nineveh) provides examples of heathen people who were won over to trust and serve God. Dispersed Jews during the Old Testament diaspora understood their call to witness directly by their living presence to the other nations (95).

2.5.4 Motif of Antagonism

The Old Testament describes ways in which God is waging war against those who attempt to thwart his redemptive plan for humankind. He battles against false gods, magic, and astrology (Deut) and social justice (Amos, Jeremiah).

The Old Testament portrays God as one who seeks to defeat all opposing powers, to evidence his supreme omnipotence and finality of His rule.

Verkuyl concludes that each of these four motifs is basic to the church understanding and applying the work of mission. Verkuyl cogently contends that for one to participate in modern mission, he too, must wage fierce opposition against those opposing God's intentions for humankind.

2.6 Biblical-Historical Relationship

To establish the biblical-historical relationship of God and the church, Peters (1982:129) defines the Kingdom of God as the "rule of God in the heart of

man..the kingdom of God within you. It is immediate and actual; it is moral, spiritual, actual.” God-centered mission is evident from the continuous emphasis on the sole Godhead of God:

I am the first and the last; beside me there
is no God. (Isa 44:6).

To make this truth vivid to Israel and the nations, worship was permitted and sanctioned at one place in Israel. Israel was to have only one temple. Thus, we see that Israel’s mission was a mission to the nations (Isa 40:5; 42:1; 6,7,10; 45:22-23; 49: 6,26; 51:4-5; 52:10,15. Peters 1982:125). God declares that Israel exists for the nations and finds true meaning only in world mission. Salvation is to be for all mankind and is to be offered to all the nations on equal terms with equal privileges and blessings.

Thus, we see that Israel’s mission was divinely bestowed:

He will bring forth justice to the nations...
He will not fail or be discouraged till he has
established justice on earth. He will be a covenant
to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes
that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the
dungeon, from the prison, those who sit in darkness.
(Isa 42:1,4,6,7 RSV) (Peters 1982:129).

Finally, we learn that God’s mission relationship with the church is ‘simply the outworking of the intentions He had at the beginning, expressed in the blessing He pronounced on the first humans He created and confirmed in the promises He made to Abraham.’ (Webb 1996:251).

2.7 New Testament Theology of Mission

The church is God’s chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. World evangelism is the imperative of the New Testament (Mk 13:10). The

Paraclete to accomplish the task is the Holy Spirit; the church is the divinely chosen agency for the proclamation.

Therefore, to understand God's mission for the 21st century we must turn our thoughts to the first century. 'This is not traditionalism it is not irrelevance; it is not living in the past. It is a timeless Christianity which is founded in Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8). (Ryken 2003:23).

The mission of the early Christians was unique. It was rooted in Jesus' appropriation of Old Testament messianic prophecy and his uninauguration of Old Testament eschatological expectations regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles into the orbit of God's salvation, and it was carried out in fulfillment of his commission to disciple the nations and to extend the good news of salvation and forgiveness of sins to the ends of the earth (Kostenberger and O'Brien 2001).

The gospel of Mark presents Jesus' mission as the core mission of his gospel with the cross functioning as his focal point, not merely for discipleship, but also for mission (Mk. 14:9). Mark's focus on Jesus' mission to the Jews places the Gentile mission still in the future. Jesus rather appears to follow the pattern of Old Testament Israel, whose presence was to attract the surrounding nations to her God without going out of her way to reach them. For these reasons, Mark is sometimes not considered, by many theologians, as a missionary emphasis.

Matthew, on the other hand, provides a crucial contribution to a biblical theology of mission. This gospel furnished the church of the latter part of the first century with a solid theological foundation for its mission to the Gentiles and still

stands as a reminder of the Church's unfinished task to disciple the nations. Jesus' final commission to his followers in chapter 28:16-20 provides a unifying climax of the entire gospel's teaching on mission, which include the following tenets: the reference to Jesus' all-encompassing authority, the charge to disciple all nations by baptizing and teaching them, and the assurance of Christ's presence until the parousia (Holy Spirit) would strengthen and undergird further missionary work (Kostenberger and O'Brien 2001:107).

Matthew also places the Christian mission firmly within an eschatological framework: mission is the church's primary task between Christ's first coming and His return:

The church is to embark on her mission at the command and on the basis of the authority of the exalted Christ, the eschatological ruler, the Son of God.
(Kostenberger and O'Brien 2001:108).

The composite nature of the Great Commission comprises all four gospels and Acts which all point to a common direction. The following outline show the unique emphasis which forms a whole:

- Matthew – the authority, all-inclusive goal and time-extension of the work.
- Mark – the urgency, method and geographical scope of the work.
- Luke – the Christocentric message and universality of the work.
- John – the spiritual equipment and spiritual nature of the work.

(Peters 1982:174). As we view the whole outline as presented in the four gospels, we see the total Great Commission. Clearly, the all-inclusive goal is

to make disciples of all nations. However, the Great Commission does not make Christianity a missionary religion; it is such because of the character and purpose of God and His relationship with the church. Neither is the Great Commission the dynamic of missions, for this resides in the Holy Spirit alone. Although the Great Commission gives us a design for missions today, it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of missions (Peters 1982:177). The Holy Spirit cannot and will not fail in His mission; in His fullness we find the dynamic of world missions.

God's theological relationship with the church is further evident through the New Testament book of Acts. The theme of the church as mission is of great importance – so much so that many biblical scholars posit that it is the clearest presentation of mission in the whole New Testament.

The Apostle Paul's missionary career began with a decisive event in his life – his confrontation with the risen Christ on the Damascus Road. From that day forward, the gospel became the determinative focus in his life. Paul became totally committed to and involved in the advancement of the gospel. His missionary commission included primary evangelism. His ambition was to go where the gospel had not yet been preached.

We have seen that the scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments attest that the theological relationship between God and the church is a mission-focused relationship that not only reaches out and gathers lost humanity – but also sends servants to achieve God's saving purposes.

Importantly, this mission of God's people within the world is to be understood within the eschatological perspective that is grounded in the events of the gospel and keeps an eye on the final goal: the gathering of men and women from every nation, tribe, people, and language before the throne of God and the Lamb.

Next, let us turn our focus to the nature of the church as witness.

2.8 The Church as Witness

God's great goal in all of history is to uphold and display the glory of His name for the enjoyment of His people from all nations. Paul, in Romans 1:5 describes this passion as: "...to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of Christ's name among all the nations."

Repeated Old Testament calls proclaim: "Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples!" (Psalm 96:3).

The church is not a human organization; it is the result of a mission or a sending that began with God. The mission of God, initiated through Jesus Christ and continued through his disciples, led to the formation of the church. Both Christ and His disciples were ambassadors sent by God, the source of mission. The church then should conceive of itself as the outcome of the activity of God who sends and saves (Van Rheezen 1996:29).

Had God not sent His Son there would be no church. Since God's mission through Christ conceived the church, it must be thought of as his institution, under his jurisdiction, set aside to fulfill his purposes in the world.

The church is God's people called out from the world to be His witness in the world. The church reflects the eternal nature of the kingdom that cannot be

destroyed. (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14). The continuance of the church is rooted in its being God's people under His eternal sovereignty. (Van Rheezen 1996:30).

The church serves as God's agent for mission.

Dr. Martin Pauw, served on the faculty of theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, from 1983-2001. He regards the role of the church within society and in the world as being that of a witnessing and serving community, operating from the perspectives and principles of the kingdom of God as a present and coming reality (Pauw 2005).

Dr. P.J. Robinson (2005) more simply views the local congregation as mission. Similarly, McCoy (2001:01) contends that the "*local*" church is the primary bearer of God's mission."

2.9 Nature of Church and Mission

Bosch (1991) suggests that the history and theology of early Christianity are profoundly a "mission history" and a "mission theology." He ascribes this paradigm of missions to the Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers as well. To these men, mission was the fundamental expression of the life of the early church. Thus, scholars conclude that the beginnings of missionary theology was also the beginning of Christian theology and affirm Kahler who stated: "Mission is the mother of theology." (Kahler 1908: quoted by Bosch 1991:16).

The gospels are to be viewed as ardent expressions of the Christian faith, written for the purpose of commending Jesus Christ to the modern world. (Bosch 1991). Bosch is careful to note that the New Testament authors differed – thus

not reflecting a uniform view of mission. This may be due in large part because the New Testament authors were less concerned with a definition of mission and more concerned with the missionary existence of their readers.

2.10 Variables of Old Testament and New Testament Mission

The decisive difference between Old and New Testament is mission. Bosch (1991) proposes that the Old Testament gives no account whereby believers of the old Covenant were “sent” by God to cross geographic, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in *Yahweh*. As previously discussed, Bosch argues that the book of Jonah has nothing to do with mission. Bosch further contends that the book of Isaiah is not to be regarded as a book about mission.

Although the Old Testament is fundamental to understanding mission in the New Testament, there is a difference between the faith of Israel and the religion of the surrounding nations. The pagan religions re-enacted their past through repetition and remembrance.

Whereas, the essence of Israel’s faith was the strong conviction that God rescued their ancestors from Egypt and made a covenant with them, the Israelites’ focus was on what God has done, is doing and will do.

Bosch contends that if there is a “missionary” in the Old Testament, it is God Himself who will bring the nations to Jerusalem for worship. A crucial task for today’s church is to test whether its understanding of Christ is aligned with His first witnesses.

In terms of the New Testament exaltation of Jesus is the sign of the victory of Jesus over satan. Mission means the proclamation and manifestation of Jesus' all embracing reign (Bosch 1991:40).

2.11 The Gospels and Mission

The majority of contemporary Christian scholars generally concede that the book of Matthew was essentially written as a missionary text to provide guidance to the crisis of the early church in understanding her calling and mission.

Matthew wishes to convey self-confidence to the Christian community and embolden its members toward seeing opportunities for witness and service.

(Bosch 1991:59). To Matthew, Christians find their true identity when they are involved in mission and in committing themselves to the salvation of others.

(Bosch 1991:83).

Mission is the dominating theme in the book of Luke. Luke expresses three fundamental concerns:

- 1) Centrality of the poor in the ministry of Jesus
- 2) The laying aside of vengeance
- 3) The Gentile mission

Luke's entire understanding of the Christian mission has several tenets:

(Luke 24:46-49)

- It fulfills scriptural promises.
- Its main emphasis is the message of repentance and forgiveness.
- The mission is intended for "all nations."
- The mission is to begin in Jerusalem and executed by witnesses.

- The mission will be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke emphasizes that the Holy Spirit not only institutes mission, He also guides the missionaries about where they should go and how they should proceed (Bosch 1991). Clearly, Luke indicates that the missionaries are not to execute their own plans, but rather, they must wait on the Spirit to direct them. Thus, we see that the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers to mission (Lk 24:49, Acts 1:8). It is the Spirit that emboldens the previously timid disciples. It is through the Spirit that God is in control of the mission.

2.12 Mission as Witness

To further understand Luke's paradigm for mission, it is crucial to grasp a thorough understanding of the word "witness". In the book of Acts, "witness" becomes the appropriate term for mission. Although the term is used by Jesus to the disciples in Jn 15:27, the term is expanded and applied to others such as Paul and Stephen.

Verkuyl (1978) cogently summarises that the New Testament is a book of mission. It owes its very existence to the missionary work of the early Christian churches, both Jewish and Hellenistic. The gospels are live recordings of missionary preaching. The epistles are also authentic and actual instruments of mission work.

In each of the four gospels and Acts a mission mandate was given by Jesus. The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to proclaim the message by word and witness (Mk 16:20). A clear caveat to today's church is: when the church refuses to heed Christ's command and neglects His orders, she grieves and

sabotages the work of the Holy Spirit, for a time. Because mission belongs to the very core of the church's being (Verkuyl 1978:112).

H. Kraemer concurs with Verkuyl when he states a very penetrating and sobering remark:

A church without a mission is a galvanized corpse.
(Verkuyl 1978: 113).

The relationship between the church and God makes the church, in a very unique sense, God's own possession. The Apostle Peter declared this when he wrote: "Ye...are a people for God's own possession." (I Peter 2:9 ASV). Thus we see a unique relationship between the church and God which makes the church peculiarly His possession (Peters 1972:203).

Because the church is God's own unique creation and not the result of historical and natural processes, she has been designed for a unique purpose and mission. Therefore, the church's design, mission, and purpose constitute her task.

Guder (2002:8) quotes Karl Barth when he attested: "...the church) is a human community called to the act of mission." This infers that the church's primary calling is in its "witness."

Glasser and McGavran (1983) both posit, however, that during the last forty years the theological crisis over the nature of the church and mission has become acute. They propose that this crisis has been precipitated largely by questions concerning the nature of religious authority. The crisis of faith in churches over the issue of religious authority is now a very real contemporary issue. Resolution of the issue depends exclusively whether the Bible is regarded

as God’s authoritative revelation – or simply as one of many “revelations of God” or the religious insights of people. The authors assert that one’s definition of “mission” and “theology of mission” will be formed based on the presuppositions held on this crucial point.

2.13 A Contemporary Understanding of Church and Mission

Western culture, particularly takes a reductionist view of church in relation to mission: *mission, missions, missionary* and *mission field*, all denote the idea of expansion. *Mission or missions* is viewed as an activity from the West to other parts of the world. A *missionary* is the agent of this expansion and *missiology* is the discipline that studies the issues arising from this expansion.

Factors challenging the reductionist view of mission need to be understood by a fuller Biblical understanding. First, mission must be viewed as communication – not as mission as expansion. The mission has to do with the communication of the gospel to peoples of the world.

Furthermore, mission should not be defined geographically; but rather in terms of the calling of the Church to bear witness of the gospel in life, word, and deed in all parts of the world. (Goheen 1999:2).

More than 100 years ago mission was theologically justified as the outpost of world secularization. Following WWI, other theological justifications for cross-cultural witness included that of Johannes Hoekendijk who defined mission as:

- Proclamation (kerygma)
- Fellowship (koinonia)
- Service (diakonia)

His theology of mission was taken from the first book of Acts. Evangelism became the chief end of mission. (Glasser and McGavran 1983).

Mission today is defined from several perspectives: “Everything done outside our four walls.” “Everything the church does for non-members.” “More direct action to achieve more justice in human relationships.” “God wants justice on earth..those carrying direct action to achieve it are doing God’s mission.” (Glasser and McGavran 1983:17). “The world is the target of mission...mission is rooted in the nature of God who sends and saves.” (Van Rheezen 1996:14). Piper (2003:10) defines mission as, “...going out for the sake of the Name (3Jn 1:7).” Warner (1999:85) views the task of the church as “bridge-building communities.” Guder (2002:11) defines “mission” as “the church exists in being sent and in building itself up for the sake of its being.”

Another integrated theologically liberal definition of “mission” is proposed by the World Council of Churches who has made a point of integrating mission with the established church, thus affecting the meaning of the word “mission.” They proposed the making of a new world order as the task of mission.

“Mission” meant the following:

- The bringing in of a new humanity
- Outlawing all forms of oppression and distress
- Humanisation as the goal of mission
- Presence as the most desirable form of mission
- Rejoice in secularization: Church needs conversion to the world.

(Glasser and McGavran 1983:18).

Although the definition of mission may vary among missiologists, never-the-less, the clear biblical mandate is for the 21st century church to work towards a more unified and global advance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Next, we will examine a classical biblical definition of mission.

2.14 Classical Biblical Definition of Mission

Scholars (Bosch, MacKay, Newbigin, Guder) have shown us that God has designed the church for a specific and unique mission. The question that arises among many contemporary missiologists is “What precisely comprises ‘mission?’

Glasser and McGavran (1983: 27) define “mission” from a western perspective when they contend:

Carrying the gospel across cultural boundaries to those who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ, and encouraging them to accept Him as Lord and saviour and to become responsible members of His church, working, as the Holy Spirit leads, at both evangelism and justice, at making God's will done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The authors contend that use of the word “mission” must keep the Great Commission at the forefront of one’s passion. The clear biblical goal of discipling all the peoples of the earth must be diligently maintained.

Approaches and goals of mission must be validated by Scripture which gives priority to discipling *panta ta ethne* (all the peoples). The call is for today’s church to listen to the Word of God – only when the church

understands the total revelation of God concerning the mission of His people, will they offer to Him their all in all to carry out His will among the nations.

Goheen (1999) views the mission of the church, however, in the context of the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God to redeem creation. The church is sent by Jesus Christ to continue His mission. *Mission* is the sending of the church into the world by God to witness to the kingdom – not simply the sending of a few individuals to remote parts of the world by a mission board. *Mission* takes place in, to, and from all six continents – from the West, but also to the West. (Goheen 1999:3).

Taylor (1968:31) more than forty years ago, uttered a cautionary note concerning the wide interpretation of *missio Dei*:

There is a real danger lest the blanket phrase “*missio Dei*” which is meant to establish the divine initiative, is worded so vaguely that it includes the whole action of God throughout time and space, as though, if He chose, God might have accomplished the renewal of man without Christ.

McGavran and Glasser (1983:165) posit that liberation theologies have given place to the secularised *missio Dei* as relating to anything one thinks God is doing in the world today as the Church’s “mission,” thus transforming the *missio Dei* into politics.

Guder (2002) cogently asserts that the call of the church today is to become a “missional” church – one that recognises the inter-relations of the Trinity as a

process of sending: the Father sending the Son, the Father and the Son sending the Spirit.

2.15 Mission of God Today

God's mission mandate is far older than the Great Commission given by our Lord in the four Gospels. This thesis gave biblical-historical evidence that it goes back to the Old Testament book of Genesis (Gen 12:1-3), to the beginning of the Jewish nation. Although rooted in the Old Testament, it is reiterated in the New Testament (Mat 28:19; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47; John 20:21-22; Acts 1:8). The Christian mission, therefore does not rest on one solitary command or two or three isolated verses; rather it is grounded in the entire body of scripture. The Holy Spirit is the originator, director, and power of the Christian mission; God is the *source* of mission; Christ is the *message* of mission; the church is the embodiment of mission. Mission constitutes the primary work of the church (Peters 1982:166).

Clearly, it is evident that the ultimate purpose of the mission of God today is to re-establish an intimate relationship of unredeemed mankind to God to enable them to live under His sovereignty both in this world and in the world to come. It was Yahweh, the Lord, the covenant God of Israel, who summoned all nations to Himself with the words:

Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth;
for I am God and there is no other. (Isa 45:22).

Seamonds (1988) posits that the church is an organism, not just an organization. Rather, it is a living fellowship where the Spirit of God is present and working – an instrument of Christ – not simply an institution. In the New Testament,

Seamands reminds us, the church is spoken of as “the body of Christ.” His point of contact with the world. Seamands further proposes that the mission of the church is the mission of Christ: to seek and rescue the lost and to give itself for the salvation of others.

Therefore, the church should be viewed in functional terms of movement, ministry, and sharing. The church is both the gathering and scattering of the people of God – gathering for worship – scattering for witness and service.

Seamands compares the mission of the contemporary church as a pool of water into which thousands of pebbles are dropped. Concentric circles move out from the place where each pebble breaks the surface, and the circles mingle with one another until the whole pool is agitated.

There is not just one centre from which the circles expand; there are centres everywhere...wherever there is a church...or an individual Christian, the mission begins. From the centre it moves out until it involves the church and the Christian in the evangelization of the whole world (Seamands 1988:21).

Seamands cogently asserts that if the church is going to disciple the +3 billion non-Christians and lift to genuine commitment the +700 million nominal Christians, it must define the goal of mission as:

Enabling multitudes to receive eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The church’s calling is to remain faithful to God’s plan disclosed in scripture. The mission of the church is an eschatological activity of salvation history. The kingdom of God rather than the planting of a universal church is the goal of the *missio dei*. Missionary vision that sees movement toward the kingdom of God as

the goal of mission and the servant church as the privileged instrument of the kingdom...opens up new dimensions for the church's mission planning and strategy (Martinson: 1999:17,18).

The priority should be: God-world-church; not God-church-world. God is calling the church to act like Christ's followers in the world: exude kindness and generosity; cultivate a quiet Christian presence with genuine Christian conduct. Remember that God is at work more outside the church than in it. (Glasser & McGavran 1983:21).

2.16 Bridging the Theological Relationship

Woodberry, Engen, and Elliston (1996:24) contend that one way to bridge the theological relationship between God and the Church is to recognise that theology is the daughter of mission, not its mother.

Importantly, most of the theology in the New Testament was worked out in response to mission problems (Acts 15). Theology viewed in light of Acts 15 would argue that missionaries need the help of theologians and theologians would find their work relevant to everyday life (Woodberry, et al. 1996:38). Too often the gospel has been equated with one's own cultural ways, thus failing to contextualise it in new cultures. Throughout church history the established church has wedded the gospel to its own culture. Woodberry (et al. 1996:40) issue a warning, however:

We must remember, however, that the gospel is not a message to be understood, but a call to be obeyed.

The authors contend that cross-cultural workers must go beyond contextualisation to an inculturation in which the gospel leads to personal and corporate transformation. It is essential to move from an emphasis on the church and the world, to God and God's kingdom.

Mission workers need to move beyond evangelism and church planting to a focus on the kingdom of God as defined by Jesus Christ, its King. Mission is first and foremost the work of God: *missio Dei*.

2.17 Task of Mission

Martinson (1999) contends that the first task of mission is theological understanding. To understand that God has gone before us in His mission. It entails asking the Holy Spirit to assist us in discerning the truth of the gospel revealed in Christian tradition that is present.

Guder (2002) posits that the formation of the church for mission should be the motivating force that shapes and energises our theological labors in all their diversity and distinctiveness. How do we understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the formation of the church? What have the old churches of the West perhaps lost with regard to the power and work of the Holy Spirit which was present in early Christianity: these are all challenges for the missional theologian.

Christian mission in the twenty-first century has become the response of a global church. The new missionary force today is transcultural witnessing for Christ (Escobar 2003). In the twenty-first century Christian mission has become international, the church needs a paradigm change in our way of studying it.

According to Escobar (p.15) the global South (South America, Africa, Asia) have set a new set of questions regarding the facets of Christian mission:

- (1) How will Christian mission be supported?
- (2) What is an appropriate lifestyle for cross-cultural workers?
- (3) What methodologies will be used for evangelisation?
- (4) Which target fields to travel to?
- (5) What is the relevance of missionary presence in various parts of the world today?

Missiologial reflection must start with commitment to the absolute authority of God's Word. Today's contemporary cross-cultural worker must have an understanding of the Bible that takes into account its cultural setting.

Former missiologist, David Bosch, similiarly emphasised:

Our point of departure should not be the contemporary enterprise that we seek to justify, but the Biblical sense of what being sent into the world signifies. (Escobar 2003:19)

Escobar posits that the foundation of the Christian missionary task is part of the fundamental reason for the church's existence.

2.18 Missional Theology

According to Guder (2002) the term "missional" is of recent coinage. Guder serves as the first incumbent of the Luce Chair in Missional and Ecumenical Theology at Princeton Seminary, USA. He cites Karl Barth, who in the 1930s gave a profound and shaping impulse to the reorientation of western ecclesiology regarding the discussion of mission. The focus then was changing from a "church centered mission" to a mission centered church."

Three motifs impressed Guder to propose a “missional theology” and a “missional church.” First, It was due to the widespread consensus among missiologists that the “church is missionary by its very nature”. Second, because western tradition had for so long ignored the missionary character of the church. Third, that since the 1930s a course correction was appearing with the emerging of missiology and ecclesiology. A way of doing theology is currently being shaped by this consensus in which we must think in terms of “missional theology due in large part to the missional character of the church.

Guder (2002) gives a succinct definition of a missional church:

...the church’s mission is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for the sake of its being.

The motive of missional theology, as defined by Guder, is derived from the church’s missional vocation. That vocation being the intentional will and command of our Lord according to I Peter 2:9:

You shall be my witnesses; as my Father has sent me, so I send you; Go into all the world and disciple the nations; you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that it may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called it out of darkness into His marvelous light.

When mission accompanies theology, when it defines the way theology works, then it becomes the task of such missional theology to accompany and support the church in its witness by testing all that the church says and does in terms of its calling to be Christ’s witness to the world (Guder 2002).

The formation of the church for mission should be the motivating force that shapes and energises all theological labors in all their diversity and

distinctiveness. Guder (2002) contends that the global church, the “great new fact of our time,” will constantly demonstrate the fundamental translatability of the gospel, its powerful destigmatisation of all cultures, and its concomitant relativisation of all cultures.

McGavran and Glasser (1983) contend that the only valid test for any theology of mission is to evaluate it from the perspective of whether it meets our Lord’s command to make Jesus Christ known, loved, and served throughout the world; Does it constrain Christians to carry out His final commands to proclaim the gospel to the total human family? Does it issue a call to spiritual conversion? Finally, does a theology of mission make possible the healing, liberating, and serving presence of Jesus Christ? Mission is carrying out God’s command to bring His salvation to all peoples (Isa. 49:6). World evangelisation should be at the very heart of Christian mission.

Glasser contends that the contemporary world calls theology to recover its missiological dimension. He proposes five criteria as being significant:

- Biblical theology must retain the dynamic element of revelation-as-process.
- Covenantal dimension: divine truth is radically transforming faithfulness in word and deed to God’s faithfulness through application.
- Theology must be culture-specific in recognition of the receptor-oriented character of divine revelation.
- In the process of doing theology we seek to recapture the evangelical task of theology as confession before men.

- How can theology function to confront the agendas of human cultures and challenge the socio-cultural ideologies of the world's societies?

2.19 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated from the Old and New Testament Scriptures that God's relationship with the church is intimately bound up with His saving plan that moves from creation in Genesis to new creation, and as framing the entire story of Scripture. It is a mission-focused relationship and is ultimately related with God's salvation reaching the ends of the earth: which is His gracious movement in His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue a desperately needy world that is in rebellion against Him.

This chapter evidenced that there are those looking for a biblical foundation of mission, who often glean so-called "missionary texts" from the Bible (Jonah, Ruth, Psalms, Isaiah) to under gird contemporary mission enterprise. Isolated texts are also taken from the New Testament (Mt 28:18-20) and isolated from the rest of the Gospel. Some would assume that they already knew what "mission" was and only had to prove that it was mandated by Scripture. To these people, their assumption was that the modern era of mission meant the geographical movement from a Christian locality to a pagan locality for the purpose of winning converts and planting churches. For these workers, the term "mission" depicts those who were sent to distant lands to re-convert protestants or convert pagans. Some with a western paradigm of mission view the term "mission" as being bound up with colonial expansion of the one and only true religion of Christianity.

This chapter has shown that in spite of these earlier connotations of “mission,” the term “mission” can boast a clear biblical pedigree within the context of “sending.” This suggest that if one wants to establish a clear biblical foundation for mission, he must not seek to justify our contemporary enterprise, but rather expand on the biblical sense of what it means to be sent into the world.

I agree with Phillips and Coote (1993:176-177) who posit that the validity of mission should not be taken from isolated passages of Scripture, but rather view mission as the very heart of the biblical message.

The fact that the church is a truly global movement, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-structural, should result in a theological manner that is modest, aware of its limitations and open to learning through interaction with the ecumenical church.

Contemporary world-wide disciples of Jesus Christ who follow in the footsteps of the early first century apostles are caught up in God’s majestic saving plan and because of their identity with Jesus, the church continues God’s mission. Today, I believe God is calling the church to model Christ and His early followers in a global world in which the church may effectively function in harmony with its mission.

Chapter 3: The Church Working in Harmony With Its Mission

The purpose of this chapter is to identify factors that contribute to the challenge of the church working in harmony with its mission. The central mission of the church coupled with the aim of mission – past and present will be expounded. From the authority of the Scriptures, the Pauline-missionary relationship of the church and mission will be discussed to shed important light on this contemporary issue.

Additionally, the chapter will offer recommendations for bridging the gap between the church working in harmony with its mission. Finally, an examination of an interdisciplinary approach to mission action and the role missiological education plays in the twenty-first century missional church will be considered.

What is the mission of the church? This thought-provoking question must be answered through the lens of the traditional interpretation of the use of the word “mission.” The traditional interpretation of “mission” was modified in the 20th century. As for the Christian church, theology and mission, the following factors influenced this modification: First, due to the advance of science and technology, faith in God seems to have become redundant. Second, de-Christianisation of the West. Western Christians often suffer from a sense of guilt due to their past suppression of other races; this circumstance leads to an unwillingness to share their Christian faith with people of other persuasions. In Europe and North America in the 1980s, more than 50,000 people per week were leaving the Christian church (Bosch 2004:3).

Third, due to a religiously pluralist world, devotees of other faiths are often more actively missionary than members of Christian churches are. Fourth, the world's division between rich and poor cause the poor to be angry and frustrated. The rich are reluctant to share their faith due to this dichotomy. What has resulted in mission circles in recent decades is a paradigm shift in mission and theology on a global level (Bosch 2004).

3.1 Primary Mission of the Church

Although mission belongs to the very nature of the church, we must not view the church as the end of mission. Rather, the nature and source of mission is: Saving action of God precedes the church and mission; the church is not the starting point nor the goal of mission; rather the church is one sent on a mission. The missionary obligation of the church is manifold: authority of faith, evangelism, and the life of the church. The church sent in mission is for the ultimate Reign of God.

As mission belongs to the very nature of the church, there are no geographical boundaries. Mission is to be carried out by the whole church because mission of God takes place in all six continents. According to Martinson (1999) mission is to be carried out in partnership rather than in a model suggesting any kind of dominance of one Christian community over another. Mission should be understood as "God's mission – *missio Dei*; the church participates in this mission.

Foundational missiological concerns of the church should be to communicate the gospel message to peoples who have not heard the good news, or have not heard it in a way they can either accept or reject it (Martinson 1999:23).

World Mission conferences (1910-1996) from Edinburgh to Bahia, have recognized that a separation of mission agencies from local churches is yet a further contradiction. Mission is not seen as an activity limited to the formation of Christian communities but is seen much more comprehensively as God's communication to all peoples – an activity which the church is called to participate in.

Mission is not solely focused on the church, rather the church is sent in mission. Mission is at the heart of the Christian community; it is the dynamism that enables its members to go out to those who have not heard about God's infinite love for them (Martinson 1999:24).

McGavran and Glasser (1983) reminds us that God has given the church many tasks to perform, such as the following:

- Evangelising the world
- Assembling for Christian worship
- Adoration of God
- Systematic instruction in His Word
- Rearing children in the fear of the Lord
- Application of Christ's teachings on individual and corporate levels

McGavran and Glasser view the primary mission of the church as being twofold:

One, telling everyone everywhere of God's provision of salvation. And secondly, teaching that the church is both the Body of Christ and God's instrument for the propagation of the gospel and the spread of His kingdom:

The primary task of the church is to call men and women from death to life (baptized, obedient believers). The church is the most powerful instrument known for ushering in a more peaceful just, and harmonious society (McGavran 1983:105).

The local congregation is the primary unit and agent for mission. Participation in God's mission is the primary task of each Christian and belongs to all local congregations. Martinson (1998:28) writes:

Every Christian community has a mission
that begins locally and does not stop
until it embraces the world.

The local church, wherever it may be, is the primary structure for mission. If all Christian communities are both givers and receivers of mission, we need to strategise so that true giving and receiving can happen with integrity. Non-western mission agencies are sending missionaries at a rate four times higher than the West. The passion and witness of Christians in developing countries are desperately needed by the churches of the West.

3.2 Task of the Holy Spirit

While the primary task of the church is to send forth a clarion call to reconcile sinful man to God, it is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity

who empowers believers to lead holy and righteous lives in fervent, intelligent evangelism of *panta ta ethne* (all people everywhere). The church can only work in harmony with its mission as it is dynamically empowered by the Holy Spirit. God's empowering presence and the church is most effective in mission when its members are in continual life-giving contact with the Holy Spirit. There is a fundamental need for the church to live continually in the experience and power of the Holy Spirit; an initial Pentecostal endowment is not enough; neither is a second or subsequent blessing – we need to “live in the Spirit.” (Peskett and Ramachandra 2003).

McGavran (1983:107) concurs that factors which create growth and expansion of the church in new territories are created through the work of the Holy Spirit who brings about conditions which enable God's people to multiply throughout the earth.

3.3 Aim of Mission: Past and Present

With reference to mission stratification, Bosch(2004) reflects on earlier missionary motives and their target aims and objectives which he describes as impure motives:

- a) Imperialistic motives that turned natives into docile subjects of colonial authorities.
- b) Cultural motive: mission workers who transferred his “superior” culture.
- c) Romantic motive: desire to go far away to exotic places.
- d) Motive of ecclesiastical colonialism: to export one's own church

to other territories.

Bosch proposes that the problem stems from the heart of the western church itself and criticises the church for propagating individualism and values of the west, instead of proclamation of the gospel.

Bosch proposes more theologically-adequate motives for mission stratification:

- Motive of conversion: personal decision and commitment
- Eschatological motive: reign of God is a future reality.
- Motive of church planting: gathering of a community of the committed.
- Philanthropic motive: church seeking justice in the world

3.4 Mission-Church Tensions

It is difficult and complex to clearly define the real issues of mission-church tensions. Therefore, it must be recognised that the concerns differ with missions, churches, people, and times. For example, denominational missions may not face the same problems as do interdenominational missions. There are great variations in mission and church organisations regarding background, training, home-church relationships and theological concepts of mission workers. It must be remembered that mission-church relationships are involved in missionary principles.

3.5 Obstacles to Mission

Van Engen believes that the ecclesiology of churches stemming from the reformation is an obstacle to mission today and pleads for a new mission-

oriented ecclesiastical paradigm that is dynamic, constantly changing and growing (Martinson 1999). Church mission relationship has become seriously blurred and is not biblically defined or clearly understood. A serious dichotomy between church and mission societies has developed.

Why?

The reasons appear to be the non-relationship between many churches and mission societies. The relationship is not fully understood, thus suffers in its deepest levels. The depth and nature of abnormal relationship between mission-church are not fully grasped and dealt with in realistic terms.

3.6 Pauline Mission-Church Relationship

In these days of mission-church tensions, we do well to look more closely to the Apostle Paul as an example and to the Holy Spirit to show us some guiding principles of partnership in mission. The Apostle Paul expresses his missionary-church relationship in Phillipians 1:5:

Your fellowship (*koinonia*) in the gospel from
the first day until now.

The key word in that phrase is "*koinonia*" which translates as "fellowship... joint participation, partnership, partner, sharing of friendship, partnership in the work of Christ (Peters 1982:233). This clearly indicates Paul's mission-church relationship principle: A relationship of partnership although closely related to an intimately bound up in the life of the churches, Paul was not so completely merged with the churches and submerged in ministry that his divine calling as a missionary to the nations was imperiled. He labored in partnership with the

churches. It never became a question which ministry belonged to the mission and which to the churches, because it was a total partnership from the beginning.

3.7 Partnership in Mission

Partnership in mission is a sacred and comprehensive concept of equals bound together in mutual confidence, unified in purpose and united in effort. A church-mission partnership that accepts equal responsibilities, authority, praise and blame. It entails joint planning, joint programming and involves sending and receiving churches on an equal basis.

Partnership of equality and mutuality in missions is:

- A spiritual relationship
- A social relationship
- A theological relationship

Partnership is a relationship which has at its roots in our identification with the churches on the deepest levels and in our fellowship in the Spirit. Partnership belongs to the nature of Christianity; it is not optional – it is bound up in Christian fellowship and progress (Peters 1982).

The principle of partnership is comprehensive and becomes determining in programming, planning, financial appointment and assignments as they involve both the mission and the churches. True partnership involves equality and mutuality to overcome hindrances to the challenge of the church working in harmony with its mission.

3.8 Challenges of the Church Working in Harmony with its Mission

Neglect of mission is the major factor that contributes to the challenge of the church working in harmony with its true mission. Dr. George Robson attests this concern when he states:

...Many congregations are sterilized by their self-centered character. The world-wide duty of the congregation is relegated to a secondary place and the congregation is proportionately non-efficient for the chief purpose of the church. What is needed is that all endeavors should be ...ordered as to sub-serve and culminate in a world-wide service. (Peters 1983: 349).

Missions properly rooted in Christ and motivated by the Holy Spirit ceases to be a burdensome duty of the church. Rather, it becomes the outflow of the life of the church. A church that does not recognise the primacy of mission deprives herself of the most intimate relationship with her Lord, fails to identify herself with the primary purpose of God, robs her membership of the deepest experiences of the Holy Spirit, and denies the world the greatest blessings the Lord of grace has provided. She ceases to be truly Christian (Peters 1982:350).

The crisis of mission is due in part to the crisis of the Christian community in the West, as has already been expounded in chapter two of this thesis. Communities of faith in the West need to recapture the theme that the church is an instrument of God's mission. Engle (Martinson 1999:276) gives a caveat at this juncture:

We are developing a world-wide view that cannot be defended scripturally and it is little wonder that vitality is draining so rapidly from our western churches.

Engle believes that the root problem of churches working in harmony with its mission is because the churches are too frequently pre-occupied with institutional loyalties and programme concerns.

Further challenges of the church include the following:

- Attempts to make sense of the gospel in a postmodern world
- Communicating in ways that hold meaning yet remain true to the gospel.
- Ways to share salvation history and basic doctrines as justification by grace through faith.
- Ways to globalise the church
- Training church members to see and think globally
- Training church members to see themselves as players in a global mission of Christ.

A lack of passion for God is another challenge to the church working in harmony with its mission. Andrew Murray announced this truth one-hundred years ago when he stated:

As we seek to find out why, with such millions of Christians, the real army of God that is fighting the hosts of darkness is so small, the only answer is this – lack of heart. The enthusiasm of the kingdom is missing. And that is because there is so little enthusiasm for the King.
(Murray 1979:133)

The zeal of the church for the glory of God must saturate all teaching and preaching. Compassion for the lost, although a high motive for mission work is not easily sustained as a motivating factor for the church in mission. Rather a

passion and zeal for the glory of God will motivate the church to work in harmony with its mission.

3.9 Interdisciplinary Approach to Mission Action

Escobar (2003) contends an interdisciplinary approach to mission action between the church and mission. He concurs with Peters (1982) and Martinson (1999) that the foundation of the Christian missionary task is part of the fundamental reason for the church's existence. With the decline of Christianity in the global north (North America and Europe) the new immigrant third world churches have imported "mission" on their own doorstep. Older, traditional western denominations express discomfort at a new partnership to carry on mission around the world. Escobar (pg.11) refutes such limited vision by stating:

The heart of mission is the drive to share
the good news with all, to cross every
border with the gospel.

Zeal for the glory of God should motivate the church to engage in missions. That Christ became a servant to show God's truthfulness and to confirm God's promises are facts that should motivate churches to mission action.

3.10 Role of Theological Education

Another interdisciplinary approach to mission action involves examining the role that theological education plays in equipping its members for service.

As the church faces the task of working in harmony with its mission, consideration needs to be given to the role that theological education plays in fulfilling the church's mission.

If mission is the basic reason for the existence of the church, our theological institutions must be proponents of mission education. Siewart and Valdex (1999:43) propose accomplishing this task in the following ways:

- Gifted students need to be cultivated for cross-cultural ministry.
- Each faculty member and student needs to be a global citizen
- Study of sociology and anthropology in ministerial training will equip persons for dialogue in the world and assist in personal spiritual formation.
- Assisting churches to be globally sensitive and, yet theologically sound
- Assisting churches to be involved in reaching those without the gospel
- Defining the role of the local congregation in global mission
- Assisting the local congregation to be the primary unit and agent for mission

The interest in globalising theological education over the past twenty years has given new prominence to the issue of missiology's role in seminary curriculum. David Bosch (1991:44, 48) proposed the place of missiology in seminary education curriculum as follows:

- 1) Appending missiology to an existing discipline such as practical theology to become "the study of self-realisation of the church in missionary situations."
- 2) Introduction of missiology as a theological discipline in its own right – resulting in it becoming "a science of the missionary for the missionary."
- 3) Incorporating missiology into other theological disciplines so that the missionary dimension is introduced into the entire field of theology.

Van Engen (Woodberry et al 1996: 208-231) similarly expresses the need for a full-fledged missiology that would “emanate in biblically informed and contextually appropriate missional action.” (221) To identify broad similarities in missiology is not to gloss over the very real questions that need to be discussed, such as:

What is the place of missions in seminary curriculum?

What is the goal of missiology? Action or reflection?

Are theological schools training the masses of missionaries or educating the elite, the leaders and the educators? (Woodberry, et al 1996: 271).

When discussing the question of how we should be educating for mission in order to equip the church to work in harmony with its mission, we must not overlook the large number of world area students who need appropriate training for them to return to their countries to work and teach cross-culturally. (Martinson 1999:309).

However, a caveat by Robert Schreiter (in Martinson 1999) contends that to focus too heavily on culture and the dynamics of cross-cultural communication in theological education of missionaries and missiologists can lead one to neglect the important aspects of one’s faith; for this reason spiritual formation becomes a necessary aspect of missiological education.

Woodberry (et al 1996:271) similarly concurs with Schreiter to incorporate spiritual formation into missiological education and calls us to face “the challenge to keep in balance the inherent tensions among the spiritual, academic, and the practical. Creative partnerships in missiological education should include multi-

cultural and multi-ethnic mission teams around the world demonstrating the unity of Christ's body by sharing insights they have observed around the globe.

The aforementioned critical issues should impact the programme planning of multi-modal tasks for global seminaries. Higher education institutions of theological learning must consider these issues as they contemplate contemporary and biblically-relevant ways to assist churches to work in harmony with their mission in a radically changing global society.

3.10 Recommendations

Churches who have lost their zeal for mission will require a new vision to break out of the present stalemate toward a different kind of missionary involvement: a new paradigm for mission must emerge. Mission must include witness as one of the essential dimensions.

Today, the church in mission may be described in terms of sacrament and sign. It is a sign in terms of a symbol or model; it is a sacrament in the sense of representation. The church is not identical to God's reign – yet not unrelated. The church is a foretaste of God's reign to come. The church exists then, in creative tension of being called out of the world and sent into the world. The church's challenge is to be God's experimental garden on earth – a fragment of the reign of God – as a pledge of what is to come (Bosch 2004:11).

The church's self-understanding must be transformed from a non-missionary to a missionary self-image.

The church must view herself as existing to communicate the good news of the kingdom of God. She must recover the missionary nature of the church.

Along with an inner missionary consciousness, the church must exhibit an outer missionary encounter with her culture. The church must confront the idols of the reigning worldview. She will refuse to live in comfortable cohabitation with powers that contradict the reign of God (Goheen 1999).

3.11 Missiological Implications

Plus or minus 3 billion people still need to hear the claims of the gospel. Plus or minus 1.1 billion people will never hear the claims of the gospel unless someone goes to their people group. Today, the world still contains 10,000 unreached people groups. Only 4,000 of the 332,000 global missionaries are deployed to evangelise them. Only 1.2 percent of missionary funding and missionaries go to these unreached peoples. Of more than 6,500 languages, 4,000 do not have any portion of the Bible available. (Ryken 2003).

These sobering statistics indicate the overriding implication for the mission of the contemporary church: the need to see itself more consciously in relation to the mission of Jesus. The New Testament Apostle John conceived the mission of the Christian community as the mission of the exalted Jesus carried out through His followers.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter examined five primary challenges of the church working in harmony with its mission. Initially, scholars have proposed that many of the challenges are due in large part because of the church's neglect of missions. The church often fails to recognise the primacy of mission and does not view her primary mission as existing to communicate the good news of the kingdom of God. This apathy results in a lack of zeal for mission. A second contributing factor which prevents the church from working in harmony with its mission is the church's pre-occupation with institutional loyalty and programme concerns. Too often, local "church growth" receives higher priority than the church being sent in mission. The third tragic result is the church's failure to view herself as an instrument of God's mission. Unfortunately, there is a critical and fractured church-mission relationship whereby the church fails to think and act globally for the glory of God; she ceases to view herself as an instrument of God's mission.

Additionally, this chapter examined the fourth key factor which hinders positive church-mission relationship: when churches view the gospel as irrelevant in a post-modern world. The result is extreme apathy. Finally, we see that each of these hindrances result in a gross lack of passion for God in which the church conforms to the pattern of post-Christian times.

To unite the relationship between church and mission will require an interdisciplinary approach with church, mission entities, and theological

institutions working in harmony and partnership to accomplish the biblical goals of the *missio Dei, panta ta ethne* (all people everywhere).

Jesus became a servant in order to:

- Show God's truthfulness
- Confirm God's promises

These irrefutable facts should motivate churches everywhere to work in partnership and harmony with its mission.

The searching question we must ask is: *What are the keys to the church working in harmony with its mission?* In addition to an interdisciplinary approach to mission, chapter four of this thesis will seek to discuss ways in which the church must seek a biblical-holistic paradigm for working in harmony with its mission.

Chapter 4:

Recovering the Biblical Holistic Concept of Christian Mission

The purpose of this chapter is to identify ways in which the church may recover a biblical holistic concept of Christian mission. The word “holistic” is commonly used today. It infers that the church must be concerned with the whole individual and the whole society. McGavran and Glasser contend that true holism has always marked the mission of the church; Jesus stated this clearly in Matthew 10:28 NASB :

Do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Christians must first be followers of Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then Jesus will cause them to seek a better social order and to change their society: family, kindred, neighborhood, village or city.

Vermeullen (2005) refers to Costas (1979:xii) when he offers the church this challenge:

The crucial problem in mission today is whether we can overcome our particularities, get a glimpse of its totality, and maintain its integrity...whether we can repossess ...the biblical vision of a holistic mission. The fundamental missiological question...is whether (the church) can recover its wholeness and efficacy, whether we can see it as a whole and live up to its global objectives.

The church today, according to Bosch (2004:8) is called to a new “pioneer task which will be more demanding and less romantic than the heroic deeds of the past missionary era.”

Most evangelical Christians hold that evangelism must be holistic; it must be concerned with the total person; soul as well as body, but more concerned with soul than body. Only as the soul is saved does one become obedient to Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit – only then can the body and society be improved (Glasser and McGavran 1983:67).

Martinson (1999:225) posits that Christians adhere to a biblical-holistic view of mission by responding positively to the growth of non-Christian religions. He firmly believes that Christians must stop thinking of other religions as enemies; rather view them – not as competition, but as the context of mission. He proposes bringing back into biblical focus our understanding of who the enemy really is: the enemy is sin, not people of other religions.

Tidball (2003) believes the church can return to a biblical holistic view of mission by adhering to two missionary principles of Jesus: Dying and loving. Jesus proposed in John 12:24 that there is no life without death. Although the contemporary church often seeks security, prestige, and worldly power, Jesus taught that the church must be prepared to be buried in a world of cruelty, poverty, bigotry, violence and hopelessness – the same world that crucified Him. A biblical holistic church is one that is willing to die to selfish ambitions, plans and projects. The founder of the Iona Community in Scotland proposes such a church:

I simply argue that the Cross be raised again at the centre of the market place as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a Cathedral between two candles, but on a Cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap. The kind of place where thieves talk smut, and

thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died and that is what He died about. And that is where churchmen should be and what churchmen should be about (Tidball 2003:206).

The second missionary principal of Jesus is that of loving. The visible love of disciples for one another is what convinces a skeptical world that the Father has sent the Son into the world (John 17:22-23) to bring about a new creation. When the church learns to die to its own plans and projects can it truly love one another and move forward into every dimension of life under the leading of the triune God of mission.

4.1 Biblical Holistic Mission of the Contemporary Church

Recovering a biblical holistic concept of mission can be clearly seen in the New Testament book of John's epistle. Several keen scriptural insights can be gleaned: First, John proposes that the church must view itself more consciously in relation to the mission of Jesus (as aforementioned in previous chapters of this thesis). To be truly biblical in context, the church must view itself as ultimately carrying out the mission of the exalted Jesus; to see Christ as the headship of His church. To understand that Jesus has not relinquished the ultimate control and direction of the mission of the church.

The contemporary church needs to subordinate itself consciously to the salvation/historical purposes Jesus seeks to pursue in our day. The church needs to evidence greater humility in the conception of its task, acknowledging the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in carrying out God's mission. Recognising that mission work is God's enterprise and not a human enterprise. The church must acknowledge anew the sovereignty of God in its mission: that God is who he

says He is and He has the ultimate power to rule or overrule any human decisions or plans. Additionally, the church must have an unswerving belief that the mission of God in the world cannot be thwarted. When plans and purposes of the church seem to be way laid, workers must maintain a strong faith that God IS at work in spite of the difficulties of the task.

Importantly, the world's rejection of the church (cultural relativism, religious pluralism) should not cause the church to reject the world. At this juncture, the church must maintain a passion for the glory of God and not zeal for the success of any human enterprise. The church's mission should be foundationally based on a spiritually separated life, based on God's word (John 17:17) and preach Jesus Christ as the ONLY way to the Father (John 14:6).

Clearly, we learn that there is contemporary relevance of John's epistle for the church's mission. In an age of pragmatism and pluralism, John calls the church to a return to the simplicity and clarity of biblical teaching on the Christian faith. The church's praxis (mission) must be rooted in ontological realities: a vibrant biblical Christology and soteriology coupled with a proper understanding of the identity of believers in Christ and in the world. The church's mission is not to be carried out as an individualistic enterprise, rather the mission should be undergirded by the corporate life of the community, as believers reflect God's love and unity. (Kostenberger & O'Brien 2001:224).

The overarching implication for the mission of the contemporary church...is its need to see itself more consciously in relation to the mission of Jesus(Kostenberger & O'Brien 2001: 234).

In addition to John's epistle, Kostenberger and O'Brien propose that the New Testament book of Revelation calls the contemporary church to a spiritual transformation whose primary responsibility is to God – not to the sounding Voices of the secular world. The identification figure for the church's witness must be Jesus Himself. The book of Revelation depicts the result of mission: People from every tribe and nation gathered in heaven to worship God and the Lamb (1:7; 4:10; 5:9; 7:4-17; 14:1-5).

4.2 Holistic Ministry of the Church

A searching question the biblical holistic church should be asking is: In what ways should the church respond to suffering and persecution? Kostenberger and O'Brien (2003) contend that a biblical holistic church is called to fulfill a mediatorial function between God and larger humanity through the following:

- Submission to authority
- Non-retaliation
- Love of enemies
- Harmonious, loving, unified relationships
- Perseverance
- Witness of a godly life in the midst of a largely hostile environment.

Suffering and persecution must be viewed through an eschatological perspective to see the transitory nature of affliction in light of Christ's imminent return. This perspective renders hardship more bearable. This encompasses a variety of earthly relationships: as slaves to unbelieving

masters; as wives of unbelieving husbands; as citizens of anti-Christian states (Kostenberger & O'Brien 2003:230).

By living holy lives through witness, Christians reveal to the surrounding world. God's very own nature, just as Israel was called to do. A failure to do so today, is a failure to commend the gospel of Christ by our own lives. Notably, the power to live a holy life is not drawn from one's own moral capacity, but derives from Christ's redemption through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Additionally, there is contemporary relevance in John's epistle for the church's biblical holistic mission. In an age of pragmatism and pluralism, John calls the church to a return to the simplicity and clarity of biblical teaching on the Christian faith. The church's praxis (mission) must be rooted in ontological realities: a vibrant biblical Christology and soteriology and a proper understanding of the identity of believers in Christ and in this world.

4.3 Search For Community

In order to restore today's church to a biblical holistic mission, we must carefully consider that one of the mark's of a post modern society is the search for "community." The use of the word "community" is complicated by the wide diversity of significance it has in different cultural contexts. For example, in the West are those nurtured by rugged individualism and may view "community" as an unwelcome source of restriction. By contrast, those who have been raised in a group-oriented, collectivist culture view

“community” as part of life itself – the very root of personal identity. McCoy (2001:1) illustrates this striking contrast through the well known Xhosa saying:

Umntu ngumntu ngabantu.

(“A person is a person through other people.”)

On the other hand, when common Christians use the word “community” the connotation can mean where two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name, to the solidarity of Christians with the poor and oppressed (Bosch: 1989:137). To alleviate confusion, McCoy posits that the word “community” as a key term in post modern missiology must be viewed from the New Testament inference of relation of faith to Christ. “Community” is then seen as the result of God’s saving, liberating mission in Christ. Christian “community” has to be rooted in relational terms rather than in hierarchial or bureaucratic conceptions. Bosch (2000) affirmed that a recovery of the church as a “community” is central to being a missional church in a post modern setting.

Restoring a biblical holistic mission to the church will entail that the church be a missional congregation who has the capacity to offer people a sense of belonging and to invite them on a journey toward the God who redeems, loves, heals, and reconciles.

4.4 A Missional Community

Guder (1998:204) describes a missional community as the “pilgrim people of God who are on a journey towards the fullness of the reign of God.” The questions churches must be asking is: How can a missional community

engage effectively in global mission issues? What of God's mission beyond the church? Guder posits that this model of missional community will involve creative engagement and practical action. When the local church is viewed as the primary bearer of God's mission, we can view community as a new or emerging paradigm of mission for a post modern world.

4.5 Equipping the Church for a Biblical Holistic Mission

McCoy (2001) expounds on biblical ways in which the church can recover its holistic mission. He first views the church's vocation as that of representing the reign of God as a sign, foretaste, and instrument. Thus, he views the church's calling as one that lives in the world as an apostle of God's reign. The church lives as an alternative community whose inner, communal life matters for mission (quoted in Guder 1998:128). The role of church leadership, according to McCoy, then is one that is forming and equipping a people who demonstrate and announce the purpose and direction of God through Jesus Christ. McCoy posits the vision of a missional community in a post modern society as an holistic approach for several reasons: First, because it transcends familiar dualisms between inner and outer life; between mission and maintenance. Second, it recognises and responds to the search for a sense of belonging in which people seek truth more from personal encounter than ecclesiastical discourse. Thus, missional community becomes less about what Christians "do" and more about who they are and how they live together.

Guder (1998) attests that missional communities welcome and nurture the richness and particular perspectives, backgrounds, and gifts, yet always embracing God's reconciling unity. Guder poignantly reminds the church today:

The life of the church is its witness.
The witness of the church is its life.
The question of authentic witness is the
question of authentic community. (1998:182)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined ways in which the church may recover a biblical holistic concept of Christian mission; one in which the church may recover its wholeness and efficacy and live up to its global objectives. Scholars agree that in order to accomplish this task, the church must be willing to take an integrative approach whereby its concern is for the whole individual within the whole society.

No greater example can be followed to accomplish this task than the example of Jesus Himself when He proposed two missionary principles found in John 12: Dying and loving. Here we learn that a biblical holistic church is one who is prepared to die to selfish plans and ambitions and evidence love for one another as a driving force which moves forward into every dimension of life under the leading of the triune God of mission.

A biblical holistic church will respond positively to the growth of non-Christian religions. Rather than viewing other groups as enemies of Christianity, churches will see them as the very context of mission. The biblical focus should see the enemy as sin – not people of other religions.

Thus, we will see the church as viewing itself as carrying out the mission of the exalted Jesus; that He alone is the head of the church and even in post modernity, He has not relinquished control and direction of the mission of His true Church.

The biblical holistic mission of the church must NOT be carried out as an Individualistic enterprise; rather it should be undergirded by the corporate life of the community. Community must be viewed as the result of God's saving, liberating mission in Christ. Bosch (2000) affirms that a recovery of the church as a "community" is central to being a missional church in a post modern society.

Finally, we learned that a biblical holistic church is one that seeks to be a relational, reconciling, and witnessing community. Guder (1998) concurs as he reminds today's church:

The life of the church is its witness. (1998:182).

The mission responsibility of today's church requires that it keep pace with the rate and nature of change in the culture it seeks to witness to, yet, at the same time recovering biblical humility which conforms to the character and values of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion

Hessig (1981) described the challenges of mission today as the “selfish war.” External forces are challenging classical mission paradigms with extra biblical extrapolation of mission. As well, internal forces within the church are questioning classical modes of mission methodology.

The premise of this thesis was to identify ways in which this tension between church and mission can be used creatively to further God’s mission globally in the 21st century. This thesis has examined the many factors which contribute to the church working in harmony with its mission. Several scholars have proposed reasons for the various tensions which exist between the church’s call to mission stratification. (Kritzinger & Saaymon 1990; Bosch 2004; Martison 1999; Peters 1982; Goheen 1999; Piper 2003). They have identified several key factors which have challenged the church in mission over the last forty years; of which are the following:

- 1) Lack of credibility of the global West (N. America and Europe)
- 2) Mistrust of western technology
- 3) The global West’s lack of evangelistic fervor and passion
- 4) Challenges of emerging theologians
- 5) The shrinking globe
- 6) Religious pluralism which challenges Christianity

This paradigm shift has caused the church to engage in a more interactive and integrated understanding of the relation between church and mission and to reenvision itself as an instrument of God's mission.

Thus, mission must be viewed as the church's service, made possible through Christ's entry into the world.

We must concur with Bosch when he posited that the church's mission cannot be compartmentalised or separated. Twenty-first century church leaders must abandon the thought that missionary work belongs only to a select few super-saint Christians. Rather, they must maintain the biblical holistic concept that all Christians are called by God to be a witness for Christ wherever they may live or work and wholeheartedly accept the sober responsibility of this calling.

5.1 Theological Relationship Between God and the Church

In order for Christian mission to work in harmony with its mission, it must maintain a clear understanding of the vital theological relationship between God and the church.

We saw clearly that a New Testament biblical interpretation of the word "church" signifies a "called out and called unto people." People who God called out and called together for a special purpose. Thus, we learned that the church became God's chosen generation to accomplish His mission to the world.

This thesis has given scriptural insights into God's relationship with the church (Mt, Mk, Acts, Genesis, Daniel, Psalm, Isaiah) that God's mission through Christ conceived the church. Thus, a theology of mission must deal with two

indispensable facts of biblical data: The crucifixion of Christ and His second coming.

5.2 God's Mission or Great Human Enterprise?

One of the questions this thesis sought to answer is: "How can Christian workers distinguish between God's mission or great human enterprise?" To consider the implications of this query, the church must caution against the theology of secularisation where it begins to develop extra biblical extrapolations such as: emphasis on man and his possibilities to a theology that seeks God everywhere as:

- 1) Existential questioning of modern man
- 2) In social change
- 3) In non-violent and blood revolutions

The theology of secularisation begins to denigrate conversion evangelism and the Great Commission, or re-defines them to mean ethical improvement, humane relationships or national developments. Thus in secularising theology, the church views winning men to Christ no longer necessary. Rather than operating on the basis of marketing surveys or mere human strategising, the 21st century church needs to subordinate itself consciously to the salvation historical purposes Jesus seeks to pursue in our day.

What should man's motive for mission be? I concur with the many missiologists cited in this work; that *missio Dei* must provide the highest motivation for

mission. A mission worker's calling is to bring about obedience of faith for the sake of the Name of Christ among all nations.

One of the great challenges that cross-cultural workers face is how to stay balanced and focused on their work when one is tempted to question whether the work as God's mission? or simply a great human enterprise. We must ask ourselves, *Are we serving an institution or a movement of the Spirit of God?* Often, people are sacrificed for programs. It is at this juncture of mission service that one must be reminded that all that is accomplished must be done for the glory of God alone.

Passionate zeal for the name of Jesus should be the driving force. Possessing a holy love that pursues the fullness of God in the soul and in the service of Jesus Christ.

Global Christian workers must guard against God-ignoring, God-neglecting planning or preaching; instead seek to become more God-conscious and God-dependent. It is only man's worship and passionate zeal through the power of the Holy Spirit that will fuel missions.

5.3 Recovering a Biblical Holistic Concept of Christian Mission

A main objective of this thesis was to suggest ways that the church may recover a biblical holistic concept of mission.

The overarching implication for the mission of the church is to see itself more consciously in relation to the mission of Jesus. Thus, the motivation for mission must be the *mission Dei*; the model for mission becomes the incarnation; and the mode of mission is through the power of the Holy Spirit. This entails that the

mission of the Christian community should ultimately be the mission of the exalted Jesus. The church is not to function alongside Jesus or even as a replacement of Him – rather it remains a church under divine orders, empowered by the Holy Spirit to “extend forgiveness in Jesus’ Name to repentant sinners and proclaim the gospel message. (Jn 20:23; 17:20).

5.4 The Incarnation: A Model for Mission

Foundational to the *missio Dei* is the incarnation of Christ’s ministry:

- A Mind through which Christ thinks
- A Heart through which Christ loves
- A Voice through which Christ speaks
- A Hand through which Christ helps (Peters 1972: 281).

The incarnation is at the very heart of the Christian faith (Jn 1:14) and thus becomes a model for personal witness. The incarnation teaches that power, speed, mobility, efficiency, and success (elements which the West has in abundance) cannot be the mode of a truly Christian missionary. Rather, the missiological lessons of the incarnation are clear: As the Father sent Christ into the world – Christ sends us into the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the major aspects of the incarnation means giving up the power, prestige, privilege and social position to which we often feel entitled. Instead, the truly incarnational worker is committed to doing Christ’s mission in Christ’s way. Thus, an incarnational ministry becomes the essential tool in confronting the dark forces of this world:

“Nothing but God’s incarnational strategy
will prevail against the powers of this dark world.”
(Phillips and Coote 1993:303).

5.5 Mode of Mission: Power of the Holy Spirit

To fulfill her mission, the church has to live out the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. The world has to *listen* to the gospel, but it also has to see (*witness*) it in action in the lives of those who profess to be Christians. The church is called to be the community in which the signs of the kingdom are present: love, joy, peace, justice and the power of the Holy Spirit. (Phillips & Coote 1993:133 quoting from:

Emilio Nunez from Guatemala, Central America).

5.6 Ultimate Aim of Missions

The ultimate end of missions is to be in partnership with the Triune God in the fulfillment of the purposes of the Godhead for humankind. The work of God, the *missio Dei* is the only correct mission. The church must continually evaluate its aims, motives, priorities and methods to determine if these are furthering the *missio Dei* or hindering the purposes of God.

James J. Stamoolis assessed the former Soviet Union and Central Asia and offers a clarion call to the 21st century church:

The church’s main task is the proclamation of the liberty and healing gospel of Jesus Christ which transforms the individual and through the community of transformed people, challenges, renews, and recreates society through the life giving power of the Holy Spirit. (Woodberry)

Although, the great challenge to the church in mission is to develop a biblical holistic concept of Christian mission, “In the final analysis” of mission stratification, Wagner (1971:68) reminds us, “strategy is people.” There is a human element in mission work; a person’s mental attitude toward his work has a powerful bearing on how that job is accomplished. One of the great needs among cross-cultural workers today is that of a healthy psychological attitude which will help boost the morale of mission and improve mission strategy from the inside out.

5.7 Conclusion

I believe the great challenge to the 21st century church is to develop a holistic concept of Christian mission. Yet, despite the human element it will be essential that the church never abandon the sovereignty of God in its mission to the world. I believe the church’s foundational mission strategy must mirror Jesus in His total dependence upon God, the Father. The church of Jesus Christ is God’s church. Mission organisations need to be constantly reminded of this truth in order to prevent rigid and legalistic control of their mission enterprise.

God-dependent mission organisations will respond creatively to any paradigm shifts in current mission stratification. Mission strategies will then be the result of the overflow of the church’s delight in acknowledging the supremacy of God and humbly and soberly recognising that had not God sent Jesus Christ into the world – there would be no Church.

In conclusion, this research has provided keener insights into the total Church/Mission relationship over the last forty years.

Additionally, it has enlightened my view of the biblical role of the church in mission; that mission is the church's service made possible by Christ entering the world through His suffering and resurrection. It has assisted my thinking toward a more global concept of Christian mission. Importantly, this study has broadened my concept of Christian mission to enhance a more valid missiological concept, rather than a western ethnocentric paradigm of mission, missions and missionary.

Importantly, the research which included a study of the biblical theology of mission was very enriching and gave me a richer understanding of the deep relationship between God and the church. This relationship began in the book of Genesis and is the running theme throughout the New Testament and into the 21st century; that God is continually drawing and reconciling mankind to Himself. Once reconciled, we have the mandate from God to go forth and expound the Good News to all nations.

Tensions will continue to exist between theological and mission circles. However, by examining and identifying the reasons for the tension, a common denominator may be reached to equip the 21st century church to become all that God planned it to be; a Church sent on a mission for the glory of God Himself. As was previously cited in this thesis, the mission of God in this world cannot be thwarted by sinful human resistance.

Despite the human element, we learn, therefore, that the church must never abandon the sovereignty of God in its mission. As was previously cited in this thesis, the mission of God in this world cannot be thwarted by sinful human

resistance. The church's mission strategy must mirror Jesus in His total dependence upon God, the Father. Cross cultural workers must be filled with unswerving faith, optimism and confidence in the power and victory of the Holy Spirit in order to recover and maintain a true biblical-holistic paradigm to Christian mission.

FIGURE 1:**A Biblical-Theological Sketch of Mission: A Synthesis**

(Notes from: Kostenberger and O'Brien 2001:251)

Scripture Passage:	Scriptural Teaching:
Genesis 3:15	Mission is necessitated by humanity's fall into sin and need for a Saviour; made possible by the saving initiative of God in Christ.
Exodus 19:5-6	As a recipient of divine blessing, Israel is to exalt God (witness) in its life and worship among the nations.
Isaiah 45:22	In gathering of Gentiles, effected by God (the nations come to Israel).
Mark 1:1	Focuses his message on the mission of Jesus; reference is made to the future proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles.
Matthew	Portrays Jesus' mission as proceeding along salvation-historical lines. The Great Commission is extended to all nations. The community of Jesus is sent on a world-wide mission.
Luke and Acts	Tells the story of Jesus and His salvation; Acts traces the movement of that salvation to the Gentiles. Points to Jesus' identification with all people. Even after Jesus' ascension, He never disappears from the scene; rather, He continues to direct and oversee the divine mission. Acts reminds the readers of an unfinished task and urgency to advance the gospel of salvation.
Pauline Epistles	Overall the Pauline mission takes centre stage in Paul's epistles, with the Pauline churches being expected to do their part to spread the gospel (witness) within their sphere of influence.
Gospel of John 4:34	John attempts the most conscious theological reflection regarding the relationship between the mission of Jesus and His disciples. Focuses on Jesus, who, as the Son sent, fulfils redemptive mission in complete dependence on and obedience to the Father who sent Him. Focuses on his preparation of his new covenant-community to continue Christ's mission following his death and resurrection. He calls on his followers to glorify him by "going" and bearing (witnessing) together with the Spirit. The risen Lord breathes His Spirit on the disciples and charges them to proclaim forgiveness of sin in His name. The Gospel's declared purpose is that many might believe.

Figure 2:

**Ten Missiological Perspectives
on
The Book of Jonah**

Missiologist / Biblical Scholar	Theological Viewpoint
Anderson (1961:19)	“deepest penetration into the method of mission...is in the book of Jonah...We view Jonah as the Israelites who attempt to escape from God’calling of them for the important responsibility in the redemption of the world.
Bosch (2004:17)	Jonah has nothing to do with mission in the normal sense of the word, Prophet is sent to Nineveh to announce doom. Jonah is not concerned with mission, only destruction.
Bright (in Kostenberger 1995:162-163)	Israel is challenged to take up her world mission. Israel’s call to embrace her task of proclaiming the true God to the nations.
DuPreez (1987:18)	Jonah is not an OT example of a missionary sent to a far-off country to proclaim the Good News there.
Hedlund (1991:126)	Jonah’s mission was one of the grandest events in redemptive history – it announced the calling of the Gentiles in the last days.
Kane (1976:26)	Prior to the captivity, Israel’s missionary activity was centripetal; the nations came to Israel – she did not go out to them. The sole exception was Jonah’s mission to Nineveh – his message was one of judgement – not salvation.
Kostenberger and Obrien (2001:45)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Lord’s kindness is extended to pagan outsiders. 2) God’s salvation reaches to the ends of the earth. 3) God’s saving concerns are for the world. 4) God intends to bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3) 5) Jonah is not presented as a missionary whose preaching is intended to serve as a paradigm for Israel’s outreach to the nations.
Oswalt (1991:87)	The book of Jonah implies that the Israelites have an obligation to bear God’s word even to their enemies.
Peters (1972:120)	Prophet Jonah directed his entire message of judgment to non-Israelite nation of Nineveh.

Verkuyl (1978:96)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The book of Jonah aids in understanding the biblical basis for mission.2) Book serves as a preparatory step to the mission mandate of the New Testament.3) Jonah's sin is the sin of a missionary who lacks heart.4) Portrays deep resistance of humankind to God's mission mandate.5) Salvation must occur outside the walls of the church.

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