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Developing Grace Assembly of God, Singapore To Become A Missional Family Church

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Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

DEVELOPING GRACE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, SINGAPORE
TO BECOME A MISSIONAL FAMILY CHURCH

Written by
ALVIN LIM MUN CHUAN

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

Joel Comiskey

Kurt Fredrickson

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ABSTRACT

Developing Grace Assembly of God, Singapore
To Become a Missional Family Church
Alvin Lim Mun Chuan
Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2018

The purpose of this doctoral project is to develop a ministry model with a theological framework, biblical strategy and equipping process to transform Grace Assembly of God (GA) to become a missional family church (MFC) for the fulfillment of God’s mission for Singapore and beyond. This ministry model is meant to be a comprehensive and broad framework for church ministry rather than an in-depth study on one particular theological theme. Although this model has implications on all aspects of church ministry, this project will be first used to equip the small group ministry of the church named Grace Missional Group (GMG). GMG leaders will be equipped with this curriculum who will then equip their GMG members. GA is a multi-generational, multi-lingual Assemblies of God (AOG) Pentecostal mega church of about four thousand worshipping in two locations in Singapore. The church was founded in 1950 by American AOG missionaries.

Part One of this project will present the community context of Singapore consisting of historical, political and cultural contexts. Next is the ministry context of AOG and GA. A brief history and theological distinctiveness of the AOG denomination and GA will be presented. The profile of GA with her strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will be explored in the light of her desire to become a MFC.

Part Two will present critical literature behind the MFC theological framework and strategy. A new ministry initiative of MFC will be presented for the context of Singapore and the distinctiveness of GA.

Part Three presents the strategy for implementing MFC by identifying goals and plans. It describes the implementation process to equip GMG leaders starting with the young adult young professional (YAYP) ministry. It then evaluates the effectiveness of the equipping process through an online survey and suggests areas of improvements.

Content Reader: Joel Comiskey, PhD

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All praise, thanks and glory belongs to God for giving me the opportunity to learn and grow through this Doctor of Ministry program with a majority of the funds provided by Brash Scholarship of Singapore. I want to thank my wife and family for their support to release me to study. I want to thank Pastor Calvin Lee for casting the vision to be a missional family church and the opportunity to develop this material in the context of Grace Assembly. I want to thank the leadership and staff team of Grace Assembly for your input to sharpen this project. I want to thank the YAYP ministry for the privilege to pastor you for the past eight years and for being the first to try out this training. To God be the glory!
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INTRODUCTION

“If the Gospel is to challenge the public life of our society . . . that will only happen as and when local congregations renounce an introverted concern for their own life, and recognize that they exist for the sake of those who are not members, as sign, instrument, and foretaste of God’s redeeming grace for the whole life of society.”

-Lesslie Newbigin

Grace Assembly of God church (GA) is an Assemblies of God (AOG) denominational church founded in 1950 by American AOG missionaries before Singapore became an independent country in 1965. It is one of the oldest AOG churches in Singapore. It has about 4,000 people of generational congregations (children, youth, young adults, adults) and various language congregations (English, Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, Filipino) worshipping in two locations (Tanglin Road and Bukit Batok Road). It runs twenty-four services every weekend. It is the second biggest AOG church in Singapore after Trinity Christian Centre at about 7,000 people.

In January 2012, GA had a change of senior pastor from David Lim to Calvin Lee. Shortly after taking over leadership, Lee began to use the word “missional” to describe the new direction of the church as he was impacted by materials he had read about the missional church and the desire for GA to be more outward focused. Missional was a new term that most of the staff has not heard of. He began to use phrases like “live life missionally” and “be the Gospel wherever you are” to describe the missional

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lifestyle. GA has traditionally been referred to as a family church as it has many generations in the same family worshipping in different dialect congregations but under one church. This vision was further refined in 2015 as he cast the vision for GA to be a Missional Family Church (MFC).

The MFC model is relevant and needed as the church evaluates the growth of Christianity in GA, the AOG as well as Singapore at large. Our church has been hovering at 4,000 since 2006 and baptism numbers remain around 120 yearly with no major breakthroughs in growth. Our denomination also has declined with 24,000 in 2001 to about 22,000 in 2018. As a nation, Christian conversion rates have slowed down and more young people are becoming irreligious in recent years. I believe that the MFC model is a key biblical framework for strategizing for new growth at all levels of ministry in the twenty-first century.

I have been the young adult pastor in GA since 2010. I also headed the next generational ministry named NEXUS overseeing the children, youth and young adult ministries from 2015-2017. In 2018, I became the head of the Christian education department, named Equipping the Gracians (ETG). In July 2014, I was presented with the

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opportunity to pursue a Doctor in Ministry focused on Asian Leadership at Fuller Seminary. I focused my doctoral study on MFC to develop the theological and ministry framework for implementing MFC for GA. This model has been accepted for implementation throughout the entire church. This project though written specifically for GA will still be useful and relevant for any church who wants to transform their church to become missional, especially in the context of Singapore.

The term “missional” was made popular by the book Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America edited by Lois Barrett and Darrell L. Guder in 1998. Thereafter was an avalanche of books on this topic of missional church. A search on Amazon books with the word missional in the title results in at least 1,500 books on the topic as of 2017. The book was written as a response to the critical decline of Christianity (dwindling numbers, loss of youth, clergy burnout, biblical illiteracy) in the post-Christian North America context (more individualistic, more pluralistic, more secular) where Christianity was once favoured and central to culture and society (Christendom).4 Missional Church was greatly influenced by the writings of Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch.5 Newbigin critiqued the massive decline of the spiritual condition of England in the mid-1970s after returning from being a missionary for three

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5 Timothy J. Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Loc 7226.
decades in India. The decline of Christendom in the West after World War II according to Newbigin was due to the rise of eighteenth-century Enlightenment which promoted the sufficiency of human reasoning rather than faith in God.

In an era where overseas missions was a separate and compartmentalized department of the church, Missional Church was the first source to make the explicit connection between missiology and ecclesiology as missiological ecclesiology – a missional church. This moves Christians from seeing the Church with a mission to missional church. This missional ecclesiology is essentially a revelation of the missionary nature of the Triune God who sends the Church. The missional church conversation is not another church growth strategy that focuses on methodology, but rather a deep theological reclamation of the biblical identity and nature of the Church, and therefore is relevant for all churches in all contexts. Although the book is written


7 Timothy Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Loc 7386.


11 Ibid., Loc 455.
for the North American context, the Church in first-world Singapore has much to gain
from this conversation as Christianity came from the West, largely affecting our ministry
philosophy. Many globalized Western trends and ideologies also affect Singapore.

Guder defines “Mission” as “sending” and is the “central biblical theme
describing the purpose of God’s action in human history.”12 Therefore the word missional
according to Guder is the adjective to describe God’s mission described as “God’s
initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal all creation.”13 This mission is
defined by Christopher Wright as, “Our committed participation as God’s people, at
God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world
for the redemption of God’s creation.”14 Missional therefore is the adjective describing
something or someone characterized by this mission.15 Missio Dei is the Latin theological
term for the mission of God. The word missional is interpreted differently by different
authors leading to much confusion as to its meaning because missio Dei was defined too
generally in Missional Church.16 The book The Missional Church in Perspective was

12 Guder and Barrett, Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North
America, 4.

13 Ibid.

14 Christopher J. H. Wright, The Mission of God : Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative
(Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2006), 23.

15 Ibid., 24.

16 Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7226.
published to address the four different themes and ten sub-themes in interpretations and applications that have evolved out of the missional conversation.17

The purpose of this doctoral project is to develop a ministry model with a clear theological framework, biblical strategy and equipping process to transform Grace Assembly of God to become a missional family church for the fulfilment of God’s mission for Singapore and beyond. This ministry model is meant to be a comprehensive and broad framework for church ministry rather than an in-depth study on one particular theological theme. This project is an attempt to consolidate the varied missional ideas out there to come up with a comprehensive and practical missional blueprint to build MFC. Although this model has implications on all aspects of ministry in the church, this project will be first used to equip the small group ministry of the church named Grace Missional Group (GMG). GMG leaders will be equipped with this curriculum who will then equip their GMG members. Leaders of 21 GMGs from the Young Adult Young Professionals (YAYP) of about 250 members will receive this training first from January to December 2017. They will then teach this in their GMG from February 2017 to March 2018. The English adult GMG leaders of 101 GMGs will receive their training from January to December 2018. Part One of this paper will give a brief description of the historical and cultural context of Singapore and GA. Part Two addresses relevant literature and the

theology of the new ministry initiative. Part Three looks at the goals, plans for execution, implementation and evaluation of the MFC curriculum and equipping process.

The model of the MFC framework is shown in Figure 1.1 below. The title of this curriculum is “Missional Family Church: On Mission Together.” There are five strategic thrusts starting with the letter “E” in this model namely Enthroning the King; Empowering the Family; Equipping the Gracians (GA members); Engaging the Community; Expanding into the World.

There are different ministries supporting each strategic thrust. The first thrust is “Enthroning the King.” The key ministries are Creative Arts ministries (worship) and Prayer ministries. The desired outcome is for Gracians to worship God in spirit and in truth. The second thrust is “Equipping the Gracians.” The key ministry to do that is Grace Discipleship Process (GDP). Its desired outcomes are that all Gracians learn and live out the Word of God as they are equipped through GDP. The third thrust is “Empowering the Family” which consist of strengthening the biological and spiritual family of God. For empowering the biological family, the key ministry is Grace Family Life ministries (FLM), which oversees marriage and parenting ministries and courses. Its desired outcome is strong biological families discipled in God’s Word. For empowering the spiritual family, the key ministry is Grace Missional Family (GMF) which oversees adult small group ministries named Grace missional groups (GMG) ministries. Its desired outcome is for every Gracian to belong to a GMG to seek God, serve God, love one
another and reach out together. There is also the NEXUS ministry which consists of the children, youth and young adult ministries. The fourth thrust is “Engaging the Community.” The key ministries are Grace Community Outreach ministry and REACH ministry. Its desired outcome is that Gracians will initiate acts of kindness and impact the community. The fifth thrust is “Expanding into the World.” The key ministry is Grace Missions (GM). The desired outcome is that every Gracian will “go and glow for the Lord” in global missions.

When we do the first three strategic thrusts well, the outcome is that we will be able to fulfil the last two strategic thrusts of engaging our community (local mission) and expanding into the world (global missions). There are altogether ten separate topics in the MFC model as seen in the three small circles. The missional conversation needs to begin with who is the missional God.

Figure 1.1. Missional Family Church Curriculum Framework
The first small circle is Enthroning the King. It describes the missional God who is the king that his followers are called toenthrone. He is the Trinity on Mission (Trinitarian Missiology) who is actively involved in his redemptive mission from beginning to end and now invites the Church to join him. The mission of God (Missio Dei) describes nature and extent of the mission of God. The Reign of God (Kingdom of God) describes God as King and his kingdom, and how his people are to respond to the reign of God in their lives.

The second small circle titled Empowering the Family describes the importance of empowering the biological family and spiritual family which is the Church (MFC). There are four distinctives of MFC. It is a church that exercises incarnational ministry modelled by Christ who crossed culture to come from heaven to earth in order to reach humanity. His followers are in turn called to follow his ministry example by being intentional to go into the context of the lost in order to reach them rather than just wait for them to come into the foreign context of the Church. The second distinctive of MFC is that the Church is missionary in nature. This means that it is birthed by a missionary God for the primary reason of the mission of God to reach the world rather than existing to benefit its members. The third distinctive of MFC is to be a contrast faith community of love and biblical values that builds believers and draws unbelievers in as it stands as a positive contrast to the world. The fourth distinctive is that MFC believes in exercising
intergenerational ministry where we equip members to build faith at home and facilitate faith formation across different generations within the church.

In order to achieve the vision of MFC, we need the final third small circle titled Equipping the Gracians. GA needs to equip individual Gracians in three areas. First, GA needs to be clear about the Gospel message which saves sinners as well as transforms how believers live their entire Christian lives. Second, Christians have to do ministry out of a biblical individual identity. One’s primary identity needs to be secured in being a child of God the Father before he can be a servant like God the Son, and a missionary empowered by the Spirit. Third, his followers emulate Jesus’ strategy of world evangelization by investing in a small life-on-life missional group helping one another to know God (upward), be known by others (inward) and make him known (outward).

When we are able to understand and actualize these ten theological themes of MFC, we will be able to effectively Engage the Community of Singapore and Expand into the World with the Gospel. I believe this MFC model represents God’s scriptural blueprint for his Church and the means to reach the world for Christ. This MFC model, though specifically developed for GA in Singapore will be useful for all churches since it is based on biblical principles rather than ever changing church growth methodology. Due to the limited length of this paper, this project is meant to be broad in its coverage of this MFC ministry philosophy rather than in-depth into each of these ten principles.
PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
CHAPTER 1

SINGAPORE CONTEXT

Singapore is a small island city-state of 719-square kilometers off southern Malaysia. It is a first-world nation with a tropical climate and multicultural population of 5.6 million. This chapter will look at the history, politics and culture of Singapore to identify missional opportunities and challenges that are unique to Singapore. To develop effective missional leaders and disciples in Singapore, there is a need to understand the unique context of Singapore and contextualize the Gospel to minister to those living here. Missional leaders are to affirm culture that is in line with the Gospel and challenge culture that is contrary to the Gospel.

History

On 30 January 1819, modern Singapore was founded by Englishman Stanford Raffles and was colonised by the British until World War II in 1942.¹ Singapore started off as a migrant society with largely illiterate migrants from China, India, Sri Lanka and

the surrounding Malay Archipelago.\(^2\) Being colonized and a strategic trading port filled with migrants, Singapore was very culturally pluralistic as it was exposed to Western, Eastern and international influences.\(^3\) Trade in Singapore expanded rapidly due to her political certainty, strategic location, free trade policies, deep sheltered harbor, comparative orderliness and migrant work force.\(^4\)

The failure of the British to defend Singapore (part of Malaya) in World War II led to political momentum to separate from colonial rule. Malaya gained independence in 1963 from British rule to become Malaysia.\(^5\) Singapore was separated from Malaysia due to political differences and became an independent nation under the dominant political party of People’s Action Party (PAP) led by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) in 1965.\(^6\) The separation of a small and young nation from the British and Malaysia meant that Singapore had to quickly learn how to survive on her own with little natural resources, hostile neighbours and dependency on the outside world.\(^7\)

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\(^2\) Tan-Chow, Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore, 26.


\(^4\) Ibid., 13; Chew, Lee, and Southeast Asian Studies Program (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), A History of Singapore, 44.

\(^5\) Ibid., Chew, Lee, and Southeast Asian Studies Program (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), A History of Singapore, 111.

\(^6\) Ibid., 147.

PAP sought to build a democratic, multiracial, meritocratic society for economic transformation.\(^8\) Singapore has done well under the leadership of PAP in her short history from a third world to first world nation. HuffPost reports with empirical data that Singapore has shown the greatest economic progress in the world in her short fifty years history (2015).\(^9\) Singapore is ranked third in the Global City Competitiveness Index in 2017-2018.\(^10\) She has the highest home ownership in the world at 90 percent of the population with its compulsory saving scheme named the Central Provident Fund.\(^11\) However, economic success has the potential to draw one away from God through dependence on self and government (1 Tim 6:17-19), when it should be a means to bless other nations as gratitude to God (Gen 12:3).

**National Ideology**

Politically, Singapore’s phenomenal economic rise against all odds as a small nation was largely due to three national ideologies namely, meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty.\(^12\) Meritocracy is the governing principle of Singapore to give all Singaporeans

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\(^8\) Chew, Lee, and Southeast Asian Studies Program (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), *A History of Singapore*, 364.


\(^11\) Mahbubani, "Why Singapore Is the World's Most Successful Society."

\(^12\) Ibid.
equal chances to succeed and be rewarded through hard work and excellence regardless of socioeconomic factors, family background, race or religion.\textsuperscript{13} This principle has worked well for equalizing opportunities for all to get a head start through subsidizing education so that even the poor can afford a good education. This principle may not work as well as it used to because the rich now have greater resources to give their children a head start in education through additional tuition and good home environments.\textsuperscript{14} Meritocracy should not be seen as entitlement due to hard work but the grace of God to excel and a means to help the needy.

The second national ideology is pragmatism. Pragmatism means that Singapore does not try to reinvent the wheel, but to emulate solutions and adapt them effectively to our nation.\textsuperscript{15} The downside of pragmatism is that principles can be compromised when circumstances or benefits change, especially since Singapore is a small and vulnerable nation.\textsuperscript{16} For example, the use of only English and Mandarin on all national platforms for economic efficacy meant the loss of all other dialects with its culture for future generations. This inevitably creates a people who choose based on economic benefits or efficiency (what works) rather than principles, values or vision (what is true). Faith in


\textsuperscript{14} Donald Low et al., \textit{Hard Choices: Challenging the Singapore Consensus} (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), Loc 1015.

\textsuperscript{15} Mahbubani, "Why Singapore Is the World's Most Successful Society."

God often requires taking risk, pursuing godly vision and obeying God even when it does not make practical or economic sense. Many Christian parents forbid their children to go into full-time Christian ministry because of this prevailing mindset.

The third national ideology that has propelled Singapore is that of honesty. Singapore’s founding fathers abided by a zero tolerance for financial corruption and moral failure for all national leaders. Singapore is ranked seventh in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index in 2016 and is the least corrupt country in Asia since 1995. Government ministers have been asked to resign when they are involved in extra-marital affairs. Singaporeans are thankful for a government with high standard for morality, which prayerfully translates to turning to God, the ultimate moral lawgiver.

**National Leadership**

The ruling power PAP’s style of leadership has been central control and efficient order in awareness of her vulnerability as a small nation. With PAP’s early success in leading the country against the odds for survival, it encouraged LKY’s and PAP’s one-party authoritarianism. All forms of mass media like the press, radio and television are controlled by the government and divisive topics like religion, race, politics and negative

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17 Mahbubani, "Why Singapore Is the World's Most Successful Society."


criticism of the government are censored or liable to be charged in court. Singapore is ranked 153 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index in 2015.

The government though almost absolute in its power and control is largely benevolent rather than corrupt. It is the second least corrupt nation in the world after Denmark in 2016. It is also ranked ninth in the world in terms of rule of law and number one in terms of order, security and regulatory enforcement in 2016. Singaporeans are generally happy to passively follow the instructions of the government as they viewed them as corruption-free, politically and economically effective despite foreign criticism of dictatorship rule.

While the government has generally led the country well, Christian citizens should aspire to play an active role in nation building and be a voice in the public square. They cannot assume the government will always make godly decisions. For example in 1985, the government liberalized the abortion law to allow any female of any age to abort

21 Chew, Lee, and Southeast Asian Studies Program (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), A History of Singapore, 303.


23 Tan-Chow, Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore, 30.


25 Ibid.

their fetus up to 24 weeks (one of the most liberal in the world) with no questions asked or parental consent when previously abortion was only allowed under special circumstances. In 2010, the government opened two casinos in Singapore despite objections from the religious community which forms 83 percent of the population. Policies were then made to minimize gambling addiction of locals.

**Education**

Devoid of any natural resources, Singapore has always depended on the development of human resource for success, leading to education as a national obsession. In the first nine years in power, the government spent one-third of their budget on improving education because it was recognized as the most important long-term means to progress and to inculcate national values. Today, Singapore is top in the world in the Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) rankings for Maths,
Science and Reading in 2016, based on tests taken by 15-year-olds in more than seventy countries.  

Private tuition for children starts at a young age and is a huge investment. Forty percent of children in pre-school start having private tuition at that young age. Seven in ten parents in Singapore engage private tutors for their children. Singaporeans spent S$1.1 billion dollars in 2014; double the amount of S$650 million in 2004 on private tuition. This has led to dampening social mobility as wealthy families pay more for tuition while poorer families cannot afford it.  

This excessive focus and competitiveness in education causes students to suffer from an overload of stress. A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that 86 percent of Singaporean students are worried about poor grades compared to 66 percent of students across all 72 OECD countries leading to more students seeking medical help. Education and lifelong learning is good but when

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34 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
pursued as an idol for self-worth and security leads to overwork. It also leads to a sense of identity found in academic qualifications rather than in Christ. The church traditionally sees a drop in student attendance whenever exams are near.

**Religious Harmony**

Singapore is built upon the values of the equality of race, language and religion as espoused by the national pledge. There is a deliberate attempt to depoliticize religion by the government unlike neighboring Asian nations who use it to control politics. Major religions like Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Taoism are given space to be practiced freely in Singapore. Singapore is one of the most pluralistic nations in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion, yet have done well in maintaining religious and racial harmony. However, there is always a tension between religious freedom and racial harmony. The Church must be sensitive and not put down other religious faiths when reaching out to them while maintaining the exclusivity of Christ.

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40 Ibid., 31.

41 Ibid., 26.
Asian Values

Singapore is founded largely on Asian values especially Chinese values such as hard work, discipline, self-reliance, pursuit of success and material gains since 70 percent of the leadership and population are Chinese including LKY. They are influenced by its “Confucian ethic of harmony, which comprises a practical function of compromising opposition and solving conflict, so that order rather than disorder should prevail.”

Confucianism ideology is fundamental to the culture stressing five cardinal relationships in the right order: loyalty to ruler or state, filiality to parents, love between spouses, kindness to people, and faithfulness to friends. State and family must be placed above self. Singapore leaders are strong proponents of Confucianism, using its philosophy to build a hyper-regulated regime where public order is considered the highest good. Confucius ethics is taught as moral education in national schools. In many traditional Chinese families, individuals including adults do not convert to Christianity for fear of parental opposition. A believer must choose God above both nation and family.

45 Ibid.
Religion

Church growth in Singapore had been slow before 1940. Only 0.59 percent of the population being Christians and forty-six churches in 1940.\(^{47}\) But since the 1970s, Christianity has been growing rapidly in Singapore, being called the “Antioch of Asia” by Billy Graham in 1978.\(^{48}\) By 1982, Christians were 12 percent of the population and there were 320 churches.\(^{49}\) Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 show a drastic drop in Taoism and folk religion as Singapore modernised, switching to Buddhism as the more intellectual faith. Both Christianity and Irreligion has always been on a gradual increase.

Table 1.1. Percentage of Religions in Singapore (1980-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholicism</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestantism</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not religious</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taoism and folk religion</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Singapore though highly industrialized and urbanized, experienced revival which is a paradox of religious revivalism.\textsuperscript{51} It is said that material wealth distracts one from the pursuit of spirituality. This does not seem true for Singapore, which has one of the highest per capital incomes in the world.


\textsuperscript{51} Tan-Chow, \textit{Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore}, 34.
Christianity rose even more significantly in Singapore from 14.6 percent in 2000 to 18.3 percent in 2010, especially among the Chinese who are open to Christianity.\textsuperscript{52} Chinese form about 75.6 percent of the total population, but Christianity is the only non-ethnically based major religion in Singapore with 20.1 percent of the total population of Chinese being Christians in the 2010 census.\textsuperscript{53} The Western stigma attached to Christianity is a strange paradox in Singapore as it is the second most important religion of the Chinese after Buddhism at 42.9 percent in 2010.\textsuperscript{54} Many congregations started off as Mandarin speaking congregations.\textsuperscript{55}

However, from 2010 to 2015, the percentage of irreligious grew by 1.5 points (7.6 percent growth) while the percentage of Christianity grew by 0.3 points (6 percent growth for Protestantism with 5.6 percent decline for Catholicism) as reported in the \textit{Straits Times} article, “Youth in Singapore Shunning religion.”\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, 45.4 percent of the irreligious comes mainly from young people aged 15 to 34 years old, which is a point of concern as seen in Figure 1.2.\textsuperscript{57} This shows growth of the irreligious as faster than

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Tan-Chow, \textit{Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore}, 43.
\item Ibid., 44.
\item Zaccheus, "Youth in Singapore Shunning Religion."
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Protestantism and predominantly among the young. Possible reasons given by religious leaders could be slow engagement by religious groups, rise of liberal values, rational thinking, failure of religious figures and the lack of need in a comfortable economy.\textsuperscript{58} Churches need to rethink traditional methods to reaching Singapore especially among the young.

Figure 1.2. Religious Affiliations by Age from 2010-2015

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1_2.png}
\caption{Religious Affiliations by Age from 2010-2015}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source:} Department of Statistics, Singapore

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

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In the mid-twentieth century, the prosperity Gospel of the US infiltrated the world including Singapore. Christians in Singapore began flocking to these independent charismatic megachurches as religious consumerism and prosperity Gospel becomes more popular. Joseph Prince of New Creation Church in Singapore who is representative of this “health and wealth Gospel” or “hypergrace” theology founded his church in 1983 and rapidly grew to 33,000 congregants in 2017. His teachings include financial prosperity, freedom from sickness, law as obsolete and confession of sins as unnecessary. They built a 5,000 seat facility costing 500 million fully paid for in 2016. Singaporean Christians are increasingly marked by the theology of “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” (Christianity is having a God that helps me in my problems, to be a good person and have a place in heaven) as described by Christian Smith. There is a need to return to the missional theology of the Reign of God and the right understanding of the Gospel message to combat consumeristic Christianity.


In Singapore, Christianity is the religion of the socially mobile, English speaking, well-educated (graduates) and predominately middle-class and above population of Singapore. According to the 2010 Singapore Statistics, one out of three university graduates are Christians compared to less than one out of four being Buddhist. Less than 10 percent of Christians have primary school education and below. Over 40 percent of Christians have university degrees and are more likely to belong to the more privileged socio-economic and live on private property. Forty-six percent of Christians are below forty years old and tend to speak English. This often gives rise to the impression that Christianity is elitist and a Western religion, especially among older generations. In order to address this mindset, there needs to be education in the congregation about inclusiveness; missional efforts must be made continually to reach out to the Chinese speaking and those in the lower strata of society.

**Globalisation**

The phenomenal rise of Singapore came with the price of rapid modernization, globalization and influences of Western values. This has given rise to consumerism,
individualism, atomization of the family and acceptance of alternative lifestyles. With globalization, Western liberal values also have received greater acceptance in Singapore. For example, the LGBT movement in Singapore is growing in attendance at their annual gathering named Pink Dot growing from 4000 in 2010 to 20,000 in 2017. Only 86 percent of Christian young adults and 83 percent of youths do not agree to same-sex marriage compared to 98 percent of church leaders. This shows that the younger generation, even among Christians is more accepting and liberal in their values. In efforts to be missional, there is a need to equip believers with a strong biblical foundation first in order to reach the LGBT community with the Gospel. Other liberal values that globalization brings are in hook up culture, as well as the rise of drug use.

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Globalization has increased competition and the pursuit of materialism leading to many Singaporeans working long hours to chase the elusive Singapore dream.\textsuperscript{73} Singaporeans clocked the most number of hours worked in the world for 2015 and 2016, averaging 45.6 hours a week.\textsuperscript{74} This has led to perpetual busyness with no time for God or the things of God. The idols of busyness and career advancement as ultimate success indicators are very real issues that need to be confronted with the Gospel.

\section*{Postmodernity}

Two devastating global wars began to shake the foundations of the Enlightenment that rationality could solve every human problem and human progress was a given.\textsuperscript{75} Rationality alone has proved to be inadequate and without meaning to build one’s life and human flourishing.\textsuperscript{76} The promise of the Enlightenment and modernity to solve the world’s problems was met with the reality of increasing injustice, conflict and evil seen in human society.\textsuperscript{77} Religion was touted to vanish and decline because of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Edwin Lee and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies., \textit{Singapore : The Unexpected Nation, History of Nation-Building Series} (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), 58.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 361.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Enlightenment, but instead grew in the twentieth century throughout the world.\textsuperscript{78} Christianity, especially the Pentecostal movement, grew rapidly around the world even among communist countries.\textsuperscript{79}

The partial failure of rationality and Enlightenment to give meaning to life gave rise to Postmodernity in the Twenty-First Century. Postmodernity’s emphasis on personal choice and subjective truth makes the objective truth of God’s Word offensive. This is especially true for the younger generation who are more influenced by Postmodernity. However, the autonomy of the individual to determine belief results in the vacuum of meaning, morality and interdependence, which are the necessary for human flourishing that the Church can now meet.\textsuperscript{80} Rationality (as opposed to Postmodernity) should not to be abandoned, but theological understanding needs to be complimented with scientific and historical discoveries.\textsuperscript{81} Research done by Clive Chin in Singapore shows a perception of Christianity as more rational, systematic and intellectual compared to Buddhism or Taoism as key factors to the increase conversion to Christianity.\textsuperscript{82}

In conclusion, this chapter has covered many of the missional issues that need to be confronted in the context of Singapore. This will help formulate relevant applications

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 352.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 362.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 353.

based upon an MFC theological framework. The next chapter looks at the church and ministry context of GA.
CHAPTER 2
MINISTRY AND CHURCH CONTEXT

Assemblies of God Denomination

In September 1900, a group of forty Bible college students in Topeka, Kansas came together to study on the topic of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and began to receive the gift of speaking in tongues.¹ On 9 April 1906, seven persons praying and fasting for a personal Pentecost were baptized in the Spirit and spoke in tongues in a home on Bonnie Brae Street.² They rented a Methodist church on 312 Azusa Street to hold their meetings and revival broke out there. Services ran continuously for three years with three services a day.³ William J. Seymour, an African American pastor was instrumental in the revival and people from all racial background experienced God together which was a miracle in a


² Tan-Chow, Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore, 76.

³ Ibid., 77.
highly racist era. In 1907, the leaders affirmed the distinctive doctrine that “speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the Baptism of Holy Spirit” as seen in the accounts in the book of Acts. In April 1914, 200-300 preachers and lay leaders gathered in Arkansas to form the Assemblies of God (AOG) denomination. The AOG was birthed as a result of a missional God initiating and leading the revival by the power of the Spirit.

Pentecostalism refers to Christians who believe in and experience Spirit-baptism, the power gifts of the Holy Spirit like prophecy, glossolalia (speaking in tongues), healing, exorcism, miracles and being “slain in the Spirit.” A key distinctive of AOG is the belief that “speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the Baptism of Holy Spirit.” Pentecostalism, controversial in traditional denominations only gained prominence and respectability in the 1970s and is now the fastest growing denomination in the world. AOG as a denomination have always emphasized the Holy Spirit as the indispensable and dynamic power in mission is in line with the missional emphasis.

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 37.
6 Ibid., 24.
7 Tan-Chow, *Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore*, 44.
In 1928, American AOG missionaries Cecil and Edith Jackson started the first AOG church (Elim AOG) in Singapore.\textsuperscript{10} In 1960, AG Bible School (Bible Institute of Malaya) was set up in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia and later Bible Institute of Singapore in 1976, which were instrumental in the growth of the movement through training of pastors.\textsuperscript{11} By 1991, there were already thirty-seven Assemblies of God churches in Singapore (SAOG) with about sixteen thousand members.\textsuperscript{12} By 2001, there were a total of forty-six churches, 24,409 adherents with 394 credential holders.\textsuperscript{13} The growth of the denomination in Singapore has declined over the years with an attendance of about 22,087 in forty-four churches and 327 credential holders in 2017 as they celebrate their ninetieth anniversary (based on 2018 Singapore AOG Annual report). There is an urgent need for missional renewal.

**Grace Assembly of God, Singapore**

Grace Assembly of God, Singapore was founded in 1950. In 1950-52, American missionaries Vallence and Lula Baird started their ministry to the low income people living around the single-storey terrace shophouses at 50 Odin Square, off Alexandra

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 46.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 100.

\textsuperscript{13} Tan-Chow, *Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore*, 46.
Road.\textsuperscript{14} By the end of 1951, they had a congregation of thirty consisting of adults, teenagers and children.\textsuperscript{15} In 1959, with the needs of a growing congregation, Lau To Chan (1952-62) and Jean K. Wagner (1954-59), both female pastors, managed to purchase the freehold property at 355 Tanglin Road at the very low price of S$49,000 and decided to aptly name the church “Grace Assembly of God.”\textsuperscript{16} In 1966, the ministry of two hundred strong was handed over to Singaporean pastor Oh Beng Kee and his wife Mary Lee.\textsuperscript{17} In 1978, a new church building replaced the dilapidated bungalow at the cost of S$350,000.\textsuperscript{18} By 1982, the church had grown to 600 members.\textsuperscript{19} In 1989, a five-storey education block was added at the cost of 2.5 million dollars.\textsuperscript{20} In 1990, David Lim was installed as the new senior pastor with his wife May Lim and family.\textsuperscript{21} By 1992, Grace Assembly has grown to about 1,600 members and 16 staff.\textsuperscript{22} In January 2012 with 4000 members and 60 staff, the senior pastor position was handed over from David Lim to Calvin Lee.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 206.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 207.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 214.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 218.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 219.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 223.
Ministries

GA currently has a weekly attendance of about four thousand. The church runs twenty-four separate worship services every weekend. GA worships at two locations, Tanglin Road (GI) and Bukit Batok Road (GII). The different services as of 2017 are Chinese (Hokkien, Mandarin, Cantonese numbering about 1200), Filipino (150), English adults (1900), young adults (300), youth (450) children (250). Even though the church is big, it is like a family church with many generations of the same family worshipping together in different language and generational congregations. All strategic and spiritual directions are charted in this senior leadership team named Senior Pastor Office (SPO). It consists of the Senior Pastor (SP), Executive Pastor (EP), Head of English Ministries, Head of Chinese Ministries and Head of Operations.

GA has a social outreach arm called REACH Community Services Society as a public charitable volunteer welfare organization founded in 1999 to engage the local community. They have social services reaching out to couples, families, youths and the elderly. They now have four locations operating a family service centre, counselling centre, youth centre and elderly care centre with a staff strength of about fifty.

Strategic Statements

GA’s vision is “More people, More like Jesus.” The mission statement is “To participate as God’s loving family in the redemptive mission that was initiated by the Father, modelled by the Son, empowered by the Spirit to represent the Gospel of God’s reign in the world (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:18-20).” Core values are crafted from the
acronym, “love:” Live Life Missionally; See all of life as God-given opportunities to preach and live out the Gospel; Obey God Radically: Commit to the Lordship of Christ in every area of life; Value People Wholeheartedly: Esteem all people with honour and respect; Engage Our World Creatively: Extend our influence to all strata of society and culture. There are five strategic thrusts that were explained at the introduction.

**Church Statistics**

Church attendance has been hovering around four thousand since 2006 with no major breakthroughs in numerical growth as seen in the Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 below. In 2006 there was growth due to addition of a new worship location at GII. The number of baptism from 2004 to 2017 hovered from 100 to 150 as seen in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.2 below. GMG participation rate has also fallen from about 49 percent of total service attendance in 2013 to 38 percent in 2017 (this might not reflect true figures as some cells fail to submit their attendance). This gives fresh impetus for GA to relook at the health of the church and how it does ministry to bring the church to the next phase of growth. The MFC paradigm shift is what is needed to take GA to greater growth and impact for God’s Kingdom. There seems to be some momentum of growth in 2016 and 2017.
Table 2.1. Total Service Attendance from from 1993 to 2016

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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>1,908</td>
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<td>2,429</td>
<td>2,602</td>
<td>2,528</td>
<td>2,716</td>
<td>3,121</td>
<td>3,034</td>
<td>3,195</td>
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<td>% growth</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<td>% growth</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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Source: Church records

Figure 2.1. Graph of Total Service Attendance from 1993 to 2017

Table 2.2. Total Number of Baptism and Church Transfers from 2004 to 2017

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<td>BAPTISMAL</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>111</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>136</td>
<td>121</td>
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<td>133</td>
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<td>TRANSFER</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>226</td>
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</table>

Source: Church records
The equipping ministry of the church is named Grace Discipleship Process (GDP). Currently, there are three levels of equipping namely Missional Learning, Missional Living and Missional Leading. These are mostly conducted in a classroom lecture format with the teacher feeding information and the audience receiving. The exception is Basics of Missional Living (BML) which is conducted one-on-one for new believers for seven lessons. The content and pedagogy of missional theology has not been developed and integrated into these modules. GA does not have a strong equipping culture and sign-ups for classes are usually low. Attendance also fluctuates widely depending on the prominence of the teacher teaching the class.

In 2016, Grace Missional College (GMC) was started in church as a joint collaboration with Christian Life Educators Network (CLEN) in partnership with International Christian Missions Plus Ltd (ICM+) and Oral Roberts University (ORU) to
equip the congregation in Missional Leading. GMC aims to empower and equip lay leaders, lay ministers, interns, ministry staff and those who have full-time calling. Two tracks, namely a short-term theological certificate and Diploma of Theological Studies, are offered currently. Modules are simpler than the theological modules offered in traditional seminaries but its missional emphasis is lacking both in content and pedagogy. There is also generally a low take up rate of between 20 to 40 participants per module.

GA currently does not have adequate discipleship content or a process to develop missional disciples or leaders. It is the intention of this paper to outline the equipping content and process needed to develop missional leaders and disciples in GA. There is a need to evaluate the current stage of GA’s missional understanding and application since 2012 (where the word missional was first used by Pastor Calvin) in order to suggest steps forward.

Stages of Missional Change

Alan Roxburgh, in Missional Leaders, talks about five stages in the missional change model. The first stage is Awareness, where people are beginning to be aware of the crisis they are in and begin to be committed to change. This is the stage where the congregation needs to trust the leader’s motives, maturity and competence to lead them to growth. Therefore, effective communication, teaching, sharing testimonies, listening and dialogue are key at this stage of being aware of the missional paradigm.

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The second stage of the missional change model is the Understanding stage, where dialogue and new questions intensify to integrate thinking and feelings leading to understanding. The third stage, Evaluation, where people now consider whether their specific activities, programs and commitment are congruent with their awareness and understanding of the missional paradigm in their context. People will evaluate what they need in terms of skills, structures and resources to move forward in missional innovation or resist the process for change as change brings anxiety. The fourth stage is Experimentation, where people practice and experiment what they have been learning and thus affecting the culture of their ministry or church.

The fifth and final stage is Commitment, where people have internalized and are convinced of the new missional way of doing church because most have participated and experienced the success and power of that positive cultural change. The leadership is at the evaluation stage, considering the implications to ministry after understanding the MFC theological framework. The church at large is still at the understanding stage, trying to understand what missional truly means. Let us now look at the SWOT analysis of implementing the MFC ministry model.

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24 Ibid., Loc 1801.
25 Ibid., Loc 1840.
26 Ibid., Loc 1900.
27 Ibid., Loc 1982.
Strengths

One strength of MFC in GA is that the SP fully endorses this direction and has driven this vision for the entire church since 2012. The senior leadership of the church is also convinced of this direction. Since 2015, most members in the church know about the vision to be MFC. There has been an increase in lifestyle evangelism by members and ground up missional initiatives started. There is greater awareness to be a witness for God wherever one is placed. Attendance has also grown since 2016.

Now with this completed MFC framework, it will give the needed theological foundation for a review of current ministry applications and implications. The entire church is being equipped with the same vision and ministry philosophy of MFC. GA is going into the evaluation and experimentation phase of the missional change. This will be exciting as more people catch the cultural change through a momentum of real life examples.

Weaknesses

Given that the church has sixty-eight years of history, there are traditional ways of doing ministry that will be difficult to change. For example, members of the church expect full-time pastoral staff to be very involved in pastoral work like home visitation, hospital visitation and conducting funerals. This means that a lot of time and effort is spent on pastoral care to members rather than leading in missional charge to reach the community. Lay leaders are not ready and equipped to take over this pastoral work. Pastors who are used to pastoral work are also ill equipped to lead people in missional
charge. Senior leadership is also unsure how to make the radical shift from traditional pastoral work to missional leadership. This can result in a missional emphasis in speech but very little change in how ministry is conducted by pastors and lay leaders. There is also no available missional church model available in Singapore to emulate and learn from.

There is also an ingrained understanding that being missional is synonymous with evangelism. Broader concepts of *missio Dei* may be resisted as it sounds too ecumenical or liberal. Power evangelism through signs and wonders seems to be the main focus rather than a more holistic approach to mission. There can be an unintended focus on using the missional bandwagon to grow in numbers but failing to fully embrace what it means and entail in changing organizational culture.

GMGs have traditionally placed emphasis on fellowship, but now have to make discipleship that leads to evangelism as central emphasis. This will be a challenge. GMGs will have to make the mindset change and eventually to be equipped to know how to multiply the group. Pastors will also need to lead by example in this area and coaching GMG leaders.

As a mega church, much is spent on weekend services and upkeep of buildings. Much time and effort are spent on improving the quality of weekly weekend services in the areas of media, announcements, sermons and worship. There are two physical buildings to renovate and maintain. These venues are essential and good platforms to
attract and disciple the congregations, but GA must ensure that enough resources are intentionally set aside for outreach beyond the walls of the church.

**Opportunities**

Looking at the state of slow growth and stagnancy of Christianity in GA, SAOG and Singapore at large, church leaders are open and eager to return to the Bible and review how ministry ought to be conducted. Church leaders in Singapore are generally wary of another church growth fad or new church growth strategy that is fleeting. The MFC model presents a biblical foundation of who God is and who the Church is, before going into contextualized implications for effective missional ministry. The world is looking for an authentic faith community that cares not just for its members but exists for the sake of the world.

**Threats**

As previously mentioned, there are a few missional challenges facing Singapore that the missional church needs to address. The greatest challenge has to do with the mindset that religion is meant to get what one wants in this life and the life to come. That is the reason why hyper-grace Christianity is so popular in Singapore. This runs contrary to MFC which emphasizes the Reign of God and the Church existing for the sake of non-members. The beauty of living out biblical Christianity needs to outweigh the selfishness of consumeristic Christianity.
Another serious threat is the influence of liberal values of the globalized world that seek to normalize any form of sexual relationship outside of marriage between male and female, the rise of moral and religious relativism and material pursuits. Postmodernity’s emphasis on choice and personal subjective truth makes the objective truth of God’s Word offensive.

As with any new ministry initiative, it will be met with resistance to traditional ways of doing ministry and effort is needed to try out new strategies with an unproven track record. The extent which MFC will permeate the culture of GA depends on the commitment and courage of top leadership in making radical changes to how personal and ministry life is carried out differently. MFC is a good theoretical framework to begin to work out its practical implications. This project and curriculum will form the theological backbone of an ongoing missional ministry philosophy that will slowly transform the church in every aspect for years ahead. It is not a one-year curriculum that will be the silver bullet for immediate transformation of the church.
PART 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will look at some key literature that was helpful in forming the biblical foundation of MFC and the strategies for its fulfillment.

Missional Church edited by Darrell Guder

This book, written in 1998, is the instrumental first book that started the massive missional church movement. It was written by a few theologians and pastors of various denominations inaugurated by the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. The book was greatly influenced by the writings of Lesslie Newbigin, especially the book The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches.¹ Newbigin, returning to Britain after being a

¹ Guder and Barrett, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America,
missionary in India from 1936-1974, analyzed and critiqued the pluralistic reality of Western society.\(^2\) The book was birthed as a response to the spiritual decline and crisis of the Church in the West marked by diminishing numbers, loss of youth, clergy burnout and irrelevance of Christianity which once held central place in society (Christendom).\(^3\) It also critiques the missionary expansion of the last three hundred years as Western enculturation beyond just evangelization of pagan nations.\(^4\) The thesis of the book is that the solution to this deep crisis would be a spiritual and theological reclamation of the identity of church based upon Scriptures rather than just a new church growth methodology.\(^5\)

The book focuses on the concept of *missio Dei*, a Latin term meaning the mission of God, arguing that mission is first and foremost “the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purpose to restore and heal creation” rather than merely an activity of the church (ecclesiology).\(^6\) “Mission” means sending and is derived from the very nature of the Trinitarian missionary God working actively throughout human history (Trinitarian missiology).\(^7\) God the Father sends in the sequence of Israel, his Son Jesus, the Holy

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\(^3\) Ibid., 2.

\(^4\) Ibid., 4.

\(^5\) Ibid., 3.

\(^6\) Ibid., 4.

\(^7\) Ibid.
Spirit and finally the Church to participate in his mission (Jn 20:21). The Church is not the goal or purpose of the Gospel but rather the instrument and witness of God’s Reign.

The difficulty for the Western Church to be missional is tied to her history when Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the fourth century leading to Christianity being the official state religion. This resulted in almost everyone in the Roman Empire becoming Christians and Christianity taking the privileged and central position of society (Christendom). This led to mission becoming just a program or department of the church to do the work of foreign mission by some missionaries since most locally are already evangelized. The challenge is to change the perspective of church with mission to a missional church. A missional church is one in which all members and resources are employed in mission as this is her missionary nature and identity. Mission is moved from the church’s effort to extend itself (ecclesiology) to the Trinity’s mission in the world (Theocentric). Guder attributed the dismal state of the North American spirituality to the rise of modernity, rationality, the autonomous self and

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8 Ibid., 5.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 6.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 82.
consumerism.\textsuperscript{14} This is followed by post-modernity’s influences of relative truth in an increasingly pluralistic society which presents great challenges to the Church.\textsuperscript{15}

The book corrected the notion of church as a place where people received religious goods and services from paid clergy rather than a body of believers sent on mission.\textsuperscript{16} This traditional mindset reinforces the consumeristic culture where “the clergy are the church’s sales representatives, religious doctrines its products, and evangelization practices its marketing techniques.”\textsuperscript{17} The Church lost the central theme of the Reign of God when salvation benefits provided by God as a personal, private affair became separated from the lordship of God over one’s whole life and all creation.\textsuperscript{18} Jesus preached centrally on the Kingdom of God as a gift to be received and a realm to be entered as one turns to God away from other idols.\textsuperscript{19} The Kingdom of God is bigger than the Church and the Church acts as a sign, instrument and foretaste to point people to that Kingdom.\textsuperscript{20} The Church represents the Reign of God as its community, servant and

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{14}] Ibid., 21-27.
  \item[\textsuperscript{15}] Ibid., 40-44.
  \item[\textsuperscript{16}] Ibid., 81.
  \item[\textsuperscript{17}] Ibid., 85.
  \item[\textsuperscript{18}] Ibid., 92.
  \item[\textsuperscript{19}] Ibid., 96.
  \item[\textsuperscript{20}] Ibid., 99.
\end{itemize}
messenger. The Church also acts as an apostle sent out to continue the Kingdom work of Jesus through preaching, teaching and healing.

The book highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in creating and cultivating life-giving missional communities that manifest the fruit and gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit creates Christian unity and love that overflows beyond the faith community to embrace all humanity. The Spirit empowers the Church for witness and ministry. Missional leadership would require more than the typical solo pastor-teacher to maintain the congregation, but a team of leaders with the five-fold ministry gifting in Ephesians 4:11 for missional engagement.

There is also no single fixed church form and structure found in the New Testament for a missional church to function well. Its structure needs to facilitate faithful witness in a particular context and culture while remaining faithful to its ecclesial traditions and practices. Corporate worship is the center of any missional community.

21 Ibid., 103-07.
22 Ibid., 133-36.
23 Ibid., 142-47.
24 Ibid., 149.
25 Ibid., 180.
26 Ibid., 213-14.
27 Ibid., 224.
28 Ibid., 234.
29 Ibid., 242.
Worship is primarily God’s people encountering the God who sends.\textsuperscript{30} They receive his word, blessings and healing as they gather to be sent out to be a blessing to the nations.\textsuperscript{31} The Church by definition is a public assembly and corporate worship is its first form of witness to unbelievers who will visit to explore.\textsuperscript{32}

To reclaim the Church as a missional movement beyond just a static institution, Charles van Engen suggests that the Nicene marks of a church be adverbs rather than adjectives.\textsuperscript{33} This means the Apostolic Church is a proclaiming community of the Gospel to the world\textsuperscript{34}. The Catholic Church is a reconciling community of all Christians as a credible witness to the world.\textsuperscript{35} The Holy Church is a sanctifying community that brings healing, salvation and Kingdom values to the broken lives in the community.\textsuperscript{36} The United Church needs to be interdependent and support one another across denominations for the purpose of unity of mission in the midst of diversity.\textsuperscript{37}

The book is helpful in challenging traditional understandings of the Church and offers some important paradigm shifts in how the theology of who God is affects who the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[30] Ibid.
\item[31] Ibid.
\item[32] Ibid., 243.
\item[33] Ibid., 255.
\item[34] Ibid., 256.
\item[35] Ibid., 258.
\item[36] Ibid., 259.
\item[37] Ibid., 264.
\end{footnotes}
Church is and ultimately what the Church is called to do. Mission as Trinitarian missiology and *missio Dei* beyond ecclesiology is a fresh perspective. The central theme of Reign of God theology is a helpful contribution in the light of consumeristic and individualistic attitudes prevalent in society as well as the Church. The book corrects common misconceptions of the Church being a place of worship where religious goods and services are being served by professional clergy rather than a body of believers on God’s mission.38

The limitation of the book is its focus being predominantly on the West, specifically the North American context namely the US and Canada.39 The churches in other parts of the world did not originate from a Christendom context and thus would be more missional rather than maintenance in its practices from the onset in order to survive. The book fails to give more attention to the history of some of the theological themes of church history introduced for a more holistic understanding.40 It also tends to portray each person of the Trinity as separate dispensations utilized in God’s mission rather than the integrated union of love overflowing to humanity.41 The debate between specialized (classical salvation of souls through evangelism) and generalized (secular history, social

38 Ibid., 84.

39 Ibid., 12.


41 Ibid., 54-55.
justice and creation) view of the *missio Dei* is not adequately addressed.\(^{42}\) This imprecise and fuzzy definition of *missio Dei* in the book results in a myriad of definitions and expressions by different authors. The primary identity of the Church as missionary in nature based on God as the acting subject is not adequately developed and explained.\(^{43}\) There are also scarce applications, examples and models provided of how a missional church would look like when it is working well.

In conclusion, the book provides radical paradigm shifts how the sending Trinity is transform the church and her mission. Though written for the West, the book is still relevant for all churches in all contexts as it is a return to Scriptures on the identity of the Church. Its diagnosis for a pluralistic and postmodern context is relevant for countries like a globalized Singapore. The book gives strong theological basis and macro concepts for a missional church that Christian leaders should reconsider for their own ministry application.

**Center Church by Timothy Keller**

Most books on missional churches write in the context of small churches or house church movements rather than a megachurch context. This book is thus helpful to show how a missional church can operate as a megachurch in the urban context of the twenty-first century. *Center Church* lays out the theological vision of how the Gospel transforms

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 55-56.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 63.
the life, ministry and mission of urban churches in the twenty-first century.⁴⁴ The book centers on the balance of three axes. First, the Gospel axis emphasizes the grace of the Gospel producing a changed life, avoiding the extremes of legalism (self-righteousness) or antinomianism (without law).⁴⁵ Second, the culture axis avoids the extremes of over or under contextualization to be effective in reaching a particular culture.⁴⁶ Third, the movement axis balances structure with movement. It highlights the need for a Church to avoid being highly structured and institutional resulting in an inability to change the form of worship or partner with other denominations for effective ministry. On the other hand, things should not be so fluid and informal that they lose all forms of traditional Christian heritage or meaningful liturgy.⁴⁷

Keller clarifies that the Gospel (people are saved, therefore they obey) is a message that is distinct from two errors: legalism (people obey, therefore they are saved) and antinomianism (they are saved, therefore no need to obey).⁴⁸ The Gospel must have two inseparable movements at once.⁴⁹ The first says, “I am more sinful and flawed than I ever dared believe” by focusing on the requirements of the law and the definition of sin to

⁴⁴ Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 264.
⁴⁵ Ibid., Loc 378.
⁴⁶ Ibid., Loc 384.
⁴⁷ Ibid., Loc 397.
⁴⁸ Ibid., Loc 576.
⁴⁹ Ibid., Loc 1097.
combat antinomianism. The second is, “I am more accepted and loved that I ever dared hope” to starved off legalism and moralism to save oneself. The Gospel is not the minimum doctrinal content to get an unbeliever saved but every ministry of the Church is “empowered by the gospel, based upon the gospel, and is a result of the gospel.” The Gospel of grace ought to be preached from every text in the vernacular at every service to evangelize non-believers and teach believers how to live a grace-filled life. This is a paradigm shift of how the Gospel is only preached at special evangelistic services to speak to non-believers.

Keller goes on to elaborate on the cultural axis of sound contextualization which means the “translating and adapting the communication and ministry of the gospel to a particular culture without compromising the essence and particulars of the gospel itself.” One should understand the culture of his audience, affirm culture that is in line with the Gospel and critique culture that is contrary to the Gospel. Keller is helpful to diagnose some of the idols of postmodernity and urban culture that resonates with cosmopolitan Singapore.

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50 Ibid., Loc 1095.
51 Ibid., Loc 1097.
52 Ibid., Loc 735.
53 Ibid., Loc 2011.
54 Ibid., Loc 2246.
55 Ibid., 3173.
Keller highlights the strategic importance of evangelizing cities as they are growing cultural centers of great influence constituting more than 50 percent of the world’s population.\textsuperscript{56} Keller says that Christians are to pray and bless the city they live in (rather than just condemn their sinfulness) like how the Israelite exiles were commanded to do while living in Babylon (Jr 29).\textsuperscript{57} This means that Christians need to develop a positive attitude towards living in the city contributing to its well-being, yet be countercultural in how they live.\textsuperscript{58} They should be radically committed to exercise social justice (common good) for the city and to integrate their faith with their work.\textsuperscript{59} The Gospel is both in word and deeds, and cannot be separated.\textsuperscript{60} The focus on reaching cities as cultural centers makes sense as more people move to cities.

Keller critiques the missional church movement as not comprehensive enough if its focus is on just being more evangelistic, but rather transforming every part of church life and ministry to contextualize the Gospel to pre-believers in her surrounding culture.\textsuperscript{61} The missional movement also tends to stick to a particular form of small, organic churches but fails to see that a church of any size can be missional.\textsuperscript{62} The Gospel also can

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., Loc 4612.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid., Loc 4023.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid., Loc 4754.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid., Loc 4767.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid., Loc 7021.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Ibid., Loc 7656.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Ibid., Loc 7735.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
be corrupted in the new missio Dei language where sin is reduced to corporate and horizontal sin, rather than personal vertical sin towards God. It is the experience of God’s grace in being rescued from one’s vertical sin through Christ’s finished work that spurs one to exercise the horizontal aspect of justice in society. Keller talks about the importance of lay ministry where every believer are equipped with relational integrity to engage the community relationally, being similar to unbelievers in their cultural backgrounds yet different in how they live out their Christian values. Finally, a missional church balances between institutional structures and ground up movements to make sustainable missional progress. Keller advocates planting new churches rather than strengthening existing ones as new churches bring new ideas and leadership that can reach new people that will bring life to all other churches.

Keller’s book is helpful to crystallize how the Gospel transforms every aspect of the individual and the Church, especially in an urban mega church setting. The book is culturally attuned to the post-modern profile of Western society and gives valuable suggestions to reach them in a holistic way. However, the dependence on the “gospel formula” can easily overshadow the dynamic dependence on the Holy Spirit to transform

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63 Ibid., Loc 7854.
64 Ibid., Loc 7867.
65 Ibid., Loc 8262.
66 Ibid., Loc 9910.
67 Ibid., Loc 10453.
lives and the work of the supernatural, which Keller does not mention but is the hallmark of Pentecostal theology.

**Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-first Century by Tan-Chow May Ling**

The thesis of the book is “to explore how Pentecostalism in Singapore may contribute positively to human flourishing in the context of religious plurality and to construct a sustainable theology to negotiate the fundamentally complex issue of the religious order.”

It seeks to clarify and show how Pentecostal theology and practice can contribute transformatively to holistic human flourishing in the pluralistic context of Singapore. This book is a rare and valuable contribution of Pentecostal theology to missional theology especially in the context of Singapore.

Tan-Chow highlights the primacy of the Spirit from the creation of the world, to the life and resurrection of Jesus, to the Pentecost of the Church and to the new creation.

Therefore, the Spirit should not take a secondary role as a misunderstood member of the Trinity. Pneumatology is central to Pentecostalism. Traditionally, the theology of the Spirit is implicit rather than explicit, articulating a tacit and practical form of theology. There is a need to formulate a more explicit theology of the dynamic work of the Spirit.

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69 Ibid., 126.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 153.

72 Ibid.
of the Spirit in Pentecostalism through biblical, historical or theological examinations as the central theme of Trinitarian missiology of the missional church.\textsuperscript{73}

The central Johannian theology of the coming of the Spirit (Jn 14-17) makes the indwelling intimacy of Christ an experiential reality after the physical departure of Christ.\textsuperscript{74} Intimacy requires communication and participation; \textit{glossolalia} is a trans-rational and trans-national language of the heart to connect with God.\textsuperscript{75} It is also a prophetic sign of the ecumenical and spiritual union of the churches as language barriers are broken down (as a reversal of Babel).\textsuperscript{76} The Spirit falls on the Jews, God-fearing Gentiles and the followers of John the Baptist in the book of Acts to show that the Spirit’s impartiality upon believers regardless of genealogy, ethnicity and tradition.\textsuperscript{77} This includes the Spirit as the teacher who will bring clarity to the teachings of Christ and bring glory to Christ (Jn 16:13-14).\textsuperscript{78} Therefore, righteousness from obeying God’s teaching through the love of Christ and the Spirit’s power are integrated to bring spiritual transformation.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 157.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 165.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 161.
Embodying the Spirit is essentially allowing the Spirit of fellowship, relationality and inclusiveness to break all kinds of spiritual separation with God and social separation with others (Gal 3:28). Humans are created in the image of the relational and communal God for relationships. The fellowship of the relational Spirit makes authentic and inclusive fellowship with others a reality without viewing people as projects or problems to be solved. The egalitarian spirituality of Pentecostalism also made us pioneers in being inclusive of women in ministry and leadership.

Worship is central in Pentecostalism, more than preaching or the celebration of the Eucharist. Worship is not peripheral to salvation but its goal and eschatological destiny. Pentecostal worship is lively, celebrative and participative experience of the tangible presence of God. Pentecostals expect and believe that they will experience God in the worship service through signs, wonders and glossolalia like the first Pentecost. Joy as an overflow of experiencing God’s superabundance frees the Church from the

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80 Ibid., 192.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 198.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., 206.
85 Ibid., 204.
86 Ibid., 206.
87 Ibid.
rigidity of rules to act creatively in mission and attempt the impossible. Sharing testimonies of God’s miraculous work is also another important way of remembering God’s reality and Reign for Pentecostals. Worship helps to turn one from self-idolatry to God and others. This translates to life transformation and a sense of participation in God’s mission to the world. Exuberant and participative worship both energizes believers and draw unbelievers to experience the presence of God.

The contribution of this book is that it provides a strong theological foundation for Pentecostal theology and practice. It debunks common misconceptions about Pentecostalism. It expounds the often undeveloped role of the Spirit in the missional movement. The Spirit is critical in discerning dynamically what God is doing and wants to do in the Church and the world for effective missional engagement.

The book critiques the strengths and weaknesses of a “Pentecostal” movement named LoveSingapore consisting of 100 churches representing 40,000 congregation members. The movement is led by pastor Lawrence Khong, senior pastor of Faith Community Baptist Church, an independent charismatic megachurch. The limitation is that the LoveSingapore movement in Singapore is not presentative of Pentecostal practice as most of the churches involved are not Charismatic or Pentecostal churches but

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88 Ibid., 219.
89 Ibid., 206.
90 Ibid., 210.
91 Ibid., 205.
mainline churches. Most of the AOG churches have very loose association with the movement or initiatives. The book should have devoted more material to critique Pentecostal churches like the AOG denomination or mega independent Charismatic churches and their unique practices in the context of Singapore.

Other Books

There are some others books that have been helpful in understanding missio Dei and the missional church. Newbigin’s *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* is a classic work that greatly influences *Missional Church* with its theology of how local congregations need to be the “hermeneutic of the gospel” in public space to reach this pluralistic society.⁹² David Bosch was one of the key theologians in developing this renewal in missiology and missio Dei in his 1991 book, *Transforming Mission*.⁹³ The thesis of the book is to trace the evolution of God’s mission over the past twenty centuries of church history and gives eleven facets of missio Dei in his writings.⁹⁴ These definitions are comprehensive but too wide to be helpful. Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross in their 2008 book *Mission in the Twenty-first Century* is helpful to present missio Dei to be

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participated by God’s people in five main areas, namely: evangelism, discipleship, mercy ministries, social reform and stewardship of creation.\textsuperscript{95}

CHAPTER 4
THEOLOGY OF NEW MINISTRY INITIATIVE

The origins of missional theology can be attributed to Karl Barth in his address at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932.\(^1\) Barth articulated that mission is first an activity of God himself rather than the Church.\(^2\) Karl Hartenstein articulated similar convictions in 1933.\(^3\) Barth introduced with greater clarity, in 1952 at the Willingen Conference, the concept of *missio Dei* as the mission of God being derived from the very nature of the Trinitarian God.\(^4\) This was radically different from the traditional understanding of mission in the context of ecclesiology (doctrine of the church) or soteriology (doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ).\(^5\) The writings of Lesslie Newbigin were instrumental in birthing the book *Missional Church* that started the missional revolution worldwide.


\(^2\) ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid., 390.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Ibid.
This project attempts to clarify what is missional, what is MFC and the strategy to get there. There are five strategic thrusts with ten theological themes in the MFC blueprint that will help fulfil the mission of God (missio Dei) as mentioned in the Introduction. The first strategic thrust is “Enthroning the King.” The missional church conversation needs to begin with who the missional God is. Unless it is clear who God is, his followers will try to fulfil the mission in their own initiative and strength. God is the initiator and sustainer of the mission, not the Church. God is the motivation and model for mission. His followers depend on him and look to him for leadership rather than themselves. Mission needs first to be God centric rather than Church or human obedience (duty or guilt) centric.

There are three aspects of the missional God, namely Trinity on Mission (Trinitarian Missiology), Mission of God (Missio Dei) and Reign of God (Kingdom of God). Trinitarian Missiology shows how the Trinity is actively involved in the mission of God from the beginning of human history to the end. Missio Dei shows the wide extent of God’s work, namely the mission of God. The Reign of God shows the central theme of the Kingdom of God and how his followers respond to enthrone the King. This chapter first explores Enthroning the King.
Enthroning the King

Trinity on Mission (Trinitarian Missiology)

Mission is defined at the Willingen Conference as “the sending of God”. 6 “The doctrine of the missio Dei is the mission of how God the Father sends Israel, then His Son, then the church with His Spirit to fulfill the mission of God. 7 It is a radical paradigm shift that mission is not primarily an activity of the Church, but first an attribute of the missionary God. 8 Ross Hastings says that, “This is central to mission, not peripheral. To be missional is to be Trinitarian, and to be Trinitarian is to be missional.” 9 Timothy Keller says, “God does not just send the church in mission, God is already in mission and the church must join him.” 10 It is not the Church that has a mission, but it is the mission of God in the world that has the Church. 11 This means that the Church is missionary in nature since it is birthed from the missionary Trinity for mission. 12

6 Ibid


8 Ibid.

9 Ross Hastings, Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 84.

10 Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7537.


12 Ibid., 391.
understanding is widely accepted by most Christian denominations after the Willingen Conference in 1952.\textsuperscript{13}

The theological term describing this missional activity of the triune God in the world is called Trinitarian Missiology (Trinity on Mission).\textsuperscript{14} Trinitarian Missiology is the doctrine of how the Trinity is actively involved in the redemptive mission playing their respective roles in human history from the beginning to the end. God while in mission sends the nation of Israel and then the Church in this mission.

The relationality of Trinity is central to mission.\textsuperscript{15} The Trinity is one God, three persons sharing one divine nature and in oneness of communion.\textsuperscript{16} C.S. Lewis highlights that God is love (1 Jn 4:8) which means that God must contain at least two persons from eternity because love with oneself is not love.\textsuperscript{17} This unique community of love found in the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation and beauty of mission.\textsuperscript{18} The Trinitarian community was self-sufficient and did not create humans because they needed companionship.\textsuperscript{19} The loving nature within the Trinity is inclusive and overflows to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Van Gelder and Zscheile, The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation, 26.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Hastings, Missional God, Missional Church : Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West, 84.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 85.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 392.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Hastings, Missional God, Missional Church : Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West, 107.
\end{itemize}
outward community of humanity. God is not utilitarian in “using” people for mission but, his creation of humanity are a reflection of the relational image of God. We love because God is love and God first loved us (1 Jn 4:19).

The work of each person of the Trinity is integrated in mission and not limited to a separated and individualized dispensation or utilization of each person of the Trinity, which is a Western Modalistic view Eastern tradition and perspective of the Trinity emphasized the relational personhood of the Trinity (social Trinity). This means the relational community of equality and mutuality within which the distinctive identity of each person of the Trinity is maintained.

The Trinity’s involvement in the mission of God is seen since the beginning of cosmic and human history. The Spirit of God creates the world out of chaos (Gn 1:1). God the Father created man and woman in the image of the relational and plurality of God denoted by plural pronouns “Let us make man in our image” (Gn 1:27). When Adam and Eve fell into sin because of the deception of Satan, there are clues that God the Father

20 Van Gelder and Zscheile, The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation, 104.

21 Ibid., 52-53.

22 Ibid., 54.

23 Ibid.


already has a rescue in mind. He said in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of Eve will crush the head of the serpent, while the serpent will only bruise his heels. The physical reality is that snakes do bite the heels of man and men often kill snakes on the head. The spiritual reality is that Satan nailed the heels of Jesus onto the cross, but Jesus dealt a fatal blow to Satan through the cross. In Genesis 3:21, God sacrificed an animal and used the skin to cover the physical nakedness of Adam and Eve, foreshowing the need for a blood sacrifice to cover spiritual nakedness.

Next, God chose Abram, the father of Israel to be the channel of his mission and blessing to the nations (Gn 12:1-4). The Exodus event is the great defining event in the history of Israel’s deliverance over all other gods and kings so that Israel will be God’s people who will know YHWH as the true God and king (Ex 5:22-6:8). Israel and her pagan neighbours knew of God’s grace as well as his impartial justice through his acts of judgement like the exodus and various exile events of Israel (Dt 10:17; Amos 3:2; 9:7). YHWH entrusts his uniqueness and universality to the witness of Israel to the nations (Dt 4:5-8, Ps 96:1-3; Is 12:4-5; 43:9-12). The Old Testament records the repeated failure of

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28 Ibid., 93-97.

29 Ibid., 90.
Israel in her calling as a servant to obey God’s commandment to fulfil the Mosaic covenant and point other nations to God (Ez 39:21-23; Is 43:22-24).\textsuperscript{30}

God the Father then sends his son, Jesus Christ to be the suffering servant to fulfil God’s mission that Israel failed in (Is 49:5-6). Christ exhibited the characteristics of YHWH like being a creator of all things (Col 1:15-17), ruler (Mk 14:62), judge (2 Cor 5:10), model (Phil 2:5), savior (Acts 4:11-12; Rom 10:9-13; Tit 2:13; 1 Tm 2:5-6; Rev 7:10) and tangible representation of God (Jn 14:6, 9; 2 Cor 4:4-6).\textsuperscript{31} Jesus essentially came to earth to show us how to live for God (model of obedience and truth by the power of the Spirit) and died on the cross to redeem the sins of mankind (savior and redeemer of humanity) (Phil 2:6-11; Luke 19:10). The pre-Pauline Christian hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 was used to super-exalt Christ as proof of his Lordship and fulfillment of prophecy (Is 45:21-24).\textsuperscript{32} The Church as the embodiment of Christ’s body will continue his ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:11-21).\textsuperscript{33}

After Jesus’ death and resurrection, God sends the Holy Spirit to guide believers in the truth (Jn 14:26) and empower his church in God’s mission to redeem the world (Acts 1:8).\textsuperscript{34} Traditionally, as well as in current missional literature, writings about the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 102.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 109-24.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 108.

\textsuperscript{33} Hastings, Missional God, Missional Church : Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West, 82.

\textsuperscript{34} Guder and Barrett, Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 5.
role of the Holy Spirit in Trinitarian Missiology are scarce and neglected. Pentecostals and Charismatics have sought to recover the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the missional work of God as mentioned by Tan-Chow previously.³⁵ Today, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing Christian movement in the world, a testimony to the dynamism and vitality of the move of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ There is need for strong theological foundation in the midst of ideological and doctrinal challenges in the history of this movement.³⁷ This understanding of the Spirit is important in the central theme of Trinitarian missiology of the missional church.

If the Trinity is leading in mission in the world, it is imperative that the Church hears and sees what God is doing and join him. That can only happen in the dynamic leading of the Spirit, not just reflecting on the model of Christ in the past. Paul considered prophecy to be an important gift in a congregation (1 Cor 14:1, 3, 31) as the timely word designed to build and encourage one another, even converting unbelievers (1 Cor 14:24-25).³⁸ Prophecy should not be rejected because of the subjective human element but rather tested and held fast to that which is good (1 Cor 14:29; 1 Thes 5:19-21).³⁹ The Spirit is not just impersonal as portrayed in the Old Testament, but richly personal as one

³⁵ Tan-Chow, Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore, 187.
³⁶ Ibid., 48.
³⁷ Ibid., 49.
³⁹ Ibid., 134-35.
who speaks (Acts 1:16), intercedes (Rom 8:26-27), leads (Rom 8:14), teaches (Jn 14:26), grieves (Eph 4:30).\textsuperscript{40} It is the Spirit of prophecy that spoke to set aside Paul and Barnabas for the work of the ministry in the context of corporate prayer and fasting (Acts 13:2).\textsuperscript{41} This gives a clue of what it means to join what God is doing in the world (\textit{missio Dei}). Pentecostalism from its genesis is concerned with the evangelization and restoration of the world by the power of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{42}

This Trinitarian missiology theology is seen clearly in John 20:21-22, where Jesus says to his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.'”\textsuperscript{43} The first act of the risen Lord was to breathe the Spirit onto the disciples (Jn 20:21-22) and send them forth into mission empowered by the Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4).\textsuperscript{44} This suggests that the effectiveness of the Church is due not to human competency or programing but the power of the Spirit of God.\textsuperscript{45} The Church participates in the apostleship of Jesus by the power of the Spirit and exists for the sake of the world and not itself.\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{40} Ibid.
\bibitem{41} Ibid., 134.
\bibitem{43} Hastings, \textit{Missional God, Missional Church : Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West}, 82.
\bibitem{44} Pinnock, \textit{Flame of Love : A Theology of the Holy Spirit}, 113.
\bibitem{45} Ibid., 114.
\bibitem{46} Ibid., 118.
\end{thebibliography}
There are implications to ministry if one truly believes that the Trinity is leading in mission. First, corporate worship needs to be Trinitarian in knowing and worshipping the different persons of the godhead. Worship needs to focus on the beauty of the missionary heart of God to help the congregation translate this intellectual knowledge to heart knowledge. The Church does not reduce her involvement in mission because God is leading, but increases involvement by being inspired by the missionary God. Second, if God is leading in mission, his followers need to be sensitive to hear the Spirit as he leads them dynamically in their everyday lives. Time must then be spent in private and corporate prayer to seek and hear from God before acting. The Church needs to equip the people on the role of the Trinity and how to hear from God.

GA coming from a Pentecostal denomination operates on Armenian theology, where man’s choice plays a big part in salvation outcomes. It has traditionally stressed on working while it is still “day” to win the world for Christ and then the end will come. This is very much works-based centric. There is a sense that the redemption of the world falls upon the shoulders of the Church and the world will be lost if it does not do its part. This unconsciously creates a “messianic complex.” This emphasis often translates to acceptance by God only if one has done enough to obey the Great Commission. Failure to do “enough” often translates to feelings of condemnation, guilt and weariness, reinforced by the preaching of the Church. The Church prides itself as the initiating agent for change rather than God. It is easy for the Church to do for God and yet lose sight of God completely. Trinitarian Missiology frees from the overbearing burden of saving the world.
and inspires his followers first to be captivated by the missionary heart of God. Then, they can follow God’s lead to love and redeem the world unconditionally and leave the results to him.

The doctrine of Trinitarian Missiology helps to realign a Singaporean worldview to a biblical one. One of Singapore’s core values is meritocracy. Singaporeans have been conditioned to define their worth through what they do and what they have done. They are a work centric society which carries into their Christian lives. They pride themselves on what they have done for God and are comfortable with doing for God for a sense of acceptance. They are also comfortable to depend on self or church growth formulas rather than God. Showing how the Trinity leads the way in mission allows them to reach out from a sense of restedness and gratitude rather than from a place of guilt or drive for accomplishment.

The Mission of God (Missio Dei)

The second theological theme of the missional God is missio Dei (Latin phrase) which means mission of God. Trinitarian missiology is about the nature of the Trinity whereas missio Dei has to do with the work of God. The study of who God is is incomplete without a study of what he has done and is doing. The mission of God reveals God working his redemptive purposes everywhere and all the time through the Church.

47 Poon and Trinity Theological College (Singapore), Engaging Society: The Christian in Tomorrow’s Singapore, 44.

and in the world to restore and heal all creation. The ambiguous and wide definition of *missio Dei* in *Missional Church* has led to much discussion and contention of what it means beyond classical conservative definitions like evangelism and discipleship, leading to many different definitions and interpretations.

After the Willingen conference in 1952, the concept of *missio Dei* underwent an unintended secularizing development contrary to the original intentions of Barth and Hartenstein to use it exclusively for God.⁴⁹ God’s mission is larger than the Church (not exclusively in and through the Church) and affects all creation and all people in all aspects of their existence throughout human history.⁵⁰ Therefore, the involvement of the Church becomes inconsequential since the Spirit of God himself brings human and social development (common good) in an already spiritually reconciled world.⁵¹ This places human development on the same importance as spiritual salvation.

However, Bosch argues that *missio Dei* as God’s holistic mission is a valuable breakthrough and one should not return to a narrow church-centric view of mission of just evangelism and discipleship.⁵² There are various ways of categorizing this wider definition of *missio Dei* beyond the traditional understanding of evangelism, discipleship and church planting. Bosch gave eleven aspects of *missio Dei* (mediating salvation, quest

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⁵⁰ Ibid., 392.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 393.
for justice, evangelism, contextualization, liberation, inculturation, common witness, ministry by the whole people of God, witness to people of other faiths, theology and action in hope) which is too extensive to be helpful.\textsuperscript{53} Van Gelder in \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective} list two primary views of \textit{missio Dei}. The specialized (classical) view of understanding God’s work focuses on God’s spiritual redemption of man and the Church as the primary agent.\textsuperscript{54} The generalized view focuses on God’s work in and through secular history as well as his continuing care of the all creation.\textsuperscript{55} Cathy Ross and Andrew Walls, in \textit{Mission in the Twenty-first Century}, identify five marks of mission, namely proclamation of the Gospel, discipleship of new believers, mercy ministries, reforming unjust structures and creation care.\textsuperscript{56} These five marks of mission were adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1996 and are helpful in this paper to define \textit{missio Dei}, not as an exhaustive definition but a sufficient framework.\textsuperscript{57}

Firstly, mission is to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (Evangelism). Evangelism refers to any activities involved in spreading the Gospel.\textsuperscript{58} Proclamation in

\begin{itemize}
\item[53] Ibid., xi-xii.
\item[54] Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, Loc 800.
\item[55] Ibid., Loc 820.
\item[57] Ibid., 3.
\end{itemize}
biblical times was a formal announcement from royalty. It is an activity of a messenger conveying an important message whether orally or in writing. Evangelism is a call to turn from (repent) a life of sin, evil and separation from God to a new life of obedience and fellowship with God based on what Christ has done on the cross.

Preaching the Gospel as evangelism was the core ministry of Jesus (Mk 1:15; Lk 4:18). Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10). The person of Jesus cannot be separated from the preaching of the Kingdom of God, as the Kingdom of God is synonymous to his presence (Mk 1:15; Lk 11:20; 17:20). Evangelism is the announcement that “God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history.” God has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth as the physical manifestation of God. The Good News that Jesus preached had both spiritual dimensions like salvation as well as physical impact like physical


60 Ibid.


63 Ibid., 4.


65 Ibid.
healing and deliverance (Lk 4:18-19). Therefore, evangelism is the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of God authenticated by signs and wonders.67

The method of preaching the Gospel needs to be discerned by the Spirit. It can be confrontational like how Peter preached to a Jewish audience in Acts 2.68 It can be contextually sensitive way to the Greeks like how Paul did it in Acts 17:16-34.69 Evangelism needs to confront both the personal and corporate sins rather than pander to the worldly aspirations of the prevailing culture.70 It is a message of hope, comfort and peace to those who are broken and lost.71 Evangelism is the work of man in obedience to God, but conversion through evangelism is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit who convicts hearts (Jn 16:8).72 The Great Commission reminds us that the core business of the church to evangelize and disciple the nations.

The second mark of mission according to Walls and Ross is to teach, baptize and nurture new believers (discipleship).73 This paper expands this definition to include not just new believers but all believers as commanded in the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20).


67 Ibid., 6-7.

68 Ibid., 8.

69 Ibid.


71 Ibid.


73 Ibid., 25.
This is the exciting journey of helping believers grow into the likeness of Christ and lordship of Christ through God’s Word and Spirit in all areas of their lives (Rom 8:29; Col 3:17,23). Believers are baptized as the initial rite and sacrament of declaring their faith in Jesus publicly. Baptism symbolizes sharing in Christ’s burial and resurrection, putting to death the old life, receiving a new life in Christ and being included into God’s family (Rom 6:3-5; Acts 2:41). Believers also are taught to pray, read the Word, worship God and grow in the context of community. Laity must then be equipped to become leaders and multiply the work of God (1 Tm 2:2).

The third mark of mission is to respond to human need by loving service. This can be defined as social justice, community engagement or mercy ministries. It means to care for the poor, needy and marginalized of society. The relationship between evangelism (preaching for the conversion of souls) and social justice is contentious and needs to be clarified in expounding on missio Dei. During the time of Christendom, the overlap of church and state made it difficult to assign clearly the responsibility of social justice. The Social Gospel movement of the 1900s “emphasized social concern in an exclusivistc way which seemed to undercut the relevance of the message of eternal

74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., 30.
76 Ibid., 35.
77 Ibid., 47.
79 Ibid.
salvation.”

This reduced the Gospel to some earthly temporal project of alleviating human suffering without God. Bosch rightly concludes that salvation is the work of God to reconcile man to himself through Christ and is not man’s attempt to solve the problems of the world for self-redemption. In 1983, at the international evangelical conference at Wheaton, this dichotomy was overcome in its official statement that, “Evil is not only found in the human heart but also in social structures. . . . The mission of the church includes both the proclamation of the Gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation.” It is impossible to give faithful witness and the preaching of the Gospel if one is indifferent to the oppression and poverty in the context around us. Both need to go hand in hand to validate each other. Salvation cannot be just out of this world (evangelism as an escape from the wrath of God) but of this world (vertical healing resulting in healing of horizontal relationships and injustice).

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80 Ibid., 402.
81 Ibid., 403.
82 Ibid., 400.
83 Ibid., 407.
85 Ibid., 137.
In the Old Testament, one would see the strong central themes of social justice being taught and the Israelites repeatedly challenged by various prophets to obey.\(^87\) Humans made in the image of God are of infinite value and sacred, and should not be mistreated or harmed in any way (Gn 1:26).\(^88\) Micah 6:8, which states that, “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly,” is a summary of how God wants his followers to live.\(^89\) The word for justice in Hebrew is *misphat* and it occurs two hundred times in the Hebrew Old Testament.\(^90\) Its basic meaning is to treat people equitably or fairly without partiality.\(^91\) First, it means to acquit or punish every person on the merits of their case regardless of race or social status (commutative justice) (Lv 24:22; Dt 16:19).\(^92\) Second, it also means to give people their rights to equitable care and protection (distributive justice) (Pv 31:8-9; Dt 27:19).\(^93\) In the Old Testament, *misphat* is often used for care and cause of the “quartet of the vulnerable,” namely the widows, orphans, foreigners and poor (Dt 14:29; 16:11; 14, Job 22:9; Isa 10:2; Mal 3:5; Zec 7:10-11).\(^94\) God introduced himself as a personal defender of these groups of people (Ps 68:4-5; 68:6).

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\(^{87}\) Ibid., 401.


\(^{89}\) Ibid., Loc 234.

\(^{90}\) Ibid.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., Loc 242.

\(^{92}\) Ibid.

\(^{93}\) Ibid.

\(^{94}\) Ibid., Loc 249.
Special care and justice must be given to this group as they are more likely to be oppressed and neglected because of the lack of resources and power (Dt 27:19; Jr 22:3). This special provision is seen through God instituting national laws for Israel like gleaning laws (Ex 23:10-11; Lv 19:9-10), lending without interest (Dt 23:19), release of debt every seven years (Dt 15:1-18), release of land every Jubilee (Lv 25:8-55). Exercising justice is not optional but God’s followers are commanded to be generous to the poor and vulnerable as representatives of God to witness to the surrounding nations (Dt 4:6-8; 10:18-19; 15:7-8; Is 58:6-7).

A second Hebrew word that has related concepts of justice is the word tzadeqah, which is often translated as “being righteous.” Tzadeqah means a right relationship with God leading to a right relationship with all others. This means that a right relationship with God (evangelism) is the foundation of a right relationship with others (social justice). Yet, it is more than just private morality or piety. Tzadeqah is primary justice that when practiced would render misphat unnecessary, since all relationships are

95 Ibid., Loc 264.
96 Ibid., Loc 301.
97 Ibid., Loc 481-512.
98 Ibid., Loc 398.
99 Ibid., Loc 316.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
conducted in the right way (Job 29:12-17). Tzadeqah and misphat are used together over thirty-six times in the Bible and means “social justice,” as a modern day equivalent (Ps 33:5; Jr 9:23-24). God’s desire is that there will be no poor among the Israelites (Dt 15:4). Exercising social justice and obeying God’s law is missional as it points people and nations to God (Dt 4:6-8; Mt 5:16).

In the New Testament, Jesus has intense interest and love for the same kinds of vulnerable people as the Old Testament, like the poor, the marginalized, the sick, outcast and sinners like prostitutes and tax-collectors (Mt 9:10-13; 11:4-5). Jesus raised the son of a poor widow (Lk 7:11-16). He ministered to the outcast like immoral women (Lk 7:36; Jn 4:27) and lepers (Mk 1:41; Lk 5:13). Jesus told his disciples to give without expecting repayment (Lk 6:32; 14:13-14) and if possible in secret (Mt 6:1-4). Jesus goes against the traditional system of patronage to build business connections just for self, but rather extending hospitality to the marginalized who cannot repay (Lk 14:12-13). Giving to the poor pleases God and is a natural expression of faith (Lk 12:33;

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102 Ibid., Loc 324.
103 Ibid., Loc 360.
104 Ibid., Loc 301.
105 Ibid., Loc 673.
106 Ibid., Loc 681-88.
107 Ibid., Loc 718.
108 Ibid., Loc 711.
No act of kindness for God, even giving a cup of water to the needy, is too insignificant and will be rewarded by God (Mk 9:41). A lack of justice reflects that one’s heart is not right with God (Is 1:17; 58:6-7; Mk 12:38-40; Lk 11:38-42). A lack of justice reflects a life far away from God as seen in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Mt 25:31-46) and Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37).

The early church sold their property and pooled their resources to help the poor such that there was no needy among them (Acts 2:44-45; 5:1-11; 6:1-7); a fulfilment of Old Testament vision of having no poor among them (Dt 15:4). The early church had a ministry to distribute food daily to widows by the deacons of the church (Acts 6:1). The Greek word for deacons is diakonia which means “humble service to practical needs.” This ministry of helps ought to begin in one’s own family (1 Tm 5:8), followed by the Church and then to all others (Gal 6:10). Paul exalts all to remember the poor.

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109 Ibid., Loc 726.
112 Ibid., Loc 763.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid., Loc 850.
117 Ibid., Loc 858.
(Acts 20:35; Gal 2:10). James challenged the congregation to exercise their true faith to produce good works and action for the needy (Ja 1:27; 2:15-17; 5:1-5). The result of good works for the needy is that the Church will grow in favor with all the people and grow like the early church in Acts 2:45-47.

GA has a volunteer welfare organization named REACH family services that is supported by the government to do social work among families, elderly and youths-at-risk. This organization is not allowed to share Christ explicitly, but is known to be a Christian charity and affiliated with the church. Grace Community Outreach ministry is the church’s social arm, engaging the community and free to share Christ. There is also a prison ministry that reaches out to convicts and their families. These are platforms to exercise social justice that has the potential to lead to people glorifying God (Matt 5:16).

The fourth mark of mission is to seek to transform unjust structures of society. This is denoted by terms like structural reform and advocacy. It means to seek social transformation through denouncing unjust structures and announcing God’s justice into systems and structures of community, government and society. This is different from dominion theology that seeks to establish Mosaic Law or God’s rule in society before

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118 Ibid., Loc 814.
119 Ibid., Loc 822.
120 Ibid., Loc 1677.
122 Ibid., 63.
Christ will return (Postmillennialism). Neither is it liberation theology that seeks to bring about social and political change to bring about justice and equality as the central aspect of the Gospel. After the Enlightenment, the public world of facts and policies were slowly demarcated to the state while the private world of faith and morals were assigned to the Church. The Church’s ministry in the public square is by and large limited to charity and development. The Church became weak in challenging unjust social and political structures as these are viewed as beyond its purview and unacceptable by political rulers. Newbigin begin to assert that Christianity does not concern only the private and domestic aspects of life but of public truth. Keller says it is naïve to just depend on evangelism to change individual hearts and individual social work without doing social reform to correct systemic social injustice. The traditional evangelical position of focusing on the spiritual and afterlife made them indifferent to the structural injustice of the current world. Examples would be how the Christianized nation of America accepted slavery till 1865 and achieved equal civil rights for all only in 1968 through the advocacy of Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister. More recently, many


124 Ibid., 402.

125 Ibid.


Western nations with majority Christians failed to be the public voice to oppose the legalization of same-sex marriages.

There are biblical passages that support the reformation of unjust systems, structure or government that goes against the Word of God. Moses was called by God to deliver the Israelites out of slavery from the government of the evil Pharaoh of Egypt (Ex 3:7-12). Daniel and his friends refused to bow down to the golden image even though it was commanded in a royal decree (Dn 3:16-18). Daniel prayed to God despite an edict forbidding that (Dn 6:7). Daniel advised a pagan king to renounce his sins and be kind to the oppressed (Dn 4:27). Israel is called to advocate against injustice and speak up, especially for those with no voice (Pr 31:8-9). Israel is commanded not to be unjust in their wages to workers or oppress widows, orphans and foreigners (Mal 3:5; Is 58:6-7; 61:1; Jer 7:6; Zec 7:10).

The Old Testament and Torah are addressed not just to individuals but the reform of the national life of Israel. The Torah is about law and order, hygiene, economics, social welfare and politics as much as it is about personal morals. Laws were instituted to combat oppression in the structures like judicial system that favours the powerful (Lv


133 Ibid., 200.
19:15), or loans that charge excessive interest (Lv 19:15), unjustly low wages (Ex 22:25-27) or income inequality (Amos 5:11; Ez 22:29; Mi 2:2; Is 5:8). There is structural reform through the institution of Jubilee in Leviticus 25 by God where land, property or slaves sold is to be returned to the original owners every fifty years to combat perpetual poverty of the Israelites. The gleaning laws were not just encouraging a handout but getting the poor to be self-sufficient through work (Ex 23:10-11; Lv 19:9-10). Slaves are released with enough resources to be self-sufficient (Dt 15:13-14).

On the other hand, many would say the New Testament is addressed to individuals and does not expect Christians to exercise social or political reformation of Greek and Roman society. In the New Testament, there seems to be more emphasis on the “spiritual” aspects likely due to the environment of persecution. Christians are told to submit to all governing authorities in Romans 13:1-7 unless it violates the word of God (verse 3). Jesus was not against paying of taxes (Matt 22:21).

However, there are examples of believers confronting unjust governments. Peter and John were commanded by the Jewish authorities not to preach and teach in the name

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137 ibid., Loc 1413.
of Jesus, but they declared a need to obey God first rather than man (Acts 4:19; 5:28). John the Baptist confronted Herod the tetrarch because he married his brother’s wife (Mt 14:4). Christ’s followers are called in Ephesians 6:12 to wrestle against “rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” These refer not to just demonic spirits but demonic influence behind social structures that perpetuate oppression and inequality. Through the cross, Christ has disarmed these demonic powers and authorities (Col 2:15). Newbigin gave examples of apartheid and communism as demonic structural powers that need to be confronted through prayers and reform.

The mission of God is wider than the Church and God can work through secular history and even through non-Christians to direct nations and governments. God has the power to raise and dispose kings and kingdoms (Dan 2:19-21). Joseph, Daniel and Esther work with excellence and piety in pagan societies to influence national structure and others towards God. God can even work through non-believers. God spoke to King Cyrus, a non-believer to allow the Israelite exiles to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of God (Ezra 1). God spoke through a donkey and evil prophet Balaam (Nm 22)


142 Ibid., 207.

to change the course of history. Paul, a persecutor of the early church encountered God in a vision and became a great apostle to reach the Gentiles and impact the Roman Empire. The Church needs to recognize God’s work in the world beyond the Church and join him in establishing his Kingdom there. God’s people must actively spread God’s Reign into every segment of society.¹⁴⁴

Christians do not overthrow every corrupt government knowing that utopia will never be reached until the reign of Christ in the coming age. However, Christians or the church can influence policies through politics (macro) through public discourse as well as send strong believers into every sector of society culture and structures (micro), to influence people and policies.¹⁴⁵ Newbigin says:

The church can never settle down to being a voluntary society concerned merely with private and domestic affairs. It is bound to challenge in the name of the one Lord all the powers, ideologies, myths, assumptions and worldviews which do not acknowledge him as Lord. If that involves conflict, trouble, and rejection, then we have the example of Jesus before us and his reminder than a servant is not greater than his master.¹⁴⁶

It is commendable that Christians in Singapore have increasingly made their voice heard in the public square through public statements on contemporary moral issues by the National Council of Churches. In 2014, the National Council of Churches of Singapore, Trinity Theological College and The Bible Society of Singapore founded Ethos Institute for Public Christianity for the purpose of engaging contemporary societal issues from a

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.


¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 221.
Christian perspective.\textsuperscript{147} This needed ministry does research on contemporary issues, equips the Church and gives press releases representing the stand of the Church on issues like sexuality and gambling. The Singapore Christian community has also signed online petitions in the past to register their disagreement with national matters like abortion, LGBT, casinos, euthanasia and offensive performances.\textsuperscript{148}

The fifth mark of mission is to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.\textsuperscript{149} This is denoted by terms like creation care and stewardship of the earth. It means to take up the delegated role as God’s image bearers to fill the earth, rule and cultivate all creation to its full potential for the benefit of all to bring glory to God (Gn 1:28). This is different from green politics which aims to create ecologically sustainable society. Discipleship is not holistic if it does not address one’s relationship with the ecological environment and physical world.\textsuperscript{150}

Evangelicals have difficulty accepting the fifth mark because most have lost the grand metanarrative of the Bible called the Four-Chapter Gospel of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration.\textsuperscript{151} Scripture begins with the creation of all things, the fall of


\textsuperscript{149} Walls and Ross, \textit{Mission in the Twenty-First Century : Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission}, 84.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 95.

\textsuperscript{151} Whelchel, \textit{How Then Should We Work?: Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work}, 8.
man, the redemption by Jesus and ends with the renewal of all creation in the new heaven and earth.\textsuperscript{152} In the last 200 years, beginning from the first half of the nineteenth century, the Second Great Awakening in the US led by preachers like Charles Finney, Lyman Beecher, Barton Stone had great revival effects, but have truncated the Gospel into an individual response to the Gospel (a Two-Chapter Gospel of fall and redemption).\textsuperscript{153} This causes one to see personal salvation as an end for self when it should be a means to fulfil God’s plan for man on this earth in this age.\textsuperscript{154} Keller says that “the purpose of redemption is not to escape the world but to renew it”\textsuperscript{155} Personal conversion and transformation is important but so is the Kingdom of God to bring cultural transformation on earth as it is in Heaven.\textsuperscript{156} The Four-Chapter Gospel clarifies the meaning of one’s entire life in God’s physical world beyond just “spiritual” Christian activities.\textsuperscript{157} Everything we do has spiritual implications and should be an act of worship (Ecc 2:24; 1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:23).

The material world matters to God. When God created the physical world, he said that it was good (Gn 1:31). The beauty of creation has the potential of drawing people to

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 10.
the knowledge of God (Rom 1:20). No other religion values both matter and spirit as good.\textsuperscript{158} The biblical concept of \textit{Shalom} includes both physical thriving as well as spiritual.\textsuperscript{159} The doctrine of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ goes against Greek gnostic thinking that spirit is good and matter is bad.\textsuperscript{160} Christ’s followers will have a new imperishable body in a new physical Heaven and earth in the age to come (1 Cor 15:42). There should not be a Christian dualism that is similar to the heresy of Gnosticism.

The Cultural Mandate or Creation Mandate in Genesis 1:28 shows God commanding humans made in his image to exercise his delegated authority to fill and subdue the earth, which means to create cultures and build civilizations.\textsuperscript{161} It is repeated after the fall and is not nullified by the fall (Gn 8:17).\textsuperscript{162} The Church is invited to participate in God’s holistic work of creation, care, redemption and restoration of the entire created world.\textsuperscript{163} Nancy Pearcey says that first, people are to “be fruitful and multiply” signifying the call to develop the social world like building families,

\textsuperscript{158} Timothy Keller, \textit{Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work} (England: Dutton, 2012), 51.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{161} Whelchel, \textit{How Then Should We Work?: Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work}, 13.

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 16.

communities, schools, cities with its government and laws.\footnote{Nancy Pearcey, \textit{Total Truth : Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity}, Study guide ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 47.} Second, they are to “subdue the earth” meaning to harness the potential of the natural world like planting crops, building homes, inventing technology, composing music.\footnote{Ibid.} Keller defines humanity’s work as “Rearranging the raw materials of a particular domain to draw its potential for the flourishing of everyone.”\footnote{Whelchel, \textit{How Then Should We Work?: Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work}, 13.}

The Four-Chapter Gospel and Cultural mandate greatly affects our theology of work. Traditionally, Christians are influenced by Hellenistic dualistic influences that view the material world as bad and spiritual world as good, giving rise to secular work as unspiritual and church ministry work as superior.\footnote{Keller, \textit{Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City}, Loc 9598.} On the other hand, many Christians in the modern secular world believe that career is their salvation and people going into full-time Christian ministry are foolish (secular above spiritual). All work has equal dignity even manual work, and “secular” work is no less noble than “sacred” work of ministry.\footnote{Keller, \textit{Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work}, 51.} When Christians work according to their gifts and passions, they reflect God’s creativity to bring value and develop the potential of his creation.\footnote{Ibid., 52.} Richard Pratt expresses it well that God is saying, “Put your heart into mastering this part of my world.
Get it in order; unearth its treasures; do all you can with it. Then everyone will see what a glorious King I am.”\textsuperscript{170} Christians can be passionate and excellent even in ‘mundane’ work as service to God and mankind as “God’s fingers” to provide for humanity. This means that work has value beyond just being a platform for evangelism, means of discipleship or necessary evil to earn a living. When Christians do their work with excellence and integrity as service unto God in every vocation, they earn the right to speak about the transforming Gospel. This means the ability to work with non-believers in every vocational arena for the betterment of society and through it point them to the creator.\textsuperscript{171} Work today is a rehearsal for fruitful work and reigning with Christ in the New Heaven and Earth as Eden restored ( Isa 65:21-22).

These five marks of missio Dei are helpful to define clearly what is within the scope of God’s holistic mission. All five marks are important but the first two marks of evangelism and discipleship are primary because they pertained to our restored vertical relationship with Christ that ought to lead to the last three secondary marks of mercy ministries, structural reforms and creation care as a natural by-product of being redeemed. There is a need to equip God’s people on each of these five areas as it has implications on how they live their entire lives in every arena of society to establish God’s Reign. Generally, the theology of the last three marks is not well developed in GA and needs to be strengthened for greater holistic witness as the focus has traditionally


\textsuperscript{171} Whelchel, \textit{How Then Should We Work?: Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work}, 29.
been on just evangelism and discipleship. Doing so will not weaken missional witness but strengthen it as God’s people understand their roles in the everyday aspects of their lives beyond just “spiritual” activities. This will combat dualism and give comprehensive and consistency of witness to the world.

The Reign (Kingdom) of God

There has been a significant recovery of the theological theme of the Reign of God or the Kingdom of God as the central message of the Bible in the missional church conversation.172 The *missio Dei* is closely related to the Reign of God because essentially the mission of God is to establish the Reign of God here on earth and fully in the age to come. Keller says that the Reign of God is the entrance into the world of God’s ruling power where God is king over every dimension of life.173 Walls says that the Kingdom of God is the rule of the eternal sovereign God over all his creation (Ps 103:19; Dan 4:3).174 George Ladd writes that God’s plan “was not to bring the evil Age to its end and inaugurate the Age to come, but rather to bring the powers of the future Age to men in the midst of the present evil Age.”175 Christians live in the tension of the already and not

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yet of the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{176} This is however different from Postmillennialism that believes that there will be increasingly more Christians and ‘Christian’ way of government before Christ comes again. Arthur Homes says the word \textit{shalom} (peace) describes this Reign of God and is a world characterized by the justice, joy, absence of hostility and full prosperity under God’s righteous rule (Rom 14:17).\textsuperscript{177} The word kingdom in the Gospels is the Greek word is \textit{basileia}. It is used by Jesus to refer to the order of “kingly rule” or “sovereignty or “kingship” of God over all creation.\textsuperscript{178}

There are a number of reasons for losing the Reign of God as an essential part of the Gospel after the early church. First, Augustine in the fourth century taught that salvation was primarily a transportation of disembodied souls from hell to spiritual heaven after death.\textsuperscript{179} This deviated from biblical eschatology where believers reign with God in the present earth to prepare to reign in the new heaven and earth where justice prevails.\textsuperscript{180} Many believers still hold and exercise this Augustinian view.\textsuperscript{181} Second, the Church has tended to separate the doctrine of the corporate Reign of God over all

\textsuperscript{176} Whelchel, \textit{How Then Should We Work?: Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work}, 24.

\textsuperscript{177} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 91.


\textsuperscript{179} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 132.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
creation from God’s provision for personal and private salvation.\textsuperscript{182} Third, in modern Western revivals in the seventeenth century, there has been a preoccupation with receiving one’s individual salvation through praying the sinner’s prayer, divorced from the full Gospel of following Christ and his Lordship.\textsuperscript{183} Fourth, the more recent hyper grace theology or prosperity gospel has also put emphasis on salvation benefits rather than the Reign of God.\textsuperscript{184} This has created a salvation-lordship dichotomy that is prevalent today.

The Gospel of the Reign of God is broader than just private, individual salvation and securing eternal security for oneself as an end goal, but bearing witness to the Reign of God in all aspects of life in the present world.\textsuperscript{185} The call to salvation should never be divorced from the call to follow, obey and serve Jesus as Lord as the ongoing conversion process (Mt 10:38; Luke 9:23-24).\textsuperscript{186} When salvation is presented solely as a present gift and future eternal bliss, it becomes a self-centered consumer good when the central theme of Christianity is turning to God from self.\textsuperscript{187} God is not just interested in saving a person and giving him salvation benefits but establishing his Kingdom on earth through him.

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 92.

\textsuperscript{183} Darrell L. Guder, \textit{The Incarnation and the Church's Witness, Christian Mission and Modern Culture} (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999), 8.

\textsuperscript{184} Barker, "The Hypergrace of Joseph Prince: A Review of 'Destined to Reign'."

\textsuperscript{185} Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, Loc 788.

\textsuperscript{186} Guder, \textit{The Incarnation and the Church's Witness}, 35.

The Reign (Kingdom) of God is the central theme of the entire Bible. It is a story of how the people of God often turn to idolatry instead of God as King. God is creator King who spoke things into existence in Genesis 1. God is the King of Israel in the Old Testament who delivered Israel yet they wanted a human king (1 Sm 8:6-7). The Davidic Covenant promises an eternal kingdom from the line of with David (2 Sm 7:16).

In the New Testament, Jesus is the promised messiah king as prophesized in the Old Testament (Mt 11:2-5; Is 29:18; 35:5; 61:1-2). John the Baptist prophesized and prepared for the coming of the Kingdom of God (Mt 3:1-2). Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom and testifies of the new Kingdom (Mk 1:14-15). The revelation of the Kingdom of God was magnified as the central aspect to the teaching of Jesus (Mk 1:1). Jesus himself is the Kingdom in person, visible and re-established. Belief in the Gospel and repentance (turning to God) by man is the first step to enter the Kingdom (Mk 1:15). Baptist is a public declaration of belonging to the Kingdom (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The values of the Kingdom in the beatitudes were counter cultural (Mt 5:3-11). The Kingdom of God shared by Jesus in the Gospels, mostly in

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188 Keller, "Preaching in a Post-Modern Climate."


191 Ibid.
parables, were both a mystery and an open secret.\textsuperscript{192} The natural by-product or response to the grace of receiving the Kingdom is to surrender all to God (Mt 13:44-46). The evidence of genuine faith in God is not the ability to perform signs and wonders but obedience to God’s will (Mt 7:21-23). The Kingdom of God is lived out as a lifestyle of surrendering to God’s Reign in every aspect of one’s life (Mt 6:32-34). The disciples were sent out to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom (Mt 10:7).\textsuperscript{193} The message of the Kingdom of God is authenticated by the power of signs and wonders (Lk 9:1-2). God’s Kingdom is different and in opposition to the Kingdom of the world (Jn 18:36).\textsuperscript{194} The Kingdom resides in his follower’s hearts and lives (Rom 14:17). Jesus crucified his will to submit to the Father’s will at the cross as the ultimate model of God’s reign (Lk 22:42).\textsuperscript{195} The cross was the decisive event that fully defeated the powers of evil; and the Kingdom of God fully inaugurated.\textsuperscript{196} The cross and the resurrection of Jesus destroyed every other demonic kingdom.\textsuperscript{197} The resurrection was a confirmation that evil and death

\textsuperscript{192} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 90.

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 89-90.

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 90.

\textsuperscript{195} Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, 115.


\textsuperscript{197} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 91.
were fully conquered.\(^{198}\) The Kingdom of God is already here (Lk 17:20-21) and not yet (Lk 13:28-30). Jesus uses three parables in Matthew 25 as the litmus test of whether believers are authentic in their faith and ready for the coming kingdom. The Church ought to live today demonstrating the Reign of God on earth in preparation of the New Heaven and Earth where Christ’s followers will reign fully with Christ (Isa 65:21-22).\(^{199}\)

The Church is the fruit and offspring of the Reign of God in the world but is not equated with the Reign of God.\(^{200}\) The Church is not identical to the Reign of God but represents the Reign of God.\(^{201}\) Newbigin talks about the Church being the “hermeneutic of the Gospel” as it exists as a sign that the redemptive Reign of God is already here, a foretaste of the eschatological full Reign of God and an instrument to bring the Kingdom of God to bear on every aspect of life now.\(^{202}\) The Church displays love, peace and justice as characteristics of God’s Reign.\(^{203}\) The Church represents the Reign of God as an incarnational, missionary and contrast community which will be unpacked in the later chapters. As a Pentecostal church, GA believes that signs and wonders need to


\(^{200}\) Ibid., 98.

\(^{201}\) Ibid., 101.


accompany the preaching of the Gospel of the Reign of God (Mk 16:17-18). However, the Kingdom of God is “already” and “not yet” fully here meaning that not all will be healed but we experience a glimpse of God’s impending power and concern for the whole person.204

The salvation-lordship dichotomy is prevalent in Singapore as well. Many Christians are marked by the mindset of “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” coined by Christian Smith.205 It is comfortable Christianity for self where God helps me in my problems, to be a “socially good” person and securing a place in heaven without any need to stress on the Reign of God. Singapore is increasingly influenced by the Health and Wealth (hyper grace) theology expounded by fast growing megachurches in Singapore like New Creation Church with more than 33,000 members and City Harvest Church with about 16,000 members as of 2017.206 Joseph Prince, senior pastor of New Creation Church was reportedly paid an annual salary of S$500 thousand and the church bought a S$500 million 5000 seat hall in a commercial building in 2008.207 This has led to a consumeristic ethos creeping into the Church in which economic success and wealth is displayed in exuberant consumption as an evangelical sign of God’s blessing, so as to

205 Zscheile, Cultivating Sent Communities : Missional Spiritual Formation, 3.
206 Church, "About New Creation Church."
draw people to the Church and bring them to Christ.208 This prosperity teaching appeals very well to the *kiasu* (Hokkien for “afraid to lose”) attitudes of Singaporean Chinese who wants the best of everything.209 It is also similar to Chinese folk religions that offer answers to prayers, health and prosperity after offering sacrifices to appease the gods.210

This narcissistic and consumeristic spirituality impacts Christian witness negatively as it embraces the values of the world and uses God to get blessings, which is contrary to the message of the Gospel of God’s reign.211 This does not mean that we swing to other extreme where we preach salvation by works or obedience. Mentoring and leadership models of a consecrated life will be necessary to disciple a people that allows God to reign in every area of their lives.

**Incarnational Ministry**

The word “incarnation” has been a new way of talking about mission and evangelism since Newbigin talked about “mission in Christ’s way” in 1989.212 The incarnation is the Christian doctrine of how Jesus as God took on human existence to reach humanity on earth as “the Word became flesh and lived among us” (Jn 1:14).213

208 Ibid., 132.


210 Ibid.

211 Ibid., 90.

212 Guder, *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*, xi.

213 Ibid., 2.
Jesus exercised incarnational ministry when he crossed cultures from heaven to earth to intentionally come into humanity’s context to reach the lost with the Gospel. God’s missionary action through humans starting from Abraham reached its climax and fullest disclosure in the sending event (incarnation) of Jesus, the Son of God (fully God) to be the Son of Man (fully man) to redeem the world. Jesus compassionately enter into the life of the neighbourhood, workplace and community first rather than expecting the neighbour to enter into the foreign subculture of the Church or synagogue. The incarnation of Christ shows how Christ destroys all racism, classism and ethnocentrism as he ministered impartially to people from all walks of life.

The Church is not the incarnation of Christ in the sense that Christ’s followers were once divine but now human, but in the sense of imitating the incarnational ministry of Jesus. The church should intentionally go into the context of the lost and needy to reach them, rather than wait for them to come and be comfortable in a church context which may not happen because the huge difference in culture. The Church is the embodiment of Jesus meeting the needs of the Church and the world (1 Cor 12:27).

Incarnational ministry therefore means the understanding and practice of Christian

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216 Ibid., 48.

mission that is rooted and shaped by the life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the messenger (who Jesus was), the message (what he did) and the model (how he did it) for how to live life as a Christian on God’s mission. The Church like Jesus is called to be distinct, yet it must also participate deeply in the life of the surrounding society, to be in the world, yet not of the world (Jn 17:15-16). The incarnational way of mission addresses the problem of how modern missions was exported worldwide with its enculturation of European imperialism, when it should have been rooted in the model of Jesus as he contextualized the Gospel to the context of the unreached.

In modern culture, the Church uses predominantly attractiveness means to draw people through charismatic speakers or professional entertainment-like services or musicals. They treat the congregation like consumeristic audiences waiting for their felt needs to be met like the popular seeker-sensitive church growth model. They seek to draw pre-believers to fit into the increasingly foreign subculture of the Church. They depend on professional clergy to share Christ rather than equip believers to share Christ effectively. Church goers are less likely to share their faith personally to their loved ones.

218 Guder, The Incarnation and the Church's Witness, xii.

219 Ibid., 9.


221 Guder, The Incarnation and the Church's Witness, xii.

222 Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7421.
but would rather invite their friends to church. Studies show that while 75 percent of Christians feel comfortable sharing their faith, only 29 percent have done so in the last six months.\(^\text{223}\) Christians are more comfortable inviting their friends, as 52 percent have done that in the last six months.\(^\text{224}\) There is a place for inviting pre-believers to church but believers need to be equipped to be incarnational in sharing the Gospel and their lives to be effective missional witnesses.

There is biblical basis for the Church is to be incarnational in ministry rather than just attractional. Jesus was always in the context of sinners, of tax collectors and prostitutes, and professed to the objecting Pharisees that he came to call sinners and not those who are righteous (Mt 9:9-12; Lk 19:1-10). Jesus’s prayer for the disciples was that they be in (engagement) the world and yet not be of (different from) the world (Jn 17:15-17).\(^\text{225}\) In Matthew 5:13, Jesus declares that believers are the salt of the earth. This image suggests that just as salt is scattered and is in close contact with food to bring flavor and prevent decay. In the same way, Christians are to be scattered into every arena of society to bring influence through the Gospel and prevent the moral decay of society.

The early church exploded in growth because lay believers (not just the apostles) preached the Gospel wherever they went as they were being scattered due to persecution (Acts 11:19-21). Lay believers in the early church evangelized and discipled others in the

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\(^{224}\) Ibid.

\(^{225}\) Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 386.
context of their relationships (Acts 8:4; Rom 15:14; Col 3:16; 1 Thes 1:6-10; Heb 3:13; 1 Jn 2:20, 27). Christians in the early church grew as they met in house churches to live out their Christian life and bless the surrounding community (Acts 2:42-47). Michael Green’s seminal *Evangelism in the Early Church* noted that the most important way that Christianity spread was through extended household (*oikos*) as evangelism was done informally by lay Christians. This means that church service should no longer be the primary connecting point between nonbelievers and God, but rather through laity who share and express the Gospel through how they live.

Being incarnational is not tied to a particular size like a small house church that lives among the community. A large church with weekly gathered worship services can be equally incarnational when its small groups or ministry groups are sent out to be incarnational. Each size congregation has its own strengths, weaknesses, limitations and capabilities to be incarnational. The litmus test is when a church disappears overnight; will it be missed by the community around it?

There are a few steps to incarnational ministry. The first is to enter the culture of those the church desires to reach as much as possible to understand and identify with

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227 Ibid., Loc 8085.

228 Ibid., Loc 8048.

229 Ibid., Loc 7697.

230 Ibid., Loc 7722.

231 Ibid., Loc 7735.
The Church lives in a secular and globalized context that may be unfamiliar or adversarial to the worldview of Christianity. It is all the more crucial to enter their context to connect first rather than expect them to enter the Church’s context. Whether in groups or as individuals, it is mostly organic and spontaneous, in the context of informal personal relationships outside of the church’s organized programs. Every Christian preaching the Gospel needs to exercise cultural quotient (CQ). One needs to understand the influence of her own culture, the biblical culture and culture of the recipient. This means a diligent effort to understand and articulate her social, linguistic and cultural reality (hopes, fears, beliefs) with honest questions and active listening.

Second, incarnational ministry must see itself as a servant to serve the common good of society. The Church as a biblical community needs to find its identity in its involvement in the community with all its resources rather than traditional markers of church success like bodies (attendance), bucks (budget) and buildings (real estate). Currently, most will see the Church’s role as purely spiritual and only if it has additional

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232 Ibid., Loc 3187.
233 Ibid., Loc 7417.
234 Ibid., Loc 8151.
235 Ibid., Loc 3239.
236 Ibid., Loc 3250.
237 Ibid., Loc 3200.
238 Ibid., Loc 7916.
time and resources should it delve into social justice. The church community should be committed with their resources to give and serve sacrificially for the good of the city, especially the poor as a powerful witness of a compassionate God (Mt 5:16).\textsuperscript{240} It is a community that cares for its neighbourhood as an integral part of the Gospel it proclaims.\textsuperscript{241} The Gospel changes the Church to bless others as fellow image bearers of God (as ends) rather than as means to conversion targets.\textsuperscript{242} In this way, Christ’s followers will be granted a great deal of influence by the community they are in and earn the right to speak to them.\textsuperscript{243}

The third step to incarnational ministry is to affirm those beliefs of the people in their context the Church is trying to reach that are in line with the Bible.\textsuperscript{244} This affirmation helps form bridges of commonality that shows understanding for their culture and appreciation of their strengths.\textsuperscript{245} It is also the premise to show its contradictions with other beliefs they hold that contradict the Bible. In Singapore, the values of the family as the building block of society; respect and equality for all people regardless of religion, race or socioeconomic strata; minimal corruption are in line with what the Bible affirms.

\textsuperscript{240} Keller, \textit{Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City}, Loc 4770.

\textsuperscript{241} Newbigin, \textit{The Gospel in a Pluralist Society}, 229.

\textsuperscript{242} Keller, \textit{Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City}, Loc 9300.

\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., Loc 4817.

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid., Loc 3300.

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., Loc 3342.
The fourth step is to challenge and confront the culture in areas that contradict the Bible. In Singapore, we need to challenge the idols of education as measure of self-worth; meritocracy as reward for hard work to the neglect of the marginalized; career and material success as salvation; religion as a consumer good for personal success. Singapore needs to see herself as blessed to be a blessing to the nations.

Last, incarnational ministry means equipping believers to integrate their faith and work in order to apply their Christian beliefs and practice in the workplace or community, which they spend the majority of their time and energy in. Traditionally, Christian discipleship is focused on private personal piety through church activities with whatever little time left from their vocational life. This is inadequate as work in the urban world requires great amounts of time, energy and ethical discernment. GA must train lay people with theological depth for effective public life and vocational witness in a pluralistic world. They need to be equipped by the Gospel to affirm cultural practices in their workplaces that are in line with the Gospel, reject those that are contrary and revise those which can be adapted. In the past, Christian business people used to be seen as cash cows to feed the ministry of the church, when they should be “missionaries”

246 Ibid., Loc 3314.
247 Ibid., Loc 4909.
248 Ibid., Loc 4918.
249 Ibid., Loc 4930.
250 Ibid.
251 Ibid., Loc 3162.
that directly impact the marketplace as the biggest mission field of the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{252}

In order to exercise incarnational ministry, GA needs it members to do so as individual missionaries sent into the mission field of their community or workplaces. GA also needs to do so as a corporate Body of Christ or GMG, caring for the marginalized community around the church.\textsuperscript{253} REACH Community Service Society gives GA a good platform to engage the community and reach the marginalized. There are also a prison ministry and various social justice projects. There needs to be further thought on how to increase congregational involvement and assimilation of those of lower socio-economic strata to a predominantly middle class and above congregation.

The Missionary Nature of the Church

Newbigin says, “If the gospel is to challenge the public life of our society . . . this will only happen when local congregations renounce an introverted concern for their own life, and recognize that they exist for the sake of those who are not members, as sign, instrument, and foretaste of God’s redeeming grace for the whole life of society.”\textsuperscript{254} This is a bold statement and there is a need to clarify if it is true that the Church exists for the sake of non-members. Traditionally, the concept of the Church is a church with a mission

\textsuperscript{252} Edmund Chan & Tan Lian Seng, Discipleship Missions: Getting Missional in Your Life (Singapore: Covenant Evangelical Free Church, 2016), 156.


\textsuperscript{254} Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, 233.
(mission as one of many tasks or departments) rather than missional church (mission as its core identity and business). The word Church means to be God’s people called out of the world (ek-lesia), set apart to be sent into the world. William Temple said that, “The church is the only society in the world that exists for the sake of those who are not members of it.”

These are many factors that gave rise to the loss of the missionary nature of the Church. First, the missional nature of the early church was lost by the fourth century when Constantine, the Roman emperor converted to Christianity and Christianity, the State religion took center stage in shaping the religious and cultural life of the West (Christendom). Since almost everyone is “saved” in the West, the Church fulfils its missionary responsibilities by just sending some money and missionaries into pagan lands through missions departments and programs. They exported a European style of what it means to “do” church. Evangelism and mission are not the core businesses of the entire Body of Christ, but outsourced to certain clergy and missionaries.

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257 Ibid., 375.


259 Ibid.

260 Ibid., 4.

261 Ibid., 6.
Secondly, during the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Reformers in defining the true marks of the Church (Gospel rightly preached, sacraments rightly administered and church discipline rightly exercised) have unconsciously influenced the Church to be seen as a place of religious activities rather than “the entire body of people sent on a mission.”262 This slowly gave rise to the perception of the Church by members and outsiders as a physical vendor of religious goods and services to meet the needs of her members.263

Thirdly, the last three hundred years of “successful” modern missionary expansion have seen the Church “fulfilling” her missionary duties by merely sending missionaries or giving money to missions work (overseas unreached ministries) which have created a dichotomy between mission and the Church.264 Missions and parachurch organization that specialize in overseas missions adds to this dichotomy.265

Fourth, the Church as service provider is reinforced by modern secular management theories and church growth strategies rather than the Word of God. Clergy are prominent as sales representative, religious programs and blessings are its products,

262 Ibid., 80.
263 Ibid., 84.
264 Ibid., 5.
and evangelism its marketing techniques.\textsuperscript{266} The Church largely depended on professional clergy or programs to attract and retain members inside the Church.\textsuperscript{267} With economic and business development creeping into church, the Church strategizes to gain market share as a business organization, and members are referred to as volunteers for manpower needs.\textsuperscript{268} Church growth models like seeker sensitive church models reinforce how the needs of people come first before what God wants. Purpose driven church models teaches five ministry purposes (worship, evangelism, service, discipleship and fellowship) to grow one’s healthy church and evangelism or mission is just one of the five tasks to be done. This business-consumer model to draw crowds greatly differs from the biblical image of the entire body of believers sent on God’s mission.\textsuperscript{269} This creates the mission-benefits dichotomy where Christians receive the benefits of salvation but see their missional role as separate and optional.\textsuperscript{270}

What the Church is precedes and deeply inform what the church does.\textsuperscript{271} Church growth movements of the past have traditionally sought to emphasize the Church’s

\textsuperscript{266} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 84.

\textsuperscript{267} Keller, \textit{Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City}, loc 7495.

\textsuperscript{268} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 84.

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., 85.

\textsuperscript{270} Guder, \textit{The Incarnation and the Church's Witness}, 17.

\textsuperscript{271} Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, Loc 1486.
strategies for growth (what the Church does) before being clear about the Church’s nature and identity (what the Church is).\textsuperscript{272} Barth’s Trinitarian Missiology contributed to the conception that the Church is missionary by nature because the God who birthed the Church is missionary by nature.\textsuperscript{273} The Church is missionary by nature because it has origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{274} Since God is a missionary God, God’s people are a missionary people.\textsuperscript{275} Therefore, the missional church conversation is not another church growth strategy that focuses on the church’s methodology, but rather a deep theological reclamation on the missional identity and nature of the Church.\textsuperscript{276}

The book \textit{Missional Church} was the first to make the explicit connection between missiology and ecclesiology as missiological ecclesiology – a missional church rather than church with a mission.\textsuperscript{277} Mission and church cannot be separated.\textsuperscript{278} This understanding collapses the dichotomy of church and mission. Mission is not something the Church does as part of its program to grow herself, but the Church’s essence and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid., Loc 441.
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid., Loc 866.
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid., 372.
\textsuperscript{276} Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, Loc 455.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid., Loc 1108.
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identity is missional. This means mission/s is more than a department, activity or program of the Church, but the core identity and essence of the Church as it takes her role to join God in his mission. The Church is the primary agent of God’s mission though not the only agent. A church that exists for its own members rather than to be fully participating in God’s outward life of love to the world ceases to be the Church. All members (not just professional clergy or overseas missionaries) in the local church are missionaries in their own community context. The Church’s entire identity lies in the participation of all its members and resources in the triune God’s redemptive mission of all creation. All ministries need to be evaluated in how they are preparing people for God’s mission rather than existing just to keep members contented.

There are strong biblical bases for the missional nature of the Church. The Church is part of the lineage of Abraham and Israel - blessed to be a blessing to all nations (Gn 12:1-3). In Exodus 19:5-6 and 1 Peter 2:9, both Israel and the Church are chosen to be God’s special possessions set apart as a holy nations, playing the role of priesthood to

279 Guder and Barrett, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 82.

280 Ibid., 6.


283 Zscheile, Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation, 6.

284 Ibid.

285 Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7488.
bring people to God by declaring the praises of God who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.\textsuperscript{286} Israel is the instrument of witness to the world not for self-benefit (Dt 4:5-8, Ps 96:1-3; Is 12:4-5; 43:9-12). The call to discipleship (follow me) is the same call to mission (fishers of men) (Mt 4:19). Christians who receive God’s love and then testify of God’s love to the world as an essential part of spiritual formation.\textsuperscript{287} Jesus is the light of the world and will lead those lost in the darkness of sin into his life of truth and life (Jn 8:12; 3:19). The people of God are also given the same identity in Matthew 5:14 as the “light of the world” suggesting that the mission of reaching those who are lost in darkness is who the Church is.\textsuperscript{288} Failing to do so will render Christians useless (Mt 5:13). The Church leads the lost out of darkness by pointing them to the light of Christ who came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10). He sends his followers to do that same for the lost (Lk 10:2). The Church, reflects the image of the relational missionary God, lives out God’s mission through a sending Trinity (Jn 20:19-23) and commissioned by Jesus (Mt 28:18-20).

Tan Lian Seng proposed five strategic mission that the Singapore church needs to engage in with the acronym “HUBET”.\textsuperscript{289} Home Missions are where the Church reaches out to the many foreigners already working in our land. Urban Missions focus on


\textsuperscript{287} Guder, \textit{The Incarnation and the Church's Witness}, 17.

\textsuperscript{288} Guder and Barrett, \textit{Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America}, 128.

\textsuperscript{289} Seng, \textit{Discipleship Missions: Getting Missional in Your Life}, 214.
compassionate ministry in the city. Business as Missions equips laity to be missionaries in the marketplace. E-Missions uses technology for mass evangelism and discipleship. TNG Missions focuses on winning The Next Generation for Christ. All of these strategies need to be undergirded by a prayer movement that is God-centred.

If the Church is missionary by nature, it means that there is a need to evaluate all ministries and resources as to whether their chief end is mission or just to benefit members. The primary role of pastors shifts from just shepherding and teaching to leading the apostolic charge. All members are to be involved in lifestyle evangelism, local outreach and overseas missions. All GMGs will need to strategize to multiply rather than remain in the same group for years. The church will need to equip members in evangelism, apologetics and cross-cultural missions. Every worship service needs to end with the sending off of members as missional witnesses into the world to combat the mind-set that the church is just a service provider for their needs.

Contrast Community

In the missional conversation, where the call to be incarnational (go out), to avoid any “attractional” form of ministry (come in), the church (gathering of believers) and its ministry can become inconsequential if not careful. Paul Stevens writes that “the

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290 Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7252.
church is a rhythm of gathering (ekklesia) and dispersion (diaspora).” The Church needs to be gathered and strengthened in Christian community before it is scattered and sent forth. Newbign said that:

I have come to feel that the primary reality of which we have to take account in seeking for a Christian impact on public life is the Christian congregation. How is it possible for the gospel to be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the Gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.

This means that for the Gospel to make sense to the pluralistic world, people need to see a visible and gathered local community living out the countercultural Gospel of love, justice and peace rather than just lone Christians. The Church is called the Body of Christ to embody the alternative community that stands as a central and concrete sign of God’s reign, love and truth. Keller says that, “Jesus says that the main way people will believe that Christians have found the love of God is by seeing the quality of their life together.” Every religion can produce morally upright individuals, but only the Gospel can produce a grace-filled truth community. Salvation is not just a private transaction


293 Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7303.

294 Guder and Barrett, Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 149.

295 Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 9078.

296 Ibid.
between the individual and God, but a social reality of transformed relationships as its greatest witness of the Reign of God. Jesus repeatedly emphasized that the greatest witness to the world is the love displayed among believers (Jn 13:35; 17:20-23).

There are six key factors to be a contrast community. First, a contrast community needs to be a spiritual community of praise and thanksgiving. In a self-determined postmodern culture of doubt, superiority and disenchantment, people can find true freedom, dignity and equality as they turn from their confused self to worship the Creator who gives hope, meaning and purpose. Newbigin says that when giving thanks in praise, “a Christian congregation is thus a body of people with gratitude to spare, a gratitude that can spill over into care for the neighbor.” In a society that stresses on human rights and justice, having a heart of thanksgiving to God gives true motivation for overflowing love for others. In a world where there is widespread pessimism about the future of Western civilization, there is a blessed hope found in the Christian story lived


298 Ibid., 104.


300 Ibid., 228.

301 Ibid.

302 Ibid.
out in Christian community.\textsuperscript{303} The Church sings of the blessed hope in Jesus coming again to redeem a world full of despair, pessimism, guilt, shame and nihilism.\textsuperscript{304}

Missional worship must primarily be the people’s encounter with the God who sends.\textsuperscript{305} In worship, they express awe at the grace of God’s missional nature.\textsuperscript{306} They receive the blessing to be a blessing, the healing to be a healing and the forgiveness to forgive.\textsuperscript{307} Gospel renewal can also affect the vibrancy of a church’s worship as both God’s holiness (transcendence) and his love (immanence) are emphasized, giving space for both formal order and the expressions of emotions.\textsuperscript{308}

This worshipping community is inclusive not exclusive when it welcomes pre-believers and makes them feel at home.\textsuperscript{309} Every part of a church’s life has to assume the presence of nonbelievers from the surrounding community for them to explore Christianity in a relevant and welcoming environment.\textsuperscript{310} Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 talks

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid., 232.\vspace{10pt}
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid.\vspace{10pt}
\textsuperscript{305} Guder and Barrett, Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 242.\vspace{10pt}
\textsuperscript{307} Guder and Barrett, Missional Church : A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, 242.\vspace{10pt}
\textsuperscript{308} Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 2076.\vspace{10pt}
\textsuperscript{309} Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 373.\vspace{10pt}
\textsuperscript{310} Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 7656.\vspace{10pt}
\end{flushright}
about being sensitive and relevant to unbelievers in the midst of a worshipping community in order to reach them.

Church worship has to reflect how Christian beliefs are expressed through culturally relevant music and lyrics targeted to the people we are trying to reach.\textsuperscript{311} In an urban setting, good contemporary music, meaningful lyrics and service aesthetics serve to draw outsiders to the beauty of God, rather than distract or disturb through poor presentation.\textsuperscript{312} This means the artistic skill of the worship team and creative arts ministries need to be executed with excellence (to the best of a church’s abilities).\textsuperscript{313} Platforms also can be made available for various local artists to collaborate with the church and the community with their expressions of art for mutual edification.\textsuperscript{314} GA recently produced a professional worship album that we can use as gifts to guests of the church that communicates our own expression of worship.

Second, a contrast community is a community of truth.\textsuperscript{315} Churches must be “countercultures that show society what human life looks like free from the idols of race, wealth, sex, power, and individual autonomy.”\textsuperscript{316} A missional people walking in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{311} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{312} Ibid., Loc 8897.
\item \textsuperscript{313} Ibid., Loc 8890.
\item \textsuperscript{314} Ibid., Loc 5002.
\item \textsuperscript{315} Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, 228.
\item \textsuperscript{316} Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, 7344.
\end{itemize}
Spirit, led by the Spirit and sowing the Spirit manifests the fruit of the Spirit. Believers need to exercise godly values like excellence, integrity, generosity, hospitality, sympathy and an ability to forgive.

This community of truth is able to use the Bible and the Gospel to both affirm the positive in culture and yet confront the idols present as well. It needs to preach in the vernacular and explain service rituals like Holy Communion, offering and baptism as it expects pre-believers in their midst. It exposes and challenges the false messages carried in the media and culture with God’s word. Gospel-centered sermons need to be preached that can both edify believers and evangelize pre-believers at the same time. I will cover this in more depth in chapter seven on the Gospel Message.

Biblical truths and culture are communicated through communal participation of particular ecclesial practices shaped by their beliefs. These practices run counter intuitive to a culture that is individualistic and self-centered. For example, Baptism is


319 Ibid., loc 7172.

320 Ibid., Loc 7982.


324 Ibid., 154.
literally a simulation of dying to sin and the old self in order to be resurrected to the new life and grafted into God's community as a public declaration of allegiance to Christ.\textsuperscript{325} The Lord’s Supper is a powerful countercultural ritual of remembering someone who denied his own human rights to die even for those who crucified him and celebration of his resurrection power available for us today.\textsuperscript{326} Celebrating the Lord’s Supper is the distinct mark of a redeemed community having freely received the grace of God for salvation and then generously expressing the same grace with those who have needs.\textsuperscript{327} Third, it will be a community of mutual responsibility.\textsuperscript{328} Western culture advocates individualism, but faith can only happen in Christian community and service.\textsuperscript{329} Members with different spiritual gifts are needed to edify and serve one another to build up the Body of Christ.\textsuperscript{330} When the Church exercises the many “one anothers” of the New Testament, it presents to the world a different social order that is attractive.\textsuperscript{331}

\textsuperscript{325} Ibid., 160.
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid., 163.
\textsuperscript{327} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{328} Newbigin, \textit{The Gospel in a Pluralist Society}, 231.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid.
Fourth, a contrast community equips the people for priestly ministry in the world (1 Pt 2:5, 9).\textsuperscript{332} The Church is sent to continue the work of Jesus, reconciling the world back to God (Jn 20:19-23).\textsuperscript{333} The members of the Church need to be trained, nourished and supported by pastoral leadership for missional living in the world.\textsuperscript{334} Lay people working in similar vocations also can gather to resolve issues specific in their industry with the Gospel.\textsuperscript{335}

Fifth, it will be a community of the Spirit. Pentecost is an inauguration of the radical hospitality of God as he invites human beings to be in communion with the triune God to experience divine superabundance.\textsuperscript{336} This distinctive Pentecostal model of church is a place “where people gather not just to hear a well prepared lecture (the Protestant way) or to witness a sacerdotal liturgy (the Catholic way) but to experience the presence of the living God”.\textsuperscript{337} This fellowship transcends the institutional means of grace of the Word and sacraments to experience the power of the original event of Pentecost ritually.\textsuperscript{338} Believers do not just know about God but know God personally and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{332} Ibid., 229.
\item \textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 230.
\item \textsuperscript{334} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{335} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{336} Tan-Chow, \textit{Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore}, 189.
\item \textsuperscript{337} Chris E. W. Green, \textit{Pentecostal Ecclesiology : A Reader} (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2016), 56.
\item \textsuperscript{338} Ibid., 57.
\end{itemize}
experientially. Since intimacy requires communication and participation, glossolalia is a trans-rational language of the heart to connect with God. What is read in the Gospel becomes transformative reality to the broken as well as the postmodern generation looking for spiritual experience.

The Spirit connects Christ’s followers with the missional God to love beyond human boundaries. Pinnock says that the Spirit is anonymous (does not have a name unlike the Father and Son) and is self-effacing (Jn 16:14 – glorifies the Son) to help believers grow in love with no personal advantage or recognition. The Spirit is the source of authentic fellowship and self-giving like in the early church. Glossolalia is also a prophetic sign of the ecumenical and spiritual union of the churches as language barriers are broken down (reversal of Babel). The Spirit falls on the Jews, God-fearing Gentiles and the followers of John the Baptist in the book of Acts to show that the Spirit’s impartiality upon believers regardless of genealogy, ethnicity and tradition. Embodying the Spirit is essentially allowing the Spirit of fellowship, relationality and

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339 Ibid.

340 Tan-Chow, Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore, 165.

341 Green, Pentecostal Ecclesiology : A Reader, 57.


343 Ibid., 117.

344 Tan-Chow, Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century : Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore, 165.

345 Ibid.
inclusiveness to break all kinds of spiritual separation with God and social separation
with others (Gal 3:28). Unbelievers are convicted and converted when they come into
this gathered community of believers which includes selfless sharing of goods (Acts
2:43) and supernatural signs like healing, prophecy, tongues (1 Cor 14:25; Acts 2:12). Exuberant and spirit-gifted worship is central in Pentecostal services to edify and draw
members and unbelievers at the same time.

Six, it will be community of unity. A macro aspect of being a contrast community
to the world is avoiding unnecessary divisions among churches and denominations and
practicing Christian unity by partnering together for prayer, outreach and justice. The
National Council of Churches of Singapore (NCCS) representing 250 churches in
Singapore has been active in making the united Christian stand heard in public space in
current issues. The churches in Singapore also gather together to pray on a regular

346 Ibid., 192.
basis; a good example is how 51,000 Christians gather at the national stadium to pray for the nation on her fiftieth birthday with the Prime Minister as Guest of Honor.\textsuperscript{351}

In conclusion, a contrast community needs to begin with the pastoral staff having a close relationship with one another that is a model for the congregation. Every part of the service and ministry of the church needs to embody Kingdom culture that is inclusive to pre-believers. The church needs to prepare and equip our ushers and congregation in the heart of pastoral care and the skills of hospitality to build a welcoming culture. Physical facilities and programs need to be designed intentionally for interaction and relationship building before and after service. Pastors need to preach the Gospel-Centered messages that minister to both believers and pre-believers at the same time.

Intergenerational Ministry

GA vision is not just to be a missional church but a missional family church. This signifies that we value strong biological family and spiritual family (church) as models of contrast community. First, the Christian biological family needs to be a contrast community where faith formation begins at home. One must first manage the biological home well before managing the church, the spiritual home (1 Tim 3:12). Parents or primary caretakers take primary responsibility to model and teach the faith to the next

generation as a lifestyle in the context of the home (Dt 6:4-9 Ps 145:4; Ps 78:1-8). The prophetic vision of Malachi for Israel is strong marriages and parent-child relationships (Mal 1:14-16; 4:6). The biological family is our first ministry that we spend the most time with, and spiritual formation cannot be outsourced to the children or youth ministry.

Intergenerational ministry needs to include faith formation across different generations in the church. The book *Sticky Faith* through research and statistics show the long term benefits of intergenerational ministry sustaining the faith of youths and young adults. Even though we have separate congregations of different languages and generations for effective ministry in a megachurch setting, intentional efforts need to be made to reap the biblical benefits of cross generational interaction and mentoring as seen in Scriptures.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites gather all generations (men, women, children and foreigners) at important events like the renewal of covenant by Moses (Dt 29:10-12; Dt 31:9-13) and reading of the law by Joshua (Jos 8:34-35) so that everyone understood the law. There was an expectation that the older generation pass on their faith to the younger generations through sharing of the significance of rituals like Passover.

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ceremonies and the various Israelite feasts (Ex 12:26-27; Lv 23:33-43). The sacrificial rituals were witnessed by the entire worship community with its sights, sounds and smell (Lv 16; Dt 15, 19). The call to worship is for all generations (Ps 148:7-14). When King Jehoshaphat was praying to God for deliverance from their enemies, all generations witnessed his prayer of faith, the prophetic reply through Jahaziel and witness the deliverance of the Lord (2 Chr 20:13). At the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem, men, women and children praised and worship God together (Neh 12:43). Ezra read the law of God to men, women and all who could understand it (Neh 8:3). Judges 2:6-10 shows the apostasy of the entire next generation when the elders of Joshua fail to transmit their faith. There are also many Old Testament examples of mutually beneficial intergenerational relationships like, Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Naomi and Ruth.

In the New Testament, Jesus himself rebuked the disciples for not allowing the children to come to him for ministry and highlighted that adults can learn from positive

355 Ibid., 80.
357 Ibid., 22.
358 Allen and Ross, Intergenerational Christian Formation : Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship, 78.
359 Ibid., 79.
361 Allen and Ross, Intergenerational Christian Formation : Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship, 81.
qualities of children for Kingdom living (Mt 18:1-6; 19:13-14; Mk 10:13-16). The early church met in house churches with all generations present (Acts 2:42-47). On the Day of Pentecost, Joel’s prophecy of God’s outpouring of his Spirit upon all generations was initiated (Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:14-21). The Church is a continuation of the intergenerational worship community of the nation of Israel (Ex 19:3-6; 1 Pt 2:9-10). Receiving salvation is often an entire household affair and decision (Acts 11:14; 16:15, 31-34, 1 Cor 1:16). Worship on earth ought to reflect worship in heaven which is international and intergenerational (Rv 5:9; 7:9). The epistles of Paul were assumed to be read to all members of the household gathered in the church as it addresses these relationships: husband and wife (Eph 5:22, 25), slave and master (Eph 6:5,9), children to parents (Col 3:20; Eph 6:1). Paul teaches four groups of people in the church namely “older men,” “older woman,” “young men” and “younger women” on their conduct and their role in mutual edification (1 Tm 5:1-2; Ti 2:1-8). Paul uses the imagery of the church as a family of God (Eph 2:19; 1 Tm 3:15; 1 Pt 4:17; 1 Thes 4:10; 1 Pt 2:17) to suggest the importance of interactions across generations in the spiritual family of the

362 Ibid., 83.
365 Ibid., 23.
366 Allen and Ross, Intergenerational Christian Formation : Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship, 83.
Church. There are also New Testament examples of intergenerational mentorship like Paul and Timothy/Titus, Barnabas and Mark, Priscilla with Aquila and Apollos.

GA runs an annual retreat where different generations intentionally come together to interact. Different congregations also come together for major events like Watchnight service, Easter and Christmas service. Intergenerational serving platforms are created during missions trips and serving together in Children’s ministries or Creative Arts Ministries. Adults are also recruited to serve as mentors for young adults.

**Equipping the Gracians**

The third strategic thrust of a missional family church is to equip Gracians. GA needs to equip Gracians in three areas as it forms our ministry philosophy. The first area is to equip them to be clear about the Gospel message. One needs to be clear about the message before one can share it with others. The second area is to equip them on individual identity as child of the Father, servant like the Son and missionary empowered by the Spirit. Unless one is clear about one’s identity, they will try to gain affirmation and identity through service which is unsustainable. The third area is to equip existing cell groups to be transformed into life-on-life missional groups that will share life and ministry together just like how Jesus did with the twelve disciples for three years.

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Gospel-Centered Message

Before sharing the important Gospel message to the world, Gracians must understand it. The Gospel literally means “Good News.” The background of this word is some life-changing event of being rescued from danger has already happened. The Gospel is not advice and not primarily a way of life. It is news (message) that is meant to be announced verbally and publicly. The Greek translation of the Old Testament—the Septuagint—the word *euangelizo* (proclaim good news) occurs twenty-three times. In the New Testament, the word group *euangelion* (good news), *euangelizo* (proclaim good news), and *euangelistes* (one who proclaims good news) occurs at least 133 times.

There is a broad and narrow definition of the Gospel. The broad definition is called the Four-Chapter Gospel where the grand metanarrative of the Bible encompasses of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration which was defined earlier. This definition is helpful as it explains the holistic goodness of all creation and humanity’s

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370 Ibid.

371 Ibid., Loc 508.

372 Ibid., Loc 494.

373 Ibid.

role in it both spiritually and physically as they await its full redemption.\textsuperscript{375} The traditional narrow definition focuses on a Two-Chapter Gospel of Fall and Redemption. The Gospel is the Good News announcing that humanity has been rescued or saved from God’s judgment upon their sins by what Jesus Christ has done on the cross to put right their relationship with God.\textsuperscript{376} Sin at its core is a broken vertical relationship with God that affects all horizontal relationships.\textsuperscript{377} A narrow definition alone may cause the listener to see the Gospel as a sheer escape from the physical world.\textsuperscript{378} A broad definition without the narrow definition will tell listeners of God’s plan to save the world but not how to get right with God which is not the Gospel.\textsuperscript{379}

There are two enemies to the Gospel according to Keller.\textsuperscript{380} The first is religion (moralism/legalism) which says “I obey, therefore I am accepted.”\textsuperscript{381} This is a form of self-salvation as one seeks to put God in one’s debt to bless them with salvation through one’s obedience and good works.\textsuperscript{382} The second is irreligion (relativism/antinomianism/hypergrace) which says, “I am accepted, therefore no need to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[376] Ibid., Loc 508-24.
\item[377] Ibid., Loc 524.
\item[378] Ibid., Loc 622.
\item[379] Ibid.
\item[380] Ibid., Loc 576.
\item[381] Ibid., Loc 1503.
\end{footnotes}
obey.” The idea is that God accepts to people as they are and they can relate to God without the law or obeying. The biblical Gospel is “I am accepted, therefore I obey,” based on faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone. Faith is not a psychological quality of faith but trusting and resting in Christ as the object of faith and his finished work to save a believer. The Gospel movement for Keller consists of two essential sequential parts, “I am more sinful and flawed than I ever dared believe but yet I am more accepted and loved than I ever dared hope.” The first part of the statement challenges those who are irreligious and the second part challenges those who are legalistic.

Christ’s followers need to know the teachings of the entire Bible to appreciate the Gospel. They need to know the law, priesthood, sacrifice and covenant of the Old Testament to recognize the holiness of God and the impossible requirements of the law for man to fulfil (avoided by hyper grace teachers). Without the Gospel of the New Testament, one is not able to understand where the Old Testament is pointing towards and thus appreciate the grace of the Gospel. Unlike legalism or antinomianism, an

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386 Ibid., Loc 725.
387 Ibid., Loc 1095.
388 Ibid., Loc 586.
389 Ibid., Loc 594.
390 Ibid.
authentic grasp of the Gospel of grace will bring increasing inner transformation of
gratitude that will bring obedience to God across all dimensions of life.391

There are three aspects of salvation: Past, Present and Future.392 Christians are
familiar with how the Gospel has saved them from the penalty of sins committed in the
past (Eph 2:4-5). They are also familiar with the fact that when they die, they will be
saved from the presence of sin in the future (Mk 13:13). They are less familiar with being
saved from the power of sin in the present (1 Cor 1:18) and how the Gospel affects how
they live their present daily lives in every aspect. Church leaders conceive the Gospel as
the minimum standard of doctrinal content for becoming a Christian believer.393 Leaders
and congregations want to move on to more advanced topics for a deeper discipleship as
they fail to see that “every form of ministry is empowered by the gospel, based on the
gospel and is a result of the gospel.”394 The Gospel is the power of God to transform
every aspect of life (Rom 1:16-17; 12:1-2; Col 1:5-6, 1 Pt 1:23-25; Phil 1:6; 3:13-14).395
Keller says that, “The gospel is not just the ABCs, but the A to Z of the Christian life.”396
D.A. Carson says, “The gospel is regularly presented not only as truth to be received and

391 Ibid., Loc 1097.
393 Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City.
394 Ibid., Loc 746.
395 Ibid., Loc 1032.
396 Ibid., Loc 1082.
believed, but the very power of God to transform (see 1 Cor 2; 1 Thess 2:4; Rom 1:16–17. One of the most urgently needed things today is a careful treatment of how the gospel, biblically and richly understood, ought to shape everything we do in the local church, all of our ethics, all of our priorities.”

There are six characteristics when it comes to the role of preaching Gospel-centered messages to a postmodern society according to Keller. First, preaching to distinguish between moralistic legalism, liberal irreligion (hyper grace) and the Gospel to address the core problem of idolatry beneath the level of behavior to see whether the Gospel is the heart’s motivation. A legalistic person will perform righteous deeds as a form of self-salvation and superiority. A liberal person does not really believe in the Gospel as he still live his life unchanged.

Second, preaching both the holiness and love of God to convey the richness of God’s grace which prevents his children from pursuing salvation through self-righteous morality and at the same time prevents them from discouragement from moral failure. It causes them to hate sin yet forbids them to hate themselves. They are both sinners and saints at the same time. Third, one preaches not only to make truth clear through

397 Ibid., Loc 1194.

398 Ibid., Keller, Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Loc 1938.

399 Ibid.

400 Ibid., Loc 1953.
information to the mind but also to present the beauty of Christ as the one who fulfilled what we cannot, to capture one’s heart and imagination for life transformation.\textsuperscript{401}

Fourth, preaching Christ from every passage (Gospel-Centered) because Jesus understood how even the Old Testament pointed to himself and his saving work as seen at the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-49).\textsuperscript{402} Christopher Wright’s developed an approach to biblical hermeneutics called missional hermeneutics, that sees the mission of God as the central framework or lens within which one reads the whole Bible.\textsuperscript{403} Gospel-Centered preaching avoids moralistic and behavior modification sermons that deal merely with efforts to treat symptoms of sin as a form of self-salvation, but rather changes one’s hearts from the inside out based upon the motivation from what Christ has already done to redeem us which gives us the right motivation to obey.

Fifth, preaching Gospel-centered sermons that minister to both Christians and non-Christians at the same time in services, because the Gospel does not just saves pre-believers but shows how Christians should live one’s life.\textsuperscript{404} Preaching in church has to show how the hopes of this culture can only find fulfillment in Christ.\textsuperscript{405} The Gospel expression can be found in the following examples.\textsuperscript{406} For sex, the Church avoids

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., Loc 1970.
\item Wright, \textit{The Mission of God : Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative}, 17.
\item Ibid., Loc 7656.
\item Ibid., Loc 9113.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
secular’s society’s idolization of sex and traditional society’s fear of sex. It also exercises love rather than hostility towards those whose sexual orientation are different. For money, followers of Christ exercise generous commitment of time, money, energy, relationships and living space to the needs of the poor, migrants and marginalized. For power, missional leaders are committed to power sharing and relationship building between races and classes that are alienated in society.

Sixth, the Gospel needs to be contextualized to one’s target audience. The Gospel must be preached in the vernacular as if the whole neighborhood is present, avoiding religious jargons and disrespectful comments about other religions or politics. The preacher cannot assume that everyone trusts the Bible and need to use science to show that they do not contradict but affirm one another. There should be a deep acquaintance with what the congregation is exposed to daily from social media, movies, media, news, books and plays, so as to address these worldviews with the Gospel. One out of three or four sermon points can be used to address the doubts and concerns of non-believers but doing it with respect, gentleness and humility. An example of this contextualization is in postmodern culture where truth and sin are viewed as relative. The postmodern generation aspires to be free persons rather than morally good persons of previous

407 Ibid., Loc 7932.
408 Ibid., Loc 4970.
409 Ibid., Loc 4986.
410 Ibid.
generations since moral truth is relative. It is more convincing to speak of sin as idolatry (worshipping or loving something above God leading to addiction and slavery) rather than breaking a moral absolute (which is now subjective). They are more receptive to the message that they cannot find true freedom from the false gods (good things that become ultimate things) that will eventually enslave them, but only in the true and benevolent God that died for them.

The resurgence of Gospel-centred teaching and preaching in the last decade is a needed revival of biblical Gospel that transforms all of life to confront the extremes of hypergrace and legalistic fundamentalism. However, the focus on applying only a correct ‘gospel formula’ can still be man’s work as they tend not to emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives which is our Pentecostal distinctive. On the other hand, Pentecostals can focus too much on experience and moralistic teaching at the expense of biblical exposition of the Word and Gospel. We need both Gospel renewal and the experiential power of the Spirit to transform lives. In GA, a workshop was conducted in 2017 to equip all preachers to preach Gospel-centered preaching in their congregations. The curriculum for children ministry was changed to Gospel Project material in 2016 as it is Gospel-centred teaching. Teachers will also be progressively trained to teach Gospel-centered lessons.

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411 Ibid., Loc 3411.
412 Ibid., 3411.
Individual Missional Identity

Next, GA needs to equip Gracians on their individual identity as missional disciples. Vanderstelt, in his book *Saturate*, talks about three key identities of missional believers that they need to know and believe in order to live out God’s purpose and mission in their lives.\(^{413}\) They are children of God the Father, servants like God the Son and missionaries by the Spirit. These identities need to be reclaimed in order not to become mere activist, “doing” to fulfill the mission of God based upon guilt or human effort to be accepted by God, or living contented lives with private piety towards God.

One can only bring spiritual transformation to one’s community to the extent of one’s inner personal transformation in Christ.\(^{414}\) Missional spiritual formation according to Jeffrey Greenman “is our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world.”\(^{415}\) The primary identity of every believer is to be grounded first in being a child of God the father.


Children of God the Father

Missional Spirituality needs to be grounded on the divine community of love modelled by the Trinity.416 A missional disciple needs to be secured in his identity as a beloved child of God based upon the unconditional love and acceptance achieved by the work on the cross in order to love others unconditionally.417 We love because God first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). Peter Scazzero in the book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* shares how before Jesus began his public ministry, the identity of Jesus as a Son of God was established but tested by Satan.418 Jesus was led to be baptized by John where God, the Father from heaven affirmed that Jesus was his beloved child even before Jesus even performed any ministry (Mt 3:17).419 Jesus was immediately led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tested by Satan who challenged Jesus to prove his worth as a beloved child of God by his performance to turn stones into bread, by his popularity to show how God will protect him from falling to death and by his possession (or power) through all the splendor of the world (Mt 4:1-11).420 Jesus overcame these temptations through Scriptural truths rather than proving his identity by performance. In the same way, Christ’s followers are tempted to prove their self-worth as a beloved child of God in these

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417 Ibid., Loc 514.


419 Ibid.

420 Ibid., 75-77.
areas even when this status is given unconditionally by the grace of God (Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 3:1). Our convictions of being a beloved child can be shaken by a seemingly lack of provision, protection, popularity, power or possessions in life’s circumstances. One’s serving or evangelizing is not based upon the need to gain acceptance from God or people through performance, but from a position of acceptance and right motivations.

Being a child of God also means belonging to the family of God, which is the Church (1 Thes 4:9-10; Eph 2:19; 1 Tm 3:15; 1 Pt 4:17). Believers call one another brothers and sisters in Christ (Acts 1:16; 6:3; 11:29; 12:17; 16:40). Christians are called to give priority to do good especially to those who belong to the household of faith (Gal 6:10). This means that every individual needs to commit to a local Body of Christ functioning as a committed member of the family of God, supporting one another before they go into the world to be missional. Therefore, being secured in our primary identity as a beloved child of God in God’s family forms the foundation of missional living and ministry.

**Servant Like God the Son**

There is a danger in staying at the first identity in today’s consumeristic and hyper grace Christianity when Christianity is all about you and God’s love for you. Private piety that does not result in actual mission of spiritual or social transformation of others is not missional spirituality.\(^\text{421}\) There are reasons for the decline of missional spirituality.

Traditional spirituality is often restricted to religious activities on a Sunday to serve members within the walls of the church. Disenchantment from the Enlightenment (reason above spirit) has led to secularism (dualism) and the decline of missional spirituality. Faith is relegated to an abstract intellectual exercise rather than a lived out reality in the world. A seeker sensitive or hyper grace approach to church growth in recent years has also reinforced a consumeristic and entitled Christianity that is self-centered rather than God or others centered.

The biblical concept of service as worship to God seems to be foreign to Christians today (Dt 6:13; 10:12; 10:20; 11:13; 13:4; Jos 22:5; Mt 4:10; Lk 16:13; 1 Thes 1:9). Barna research in the US shows that only 35 percent of Christians attend church, while only 18 percent of Christians serve in a local church and 19 percent serve in a non-profit organization. The saints of the Old Testament like Abraham (Gn 26:24), Moses (Ex 4:10; Dt 34:5), Joshua (Jos 5:14; Jus 2:8), David (1 Sm 23:10), Elijah (1 Kgs 18:36), Hezekiah (2 Ch 32:16) address themselves as servants of the Lord. It is the same with the apostles of the New Testament like Paul (Rom 1:1; 2 Cor 6:4), James (Ja 1:1), Timothy (Phil 1:1), Peter (2 Pt 1:1), Jude (Jude 1:1). Jesus is addressed as a servant of God in the

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422 Ibid., Loc 239.
423 Ibid., Loc 332.
424 Ibid., Loc 381.
425 Ibid., Loc 424.
book of Isaiah (Is 42:1-4; Mt 12:18). Jesus himself said that leadership is servanthood and that he came to serve and not to be served (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Phil 2:7). He demonstrated this servanthood by washing the feet of his disciples in John 13. Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-28 teaches how to be a good neighbor by serving anyone in need through the positive example of the Samaritan man rather than just being preoccupied with religious duties like the priest and Levite who walked by.\textsuperscript{427} Therefore, an essential identity of a believer is to see oneself as a servant of God, serving God and his people.

The bible lists a priority of service. First, we need to serve our biological family (1 Tim 5:8). Second, we serve the body of believers, the church (Gal 6:10). One serves in the local church to use one’s spiritual gifts to strengthen the Body of Christ as witness to the world (1 Cor 12). Third, one can start to serve the people in our community and workplaces especially the marginalized (James 1:27).\textsuperscript{428} Service through good deeds is a powerful witness (Matt 5:16). James Bryan Smith says, “Spiritual formation and community service is the way piety and actions are united…Our daily encounters with others are the arenas in which our relationship with God becomes incarnate.”\textsuperscript{429}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{427} Helland and Hjalmarson, \textit{Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the inside Out}, Loc 1791.
\textsuperscript{428} Ibid., Loc 1815.
\end{flushright}
Helland said that “Hospitality is a tangible kingdom practice of a missional spirituality in our postmodern, fragmented culture.”

**Missionary by the Spirit**

The first identity pertains to vertical relationship with God, the second identity pertains to the posture of how one relates to others and the third identity pertains to one’s role to bring the Good News to the lost. Every Christian is a missionary empowered by the Spirit of God to bring the Gospel to the lost (Acts 1:8). The covenant people of God are supposed to proclaim and showcase God’s salvation made available to the rest of the nations and not as an exclusive benefit (Gn 12:2; Dt 4:6; 10:19). Believers are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” to “declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (Ex 19:5-6; 23:22; Is 43:20-21, 1 Pt 2:9-10). Jesus, in John 20:21 says that he is sending his followers just as the Father has sent him. Christians are Christ’s ambassadors bringing the Gospel to the lost to reconcile them to God (2 Cor 5:19-20). Jesus says that the disciples are to follow him to become fishermen of men (Mt 4:19) as a necessary component of discipleship. Jesus declares that believers are the salt of the earth and light of the world.

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431 Ibid., Loc 636.

432 Ibid.
who influences others to glorify God (Mt 5:13-16). Paul became all things to all men in order to save some (1 Cor 9:22). Christ’s followers are called to make disciples of all nations as God’s Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20).

Missional leadership cannot just model after Jesus in the past but needs to be directed by the dynamic Spirit in the present for missional engagement. The Church should avoid depending only on its own church growth methods, but rather be responsible to discover and be responsive to what the Spirit of God is already doing in the world and join him. The Church needs to listen and be sensitive to his leading in corporate prayer and in daily lives. The Spirit speaks and directs Barnabas and Paul for God’s mission in a prayer meeting (Acts 13:2). As one spends time in Scripture reading and prayer, the Spirit of God shapes one to love God and others through obedience and sensitivity to divine opportunity. Theology is not meant to be theoretical and academic but leads to practical activity of faith. Missional spirituality consists of spiritual disciplines that form and engage with the world through the power of the Spirit.

Therefore, spiritual formation cannot be merely an internal church affair but must engage

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437 Ibid., Loc 1452.
438 Ibid., Loc 231.
in the curriculum of the world in expectation of encountering God’s presence in the neighbor or stranger.\textsuperscript{439} This is done through integration with what the Christian is already doing in living out his faith authentically in the world.\textsuperscript{440}

These three missional identities of being a child of God the Father, servant like the Son and missionary by the Spirit can be illustrated like a stool with three legs; each is important for a balanced and victorious Christian life. There are dangers in any imbalance in Christian identity. If one is just a child of God focusing on upward relationship with God, one will just bask in his love and become self-absorbed. If one is just a servant serving within the Church, she will serve as a form of self-salvation to earn the approval of God or others like a martyr. If one is just a missionary, he will reach out to the world but not have connection with God and the Church, and thus be disconnected. These imbalances in identity will not lead to spiritual growth and maturity. All three identities are needed to be a strong missional disciple who increasingly submits all of one’s life to God’s reign and actively influences others to do the same.

\textbf{Life-On-Life Missional Community}

Newbigin said that, “The only hermeneutic of the Gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.”\textsuperscript{441} This means that people are going to believe

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{439} Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, 150.
\item \textsuperscript{440} Robert J. Banks, \textit{Reenvisioning Theological Education : Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models} (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1999), 158.
\end{itemize}
the Gospel not from an individual or an explanation, but from a group of people who live it out (Jn 13:34-35; 17:23). In order for a congregation to believe and live by the Gospel, this cannot be just a mass gathering of people on a Sunday morning where people come for service and then leave shortly. Any form of interaction and relationships formed will likely be superficial. To be a contrast community, small groups in the church must form deep relationships for the purpose for reaching the world like Jesus did “with the twelve disciples for three years. In the classic book *The Masterplan of Evangelism*, Robert Coleman asserted that Jesus’s “strategy” of winning the world was not in mass evangelism which will form superficial converts but in the selection of the twelve and investing his short three years ministry time with them.\(^{442}\) Vanderstelt says that these groups need to disciple one another in all-of-life because discipleship is about every person in every place doing everything to glorify God.\(^{443}\) It needs to be life-on-life where one lives life close to one another in visible, authentic and vulnerable Christian community, learning together how the Gospel works through shared brokenness.\(^{444}\) It cannot just be a weekly Bible study that feeds the mind but fail to transform one’s life and ministry through community. The Church imitates Jesus’s strategy to reach the world through building a close community of believers that do life together to know God and


\(^{444}\) Ibid., Loc 1114.
make him known. Therefore, the church’s GMG is an important vehicle for the church to become MFC.

There are some three movements to glean from how Jesus selected and trained the twelve disciples as his primary method to reach the world after his departure. Scott Boren talks about three basic rhythms, namely Missional Communion (the practices of the Presence-Upward); Missional Relating (the practice of Agape-Inward); Missional Engagement (the practice of Engaging the Neighborhood-Outward). Mike Breen also talks about the rhythms of discipleship as deepening relationship with God (Up), relationship with one another (In) and relationship with one’s mission context (Out). These three movements can also be clearly seen in the life-on-life missional home groups formed in the early church times (Acts 2:42-47).

Life with God (Upward)

In the upward movement, the focus is how to help the small group develop a vibrant vertical relationship with God through worship, prayer and obeying the Word. Jesus spends a night praying before selecting his twelve disciples (Lk 6:12-13). Jesus modelled the importance of prayer to his disciples through his prayerful lifestyle (Mk 1:35; Lk 5:16; 6:12). Jesus taught the disciples how to pray (Lk 11:1-12). The first and

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446 Mike Breen, *Leading Missional Communities* (USA: 2013), Loc 334.

primary calling of a disciple was to “be with him” and to know Jesus personally (Mk 3:13-15). There were also times of formal training like the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), on-the-job training (Matt 17:14-20) and informally over a meal or conversation.

The home group in Acts 2:42-47 helped each other grow their vertical relationship with God. They did so by devoting themselves to learning and applying Scriptures together (v42). They did so by depending on God together by praying for one another (v42). They praised and gave thanks to God in worship together (v47a). When one’s relationship with God is strong, then she is able to do the next two movements.

**Life in Community (Inward)**

The second strategy that Jesus did with the twelve disciples was to strengthen the inward relationships with one another. The disciples lived in close community life-on-life for three years learning from one another’s victories and failures under the guidance of Jesus. There were various circles of discipleship where Jesus spends more time and intensity with those in the inner circles than the outer circles as shown in Figure 4 to build strong disciples rather than superficial converts.448 John was the “beloved disciple” at the center (Jn 13:23; 19:26; 20:2).449 There was Peter, James and John who belonged to the inner circle who were with Jesus at the transfiguration (Mt 17:1), healing of Jairus’ daughter (Mk 5:37) and at the garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:33). Then there were twelve

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448 Ibid., 101.
449 Ibid., 109.
disciples who were called apostles and were his regular companions (Mk 6:30). For the twelve disciples, Jesus requires a high level of commitment which includes living, eating, learning and doing ministry together. The call to discipleship is a call to Lordship and to be willing to forsake all to follow Christ (Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23). There were also the seventy or seventy-two disciples (Lk 10:1-20) who were sent out for ministry. He spent the least amount of time with the crowds (Mt 4:25).

The home group in Acts 2:42-47 exhibited close inward relationship. They devoted themselves to fellowship and were together sharing with one another (v44). They even sold their property and possession to give to anyone in need (v45). They broke bread and ate together with glad and sincere hearts (v46b). They went to the temple courts together daily (v46a). They did not just have Bible study once a week and then leave, but were deeply involved in each other’s lives. The result is that there were no needs that were left unmet in the group.

\footnote{Ibid.}
Life on Mission (Outward)

The third essential strategy to develop the disciples was to expose them to ministry as mission beyond the group (outward). Jesus’s leadership was fundamentally apostolic as he called forth his disciples to follow him (discipleship) not just to be saved but be fishers of men (evangelism) (Mt 4:19). In Mark 3:13-15, Jesus calls his disciples to be with him in order to send them out for the ministry of preaching, healing and exorcism. Joining God in his mission is an indispensable building block of discipleship (Mt 4:17-19, Mk 1:17). Jesus taught the disciples to pray for the harvest, so that they too would catch Jesus’s vision and compassion for the lost (Mt 9:35-38). After teaching the

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disciples, Jesus always sent them out to put what they learn into ministry practice (Mk 6:13, Luke 10:1-21). The disciples learned on the job from Jesus regarding the right methods of ministry when they failed (Mk 9:14-29).

The home group of Acts 2:42-47 found favour with all people not just people within the church. This must have happened because they were a blessing to the community through good works and miraculous healings. The result is that the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (v47).

The Hebrew model of learning adopted by Jesus was a life-on-life apprentice model that focused on “act our way into new way of thinking.” This was different from a Greek academic model of just cognitive learning. It focused on action-reflection, embodiment of truth, mentoring and modelling. The end goal of missional groups was not to increase in knowledge, in skills or moral or spiritual formation for self, but in active service and mission in furthering the kingdom of God.

Mike Breen suggests a few questions to help small groups determine where God is calling you or your team as your area of mission:

1. What are your heart’s desires?
2. What is your holy discontent?
3. What are the opportunities?
4. What are the needs of the community?

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453 Ibid., 132-33.

454 Ibid., 109.

5. What have you heard from God?
6. Is there a person of peace (someone open) you have met and what is good news to him/them (Lk 10:1-16)?

Keller describes how small groups can be missional (not just doing evangelistic activities) in their context. First, leaders and members talk positively about the city/neighbourhood. Second, avoid religious jargon and judgmental language towards culture. Third, in Bible study they should apply the Gospel to the core concerns and stories of the people of the culture. Fourth, they should also be familiar and appreciative of the media and arts of the culture yet able to critique it with the Gospel. Fifth, the group should show deep concern and generosity towards the poor, the marginalized, the outcast, the foreigners, the LGBTQ community, etc. Six, they do not bad mouth other churches, Christians or other religions. Six, the groups should invite non-Christians to come and stay as they explore spiritual issues together.

The pastor or leader ought to belong to a life-on-life GMG or staff group himself. He is then able to encourage everyone to belong to a GMG. He cultivates authentic Christian community where people can come together to pray and dialogue to discover what the Spirit is doing in, with and among them as a community. The pastor creates the platform or environment for different missional groups to come together to share and...

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learn from one another.\textsuperscript{458} He invites the people to imagine and experiment with missional initiatives from bottom up and experience for themselves as participants in God’s mission.\textsuperscript{459} Pastors must also be personally involved in the lives of members to support them in their outreach efforts when they lack motivation, compassion, ability or knowledge.\textsuperscript{460} The pastor can celebrate their successes and encourage them when they fail.\textsuperscript{461}

In summary, when the church exercise these three strategic thrusts with its ten theological distinctive, the church is then able to Engage the Community (Singapore) and Expand into the World to fulfill her vision to be MFC. It begins with knowing who is the missional God which we are called to Enthrone the King (Trinitarian Missiology, Mission of God, Reign of God). At the macro church level, the church needs to Empower the Family by exercising incarnational ministry, living out her missionary nature, being a contrast community and intergenerational church. At the micro individual level, the church needs to Equip the Gracian to be Gospel-Centred, live out the missional identity and belong to a life-on-life GMG.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{458} Ibid., Loc 762.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{459} Van Gelder and Zscheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective : Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation}, 165.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{460} Keller, \textit{Center Church : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City}, Loc 8347.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{461} Ibid., Loc 8387.}
PART THREE

A STRATEGY FOR EQUIPPING GRACE GROUPS TO BECOME A MISSIONAL FAMILY CHURCH
CHAPTER 5
STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND SPECIFIC GOALS

Goals and Plans

The purpose of this doctoral project is to develop a ministry model with its theological framework, biblical strategy and equipping process to transform Grace Assembly of God (GA) to become a missional family church (MFC) for the fulfilment of God’s mission for Singapore and beyond. For GA to become MFC, this ministry model needs to be applied to every area of ministry as a comprehensive and coherent ministry philosophy. Therefore, it will be more than a one year equipping process but a long term one. This project will begin by first equipping the GMG leaders and their GMG. After the GMG leadership have a better understanding, implications of MFC will be explored and implemented across all ministries over the next few years for the vision of MFC to be fulfilled.

This initial project started off with eleven lessons not ten. The last lesson is on five-fold ministry gifts. This lesson highlights how the Church needs to revive the five-fold ministry gifts (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd and Teacher) outlined in Ephesians 4:11-13 to equip all disciples for effective missional engagement and bring them to full maturity. These five-fold ministry gifts is not just restricted to clergy and
leaders but available to all laity in varying degrees to play an active role in ministry. It has been removed by the leadership in August 2018 due to deeper understanding of this theological theme. The leadership was not convinced that the congregation should be classified by their strengths in the five-fold ministry rather than the wider array of spiritual gifts. They felt that the five-fold ministry gifts should be restricted to leadership or clergy to equip the body rather than available to all.

**Implementation Process**

This project starts with a pilot GMGs of about 250 young adults in the young adults and young professional ministry (YAYP) that I currently directly pastor. I have been pastoring them since 2010. They are between the ages of 19 and 30 years old. There are altogether twenty-one GMGs. I have started training the cell leaders using this eleven lesson (not ten) curriculum once a month (two hours) during leader’s meeting from January to November of 2017. These sessions are video recorded with teacher and student notes given. These lessons were conducted in lecture style followed by discussion and application questions. They then take the material and taught it in their cell groups from February 2017 to March 2018. The members in the GMG do an initial online assessment in February 2017 before they start the curriculum and did the same online assessment when they completed in March 2018.¹ The results of this assessment will be shown later. Some cell groups choose to play the video recording of my teaching while

other groups choose to use the teacher’s notes to teach directly. After they have finished the lessons, they need to adopt a people group to outreach to as a GMG once a month.

After the initial trial run with the young adults, I have started equipping the adult GMG leaders from the English congregation from January 2018 to Oct 2018 (ten lessons) once a month. I train the GMG leaders in person “live” once a month starting from January 2018 for ten sessions (1.5 hours each). I also conduct the same ten sessions with all pastoral staff one week before the leader’s training so that they can facilitate any questions that may arise from their GMG leaders. They also discuss ministry implications in their different departments. There are currently about 101 adult GMGs with more than 150 leaders. They are English speaking and above thirty years old. For this training to the adult GMGs, these lessons have been professionally recorded in a studio of me teaching the lessons. Each session is about fifteen minutes long. There is also an animation to explain each of the theological themes. They are all upload on the church GDP website.\(^2\) They can watch the video if they miss the training. They can also choose play the video in their GMG or teach from the leader’s notes. Members have the member’s notes. This curriculum will end for the adults in October 2018. New members and GMG coming into GA will use the video and material to learn about the MFC ministry philosophy.

When the theological foundations of MFC are communicated to the GMG leaders of the church, they will have a strong biblical understanding and thus greater receptivity to the changes needed for missional ministry ahead. This will be supplemented with sermon series on a particular theological theme in the MFC every quarter. GMG

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curriculum in the cell will be based on what is preached in the sermon. Structural changes also will start taking place at the staff, ministry and GMG levels as implications of MFC are actualized church-wide.

**Evaluation**

To measure the effectiveness of the equipping process, GMG members of the 21 YAYP GMGs were invited to participate in a voluntary online questionnaire to ascertain their understanding and application of MFC at the beginning and at the end of their equipping. There are 48 questions that seek to test their understanding and application of the original eleven theological themes of MFC. We can ignore question number 48 as it is used to assess their understanding of the five-fold ministry gifts. They can answer these questions with strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral/unsure (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5) with the weightage in brackets. In general, a higher score means a better understanding or application of MFC. There are inverse questions in italics like questions 6, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 31 where a lower score is better. These scores are recalibrated by using 5 to subtract the score and are in italics as well. There were 144 young adults who participated in the questionnaire before MFC was implemented (B/F). There were 54 out of the 144 who chose to participate in the questionnaire after MFC was completed (A/F). The scores can be found in Appendix A.
Figure 5.1: Scores for MFC questionnaire before and after MFC training

Figure 5.2: Percentage change of scores after MFC training
From Figures 5.1 and 5.2, there were thirty-six out of forty-eight questions, or 75 percent that report a positive percentage change. There was a positive 199.9 cumulative percentage points of improvement. There was a 3.61 percent improvement of overall absolute score. Twenty-two out of 48 questions (44 percent) scored 4.0 and above indicating strong understanding and agreement to MFC theological themes. Eight out of 48 questions scored 10 percent or more improvement in understanding and application. Understanding what is missional scored the largest percentage points increase of 27.1 percent. Three questions scored 15 percent or more in improvement. The first was in question 6 where one begins to realize that the Church is not solely responsible to fulfill the Great Commission, but it is following the leadership of God the Father. Question 23 and 43 are similar in the sense of intentionally reaching out to the marginalized and lost both as an individual and as a GMG. This is heartening as one of the follow-ups after the MFC training was for every GMG to reach out to a particular people group once a month. Each GMG will also get members to agree to a GMG covenant at the end of the MFC training to solidify their commitment to the MFC values and its corresponding applications.

There were twelve questions that scored zero or negative change. There were eight questions that the MFC training did not change understanding, probably because these were in line with what they already knew. Of significance were questions 15, 16, 21 and 31 which scored negative percentage change of 4.8 percent to 16.6 percent. The training on MFC did not clarify these theological understanding but caused further misunderstanding. There is a need to clarify and strengthen the teaching to the leaders in these four areas so the right understanding can be achieved. Question 15 pertains to the
understanding of how one is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (apart from works and obedience). Question 16 has to do with the key word “sole” not just the “primary” reason why Jesus came to earth, which people may not notice due to subtle nuances. Jesus came to show his followers how to live a life for God beyond just dying for their sins. Question 21 has to do with the outsourced mentality of missions to some people of the church rather than the entire Body of Christ. Question 31 has to do with the necessity of a contrast community that needs to gather as a local church rather than just solo Christianity. The questions themselves may be ambiguous or too subtle to notice the nuances in theology.

Each category of theological theme scored a positive increase in understanding especially the understanding of what is missional, which recorded a 27 percent increase. Reign of God and missionary nature of the church scored the lowest absolute scores of below 3.0 suggesting that these are not our strong areas. The Mission of God and Gospel Message categories scored above 4.0. Other instruments of assessment are whether every YAYP GMG is successful in reaching out to a particular people group once a month after the MFC training. It is found that about 40 percent of GMG have started doing this after the MFC training.

In conclusion, there is a general increase in understanding what MFC is with the need to strengthen some areas of misunderstanding. At the same time this understanding needs to be reinforced at the pulpit as well as through ministry implications and examples that will further reinforce revelation and integration. It will take a whole church and ministry approach for congregational adoption and commitment.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This MFC framework is a consolidation of the varied literature out there on the missional movement into a comprehensive and practical model for missional ministry. It was discovered that this MFC curriculum and training, though registering positive learning in general, seems to be maintain a gap in understanding in some areas. A better measurement for success in the long run is the ability of each GMG to engage the community regularly, bring in new guests and multiply the group through their missional lifestyle and intentional incarnational efforts. I hope that this project will become a book that will hopefully give members and leaders a detailed understanding of each concept and how it fits together. These ten lessons for the GMG are the first wave of understanding and living out the ministry philosophy of MFC. The implications of the MFC framework need to be slowly worked into the structure and culture of every ministry in GA in the years to come for the MFC vision to come to pass. Eventually, I hope this material will be used to bless the wider body of Christ in Singapore and beyond in their quest to partner the missional God to be the missional family church to fulfill the *missio Dei.*
### Table 4: List of MFC Questions and their Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>B/F</th>
<th>A/F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I understand the origin and meaning of the word &quot;missional&quot;</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trinitarian Missiology</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am convinced that the mission of God to rescue mankind from their sins was initiated and led by God starting at the garden of Eden</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am convinced that Jesus Christ, the son of God was sent by God to fulfil the mission of God by showing us how to live and dying on the cross for our sins</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am convinced that the Holy Spirit was sent by God to help us to live the Christian life and fulfil the mission of God to be his witnesses on earth</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am constantly touched by God’s heart that desires to save me and others from condemnation</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>The church is solely responsible to lead the charge to save the world by obeying the great commission</em></td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Missio Dei</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I recognise that God is actively working in the world to restore humans to a right relationship with Him and I join him in this work</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I recognise God working through history, politics, nations, creation and not just the church to accomplish his purposes</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I recognise what I do daily as partnering with God to co-create and care for humans and creation</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I am convinced that God sends Christians in every arena of society to establish his Kingdom</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I see the image of God in non-Christians and I partner with them to help them to discover their potential in God</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reign of God</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I constantly and increasingly submit all aspect of my life to God's reign</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>10.1</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I pray with the expectation that miracles will happen</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I see everything I do as spiritual, whether I do it for God or self.</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><em>I believe faith alone in Christ is not enough to save me, I need obedience and good works as well.</em></td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><em>The sole reason why Jesus Christ came to earth is to save us from our sins and grant us eternal life in heaven</em></td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Nature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><em>Evangelism is one of the purpose of the church but not the sole reason</em></td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I conduct myself like a missionary being sent into my community (family, school, work) to reach others for Christ</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><em>I go to church primarily to receive blessings, teachings and support to live my life well</em></td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>A church is a group of people on God’s redemptive mission rather than a place of worship</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>As long as I give to world missions and the church sends missionaries, it is good enough for world evangelisation</em></td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarnational Ministry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I do my work with excellence and with Christian values so that I can impact others, structure or the culture</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I regularly put myself in context where I can reach out to the marginalised, poor or lost</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I love the people in my community outside of church and I also challenge them to address issues that are wrong</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I have shared my testimony or the gospel or about God in the last six months to an unbeliever</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I am constantly sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to be a blessing in my interactions with others</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>In my church, I serve passionately in a ministry to bless others</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Our worship service and sermons are understandable and relevant even to non-Christians because we expect and welcome them in our midst</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>In my church, we exercise loving one another with godly values whenever we gather together and welcome new comers</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Corporate rituals like Holy Communion, Baptism or Church Retreat are important communal events of the church for a sense of unity and belonging</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td><em>Attending church to me is optional since now one can listen to sermons and worship online</em></td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intergenerational Ministry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The church equips me to build faith at home and in my family</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>We have a culture where the older members of the church mentor those who are younger</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Different generations come together regularly to worship or serve</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>We have regular opportunities to hear faith stories of other generations</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I personally know someone from a different generation (at least 10 years difference) in the church that has made a significant faith impact in my life</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I see myself primarily as a child of God, secured in God's unconditional love</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I see myself as a servant of God serving Him and others</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I see myself as a missionary empowered by His Spirit and sent by God into my context to be his witness</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Life-on-life Missional Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I have a Christian community where I can pray, study God's Word and worship God together regularly</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I have a Christian community where we care and challenge each other with the truth of the gospel in our daily lives</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Everything we do in my Christian community is a preparation for us to reach the lost.</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I have a Christian community that intentionally and regularly tries to reach a particular group of people for Christ</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gospel Message**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I have been completely saved from the penalty of sin in my life</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>I will be saved from the presence of sin in the coming new heaven and earth</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>The gospel to me is that I have been completely accepted by God through what Christ has done on the cross for my sins, therefore I obey God out of gratitude</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I am being saved from the power of sin to live for God daily through the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fivefold Ministry Gifting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>I know my unique role and contribute to my Christian community in a positive way</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: B/F – Before MFC Training, A/F – After MFC Training, % - Percentage Change in Scores


Breen, Mike. *Leading Missional Communities*. USA, 2013.


