An Examination of Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Conceptions

Missional Ecclesiology and the Ecclesiologies of Miroslav Volf, Joseph Ratzinger and John Zizioulas

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The Flinders University of South Australia
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT</th>
<th>........................................................................................................</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>..................................................................................................................</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>................................................................................................................</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 GENESIS AND DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 The Topic / Research Question</td>
<td>.........................................................................................................</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Component Questions</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 RATIONALE AND IMPORTANCE</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Brief Introduction to Origins and Definitions</td>
<td>.................................................................................................</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Unanalysed Emerging-Missional Church Movement Materials</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3 Absence of Research</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.4 Dealing with Emerging-Missional Church Movement Ecclesiology</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.5 Missional and Ecclesiological Implications</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.6 Engaging Pressing Questions</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.7 Ecumenical and Inter-religious Repercussions</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.8 Integration of Christian Traditions</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.9 Enriching Missional Ecclesiology</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 The Two Primary Research Objectives</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 ASSUMPTIONS</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 STRUCTURE</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 SOURCES USED</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas</td>
<td>.................................................................................................</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Emerging-Missional Church Movement Sources</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS, MANUAL COMPARISON, AND QSR NVIVO</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 The Process of Content Analysis</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 COMPARATIVE METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Stages and Techniques</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 2: CRITICAL SURVEY 1</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 EMERGING VOICES</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHOSEN EMCM TEXTS</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4 Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.5 Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.6 Church After Christendom</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.7 Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.8 Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.9 EmergingChurch.Intro</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.10 Exiles: Living Missiologically in a Post-Christian-Culture</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.11 Houses that Change the World: The Return of the House Churches</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.12 Liquid Church</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.13 Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.14 Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.15 Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.16 Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World</td>
<td>................................................................................</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.17 Retrofuture: Rediscovering Our Roots, Recharting Our Routes</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.18 The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.19 The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.20 The Church Faces Death: Ecclesiology in a Post-Modern Context</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.21 The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.22 The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.23 The Complex Christ: Signs of Emergence in the Urban Church</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.24 The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.25 The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.26 The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.27 The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.28 The McDonaldisation of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity, and the Future of the Church</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.29 The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.30 The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.31 The Out of Bounds Church: Learning to Create a Community of Faith in a Culture of Change</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.32 The Post Evangelical</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.33 The Prodigal Project: Journey into the Emerging Church</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.34 The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.35 Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.36 Write the Vision: The Church Renewed</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.37 Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 THE CHRONOLOGICAL TRAJECTORY OF EMCM THEMES</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGIES 1: ESSENTIAL AND FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTIONS</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1 The Church in an Age of Post-Christendom, Marginalisation, and Liminality</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 Missional and Incarnational Ecclesiology</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3 The Gospel, Church and Culture Relationship</td>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.4 Incarnational, Postmodern Mission, Evangelism and Apologetics</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.5 Grounding Missional Ecclesiology in a Local, Worshipping Community</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGIES 2: CHARACTERISTIC, GUIDING AND MORE SUBTLE CONCEPTIONS</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL CRITIQUES</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Interpreting History: Constantine, Christendom, Modernity and Church History</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 Postmodernity and Ecclesiology</td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3 Church and its Leadership Navigating Change, Crisis and Confusion</td>
<td>173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4 Deciding Whether to Merely Criticise Other Ecclesiologies or to Constructively Inform Them Missionally</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.5 Critiquing Evangelism’s Epistemology and Methodology</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.6 A ‘Second Reformation’ and Revolution</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL THEOLOGIES</td>
<td>186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Theological Orientation and Imagination</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Considering Eschatology, Sovereignty and Providence</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Pneumatological Considerations for Ecclesiology</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4 Christocentric and Messianic Ecclesiological Foundations</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.5 Embodying and Proclaiming the Kingdom and Reign of God</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.6 Trinitarian Perspectives</td>
<td>201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL PRACTICES</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 Apostolic, Missional Leadership in Churches</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2 Missional Systems, Structures and Programs</td>
<td>206</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3 Missional and Ecclesiological Experimentation</td>
<td>209</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4 Planting New Missional Communities</td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.5 The Gifting of all Believers for Service, Ministry and Mission, and the Participatory</td>
<td>238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Christian Worship</td>
<td>213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.6 Spirituality and Discipleship in Missional Communities</td>
<td>215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.7 Relationships: Networked, Fluid and Organic</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.8 Reinventing Theological and Ecclesiological Education</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.9 Missional and Ecclesiological Holism and Activism: Justice, Ethics and Compassion</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.10 Worship, Liturgy, the Arts, Sacrament, and Tradition</td>
<td>226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.11 Denominationalism, Ecumenism, Catholicity, and Unity</td>
<td>229</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Considerations</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1 Placing the Emphasis on Emerging or on Missional</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.2 Criticisms and Critics of the EMCM and its Ecclesiology</td>
<td>234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Summary and Critical Reflections for Chapters 3, 4 and 5: Reformation Notae Ecclesiæ and Core Aspects of Emerging-Missional Ecclesiology</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 3: CRITICAL SURVEY 2</td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 THE FREE CHURCH ECCLESIOLGY OF PROFESSOR MIROSLAV VOLF</td>
<td>261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 The Nature and Ecclesiality of the Church</td>
<td>262</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 The Mediation of Faith and a Theology of Human Personhood</td>
<td>266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Trinitarian Ecclesiology</td>
<td>268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Leadership, Authority and Ecclesial Structure</td>
<td>271</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 The Catholicity of the Local Church</td>
<td>274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Ecumenical Contours of Ecclesiology</td>
<td>277</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Summary and Brief Critical Reflections</td>
<td>278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8 Conclusion</td>
<td>281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 THE CATHOLIC ECCLESIOLGY OF CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER (POPE BENEDICT XVI)</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 The Nature and Essence of the Church</td>
<td>284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Communio and the Church’s Substance</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Eucharistic Ecclesiology and its Practical Implications</td>
<td>291</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 The Relationship between Structure and Content</td>
<td>294</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Ecumenical Dialogue and Problems</td>
<td>296</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Summary and Brief Critical Reflections</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 THE EASTERN ORTHODOX ECCLESIOLGY OF METROPOLITAN JOHN ZIZIOULAS</td>
<td>301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Being as Communion: The Nature and Essence of the Church</td>
<td>303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Truth, Communion and Ecclesiology</td>
<td>309</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Christology, Pneumatology and the Church</td>
<td>312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Eucharistic Community and Catholicity</td>
<td>315</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Church Structure, Apostolicity and Ministry</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Locality and Universality</td>
<td>322</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7 Summary and Brief Critical Reflections</td>
<td>323</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 Conclusion</td>
<td>326</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 4: TOWARD DIALOGICAL ECCLESIOLGIES FOR A MISSIONAL CONTEXT</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 AN ANALYSIS OF AREAS OF CONVERGENCE, DIVERGENCE, AND MUTUAL ECCLESIOLGICAL ENRICHMENT</td>
<td>328</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 EMCM Ecclesiology Enriched and Challenged by the Ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulias</td>
<td>330</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.1 Faith, Personhood, and Trinitarian Ecclesiology – Professor Miroslav Volf</td>
<td>332</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.2 Communio, the Church’s Substance, and Eucharistic Ecclesiology – Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)</td>
<td>355</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.3 Truth, Communion, Eucharistic Community, and Other Theological Contributions – Metropolitan John Zizioulias</td>
<td>372</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 EMCM Ecclesiology Enriching the Contrasting and Parallel Perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas</td>
<td>393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2.1 Mission as an Expression of the Nature of the Church ........................................ 394
9.2.2 Core Expressions of the Missionary Nature of the Church ................................. 399
9.3 SUMMARY OF THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ........................................... 432

10 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ............................................................................ 436

10.1 FINDINGS ........................................................................................................... 437
10.2 CONCLUSIONS .................................................................................................. 441

11 APPENDICES ........................................................................................................ 446

11.1 APPENDIX 1: THE THIRTY-SEVEN EMCM TEXTS EXAMINED IN THE RESEARCH .... 446
11.2 APPENDIX 2: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EMERGING-Missional ECCLESIOLOGIES 1: ESSENTIAL AND FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTIONS .......................................................... 449
11.3 APPENDIX 3: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EMERGING-Missional ECCLESIOLOGIES 2: CHARACTERISTIC, GUIDING AND MORE SUBTLE CONCEPTIONS ...................................................... 455
11.4 APPENDIX 4: BACKGROUND, ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE EMCM TEXTS RESEARCHED ................................................... 471

11.4.1 Lois Barrett ....................................................................................................... 471
11.4.2 Ryan Bolger ...................................................................................................... 472
11.4.3 Kester Brewin .................................................................................................. 472
11.4.4 James Brownson ............................................................................................. 472
11.4.5 Rodney Clapp .................................................................................................. 473
11.4.6 Neil Cole .......................................................................................................... 473
11.4.7 Andy Crouch .................................................................................................... 474
11.4.8 Ingrace Dieterich ............................................................................................. 474
11.4.9 John Drane ........................................................................................................ 474
11.4.10 William Dyrness ........................................................................................... 475
11.4.11 Michael Frost ................................................................................................ 475
11.4.12 Craig Van Gelder .......................................................................................... 476
11.4.13 Edmund Gibbs ............................................................................................... 477
11.4.14 Darrell Guder ............................................................................................... 477
11.4.15 Douglas Hall .................................................................................................. 478
11.4.16 Barry Harvey ................................................................................................ 478
11.4.17 John Hendrick ............................................................................................... 478
11.4.18 Alan Hirsch .................................................................................................... 479
11.4.19 Walter Hobbs ............................................................................................... 479
11.4.20 Michael Horton ............................................................................................. 479
11.4.21 George Hunsberger ....................................................................................... 480
11.4.22 Michael Jinkins ............................................................................................. 480
11.4.23 E. Dixon Junkin ............................................................................................. 481
11.4.24 Christopher Kaiser ....................................................................................... 481
11.4.25 Gerard Kelly .................................................................................................. 481
11.4.26 Philip Kenneson ............................................................................................ 482
11.4.27 Dan Kimball .................................................................................................. 482
11.4.28 Cathy Kirkpatrick ......................................................................................... 482
11.4.29 Jeff Van Kooten ............................................................................................. 483
11.4.30 Alan Kreider ................................................................................................ 483
11.4.31 Frederica Mathewes-Green ......................................................................... 484
11.4.32 Brian McLaren ............................................................................................... 484
11.4.33 Erwin McManus ........................................................................................... 485
11.4.34 Michael Moynagh ......................................................................................... 485
11.4.35 Stuart Murray ................................................................................................ 486
11.4.36 Mark Pierson ................................................................................................ 486
11.4.37 David Putman ............................................................................................... 487
11.4.38 Mike Riddell ................................................................................................ 487
11.4.39 Fred Romanuk .............................................................................................. 488
11.4.40 Alan Roxburgh ............................................................................................. 488
11.4.41 Paul Satari .................................................................................................... 489
11.4.42 David Scotchmer ......................................................................................... 489
11.4.43 Wilbert Shenk .............................................................................................. 489
11.4.44 Wolfgang Simson ........................................................................................ 490
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the research question, ‘What are the similarities and differences between the ecclesiological conceptions of the western Emerging-Missional Church Movement (EMCM) and the core ecclesiologies of the theologians presented in Miroslav Volf’s After Our Likeness, being Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and how might dialogue between all these parties enrich and inform ecclesiology?’

The two primary and consequent research objectives, therefore, are detailed here. (1) To critically analyse and describe the primary (explicit and less obvious) ecclesiological perspectives of thirty-seven of the most influential EMCM authors, examining works published between 1995 and 2008. (2) To build on Volf’s After Our Likeness, by putting the ecclesiologies therein into a critical conversation with the EMCM, which demonstrates their similarities, differences, and opportunities for enriching dialogue.

The research methodology is qualitative, involving Content Analysis, the manual comparing and contrasting of primary sources, and the use of the textual analysis software QSR Nvivo. It involved the examination of thirty-seven EMCM documents published between 1995 and 2008, the analysis of the ecclesiological works of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and the comparison of these sources in order to form conclusions.

The thesis involves four parts. Part 1, which is titled Introduction and Methodology, includes the introduction, rationale, description of the research methodology, and justification for the choice of the particular EMCM authors and of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in this study.
Part 2, which is titled *Critical Survey 1*, provides an examination of the chosen EMCM texts, and an analytical survey and evaluation of both the obvious and the more subtle ecclesiological views of the EMCM. The insights of Stanley Grenz, David Bosch and Paul Hiebert are occasionally added to this analysis, not because they are explicit ‘members’ of the EMCM, but because of their significant influence on the EMCM texts.

Part 3, titled *Critical Survey 2*, briefly summarizes the core perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, not to put them into critical dialogue with each other, or even to critically analyse their perspectives, but to establish their convictions for the purpose of an ecclesiological dialogue with the EMCM. Such a critical survey leads the thesis toward further critical lines of reasoning, comparison and conclusions.

Part 4, which is titled *Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context*, examines the similarities and differences between the ecclesiologies of the EMCM and that of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, how such dialogue enriches all the parties concerned, and suggests how dialogue deepens and benefits missional ecclesiology as it is taking shape in western culture. It presents the thesis findings and conclusions.

This thesis concludes that while the ecclesiological perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas enrich those of the EMCM, the emerging-missional ecclesiology of the EMCM contributes significantly to the development of a meaningful missional ecclesiology for contemporary western culture. EMCM ecclesiological perspectives on the missionary nature of the church, and on the core expressions of this missionary nature in local faith communities, are significant for other ecclesiological traditions and for the western church in an increasingly missional context.
Furthermore, a thorough analysis of EMCM ecclesiology is important for the formation of an adequate missional ecclesiology for contemporary western culture.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Rev Graham Joseph Gary Hill
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the wise, insightful and scholarly supervision provided by my supervisor Associate Professor Andrew Dutney of Flinders University in South Australia. Although I completed most of this thesis by distance, the meetings we had were invaluable and stimulating, and his constant encouragement and scholarly wisdom in this project were greatly appreciated. He is a sought after supervisor for very good reason, and I benefited greatly from his commitment to excellence in theological reflection.

My secondary supervisor Reverend Doctor Graeme Chatfield also helped me probe the issues relevant to the thesis, and for that assistance, I am very thankful.

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I am deeply grateful for the learning community that is Morling College, and for the many occasions that faculty and students have helped me examine issues explored in this thesis. The theological insight of fellow faculty members is a rich resource I regularly mine and respect.

I especially must acknowledge the love, support and very real sacrifices made by my family for the sake of this thesis. My wife Felicity and daughters Madison, Grace and Dakotah enrich my faith, deepen my life, and constantly and graciously give me the time and love I need to complete such a project as this. My deepest love and gratitude is to them, and particularly to Felicity, for the constant sacrifices she made because of her commitment and love for me. My parents, Gary and Catherine Hill,
have shaped so many of the disciplines I needed to complete such a task, which so often felt so overwhelming, and I thank God for their training, constant love and example.

Finally, I would like to express my love for the risen Jesus Christ, to whom I am committed to serving as his disciple throughout all the day of my life. His hope and strength carried me so often in this project. I acutely recognise that this thesis is a study of his Bride, whom he cherishes and sustains in all her frailties and possibilities.

Rev Graham Joseph Gary Hill, March 2009
PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY
1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the thesis, including its genesis and description, rationale and importance, aims and objectives, assumptions, structure, and scope and limitations.

1.1 Genesis and Description

This study had its genesis in three spheres of experience. The first was the many conversations I have had with Australian Christian young adults who are exploring what it means for the church to be missional and engaged with their generation. Their frustration and disillusionment with the state of the existing church is only exceeded by their hope for a more intentionally missional future. Their desire to be involved in emerging expressions of church, and their willingness to discuss the shape of the church’s missional nature, inspires me, and has led to the themes addressed in this thesis percolating in my mind and imagination for some time.

The second was reading the burgeoning western Emerging-Missional Church Movement literature as part of my lecturing role at Morling College, which is the Baptist Bible and Theological College of New South Wales and the Australian

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1 The word count of the thesis, for the main body of the text, is 95,460 words. The Flinders University Faculty of Education, Humanities, Law and Theology has determined that the length of a PhD thesis should be a maximum of 100,000 words. This excludes footnotes, bibliography, tables and appendices.

2 The picture on the title page is of St. Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney, Australia, and was taken by Frank Hurley (1885-1962). The copyright is owned by the National Library of Australia, and the picture is used by written permission from that institution. The internet address of the picture is http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an23478468 (Accessed December 7, 2008). I have not footnoted these details on the title page because a footnote there seems inappropriate; rather, I have intentionally placed these details in the second footnote. For me, the architecture of this cathedral, and its physical and intentional location among the people of Sydney, symbolise the ecclesiological tensions, complexities and possibilities wrestled with through successive Christian generations, and touched on in the primary themes of this thesis. Bibliographical details: Frank Hurley. St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney Australia. nla.pic-an23478468. National Library of Australia.
Capital Territory. I placed the content of that reading and lecture preparation into conversation with the concerns and issues raised by the young adults I have mentioned above, and whom I have had the privilege of having from time to time as students. This reading, preparation, lecturing and engaging with students has significantly shaped my understanding of the church as essentially missional, and the need for the western church to embrace and explore this reality.

The third was coming across Miroslav Volf’s *After Our Likeness*,\(^3\) and imagining the contents of that ecclesiological discourse being put into conversation with the emerging postmodern ecclesiology I have previously discussed. I became intent on considering how such a conversation might enrich, extend and inform the ecclesiologies of all the parties concerned, and so this study was birthed.

Following is a description of the research topic and the associated research questions that have shaped this study:

### 1.1.1 The Topic / Research Question

‘What are the similarities and differences between the ecclesiological conceptions of the western *Emerging-Missional Church Movement*\(^4\) and the core ecclesiologies of the theologians presented in Miroslav Volf’s *After Our Likeness*, being Volf, Ratzinger\(^5\) and Zizioulas, and how might dialogue between all these parties enrich and inform ecclesiology?’

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\(^4\) As articulated between 1995 and 2008 by thirty-seven key published writings of the *Emerging-Missional Church Movement*.

\(^5\) Joseph Ratzinger was appointed Bishop of Rome on April 19, 2005, at which point he took on the name Pope Benedict XVI. In this thesis I refer to him as Pope Benedict XVI when dealing with works written in that title, Joseph Ratzinger when dealing with works written in that name, and Joseph Ratzinger when referring to him in general, since most of the ecclesiological works analyzed were written under the name of Joseph Ratzinger.
1.1.2 Component Questions

Following are the component questions of the thesis, and each one represents the hierarchy of structure in the thesis, as indicated in the footnotes:

1. ‘Why is such a study important, in the light of the growing influence of the expanding ecclesiological perspectives of the Emerging-Missional Church Movement (hereafter called ‘EMCM’) and the general missional context the church in western culture finds itself in?’

2. ‘Why use Content Analysis and a comparative approach as the research methodology?’

3. ‘What are the influence, representation, relevance and importance of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas?’ In addition, ‘Why one would compare them with the EMCM?’

4. ‘Who were the key published authors in the EMCM, and what are their weight, typification, pertinence, and consequence?’ In addition, especially, ‘Why would one choose these particular authors as representative of the EMCM?’

5. ‘What are the essential emerging ecclesiological conceptions of the EMCM and what appraising remarks might be offered?’

6. ‘What are the characteristic, guiding and more subtle ecclesiological views of

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6 ‘Introduction’ in the Table of Contents
7 A comparative approach posits contrasting, alternative points of view in dialogue and comparison with each other.
8 ‘Methodology’ in the Table of Contents
9 ‘Methodology’ in the Table of Contents
10 ‘Emerging Voices’ in the Table of Contents
11 ‘Emerging-Missional Ecclesiologies 1: Essential and Foundational Conceptions’ in the Table of Contents
the EMCM and what critical observations might be presented?'

7. ‘What is the fundamental Free Church ecclesiology of Volf and what evaluative comments might be made?’

8. ‘What is the core Catholic ecclesiology of Ratzinger and what evaluative comments might be made?’

9. ‘What is the principal Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology Zizioulas and what evaluative comments might be made?’

10. ‘What areas of convergence, divergence and mutual ecclesiological enrichment exist between the central and also the more subtle EMCM ecclesiological understandings, and that of Volf, Ratzinger and John Zizioulas?’

11. ‘What findings, conclusions and implications might be formed from this research?’

1.2 Rationale and Importance

1.2.1 Brief Introduction to Origins and Definitions

The phenomenon that is the Emerging-Missional Church Movement (EMCM) can be traced back through the Gospel and Our Culture Network in the United States of

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12 ‘Emerging-Missional Ecclesiologies 2: Characteristic, Guiding and More Subtle Conceptions’ in the Table of Contents
13 ‘The Free Church Ecclesiology of Professor Miroslav Volf’ in the Table of Contents
14 ‘The Catholic Ecclesiology of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)’ in the Table of Contents
15 ‘The Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology of Metropolitan John Zizioulas’ in the Table of Contents
16 ‘An Analysis of Areas of Convergence, Divergence, and Mutual Ecclesiological Enrichment’ in the Table of Contents
17 ‘Findings and Conclusions’ in the Table of Contents
America and the United Kingdom,\(^{18}\) through to such theologians as the British and South African missiologists Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch. The perspectives of such theologians as Newbigin and Bosch captivated the imaginations of a group of missional ecclesiologists such as Hunsberger, Guder and Roxburgh, who in turn inspired an emerging generation of missional thinkers and practitioners such as McLaren, Kimball, Frost, McManus and the other EMCM authors who have been selected for this research project.\(^{19}\) All of these authors mentioned in this paragraph have become an influential part of the EMCM, whether they self-identify with this movement or not, and although the EMCM is a movement of thought, rather than an organised movement, its nature, concerns, and most influential authors and writings, are identifiable, \(^{20}\) and are examined in this thesis.

In 1993, Lesslie Newbigin wrote ‘The experience of European churches suggests that the synthesis between Christianity and the Enlightenment, which was inherent in much of the missionary thrust of the last century, is not sustainable forever.’\(^{21}\) Earlier he had suggested that ‘For the church to live out an intimate engagement with the narrative of God’s action in Jesus Christ that shapes its life and thought, it must use personal and communal ways of knowing that reach beyond the merely rational.’\(^{22}\) Bosch also influenced the EMCM with his missiology for western (and global) culture, and especially with his work *Transforming Mission*.\(^{23}\)

\(^{18}\) The Gospel and Our Culture Network in the US and UK can be found respectively at http://www.gocn.org/ and http://Gospel-culture.org.uk/ (Both accessed December 7, 2008).

\(^{19}\) For more information on each of the persons mentioned in this sentence, see the chapter Emerging Voices.


\(^{23}\) Bosch influenced the EMCM with such assertions as, ‘Mission is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or
The writings of missiologists like Newbigin and Bosch captured the imaginations of an emerging generation of church leaders, young adults, and others, and have contributed greatly to the rise of the EMCM in the West.

Forming a clear and concise definition of the EMCM is, however, a difficult process. I will attempt to do this with reference to the summaries and definitions offered by Stuart Murray, Andrew Jones, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, and, finally, Alan Roxburgh, each of whom has played a significant role in shaping the ecclesiology of the diverse movement that is the EMCM.

Stuart Murray has stated that he likes the term ‘emerging church’ because of its association with such ideas as interdependence on established forms of church, the provisionality and dynamism of the movement, and the flexibility inherent in its soteriology. The classical doctrine of the missio Dei as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and Son sending the Spirit is expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world.... The missio Dei purifies the church. It sets it under the cross – the only place where it is ever safe... Looked at from this perspective mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus, wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God’s love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.’ D.J. Bosch, Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), p.390 and 519.

The response to Carson by Emergent-US sums up the difficulty of such definitions, when they write, ‘We have repeatedly affirmed, contrary to what some have said, that there is no single theologian or spokesperson for the emergent conversation. We each speak for ourselves and are not official representatives of anyone else, nor do we necessarily endorse everything said or written by one another. We have repeatedly defined emergent as a conversation and friendship, and neither implies unanimity – nor even necessarily consensus – of opinion.’ Response to Recent Criticisms, written by Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, Spencer Burke, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Andrew Jones and Chris Seay. Available at http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/files/response2critics.pdf (Accessed December 7, 2008).

Stuart Murray is chair of the UK Anabaptist Network, the author of a number of books on church and mission in post-Christendom (which are in this thesis’ bibliography, along with the works by Roxburgh referred to below), and director of a pioneering church-planting agency. Andrew Jones is the Project Director of the Boaz Project, which is developing support structures for churches in emerging cultures, and is one of the most widely read EMCM webloggers. Eddie Gibbs is the Donald A. McGavran Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, and his book on the EMCM was written by Ryan Bolger, who is Assistant Professor of Church in Contemporary Culture at Fuller Seminary. Alan Roxburgh works with the Allelon Missional Leadership Network in the formation of leaders for the missional church, and has authored a number of books on missional church and leadership.
imprecision.\textsuperscript{26} In a lecture on the EMCM at Morling College, Sydney, on Tuesday July 31, 2007, Murray suggested the following 'tentative classification' around the themes of mission, community and worship, with concrete yet non-exhaustive examples under each heading:\textsuperscript{27}

1. MISSION-LED (refocusing churches on mission)

(a) \textit{Restructuring churches for mission}

Seeker-oriented church
Purpose-driven church
Cell church
G12 cell church
Minsters and Clusters
Café-style church

(b) \textit{Importing church into new places}

Workplace church
Pub church
Club-culture church
Café church
Enterprise church
Cyber-church

\textsuperscript{26} In Moynagh’s work, Stuart Murray writes, ‘Attempting to categorise the emerging church at this stage is like trying to nail jelly to a wall. The categories keep shifting as stories change, groups begin and evolve, and as our own interpretation develops. But some attempt to describe and reflect is vital if we are to learn from what is happening.’ M. Moynagh, \textit{Emergingchurch.Intro} (Oxford: Monarch, 2004). p.14.

\textsuperscript{27} Murray was lecturing directly from his previously published work in S. Murray, \textit{Church after Christendom} (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005). p.67-98.
(c) **Incarnating church into different cultures**

Network church
Culture-specific church
Youth church
Young adult church
Children’s church
Church for marginalised groups
Indigenous neighbourhood churches

2. **COMMUNITY-LED (reconfiguring churches around community)**

(a) **Churches shaped by community engagement**

Midweek church
Project church
7-day-a-week church
Post-Alpha church

(b) **Churches shaped by community dynamics**

Table church
Household church
Base ecclesial communities
Small Christian communities
Organic church
Post-church communities
3. **WORSHIP-LED** (*re-imagining worship in churches*)

(a) *Alternative worship*

(b) *Culture-specific worship*

Ethnic church

Contextual liturgy

(c) *Customised worship*

Multi-congregational church

Menu church

Multicultural church

(d) *New monasticism*

Dispersed church

Common-purse communities

New monastic orders

Boiler rooms

Similarly, Andrew Jones, in a weblog article of February 1, 2006, suggested the following classification around the ideas of ‘missional’ and ‘emerging’, under the heading *What I Mean When I Say “Emerging-Missional” Church*. His conclusions touch on similar ideas, but have different emphases, when compared with Murray’s
1. EMERGING

- A nod to the newness of the movement and its fluidity.
- It is coming up out the previous wave of ministry, but not necessarily in protest to it.
- It displays characteristics of emergent behaviour that are evident in any system when chaos finds order through self-organisation and other emergent criteria.
- The ministry is a biblically informed contextual response to the local emerging cultural context - something similar to what the wider church used to call youth culture, Gen X culture, postmodern culture, etc.
- It addresses issues of culture as well as mindset (postmodern) and life-stage (youth, Gen X).

2. MISSIONAL

- The word ‘missional’ is often added to ‘emerging’ to form the description ‘emerging-missional church’.
- Many North American missiologists and theologians have adopted the word ‘missional’… The emphasis was put on God's mission rather than ours - we participate with the Triune God in what he is doing.

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3. EMERGING-MISSIONAL

- The term ‘emerging-missional church’, favoured by Australians and New Zealanders, seems to tie together the two strands of missio dei and missio ecclesiae in one phrase.
- Without the missional, emergent is just style. Without the emergent, missional pours the new wine backwards into old containers, and often without regard to context. That is why the combination of words is kept intact.

Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger attempt a concise definition of the emerging-missional church movement in the following:

Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses the nine practices. Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.\(^{29}\)

Alan Roxburgh, however, in a booklet titled *What Is Missional Church?* endeavoured to avoid such a simple definition because of their limitation.\(^{30}\) Roxburgh then

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\(^{30}\) Roxburgh writes, ‘If we could provide a simple straightforward definition of missional church, there wouldn’t be so much confusion. Some have tried this approach. Google missional church and you’ll find all kinds of propositional statements that provide neat, clean clarity like a nicely wrapped package. Most of the time these definitions fail to challenge our imaginations or help us break out of assumed patterns and assumptions of the church. Without trying to give a definition, I will offer some themes for exploration that might stretch your imagination and give you a new picture of missional church.’ A.J. Roxburgh, *What Is Missional Church? - an Introduction to the Missional Church*
proceeds to proffer that the missional church conversation is built around the following themes:

1. Western Society as Mission Field

2. Mission is about the Missio Dei

3. Missional Church is about the Church Being a Contrast Society

4. It is about a Three-Way Conversation Between Gospel-Church-Culture (or using his first three points above, a three-way conversation between Missio Dei – Contrast Society – Missionary Context)

Therefore, a definition of the core characteristics of the EMCM needs to take these elements suggested by Murray, Jones, Gibbs, Bolger and Roxburgh into account, as well as other literature in the field, and would include the EMCM’s diverse but recognisable emphasis on:

1. **EMERGING** - Emerging, contextualised and culturally-appropriate forms of community and worship

2. **MISSIONAL** - Refocusing churches on mission, western society as mission field, and mission being sourced in the Missio Dei

3. **CHURCH** - The idea of the church as a contrast society, and an embrace of missional ecclesiology


31 Such as the descriptions of the mission-shaped church in R. Williams, Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context (London: Church House, 2004).
4. **MOVEMENT** – A growing body of literature, practitioners, communities and theologians in the West, networked less by definitions than by a similar assessment of the missional challenges and possibilities of contemporary and post-Christendom western culture. It is worth noting, however, that the diversity of the group and its perspectives makes it a very loose, young, evolving and complex ‘movement’. Some within this group would prefer to call it a ‘conversation’ rather than a ‘movement’, yet the idea of this being a movement is becoming more acceptable as it grows in influence and expanse.\(^{32}\)

5. **EMERGING-MISSIONAL CHURCH MOVEMENT** - Therefore, an ecclesiological and missiological three-way conversation, as noted by Roxburgh, on *Missio Dei, Contrast Society*, and *Missionary Context*, as evidenced by a growing body of literature.

The characteristics of the EMCM will be examined in more detail in chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis, in an analysis of thirty-seven influential EMCM texts.

It is also important that a distinction be made here between *emerging* and *Emergent*. *Emergent or Emergent Village* is an organisation based in North America and the United Kingdom that has significant figures within the EMCM associated with it, such as Tony Jones, Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, Jason Clark and Mark Oestreicher.\(^{33}\) While it is a very influential group within the EMCM, it would be

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\(^{32}\) In an introduction to their book on emerging-missional churches, Gibbs and Bolger write, ‘This study of emerging churches represents a determined attempt to identify the key practices of this disparate movement, which is so diverse and fragmented that some observers and insiders do not like to think of it as a movement at all. For insiders, it is more of a conversation... Although the communities they lead may be small in number, the numbers are growing rapidly as their influence spreads through websites, blogs, chat rooms, and conference interactions.’ Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*. p.29.

wrong to define the whole EMCM by its perspectives. By *emerging* or *emerging-missional* in this thesis, I mean the wider, global, informal movement mentioned in point four above, which includes *Emergent*, but it much larger.

The growth of the EMCM has been exponential and its influence far reaching, with scores of books, articles, websites, web logs and missional plants produced or created each year. The consequences have included:

1. shifts in local church, denominational and para-church agency church planting strategies
2. the creation and/or stimulation of the Alternative Worship movement
3. explorations in the intentional combining of businesses with missional plants through social entrepreneurship
4. Postmodern expressions of evangelism and mission
5. changing emphases in ministerial and theological education
6. revolutionary missional discussions in cyberspace, especially through web logs and pod-casting
7. whole denominations looking at fresh expressions of church (for instance, the *Mission-Shaped Church* report)\(^{34}\)

The influence of the EMCM on the shape of the contemporary church cannot be ignored, and what follows is further rationale for the selection of this thesis topic, and a description of its importance.

1.2.2 Unanalysed Emerging-Missional Church Movement Materials

There is an expanding body of materials relating to EMCM ecclesiology that has never been significantly analysed or mapped, and especially in comparison with the ecclesiological writings of some key representatives of the major Christian traditions. This research seeks to remedy this, by examining and evaluating central EMCM ecclesiological texts\textsuperscript{35} through the processes of Content Analysis and comparison with the outstanding ecclesiologists Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

1.2.3 Absence of Research

To date, as far as this study's research into published books and articles and unpublished theses has uncovered, no specific published, postgraduate or postdoctoral research has been conducted in this area. The research proposal for this thesis listed fourteen of the most pertinent theses to the research topic, out of seventy-nine theses found that have some relevance, although none have been written that cover the primary concerns of this thesis.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{35} Specifically ‘missional ecclesiology’

1.2.4 Dealing with Emerging-Missional Church Movement Ecclesiology

Since many postmodern people in the Christian churches within western culture are wrestling with the implications of the EMCM ecclesiologies on their understanding of the nature and purposes of the church, this is a critical area of study.

1.2.5 Missional and Ecclesiological Implications

Western Christian churches need to consider how their worship, community, mission, governance and ecclesial leadership forms might be relevant or irrelevant for this postmodern, largely anti-institutional, and often enthusiastically missional generation of Christians, not to mention those outside of the Christian faith, while itself being transformed or shaped by the burgeoning EMCM perspectives. The research question, then, has major implications for the evolving shape of ecclesiology, spirituality, community, and incarnational ministry in Christian churches in the 21st century.

1.2.6 Engaging Pressing Questions

All religious traditions are faced with challenges presented by emerging and evolving postmodern western culture, and this is particularly true of Christianity since it might
be suggested that this particular culture is a post-Christendom one. Christianity, which finds itself now on the margins of a culture in which it once enjoyed a central place, is confronted with the need to engage questions about how to help its traditions make sense to a new, secularised, consumeristic, highly individualistic, spiritually sensitive, postmodern generation. This research is of real value to Christian theological and ecclesiological reflection as it assists in the process of engaging such questions as:

1. In what some have characterised as an anti-institutional and individualistic age, how do our religious traditions and institutions engage the imaginations and allegiance of our younger members?

2. How do emerging concepts in information technology, cultural studies, the place of networks in societies, and the like inform Christian ecclesiology?

3. How will leadership and governance need to change in order to engage the hearts and minds of our younger adherents and potential leaders?

4. How will the primary contours of postmodern culture express themselves in the spirituality and religious practices of the next generation of Christians, and do significant figures within the various expressions of that tradition (such as Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas) have forums for dialogue with the emerging generation?

5. How do we communicate our tradition, values, beliefs, and the like in such a way that a younger postmodern generation can embrace these as their own?

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See, for instance, S. Murray, Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004). See also Murray, Church after Christendom.
6. How will this younger generation themselves wrestle with the relationship between their tradition and its ecclesiological trappings and their postmodern western culture, and especially their culture’s attitude toward institutions and the Christian heritage?

7. How will these younger practitioners shape their tradition and its practices, mythologies, symbols, and ecclesiological expressions in such a way that it makes sense to their generation, and to the postmodern secular culture they live in?

1.2.7 Ecumenical and Inter-religious Repercussions

As a direct consequence of their emerging ecclesiological perspectives, the younger leaders of the EMCM are seeking to engage those from other faith traditions and from other expressions of Christianity (meaning Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic, and the like) in fresh, relation and more organic ways. Some of the older forums of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue are being less emphasised for an emerging, more grass-roots relationship. This is an ecumenical and interfaith communion that is found in cafes, around meals, online, in relationships between families and young adults, around good wine, in combined marketplace-located enterprises, and in prayer. There is an emerging generation of younger leaders and young adults, from a great variety of Christian traditions, who are meeting each other deeply in these ways. So this research has implications for what this might mean for our interfaith and ecumenical practices and forums in the future, and for what this might mean for the emerging shape of the inter-religious and ecumenical movements.
1.2.8 Integration of Christian Traditions

Within the Christian tradition, leading figures within the various institutionalised expressions of that tradition such as the Orthodox Zizioulas, the Catholic Ratzinger, and the Free Church Volf are having their tradition’s views challenged by an emerging generation, and especially in the realm of ecclesiology. The perspectives of these distinct Christian traditions and their notable proponents are not being disregarded in an offhanded manner, nor are they being rejected as completely irrelevant, however they are being merged, reshaped and incorporated into emerging forms of ecclesiology, spirituality and belief within Christianity. Dialogue and emergence is happening between the great Christian traditions because of the core values in postmodern culture. Yet no research to date has been conducted on how the perspectives of theologians such as Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas are being embraced, reinterpreted, contradicted or embodied in the EMCM. This study begins this important process.

1.2.9 Enriching Missional Ecclesiology

This research makes a significant contribution by proposing how the emerging EMCM theologies and perspectives, in dialogue with Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas:

1. Extend and enhance our current understandings of ecclesiology, and open up fresh horizons in this area of theology.

2. Build on and broaden the tradition of missional ecclesiology established by persons such as Newbigin, and therefore enhance our contemporary western appreciation of the church as essentially missional.

3. May themselves be enriched by the perspectives of other ecclesiologies, so that
missional ecclesiology is deep and rich.

Therefore, for the various reasons outlined, this research project is important in its contribution to Christian theology, ecclesiology and missiology in an evolving western context.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The research aims to achieve the following:

1. Provide an original contribution to the field of missional ecclesiology in particular and ecclesiology in general, by opening up fresh horizons and dialogical opportunities in this field of theology

2. Contribute to the ongoing discussion in the western Christian church on the relationship between gospel and culture

3. Offer insights into the church’s mission within and to their postmodern cultural context

4. Describe the ecclesiological contours of the EMCM in an original fashion

5. Initiate some much needed analysis of the EMCM ecclesiology, theology and praxis

6. Undertake missional ecclesiological research within an ecumenical research context

The specific research objectives are to:

1. Identify the essential similarities and differences between the overt and less
obvious emerging ecclesiological conceptions of the EMCM and the core ecclesiological perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas

2. Produce a piece of research that demonstrates how the various ecclesiological conceptions might be enriched and broadened through genuine and rigorous dialogue, and how this dialogue might specifically enhance contemporary western missional ecclesiology

3. Make evident why this particular research project is important in the light of the growing influence and evolving ecclesiological perspectives of the EMCM, and in the light of the critical missiological position the western church now finds itself in

4. Analyse and reveal the primary ecclesiological perspectives of thirty-seven of the most influential EMCM authors (these authors represent both practitioners and thinkers within the EMCM)

5. Summarise the core ecclesiological perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas for comparative purposes

6. Form specific conclusions, implications and recommendations from this research that are of value to the church’s engagement with gospel and culture questions, to endeavours to form missional responses to a post-Christendom context, and to considerations regarding the emerging forms of missional ecclesiology and communities

7. Use the processes of Content Analysis and comparative methodology to achieve the overall aims and specific objectives of this research project
1.3.1 The Two Primary Research Objectives

The two primary, most specific, and most important research objectives are:

1. To critically analyse and describe the primary (explicit and less obvious) ecclesiological perspectives of thirty-seven of the most influential EMCM authors, examining works published between 1995 and 2008. EMCM ecclesiology has never before been analysed and described in this way.\(^{38}\)

2. To build on Volf’s *After Our Likeness*, by putting the ecclesiologies therein into a critical conversation with the EMCM, which demonstrates their similarities, differences, and opportunities for enriching dialogue. This research aims, therefore, to build specifically on the ecumenical ecclesiological conversation begun by Miroslav Volf in his book *After Our Likeness*, in which he establishes his Protestant Free Church ecclesiological perspectives in dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology of Zizioulas, and the Roman Catholic ecclesiology of Ratzinger. I am intentionally using the three ecclesiologists represented in Volf’s *After Our Likeness*, since this work provides a valuable ecumenical discussion between three capable ecclesiologists from their respective Christian theological traditions, and since Volf’s treatment of this ecclesiological discourse may be further extended and enriched by adding EMCM writers to the discussion.

What Volf’s treatment of an ecumenical ecclesiological discourse has begun, this thesis aims to broaden, enrich and inform, and to extend its frames of

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\(^{38}\) Again, it should be noted that the insights of Stanley Grenz, David Bosch and Paul Hiebert are occasionally added to this analysis, not because they are explicit ‘members’ of the EMCM, but because of their significant influence on the EMCM texts. I do not attempt to do justice to the entire thought of these three important theologians, simply because I do not have the space in this thesis.
reference. Also, rather than putting Ratzinger, Zizioulas and Volf into discussion with each other, as Volf’s work has done, I have put these ecclesiologists into a critical discussion with an emerging and largely unexplored body of postmodern missional ecclesiological writings. The aim is to uncover how an emerging body of literature that Volf did not examine in his work might enrich these three ecclesiologists, and to examine how the contemporary Emerging-Missional ecclesiology might itself be enriched, confronted, and posited into discourse with the three ecclesiologists represented in Volf’s *After Our Likeness*.

### 1.4 Assumptions

The following assumptions influence this research and underpin the interpretation of the data in relation to the thesis’ focus:

1. The ecclesiological discussion and analysis begun by Volf, in *After Our Likeness*, is further enhanced and enriched by this thesis’ addition of EMCM ecclesiology into the conversation.

2. Assertions about the missional ecclesiology of contemporary EMCM writings and their comparison with the ecclesiologies of the main Christian traditions need to be rigorously critiqued, rather than treated lightly or superficially.

3. The EMCM has distinct understandings about ecclesiology that may be distilled and outlined.

4. Some of these EMCM ecclesiological perspectives are obvious, while others are more subtle, formative, and revealed through scrutiny and examination.
5. Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas also have distinct ecclesiological understandings that may be distilled and outlined.

6. Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas may serve as indicative of their respective traditions, given the limitations of a PhD thesis, and their ecclesiologies contain all the elements needed for a comparative study with the EMCM (that is, within the scope of the aims and objectives of this thesis).

7. The ecclesiological understandings of the EMCM and of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas may be compared and contrasted.

8. Content Analysis and a comparative methodological approach are appropriate for this particular research project.

9. It is possible to arrive at reliable, valid and appropriate conclusions about the essential similarities and differences between the emerging ecclesiological conceptions of the EMCM and the core ecclesiologies of the above-mentioned theologians. This is achieved through the brief examination and analysis of the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, the thorough application of Content Analysis to the primary source documents of the EMCM, and the application of a comparative methodology. One may also arrive at appropriate conclusions, implications and recommendations.

10. This research project is significant, since it makes an original contribution to the ongoing discussion about the emerging shape of missional and ecumenical ecclesiology in western culture.
1.5 Structure

As outlined in the thesis Abstract, Part 1, titled Introduction and Methodology, serves as the introduction, rationale, description of the research methodology, and justification for the choice of the particular EMCM authors and of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in this study.

Part 2, titled Critical Survey 1, provides an examination of the chosen EMCM texts, and an analytical survey and evaluation of both the obvious and the more subtle ecclesiological views of the EMCM.

Part 3, titled Critical Survey 2, briefly summarizes the core perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, not to put them into critical dialogue with each other, or even to critically analyse their perspectives, but to establish their convictions for the purpose of an ecclesiological dialogue with the EMCM. Such a critical survey leads the thesis toward further critical lines of reasoning, comparison and conclusions.

Part 4, titled Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context, examines the similarities and differences between the ecclesiologies of the EMCM and that of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, how such dialogue enriches all the parties concerned, and suggests how dialogue deepens and benefits missional ecclesiology as it is taking shape in western culture. It presents the thesis findings and conclusions.
1.6 Scope and Limitations

The particular parameters and limitations of the study are sevenfold:

1. Its perspective is limited to Christian theological (and especially ecclesiological) considerations of EMCM writings, in relation to the ecclesiological works of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

2. It is limited in terms of primary sources. These are thirty-seven (37) specific publications from the EMCM, and the ecclesiological writings of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

3. It is limited in terms of the primary text on which it builds upon, being Volf’s *After Our Likeness*. Rather than building upon the conclusions offered by Volf in that work, it particularly and limitedly builds upon the specific ecumenical framework offered by Volf when he posited his Free Church ecclesiology into conversation with the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology of Zizioulas and the Roman Catholic ecclesiology of Ratzinger.

4. It has a limited timeframe. The possibilities for such a study will be continually expanding as the scope of EMCM authorship expands and since Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas continue to publish. This study, therefore, has as its sole focus specific EMCM writings published between 1995 and 2008, and only ecclesiological writings published by Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas before the completion of this thesis.

5. It is limited in having a specific focus within these writings: that of ecclesiology in general and missional ecclesiology in particular.
6. It is limited to English language literature within the EMCM, since this is the primary and overwhelming language in which such works are published. It is also limited to the English language ecclesiological works of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas (since all of the substantial ecclesiological works of these authors either are written in English or have been translated into English). Occasionally a non-English language text will be cited; however, this will be the exception rather than the rule.

7. Moreover, finally, it is limited or ‘shaped’ by my own theological and ecclesiological tradition or ‘lens’. As I attempt to put the EMCM, Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas into critical dialogue with each other, and as I assess what is important in this conversation and how I might evaluate the various ecclesiologists, I am inevitably influenced by my own theological and ecclesiological tradition or ‘lens’ – that of Evangelical, Free Church, Baptist ecclesiology. This is spelt out more clearly in Chapter 9 as the various threads of the thesis are woven together in order to form conclusions.

In the next chapter, the research methodology used in this study is outlined, including Content Analysis and comparative methodology.
2 METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this thesis is by a form of qualitative research in the examination of documents written by Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and in the analysis of thirty-seven (37) specific EMCM texts. This form of qualitative research is called Content Analysis. Primary sources from within the EMCM, and from these notable ecclesiologists mentioned, therefore, form the text for the analysis. A thorough comparison of the EMCM primary sources with the core ecclesiological writings of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas was undertaken, using comparative methodology, in order to form conclusions.

2.1 Sources Used

2.1.1 Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas

While it is impossible to find any one ecclesiologist who might fully represent each of the three great Christian traditions (Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant), I am dealing with those who are at least outstanding and widely recognised within their particular tradition – Volf as Protestant (particularly, Free Church), Ratzinger as Catholic, and Zizioulas as Eastern Orthodox. Given the limited scope of a doctoral thesis, and the particular and limited aim of this thesis, which is to build on Volf’s

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1 Here are some indications of their significance within their respective traditions: ‘Volf is a match for his dialogue partners, Zizioulas and Benedict (Ratzinger), in his Protestant trinitarian construction of the community of ‘free and equal’ persons’ writes Moltmann on the cover of: Volf, After Our Likeness.; ‘John Zizioulas, the titular bishop of Pergamon and perhaps the ablest ecclesiologist of the Eastern Orthodox Church, builds critically on the long tradition of Eastern ecclesiology.’ V. Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2002). p.95; ‘You (Cardinal Ratzinger) have not ceased to dedicate your intellectual and moral energy to promote and safeguard the doctrine of the faith and customs throughout the Catholic world, at the same time fostering studies geared to increasing the intelligence of the faith, and to giving an adequate answer, in light of the Word of God, to the problems arising from the progress of science and civilisation.’ Vatican City, June 28, 2001 – In John Paul II’s congratulatory letter to Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Available at http://www.ratzingerfanclub.com/news (Accessed December 7, 2008).
After Our Likeness, one ecclesiologist from each of these traditions will need to suffice as a comparative figure with the chosen EMCM authors. Further research might be done in the future, which builds on this thesis by including ecclesiologists from other streams of Protestantism that are precluded here by the limited nature of this study.

Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas have been chosen to be compared with the EMCM because of the primary objective of this thesis, which is to build on Volf’s After Our Likeness by putting the ecclesiologies therein into a critical conversation with the EMCM. They have also been chosen because of the way in which they represent their respective ecclesiological traditions, influence the contemporary ecclesiological environment and discussions, and have made an important contribution to the study and understanding of ecclesiology. This section does not include a critical analysis of the main ecclesiological works of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, since such analysis is provided in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

2.1.1.1 Professor Miroslav Volf

Why would one choose Miroslav Volf and his book After Our Likeness for an ecumenical ecclesiological study such as this? Volf was born in Croatia in 1956, and educated in Croatia at the Evangelical-Theological Faculty, Osijek, in the United States at Fuller Theological Seminary, and in Germany at the University of Tübingen. He has received doctoral and post-doctoral degrees from the University of Tübingen (Dr. Theol., Dr. Theol. habil.), where he studied under Jürgen Moltmann, and has published and edited numerous books and scholarly articles, some of which are listed below. He served as Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and is a member of both the
Presbyterian Church of the United States, and the Evangelical Church in Croatia. He is now Director of Yale Centre for Faith and Culture, and Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology, Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut.²

Volf is a valuable dialogue partner with the EMCM, since he not only has ecclesiological roots in classical western ecclesiology, but also champions a form of Protestant ecclesiology that most resonates with and reflects the EMCM ecclesiology (Free Church ecclesiology). In fact, Olson of Baylor University goes as far as to suggest that evangelical spirituality most naturally leads to Free Church ecclesiology, since they are uniquely compatible. Certainly EMCM ecclesiology in the main is both evangelical and Free Church in its orientation - ‘Free church ecclesiology, like evangelical spirituality, binds the conscience of the church to the Word of God alone and permits – even requires – members of churches to participate in the processes of renewal and reform’.³

Volf is also deeply concerned with missiology, cross-cultural communication, the voices of emerging young congregational and charismatic churches, community, ecumenical dialogue, justice, peacemaking and reconciliation, making concrete local churches relevant to their postmodern and missional contexts, and other concerns that resonate with the EMCM and the texts analysed in this research project.⁴ Volf, as an academic ecclesiologist, provides a sympathetic, attentive, and valuable bridge between emerging ecclesiology and the traditional ecclesiologies of the Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions, and this is artfully demonstrated in his book After Our Likeness.

2.1.1.2 After Our Likeness

Since After Our Likeness is foundational to this thesis, it is worth briefly considering here the contribution this book makes. Kärkkäinen, of Fuller Theological Seminary, writes about Volf and After Our Likeness,

Unlike too many ecclesiological treatises, even more recent ones, Volf listens carefully not only to the tradition, but also to the emerging voices of thriving, growing churches both in the West and especially outside. His work is also distinctive in that it is one of the first theologically responsible, constructive works from a Free Church perspective. Standard ecclesiologies tend to either totally ignore younger churches, which are usually theologically less sophisticated, or at their best just offer some passing comments on their growth or numbers. Volf queries, “The Churches of the Future?” (p.11), and Free churches may be just that.⁵

Volf’s two best-known works are Exclusion and Embrace, which Christianity Today selected as among the one-hundred best religious books of the 20th Century,⁶ and in which he engages the question of identity, and After Our Likeness, in which he explores trinitarian ecclesiology in dialogue with Ratzinger and Zizioulas.⁷ Volf writes of his ecumenical ecclesiological aim in the book,

The goal of my efforts is an ecumenical ecclesiology - not in the sense of a construct that draws on all traditions but is rooted in none, but in the sense that all the great themes of this unmistakably Protestant

⁵ Ibid. p.134-135.
⁷ See the online bibliography and curriculum vitae of Volf at http://www.yale.edu/divinity/Curriculum Vitae/MVOLF.pdf (Accessed December 7, 2008).
ecclesiological melody are enriched by Catholic and Orthodox voices.\textsuperscript{8}

The following things have been written about \textit{After Our Likeness}, and its place in the contemporary and evolving ecclesiological landscape, including its ecumenical significance, and importance for Free Church ecclesiologies such as those embrace by many within the EMCM:

Good books provide readers with fresh insight and useful information.

Great books, especially in theology, range over several disciplines, revisit enduring human patterns and then weave new paradigms to explain old concerns. Miroslav Volf’s book is both a good and great book… Volf is a rising star in contemporary theology… \textit{After Our Likeness} signals his move beyond the Moltmann circle. In this work, Volf seeks to offer a newer, more inclusive, more rigorously constructive ecclesiology… In a refreshing and impressive way, it is biblically sensitive, historically rich and ecumenically volatile…\textsuperscript{9} - John W. Stewart, Princeton Theological Seminary

By reformulating Free Church ecclesiology, Volf offers anyone interested in ecumenical dialogue a new touchstone for understanding many of those traditions that continue to be excluded (and to exclude themselves) from ecumenical discussions.\textsuperscript{10} – Philip D. Kenneson, Milligan College

Above all, the author provides a basis for those in the Pentecostal,

\textsuperscript{8} Volf, \textit{After Our Likeness}. p.xi.
Evangelical and Free Church traditions to find a way into the central
discussions of koinonia that are so important in today's ecumenical
movement.  

Jeffrey Gros, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops

2.1.1.3 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

Joseph Ratzinger was appointed Cardinal of Munich in 1977, Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1981, Dean of the College of Cardinals in 2002, and Bishop of Rome on April 19, 2005 (when he took on the name Pope Benedict XVI). Born in 1927, he is the 265th and current Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, and sovereign of the Vatican City State. He succeeded Pope John Paul II, who died on April 2, 2005.

The choice of Ratzinger is not merely because he is the current Pope. Our focus, instead, and in this order, is on him as an outstanding theologian, then as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and then as the contemporary Pope. Ratzinger is a widely acclaimed Catholic theologian, ‘one of the most prolific theologians of his generation’, a tireless author and theological professor, and a conservative representative and defender of traditional Catholic doctrine and values. He has held theological professorships at the College of Freising (1958-1959), the University of Bonn (1959-1963), the University of Münster (1963-1966), the University of Tübingen (1966-1969), and the University of Regensburg (1969-1977).

The post to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,

...is regarded by some as the second most significant within the Catholic Church after that of the papacy itself, or at least the most significant of the nine heads of Congregations. While holding these appointments Ratzinger continued to publish substantial academic works. His doctoral dissertation, defended in 1953, was entitled *The People and the House of God in Augustine’s Doctrine of the Church*; and his postdoctoral thesis, or *Habilitationsschrift*, offered an examination of St Bonaventure’s theology of history.\(^{14}\)

His representation of conservative Catholic ecclesiology, and influence on ecclesiology, and Catholic theology in general, is self-evident, and widely recognised.\(^{15}\)

### 2.1.1.4 Metropolitan John Zizioulas

Metropolitan John Zizioulas is the titular Eastern Orthodox Bishop of Pergamon, represents the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Eastern Orthodox Church on international church bodies, and was formerly Professor of Theology at Glasgow University and Kings College, London.\(^{16}\) He is the Chairman of the Academy of Athens, has led theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches, and is a widely acclaimed Orthodox theologian. He studied in Thessaloniki, Athens and the United States, was Secretary of the Faith and Order section of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, and has been a visiting professor at Geneva, London University and the Gregorian University, Rome.

\(^{14}\) Ibid. p.1.  
Zizioulas’ best-known books are *Being as Communion*, and *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*. His recent *Communion and Otherness* has expanded the themes in these books. Born in 1931, he was a student of Georges Florovsky, and has written extensively on the theology of person, based mostly on the St. Maximus the Confessor. His influence on contemporary Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology is widely acknowledged, and Kärkkäinen calls him ‘perhaps the ablest ecclesiologist of the Eastern Orthodox Church’. Douglas Knight, who authored *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, writes online that,

John Zizioulas is one of the best known theologians of the contemporary Orthodox Church, a central figure of the ecumenical scene and one of the most cited theologians at work today... Zizioulas’ central concern is human freedom, and his work offers a radical discussion of the relationship between freedom and community. Freedom is not restricted, but enabled, by our relationships with other persons, Zizioulas argues, for the community in which God includes us is the place in which our personal identity and freedom come into being. God is intrinsically communion and free, and his communion and freedom he shares with us. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the source of the communion of the universal Church... This communion is being actualized by God in the community of the Church. The persons gathered into this communion will participate in the freedom of God,

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Therefore, each of these three notable ecclesiologists wields considerable influence within and beyond their respective Christian traditions, and collectively they make worthwhile dialogue partners with the missional ecclesiology of the EMCM. In chapters 6, 7 and 8, I will examine their ecclesiology in detail, in order to establish a conversation between them and the EMCM literature.

### 2.1.2 Emerging-Missional Church Movement Sources

With regard to EMCM sources, this thesis concentrates on primary sources from within the genre to enable us to provide a distillation of their characteristics, in order to measure the findings of the Content Analysis against the works of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. Each of the EMCM texts chosen have been selected due to their date of publication (1995-2008), breadth and representation of their content and style, English-language content, influence, circulation, typification, pertinence, and consequence. Some are more academically written than others are, and some of the authors might more readily self-identify with the EMCM than others would, yet all of the thirty-seven chosen texts have emerged as influential in the shaping of the EMCM in western culture.

I have intentionally varied the selection to include academic and popular texts, and while I have attempted as far as possible to choose one text per author, there are a few instances where an author has published more than one work between 1995 and 2008 that must be included in this study, due to their influence on EMCM.

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ecclesiology. The thesis chapter *Emerging Voices* articulates in detail why one would choose these particular authors and texts as representative of the EMCM between 1995 and 2008, and the thirty-seven (37) EMCM books examined in this thesis are listed in *Appendix I*.

### 2.2 Content Analysis, Manual Comparison, and QSR Nvivo

The principal processes engaged in this research paper were Content Analysis, and the comparing and contrasting of primary sources. These involved the qualitative investigation and analytical appraisal of the perspectives and content of the primary source documents. The primary source documents that were scrutinised using Content Analysis were thirty-seven written texts within the EMCM genre between 1995 and 2008, and the ecclesiological writings of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. These are listed above.

These works were examined manually in their entirety, and then downloaded into the document analysis software program QSR Nvivo, which is described in detail later on in this section. The books and articles were scanned into Microsoft Word as rich text, and then downloaded into QSR Nvivo for further examination and qualitative Content Analysis. Permissions to undertake this activity was explicitly received in writing from the relevant publishers.

**Important Note on Manual Document Analysis and Comparison:** It is important to note here that the QSR Nvivo software provides only a complement to the rigorous work of analysing the material oneself through the processes of Content Analysis and comparative examination. All EMCM texts, and the works of Volf,

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Ratzinger and Zizioulas, were analysed rigorously through the manual processes of Content Analysis and comparative study, before being introduced to QSR Nvivo. QSR Nvivo was merely used as a secondary resource to help identify any concepts, themes or relationships between ideas that might have been missed in the manual analysis.

Content Analysis is inductive rather than deductive, and entails an in-depth examination of texts for the existence, relationships between, and use of, specific words, phrases, content and ideas, both obvious and not so obvious. Content Analysis ‘begins with the act of identifying concepts present in a given text or set of texts, and then seeks to go beyond presence by exploring the relationships between the concepts identified.’  

Hypotheses are made, and interpretations are proposed, from the identification of content, and the relationships between concepts.

Word frequency counts are an unreliable method for determining the meaning of content in documents. Therefore, Content Analysis probes deeper into the texts that are examined, looking for the relationships between ideas, theories, premises, and notions, and for the explicit and implicit meanings therein.

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22 From the Writing@CSU Writing Guide available at http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/content (Accessed December 7, 2008).

23 Stemler writes, ‘Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; GAO, 1996; Krippendorff, 1980; and Weber, 1990). It allows inferences to be made which can then be corroborated using other methods of data collection (Krippendorff, 1980). Content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion (GAO, 1996). Krippendorff (1980) notes that ‘[m]uch content analysis research is motivated by the search for techniques to infer from symbolic data what would be either too costly, no longer possible, or too obtrusive by the use of other techniques’ (p. 51). Further, it is a useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention (Weber, 1990). While technically content analysis is not restricted to the domain of text, in order to allow for replication, the technique can only be applied to data that are durable in nature.’ S. Stemler, An Introduction to Content Analysis, Eric Digest (ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation College Park MD, http://www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/content.htm. Accessed December 7, 2008). I also quoted this passage in my Master of Theology thesis, since I used Content Analysis in that thesis also, and since this quotation is so pertinent to the use and nature of Content Analysis: G.J.G. Hill, “Cybergnosticism? A Study of Contemporary Christian Faith Communities in Cyberspace” (Unpublished Master of Theology Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia, 2004). p.18 and 19.
Content Analysis allowed this research paper to uncover and detail the ecclesiological contours of the EMCM texts analysed, as well as those written by Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. The main questions that were dealt with in this Content Analysis of the principal materials were:

1. ‘What are the essential and more subtle emerging ecclesiological conceptions of the EMCM?’

2. ‘What are the core ecclesiological perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas?’

3. ‘What similarities and differences exist between the central and more subtle EMCM ecclesiological understandings, and that of Volf, Ratzinger and John Zizioulas, which may lead us to form some conclusions?’
2.2.1 The Process of Content Analysis

The process of Content Analysis involved the following eleven stages:

1. **Formulation of the Research Questions:** See the three questions articulated in the previous paragraph, and the central research question in the Introduction.

2. **Choice of Units of Analysis:** The thirty-seven chosen EMCM works and the ecclesiological writings of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, were chosen as the units of analysis.

3. **Coding through Selective Reduction and Manual Comparative Examination:**
   These texts were then examined in-depth, through manually searching for key words, sets of words, ideas, concepts and phrases that are related to the research questions, and that established the levels of analysis and generalisation. This process was conducted manually, by immersing oneself in

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the relevant texts over a period of months, coding the texts through selective reduction, and examining the texts comparatively. Only when this painstaking manual process was complete did I proceed to use QSR Nvivo as a complementary resource.

4. **Levels of Analysis and Relational Analysis**: Specific words, sets of words, technical language and expressions were then scrutinised in more depth for their consequence and relationship. The relationships between these concepts (and their synonyms) were then analysed manually and by using QSR Nvivo.

5. **Coding for Frequency, Context and Relationships between Concepts**: Coding was then undertaken. This coding was established in order to reveal the incidence, regularity, contextual location, and interrelations between the concepts (especially within the entire collection of EMCM texts, but also in relation to the works of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas).

6. **Deciding on the Level of Generalisation**: When concepts were identified as the same or similar, they were coded as such, regardless of their articulation or form. For example, ‘missional-church’ and ‘emerging-missional-church’. From there, levels of implication and generalisation were decided upon, and the similarity or difference of concepts was catered for. For example, does ‘emerging church’ always imply ‘missional church’?

7. **Translation Rules**: Translation rules were then created so that concepts that are more specific were translated into general and more widely applicable ones. For example, the concept ‘outreach’ is generally thought to imply ‘evangelism’ or ‘mission’. These relationships were made clear, and then coded for their regularity, and the influence they asserted upon the documents.
8. **Un-coded Information**: Un-coded text (except for common words like ‘the’ and ‘a’) was taken seriously until deemed irrelevant, and was used to inform, reshape, or enrich the coding.

9. **Coding the Text using QSR Nvivo and Concept Mapping**: After conducting the manual comparative examination, the texts were coded using QSR Nvivo over a period of many months of examination. Nvivo is a version of the QSR software for code-based qualitative analysis of large amounts of text, which facilitated the development of hypotheses, theories and concept relationships in the examination of the data. Concept Mapping\(^{25}\) was also used in order to map these concept relations, and their substance, sign (whether they are positively related or negatively related), and direction (determining which concept influences the other).

Again, it must be emphasised that the coding and textual analysis was done both manually (through reading the texts and manually writing down concept occurrences, relationships, and peculiarities) and using the Nvivo software program. The concurrent manual and automated coding and analysis was undertaken to ensure rigor and validity in the research and results.\(^{26}\)

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\(^{25}\)Dagan defines Cognitive and Concept Mapping in the following manner. ‘Cognitive mapping may be defined as a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in their everyday spatial environment. Simply put, it is the process of creating a mental map. Concept mapping is a type of cognitive map, in this sense, representing a structured process, focused on a topic or construct of interest, involving input from one or more participants, that produces an interpretable pictorial view (concept map) of their ideas and concepts and how these are interrelated. Basically, a concept map is a graphical representation of the structure of knowledge.’ Dagan, R. 2004. Cognitive Mapping. Available at [http://intraspec.ca/cogmap.php](http://intraspec.ca/cogmap.php). Intraspec, CA. (Accessed December 7, 2008).

\(^{26}\)‘Coding with a computer is one of contemporary conceptual analysis’ greatest assets. By inputting one’s categories, content analysis programs can easily automate the coding process and examine huge amounts of data, and a wider range of texts, quickly and efficiently. But automation is very dependent on the researcher’s preparation and category construction. When coding is done manually, a researcher can recognise errors far more easily. A computer is only a tool and can only code based on the
It is important to note here that the conceptual and hypotheses analysis was the crucial element for the development of theories and the structuring of this thesis, and that Nvivo was simply a tool of analysis.

10. **Analysis of Results:** Upon the completion of coding, the results were analysed in order to form conclusions that could be articulated in the thesis chapters.

11. **Reliability and Validity:** QSR Nvivo generated reports that demonstrated where documentation (text) from each book and article had been deemed relevant to the thesis, and had been coded at particular points. This was in order to ensure reliability and validity. Repeatability is hampered in the short-term, however, by a written agreement made with the relevant publishers to delete the scanned text from all computers once this examination using Nvivo was completed.

All the over one million words of text were examined, and the results were evidenced in the headings, ideas, recommendations, conclusions, and proposed implications presented in chapters 4 to 9 of this thesis. This analysis covered all of the data in the texts examined, in order to provide a reliable and valid thesis. The result of this intensive activity is the subject matter presented in chapters 4 to 9.
2.3 Comparative Methodology

Along with the processes of Content Analysis previously described, a comparative methodology was also used. Comparative methodology involved examining the similarities and differences between the EMCM and ecclesiological documents compared, and then describing those similarities and differences relative to the arguments advocated in the later part of this thesis. Rather than merely listing the similarities and differences discovered, the comparative methodology involved analysing and describing those similarities and differences in such a way as to support the broader theoretical concepts and issues postulated throughout the process of the comparison. Comparative ecclesiology is a developing theological field, although in its infancy, and this study contributes to this growing body of comparative work.27

27 Examples of this developing area of comparative ecclesiology, with descriptions taken from their covers, include: R. Haight, Christian Community in History: Volume 1: Historical Ecclesiology (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004). – ‘Charts the history of the church’s self-understandings from the origins of the church in the Jesus movement to the late middle ages’; ———, Christian Community in History: Volume 2: Comparative Ecclesiology (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005). – ‘Develops a Comparative Ecclesiology based on the history and diverse theologies of the worldwide Christian movement from the Reformation to the present’; ———, Christian Community in History: Volume 3: Ecclesial Existence (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008). – While volumes 1 and 2 ‘of Christian Community in History described the historical diversity of the church across its history (up to the Reformation in vol. 1) and among the churches (since the Reformation in vol. 2)’ vol. 3 ‘is an attempt to describe what the churches possess in common, i.e., to retrieve ecclesiological constants from history reaching back to scriptural origins in order to construct and portray the common ecclesial existence shared by the churches’; Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology. – ‘Provides an up-to-date survey and analysis of the major ecclesiological traditions, the most important theologians and a number of contextual approaches’; G. Mannion, ed. Comparative Ecclesiology: Critical Investigations (London: T&T Clark, 2008). – Explores ‘issues such as the nature, method and development of comparative ecclesiology; critical assessments as well as appreciations of Roger Haight’s Christian Community in History’; ———, Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time (Minnesota: Glazier, 2007). – ‘Addresses the situation of the church in a postmodern world... Offers concrete suggestions about how the church can create a better harmony between its own self-understanding, its ecclesiological vision, and its day-to-day life, its ecclesial practice’; B.P. Prusak, The Church Unfinished: Ecclesiology through the Centuries (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004). – ‘Develops a historical ecclesiology’; and the work of the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Ecclesiology at Liverpool Hope University http://www.hope.ac.uk/research/ecclesiology and the ecumenical, international ecclesiological discussion it facilitates through the the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network.
2.3.1 Stages and Techniques

Therefore, using a comparative methodology, along with Content Analysis, involved:

1. Examining each of the EMCM works and the writings of the three ecclesiologists chosen, which, were analytically compared with each other, in terms of the theological, ecclesiological, and contemporary cultural environments to which they belong.

Please note, that while I am specifically building on the ecumenical framework of the ecclesiological conversation begun by Volf in *After Our Likeness*, I have not relied on his conclusions, or on his analysis of the ecclesiologies of Zizioulas and Ratzinger. Instead, I have examined the primary sources from Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas myself, and have come to my own conclusions about their ecclesiological positions, and the opportunities presented for conversation with the EMCM.

2. Formulating the larger conceptual and ecclesiological framework that is at the analytical core of the thesis, and the central arguments of this thesis, which emerge out of the comparative investigation.

3. Comparing each of the writings with the others at the descriptive level, in order to ascertain their points of convergence and divergence, and individually comparing each thing unearthed with the thesis’ larger theoretical position or problem.

4. Concluding the thesis by elucidating what these comparisons at both the

http://www.aarweb.org/meetings/Annual_Meeting/Program_Units/PUCS/Website/main.asp?PUNum=AARPU164.
descriptive and the abstract levels reveal about the consequence of the
ecclesiological and theoretical arguments that are at the analytical heart of the
thesis – especially the significance of these ecclesiological arguments that are
described in Part 4 Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context.

This chapter has considered the research methodologies utilised in this thesis. The
following chapters consider the influence, representation and importance of the
EMCM authors chosen for this study, and of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.
PART 2: CRITICAL SURVEY 1
3 EMERGING VOICES

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the influence, pertinence and consequence of the EMCM authors and primary source texts chosen in this research. It is also to describe why one would choose these particular authors and texts as representative of, or important within, the EMCM between 1995 and 2008.

As noted briefly in the Methodology, these texts have been selected based on:

1. Date of publication (1995-2008);¹

2. A selection of both academic and popular books;

3. Breadth and representation of their content and style;

4. English-language content;

5. Influence, circulation, typification, pertinence, and consequence, of both the authors and texts: Most importantly, even though some of the authors might not readily self-identify with the EMCM body of literature, all of them have been influential in the shaping of the EMCM between 1995 and 2008. This is demonstrated by each of the specific thirty-seven titles examined meeting at least three of the seven following criteria:

   a. Their inclusion in the recommended or required reading for units in the Fuller Theological Seminary, California, Missional Leadership Cohort Doctor of Ministry program, which is a well regarded international

¹ As noted earlier, while I have attempted as far as possible to choose one text per author, there are a few instances where an author has published more than one work between 1995 and 2008 that must be included in this study, due to their influence on EMCM ecclesiology (specifically Roxburgh, Frost, Hirsch, Murray and Gibbs).
doctoral training program in missional leadership and ecclesiology;²

b. Their presence in the Mars Hill Graduate School library, which is a library and graduate school specialising in the EMCM and in its analysis and critique (its pastor, Mark Driscoll, is critical of certain aspects of the EMCM, as we shall see later), and that is attached to the missionary community of Mars Hill Church in Seattle;³

c. Their consideration on at least six of the fifteen most notable EMCM weblogs, since weblogs provide the forum in which many in the Emerging-Missional Church Movement are gathering in order to discuss relevant issues. While the socio-economic background, gender and nationalities of these bloggers are not diverse, these, nonetheless, are the weblogs that are most influential on the EMCM. The fifteen weblogs chosen because of their influence on the EMCM conversation, the large number of persons contributing to their discussions, their acclaim among EMCM bloggers, the extent to which they are cross-referenced and referred to by other weblogs in the EMCM, and their formative influence on online EMCM debates and perspectives, are:

i. Backyard Missionary – Andrew Hamilton, Perth, Australia -
   http://backyardmissionary.com/;

ii. Emergent Kiwi – Steve Taylor, Christchurch, New Zealand -
   http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz/;

³ http://www.mhgs.edu and http://beta.marshillchurch.org/ (Both accessed December 7, 2008). This is a softer criteria than the others.
iii. Emergent UK – Jason Clark, Surrey, United Kingdom - http://jasonclark.emergent-uk.org/;


vii. Moot – The Online Community of St Matthew’s Church, Westminster, United Kingdom - http://moot.uk.net/blog/mootblog.htm;


xi. Signposts – Phil and Dan McCredden, Melbourne, Australia - http://www.signposts.org.au/;

xii. Tall Skinny Kiwi – Andrew Jones, Orkney, London, United Kingdom - http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com;
xiii. The Forgotten Ways – Alan Hirsch, Melbourne, Australia -
http://www.theforgottenways.org/blog/;

xiv. The Living Room – Darren Rowse, Melbourne, Australia -
http://www.livingroom.org.au/;

xv. TheOoze – A North American and Canadian weblog with a variety
of contributors - http://www.theooze.com/blog/index.cfm;

d. The book and/or the author are frequently mentioned when searched for
on the Customised Emerging Church Google Search Engine, which has
been specifically designed to search eighty-nine widely read EMCM
websites.\(^4\) Designed by C. Wess Daniels, the engine uses Google’s Co-op
feature to search eighty-nine websites, e-magazines and weblogs that deal
with EMCM issues. Daniels’ sources for this list came from these well-
known bloggers, who are well respected in EMCM circles: Scot
McKnight, Ryan Bolger, The Daily Scribe, Andrew Jones, Jordon
Cooper, Adam Cleveland and Steve Taylor. Daniels is constantly adding
and removing links on this search engine as needed, and from feedback
from the EMCM community.

e. The invitations received by the authors to speak at conferences, seminars,
and the like on the EMCM and/or their writings;

f. Their commendation by other leaders of the EMCM;

g. Whether they are on more than one of the recommended reading lists of

\(^4\) See Appendix 3 for a list of the eighty-nine EMCM-related websites.
(Accessed December 7, 2008).
the four organizations or books/articles listed below:

i. The Gospel and Our Culture Networks in the United Kingdom and North America;\(^5\)

ii. The Center for Parish Development in Chicago;\(^6\)

iii. Forge Mission Training Network in Melbourne, and the Tinsley Institute in Sydney;\(^7\)

iv. The Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society’s *Emerging-Missional Church: Introductory Reading Guide.*\(^8\)

The importance of these EMCM authors and texts is examined under the texts’ headings, since some of the texts have more than one contributing author. For each text, I will very briefly note the professional context of the author or authors and then examine the themes, strengths and weaknesses of that particular text. Each author’s background, academic qualifications, professional experience and scholarly publications are provided in more detail in Appendix 4, often with reference to their personal or professional WebPages. The importance and relevance of the chosen texts to this particular study, is demonstrated by the fact that each of the texts meets the selection criteria outlined above.


\(^8\) D. Cronshaw, "Emerging Missional Church: Introductory Reading Guide," *Zadok Perspectives* S143 (Summer 2005).
3.1 An Examination of the Chosen EMCM Texts

3.1.1 A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society

Rodney Clapp is an editor with Brazos Press, and was the featured speaker at the Missional Church Convocation 2005.

_A Peculiar People_ has as its primary theme the development of an alternative, subversive Christian culture and ecclesiology within the context of a pluralistic society. The strength of the book is in its challenge to the church to rediscover its vocation as the church, as worshiping community, as parade, as listening community, as missional, as a way of life, and as a community of friends. The main weakness of the book is that while its Anabaptist perspectives certainly contribute to its strengths, these Anabaptist paradigms also tend to be emphasised to the exclusion of other ecclesiological, theological and missional viewpoints. The work also places considerable emphasis on the formative potential of community, to the exclusion of all other spiritual and personal practices.

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9 R. Clapp, _A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society_ (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1996).


11 ‘I wish Clapp had devoted more reflection to the proper role of the category of the individual… in seeking a corrective Clapp places an excessively heavy burden on the formative powers of such communal practices as liturgy and what he calls "the performance of Scripture"… I also think the book sometimes glosses over the difficulty of communicating with those outside the church… But this is a wonderful, thoughtful, well-written call for the church to be the church.’ J. Ortberg, ‘Christendom Must Die… For the Church to Live,’ _Christianity Today_ 41, no. 7 (1997). p.40. See H. Carrigan, "A Peculiar People," _Publishers Weekly_ 243, no. 42 (1996).
3.1.2 An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind

Erwin McManus is the Lead Pastor and Cultural Architect of Mosaic in Los Angeles, California, an Emerging-Missional congregation.

An Unstoppable Force has as its primary thesis that local Christian communities can influence their cultures when they embrace missional ecclesiology, an apostolic ethos, creative and compelling worship, and rooted-ness in their early church origins. The strength of the book is its enthusiastic call by a local church practitioner for communities of faith to embrace in an unashamed manner mission, innovation, visionary leadership, holistic discipleship, community, and an apostolic ethos. The main weaknesses of the book revolve around McManus’ poorly formed theological justifications for his assertions, his regurgitation and postmodernization of Rick Warren’s ‘five purposes of the church’, his regular juxtaposition of false opposites (such as the choice between ‘organizing’ or ‘catalyzing’), and the lack of clarity in his writing and theologising style.

3.1.3 Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World

Barry Harvey has been the Associate Professor of Theology in the Honours College

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13 Ibid. From the book’s dust jacket. Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.mosaic.org (both last December 7, 2008).
14 R. Warren, The Purpose-Driven Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).
of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, since 1988.\textsuperscript{17}

The primary thesis of \textit{Another City} is that in contrast to the worldviews, political ideologies, and lifestyles present in popular western and globalized culture, the church needs to cultivate its ontological being as ‘Another City’ that is not aligned or characterized by political systems present in this world. The strength of the book is the scholarly breadth of Harvey’s ecclesiological landscape, and its grounding in a thorough examination of church history (including the early church as \textit{altera civitas}, the polity and politics of the pre-Constantinian church, the ecclesiologies of the Constantinian, Christendom and Modern eras, and the church’s historical location and challenges in postmodernity). It also provides an imaginative and evocative excursion into the post-Christendom form of the church as \textit{altera civitas}. The main weaknesses of the book are its eagerness to equate hedonism and narcissism with much of popular culture, rather than providing a more gracious and balanced assessment, coupled with its development of an ecclesiology with some sectarian tendencies. There is also an unhelpful assumption that the early church’s relationship to its surrounding culture is necessarily the ideal stance for the church in postmodernity to adopt.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{3.1.4 Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World}\textsuperscript{19}

Philip Kenneson has been the Associate Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Milligan College, TN, since 1998, and was the Assistant Professor of the same

\textsuperscript{17} Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.baylor.edu/pr/guide_source.php?source_id=30 (Accessed December 7, 2008).


\textsuperscript{19} P.D. Kenneson, \textit{Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World} (New York: Trinity, 1999).
faculty from 1992-1998.\textsuperscript{20}

In \textit{Beyond Sectarianism}, Kenneson proposes that the church’s role in contemporary society is to serve as a ‘contrast-society’, and that in post-Christendom the church needs to re-conceptualize its identity and its relationship to the world as such a contrasting social matrix. The strengths of the book are Kenneson’s articulate assertion that a contrast-society has real missional potential, since it is communal, incarnational, and embodied life in contemporary culture is the essence of its witness, and his grappling with those elements that keep such a contrast-society from drifting into sectarianism, while remaining missionally engaged with the world. The main weakness of the book is its endeavour to challenge the broader society’s labelling of ‘contrast-communities’ as sectarian, and to call society to use another name for such communities. Why Kenneson would be surprised that the broader culture would label such contrast-societies as sectarian is a mystery, as is the enormous amount of energy, he has spent trying to defend this goal to rid secular discourse of this pejorative term. While challenging Christian groups to stop labelling each other is a valid cause, contrast-societies will probably always be seen as sectarian by the broader culture. Mosser also suggests that Kenneson is too readily developing a (Anabaptist?) theological thread evident throughout the \textit{Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series}.\textsuperscript{21}

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\textsuperscript{20} Details regarding his career can be found at \url{http://www.milligan.edu/bible/PKenneson/Publications.htm} (Accessed December 7, 2008).
\textsuperscript{21} D.N. Mosser, "Beyond Sectarianism," \textit{The Clergy Journal} 77, no. 6 (2001). p.47.
3.1.5 Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community\(^{22}\)

Ed Stetzer is a seasoned church planter, trainer of pastors and church planters, and a former Professor at the Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. David Putman is one of the pastors at Mountain Lake Church in North Atlanta, which has grown to nearly two-thousand attendees in its six years of existence.\(^{23}\)

Their work *Breaking the Missional Code* asserts that churches that make a missional shift in their ecclesiology and practice have paid attention to three main ingredients. These are, firstly, the establishment of certain scriptural and theological foundations (the interaction between ecclesiology, missiology and christology in particular). Secondly, the application of these theological principles practically (such as releasing all members as missionaries, multiplying communities through missional planting, and emphasising discipleship, processes, cultural discernment, contextualisation, spiritual formation, partnerships between churches, missional leadership, et cetera). Thirdly, according to the authors, all this should be placed in the context of attention to empowerment by the Spirit.\(^{24}\) It is a thorough book, which is theologically and practically astute, but which at times feels cobbled together like a compilation of the author’s favourite seminars. There is a lack of cohesiveness in the themes developed in the book, and a regurgitation of the prevailing perspectives in the emerging-missional literature.\(^{25}\)


\(^{25}\) For instance, the key elements of the ‘Missional Matrix’ are present in quite a number of the EMCM texts, and especially in the works of Frost and Hirsch. See Jason Sexton, "Breaking the
3.1.6 Church After Christendom

Stuart Murray is Associate Lecturer in Church Planting and Evangelism at Spurgeon’s College in London, chair of the UK Anabaptist Network, and director of Urban Expression, which is an innovative church planting agency.

In Church After Christendom, which is a follow up work to his Post-Christendom, Murray understands post-Christendom in western culture as an opportunity for the church to embrace marginality, liminality, and fresh ecclesiological expressions. Murray is interested in an ecclesiology adequate to post-denominationalism, postmodernity and post-Christendom. He sees the church in post-Christendom exploring fresh expressions of mission, community and worship, seeking simplicity and sustainability, and facilitating the natural interplay in the conversion process between belonging, believing and behaving. His conclusions reflect his substantial, scholarly and well-documented research among EMCM communities.

3.1.7 Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry

Edmund Gibbs is the Senior Professor of Church Growth and the Director of the Institute for the Study of Emerging Churches at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, where he has served since 1984.

Church Next is written with clarity of style and a missiological vision for contemporary western faith communities. In it, Gibbs outlines nine areas in which

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26 Murray, Church after Christendom.
27 Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com/node/91 (Accessed December 7, 2008).
29 E. Gibbs, Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 2000).
the church must transform in order to become missionally effective in postmodern culture. These are: from living in the past to engaging with the present, from market-driven to mission-oriented, from bureaucratic hierarchies to apostolic networks, from schooling professionals to mentoring leaders, from following celebrities to encountering saints, from dead orthodoxy to living faith, from attracting a crowd to seeking the lost, from belonging to believing, and from generic congregations to incarnational communities.\(^{31}\) Webster insightfully notes that the weaknesses of the work are present in its superficial exploration of organisational and systems theories, its compromising attempts to appeal to readers from both the Church Growth and Emerging Church persuasions, and its dressing-up of Church Growth principles in postmodern and theological language. There are also misunderstandings of the epistemological foundations of postmodernism, and ‘in response to late-modern fragmentation and disintegration they major on conforming to perceived heterogeneity rather than challenging the paradox of actual homogeneity.’\(^ {32}\)

3.1.8 Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures\(^ {33}\)

The ministry of Edmund Gibbs has been described already in this chapter. Ryan Bolger is Associate Professor of Church in Contemporary Culture in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.\(^ {34}\)

_Emerging Churches_ is a well-written text that on the one hand demonstrates the

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\(^{31}\) Gibbs, _Church Next_. p.5.


\(^{33}\) Gibbs and Bolger, _Emerging Churches_.

variety of groups present in the EMCM, and on the other hand examines the nine 
coherent and identifiable practices of emerging-missional churches. It provides 
concrete examples of such communities around the world, and allows fifty leaders of 
EMCM communities to tell their stories and share their aims. The nine practices 
identifiable in EMCM communities, according to this text, are Christocentricity, a 
desire for social transformation, community orientation, hospitality, generosity, 
participation, creativity, mutual leadership, and an emphasis on spirituality. Cray 
notes, however, that the kinds of communities used as examples in this work are 
neither exhaustive nor necessarily representative of all ‘fresh expressions’ of church 
in postmodernity. While in these EMCM examples ‘ecclesiology is being reshaped 
by missiology’, there is a much broader cluster of ‘new ways of being church’ within 
postmodern western culture then these examples might suggest. However, this 
research by Gibbs and Bolger is a valuable contribution to the EMCM material.  

3.1.9 EmergingChurch.Intro 

Michael Moynagh is the Director of the Tomorrow Project, which analyses emerging 
trends and issues in British culture, and provides training and consultation on their 
findings.  

EmergingChurch.Intro attempts to survey the expressions, themes, importance, 
values, and missionality of the Emerging Church Movement. The book’s strength is

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35 Graham Cray et al., "Book Reviews," International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church 6, 
no. 1 (2006). p.117-118. See these reviews also: Ed Trimmer, "Emerging Churches: Creating 
John S. Hammett, "Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures," 
p.415-416; Naomi Hafter, "Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern 
36 Moynagh, Emergingchurch.Intro.  
37 Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.tomorrowproject.net/?id=-28 (Accessed 
December 7, 2008).
its helpful overview of the movement, and its practical suggestions for how existing churches and denominations can apply the movement’s insights, and stimulate new missional plants, through contextualisation, releasing grass-roots initiatives, mobilising support, shifting resources and priorities, and thinking about the shape of the church through the prism of missional ecclesiology. The weakness of the work is its emphasis away from genuine missional ecclesiology toward a preoccupation with the innovative, creative, postmodern, urban and novel. The focus, therefore, seems to be more on ‘emerging’ than ‘missional’, and its ecclesiological assumptions seem rather unexamined and postmodernised.

### 3.1.10 Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post Christian-Culture

The ministry of Michael Frost is described under the text he wrote with Alan Hirsch entitled *The Shaping of Things to Come*.

Frost begins this work with reference to a common failing of the EMCM, the aggressive critique of the established church, and with an effort to clarify and justify his own stance with regard to the church. He writes that his goal is to evaluate and assist the established church.  

Pursuing that goal, Frost encourages disciples of Jesus to embrace their exilic memory, follow Jesus into exile, be authentic, serve a cause greater than ourselves, create missional community, be generous and practice hospitality, and work

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39 ‘Some of my listeners have reviled it as “church bashing,” while others celebrate is as prophetic. I have never claimed to be doing either. I have no stomach for unsophisticated church bashing. Announcing that the church is like an emperor with no clothes is easy enough. Any fool can do it. And besides, the church seems altogether unchanged by such announcements... Neither have I ever made claim to being a prophet... Rather, my goal is to make a thoughtful evaluation of many facets of contemporary church and culture, and to offer helpful suggestions for Christians who wish to improve both of them in ways that are biblically sound and pleasing to God.’ Ibid. p.ix.
righteously. In other words, he is challenging Christians ‘to live missionally in a post-Christian culture.’ He comments on the churches’ silence in the face of injustice, the exploitation of creation, and the neglect of the oppressed, and challenges ‘exiles’ to take a different, transformative stance.

This is a seminal work in the EMCM field, which helps individual disciples navigate faith in a post-Christian context, especially if they feel themselves to be isolated from the values of both contemporary culture and the established church. Frost encourages his readers to live incarnationally in their own communities, and to seek opportunities to live the demands of the gospels in the world both individually and corporately.

3.1.11 Houses that Change the World: The Return of the House Churches

Wolfgang Simson is a strategy consultant, researcher, theologian and journalist who teaches courses on church growth and missiology at the Free Evangelical Theological Academy, Basel, Switzerland.41

Houses that Change the World is Simson’s case for ‘the return of the house churches’.42 He is convinced that a radical reformulation of ecclesiology in the western world in necessary if it is going to be relevant and stem its decline. Churches, according to Simson, should consider abandoning their ecclesial buildings and meet in homes. Simson describes his theories of the superiority of house churches, their preferred leadership styles, the difference between house churches

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41 Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.simsonwolfgang.de/html/welcome.html and http://www.dawnministries.org (Both accessed December 7, 2008).
42 Simson, Houses That Change. p.xxiv-xxv.
and cell churches, the place of persecution in house church multiplication, house church adaptability to change, and the tremendous missionary and growth potential of such churches.

While his argument for the reconsideration and adoption of house churches is compelling and well researched, the work inevitably exalts a particular form of and location for church in a way that the New Testament does not. Simson’s commitment to house churches in this text is both its practical strength and its theological weakness. His list of biblical proofs for the priority of house churches and the removal of traditional forms of preaching are unconvincing due to their exegetical errors. His conviction that the explosion of house churches in persecuted countries is evidence that house churches can explode in numbers everywhere, is fraught with logical fallacies. EMCM churches have begun to meet in homes in fresh and exploratory ways, and this book is useful as it helps them understand the nature of the house church. However, many of its claims need further critical examination, and its emphasis on a particular location for churches may eschew its ecclesiology.  

3.1.12 Liquid Church

Pete Ward has been Lecturer in Youth Ministry and Theological Education, and Programme Director for the MA in Youth Ministry and the Doctorate in Ministry, at King’s College in London since 1998.  

Liquid Church asserts that churches need to be ‘liquid’ networks of relationships and communications, rather than ‘sold’ institutions and structures. The strength of the

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45 Details regarding his career can be found at [http://kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/education/staff/pwardpubs.html](http://kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/education/staff/pwardpubs.html) (Accessed December 7, 2008).
book is its understanding of the need for ecclesiological forms to connect with the postmodern inclination toward, and penchant for, fluidity, network, participation, involvement, flat leadership models, movement, imagination, and some form of ‘liquidity’. While this work opens up fresh and welcome horizons in ecclesiological discussion, its shortcoming are its narrow ecclesiological reflection, and its inability to flesh out what such a ‘liquid church’ would actually look like in practice. It also assumes that morphing into postmodern and market-driven forms of community is necessarily desirable or sustainable, and fails to examine whether consumer-choice, as advocated by the author, will inevitably diminish the viability of churches that do not market themselves well. Moreover, it relies on Bauman’s analysis of ‘liquid modernity’, without any references to Bauman’s ambivalence to aspects of late modernity, and it draws some dubious ecclesiological conclusions from the author’s understanding of the trinitarian and pneumatological theology. Critics have suggested that there are significant sociological and theological omissions in the work.

3.1.13 Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America

An ecumenical team of six authors contributed to Missional Church, which was a research project commissioned by the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America.

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48 De Groot, for instance, writes, ‘This brings me to two omissions in this seductive book. The first is of a sociological nature. In a contemporary market approach to the church, one cannot ignore the “rational choice” thesis that, in a context of pluralism, only churches which operate as exclusive firms will be vital. According to this theory, the liquid church would inevitably be “a sell out,” not because it “embraces the believer as a consumer,” but because it uses an ineffective marketing strategy. The second omission is of a theological nature. Although the author states more than once that a true church is marked by an authentic communication of the Word and the sacraments, he does not indicate in what way the liquid church provides the right administration of the sacraments.’ K. De Groot, "Liquid Church," Religious Education 99, no. 1 (2004). p.98.
49 Guder, Missional Church.
America.

Lois Barrett is the Director of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Kansas, and Associate Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies. Inagrace Dietterich is the Director of Theological Research for the Center for Parish development in Chicago, Illinois, which is an institute dedicated to preparing churches to be missional in contemporary western culture. Darrell Guder is Princeton Theological Seminary’s Dean of Academic Affairs and the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology, and the vice president of the American Society of Missiology. George Hunsberger is the Professor of Congregational Mission at Western Theological Seminary, Michigan, and the Coordinator of the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. Alan Roxburgh is the Vice President for Allelon Canada and the team leader for the Mission in Western Culture Project. He was formerly the President of the Missional Leadership Institute, North Vancouver, BC, and the Professor of Evangelism and Mission at the McMaster Divinity School of the University of Toronto. Craig Van Gelder is Professor of Congregational Mission at Luther Theological Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, and previously served as Professor of Domestic Missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*Missional Church* is a timely and prophetic extension by the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America, of the work of Lesslie Newbigin. It challenges the church to embrace missional ecclesiology, to see mission as a way of being for the

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50 For each contributor to this work I will provide a link to where further details regarding their career can be found. For instance, details about Barrett’s career can be found at http://www.ambs.edu/about/staff-and-faculty/lois-barrett (Accessed December 7, 2008). Ibid. p.vi.
church, to understand that North America is now itself a mission field, to pursue its
missional vocation in a marginal, liminal and post-Christendom context, and to
examine the missional appropriateness of its institutions, structures, and ecclesial
forms.\textsuperscript{56}

The book’s weak points are found in the varying quality of the writing style and
depth of ecclesiological reflection made by the various contributors. In addition, in
their attempt to integrate a concern for the Reign of God with the mission of the
church, the authors tend to minimize the presence, grace, and redemptive activity of
God in areas of culture, interpersonal relationships, institutions, and life in general
that are not specifically located in the church. Smith writes, therefore, ‘the authors
hold to a powerful ideal, “The church is THE preview community, THE foretaste and
harbinger of the coming Reign of God:’ (my emphasis). Here the authors and I part
company; I would prefer to replace “the” with “a”.\textsuperscript{57} Aside from these criticisms, the
work is arguably the most thorough introduction to missional ecclesiology from a
North American perspective.

\subsection*{3.1.14 Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions
of Church in a Changing Context\textsuperscript{58}}

\textit{Mission-Shaped Church} is a report from a working group of the Church of England’s
Mission and Public Affairs Council.\textsuperscript{59} The foreword to the report was written by the

\textsuperscript{56} The authors claim, ‘It has taken us decades to realize that mission is not just a program of the
church. It defines the church as God’s sent people. Either we are defined by mission, or we reduce the
scope of the gospel and the mandate of the church. Thus, our challenge today is to move from church
with mission to missional church.’ Ibid. p.6.


\textsuperscript{58} Williams, \textit{Mission-Shaped Church}.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. p.ix. It is also available online at
Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who is the Primate of All England, senior archbishop of the Church of England, and the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The work has many strengths, including an overview of recent developments in emerging-missional church planting, a description of the variety of ‘fresh expressions of church’ in the western world, proposals for facilitating further missional experimentation and church planting, and resources to help established local churches apply the insights emerging in the EMCM. Its recommendations for the thorough application of a missionary ecclesiology are designed for denominations (including their legal options for recognising these fresh ecclesiological expressions), ecumenical bodies, established local churches, and pastors and church planters. The implementation of these recommendations in the Church of England and the Methodist Church in the United Kingdom is the responsibility of the Fresh Expressions of Church initiative.60

However, the report lacks theological depth, and in his theological review Hull writes that ‘the fresh expressions of church which are so badly needed deserve better theological support, and may be inhibited if the theological weaknesses of the document are not corrected.’61 Among other criticisms, Hull rightly asserts that the concepts of church, mission and kingdom in the document need better theological clarification, and that diversity and plurality of religions, values and lifestyles in post-Christendom needs to be view more positively in the report. Rather than missiology shaping ecclesiology, at times the report shapes the mission of the church

around its existing ecclesiological paradigms and concerns.

**3.1.15 Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens**

Neil Cole is the Executive Director of Church Multiplication Associates, a seasoned pastor, church planter, author and church consultant.

In *Organic Church*, Cole attempts a missional ecclesiology that emphasises church planting, the ‘dethroning’ of Sunday worship services and church buildings, transformation and the kingdom of God, and small, contextualised, non-hierarchical and decentralised ‘house churches’. These may meet in a broad variety of settings, such as cafés, bars, parking lots, sporting clubs, and the like. While Cole has successfully overseen the planting of numerous such churches, the book is ecclesiologically thin, and uses metaphor in dubious and tenuous ways (such as the biblical image of the Bride and the Bridegroom, people’s relational proximity to Osama Bin Laden, and the movies Schindler’s List and the Zombie Bride). It also provides little practical advice for leaders seeking to engage emerging-missional ecclesiology in their local contexts. It has been influential, however, among church planters in the EMCM, due mainly to the success of Cole’s Church Multiplication Associates.

**3.1.16 Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World**

Stuart Murray’s ministry has been described already in this chapter.

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63 Details regarding his career can be found at [http://cmaresources.org/about/team](http://cmaresources.org/about/team) (Accessed December 7, 2008).


65 Murray, *Post-Christendom*. 
The main thesis of *Post-Christendom* is that Christendom has ended in the West, that is, the church now exists in marginality and liminality, and that Christians in the West need to discover new ways of being community, relating to cultures, engaging in mission, and understanding ecclesiology. Murray considers post-Christendom to be a time of missiological and ecclesiological renewal and faithfulness for those in the western church who draw on the insights of the early church and various dissident movements in church history, and who explore fresh ways of being the church from the margins. The book provides a detailed and rich exploration of the nature, heart, and history of Christendom, the legacy of that period of western history for the current issues facing the church, and the potential shape of mission, church, theology, and faith in post-Christendom. Murray demonstrates how marginal Christian movements – the Donatists, Waldensians, Lollards, and Anabaptists – navigated their relationship with the State and their surrounding culture, and provide clues for the church in postmodernity and post-Christendom.

At times Murray too readily assumes, however, that the experience of marginality for these dissident groups will be the experience of marginality for the contemporary church. He also seems unconcerned with the sometimes-questionable theological views of these groups, and the failings of their often-sectarian behaviours and worldviews. While the church in post-Christendom may have much to learn from these groups, it would have been better if Murray had examined these groups more critically. It might also be noted that Murray’s assessment of the condition of the church is a British and western one, and that in other parts of the world the church is indeed moving from the margins to the centre, and that continental Europeans may have a different perspective. Ott also asks what church historians would make of Murray’s historical survey of Christendom, and what systematic theologians would
make of the ecclesiology of ‘the whole phenomenon of the “emerging churches”’. 66

3.1.17 Retrofuture: Rediscovering Our Roots, Recharting Our Routes 67

Gerard Kelly is senior pastor of Crossroads International Church, Amsterdam, a director of Spring Harvest, which equips churches through events and courses, and the founder of Bless Europe, a mission agency working throughout Europe and the United Kingdom. 68

In Retrofuture, Kelly articulately examines how in an age of social transformation the church needs to adapt and respond in such a way that its ecclesiological forms, leadership dynamics and models, and missiological approaches make sense within the context of post-industrial technologies, post-literate communications, postmodern worldviews, post-imperial world orders, and post-Christian spiritualities. The failing of the work is the way in which Kelly’s ecclesiology is shaped by the five ‘posts’ of contemporary postmodern culture, rather than by broader ecclesiological discussions, scripture, or any other acknowledged theological stream. One gets the impression that his chameleon-like-ecclesiology evolves to reflect current cultural trends, rather than being grounded in deeper theological themes.

3.1.18 The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom 69

Alan Kreider has been the Professor of Church History and Mission at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary since 2004, 70 and from 1995-2000 he served as

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67 G. Kelly, Retrofuture: Rediscovering Our Roots, Recharting Our Routes (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1999).
68 Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.xrds.nl/about_sub.asp?PageNumber=46, http://www.bless.org.uk/, and Spring Harvest can be found at http://www.springharvest.org/ (each Accessed December 7, 2008).
Director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture, Regents Park College, Oxford, and was a member of the Oxford University Theology Faculty.\(^{71}\)

The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom traces changes in the meanings attributed to conversion in the history of the church, and argues that Christendom shaped, and was profoundly shaped by, these changes. Kreider proceeds to challenge his readers to adopt missiological alertness in post-Christendom, examine ancient models of conversion for the church’s future, expect conversion that truly changes behaviour as well as belief and experience, and explore the power of catechetical processes. Even though this is a valuable work that should cause its readers to examine the place of conversion in church life, it does at times, however, become too simplistic and lack ‘interpretative depth’ when dealing with church history and its Constantinian heritage.\(^{72}\)

3.1.19 The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America\(^{73}\)

An ecumenical team of sixteen authors contributed to The Church Between Gospel and Culture, which was a research project commissioned by the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. The ministries of Dietterich, Hunsberger,

\(^{71}\) Details regarding his career can be found at http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/about/staff-and-faculty/alan-kreider/A_Kreider_CURRICULUM_VITAE.pdf (Accessed December 7, 2008).

\(^{72}\) Stansbury notes, “Kreider appears rather nostalgic about the pre-Constantinian days when conversions supposedly produced Christians who were really transformed… Although Kreider is certainly aware of the historical changes that took place after the so-called “Peace of Constantine,” one wonders whether he fully appreciates the immense challenge the Church faced as a result of these changes… His caricature of the early medieval Church is far too simplistic… (However) These comments are not meant to detract from the overall value of the book.” R. J. Stansbury, "The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom," Fides et historia 32, no. 2 (2000). p.144. See also: Anthony J. Gittins, "The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom," Mission Studies 17, no. 1-2 (2000); C. Norman Kraus, "The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom," Menonite Quarterly Review 74, no. 4 (2000); and, W. H. C. Frend, "The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom," Expository Times 111, no. 11 (2000).

Roxburgh, and Van Gelder have been described already in this chapter, and Hall and Shenk are described later (so only nine contributors are described here).

James Brownson is James and Jean Cook Professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary, Michigan.\textsuperscript{74} William Dyrness is Professor of Theology and Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, California.\textsuperscript{75} John Hendrick is Emeritus Professor of Mission and Evangelism at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Texas.\textsuperscript{76} E. Dixon Junkin is a Presbyterian minister who was formerly Dean of the Institute for Christian Formation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Stony Point, New York.\textsuperscript{77} Christopher Kaiser is Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Western Theological Seminary.\textsuperscript{78}

Paul Satari is lay pastor for missions and evangelism at the Wesley Methodist Church, Singapore.\textsuperscript{79} David Scotchmer was Associate Professor of Mission and Evangelism at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, until his death.\textsuperscript{80} David Watson is the Interim Senior Pastor of West End United Methodist Church, and was formerly the Executive Secretary for Covenant Discipleship and Christian Formation at the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. He has also served as the Professor of Congregational Life and Mission at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC.\textsuperscript{81} Charles West is Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics Emeritus at Princeton Theological.

\textsuperscript{74} For the remaining contributors to this work I will provide a link to where further details regarding their career can be found. For instance, details about Brownson’s career can be found at http://www.westernsem.edu/explore/faculty/brownson (Accessed December 7, 2008).


\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. p.ix.

\textsuperscript{78} http://www.westernsem.edu/explore/faculty/kaiser (Accessed December 7, 2008).


\textsuperscript{80} Ibid. p.x.

Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.\textsuperscript{82}

*The Church Between Gospel and Culture* is the valuable contribution of sixteen scholars from The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America coming together to contribute twenty essays around the three themes of culture, gospel, and church, and their missional expression in western culture. The contributors examine the nature of a domestic missional ecclesiology, analyse the modern and postmodern cultural shifts and issues facing the church, and challenge the church to respond in missionally appropriate ways. They move ‘toward a theological repositioning of the identity of the church, envisioning a missional hermeneutic for a missionary church with missionary pastors. The book provides a smorgasbord of ideas and approaches helpful to us who are seeking a new paradigm for mission and evangelism in North America.\textsuperscript{83} The shortcomings of the work are minor, and include the lack of cohesive thesis because of the large amount of authors and essay topics, the vagueness of the solutions and practical ecclesiological responses suggested, and the complexity of some of the chapters, which seem to contribute little to the overall aims of the work. Overall, however, the work provides a rich contribution to discussions about missional ecclesiology in the emerging mission field of western culture.

3.1.20 The Church Faces Death: Ecclesiology in a Post-Modern Context\textsuperscript{84}

Michael Jinkins is Professor of Pastoral Theology and Academic Dean of Austin

\textsuperscript{82} Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., *The Church between Gospel and Culture*, p.x.


Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas.\textsuperscript{85}

*The Church Faces Death* is a compilation of five essays on ecclesiology in postmodernity. Each of the five chapters is self-contained, and represents a rigorous and provocative excursion into the shape of ecclesiology in emerging postmodern culture. These are ecclesiology in light of the decline and ‘death’ of the church in Chapter 1, ecclesiology in contemporary semiotic dialogue in Chapter 2, and ecclesiology through the lenses and shortcomings of taxonomies in Chapter 3. The book goes on to discuss moving from abstractions about the church to an appreciation of its embodied expressions and historical concreteness in Chapter 4, and ecclesiology and the moral life of the church in Chapter 5. Overall, Jinkins’ thesis is that the church in postmodernity is in decline and facing death. While the possibility of such death might tempt the dying church to rely upon ‘its executive competence, its technical expertise, its strategies, and its long-term planning’\textsuperscript{86} in order to arrest the process, Christian theology, history and experience teach us that death represents opportunities for reliance on God, transformation, resurrection, and rebirth. ‘When the church faces death, in point of fact, it encounters a critical moment when it may know the power of the resurrection.’\textsuperscript{87}

At times one wonders whether Jinkins’ ‘conversation partners’\textsuperscript{88} have been dealt with too simplistically, or interpreted in a way which merely suits Jinkins’ arguments; especially his treatment of Derrida’s connection between individual mortality and moral responsibility. Yet this work offers a valuable contribution to ecclesiology in a postmodern context, which is a field that must surely broaden in the

\textsuperscript{85} Details about his career can be found at http://www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=14&dirid=14&ddid=1 (Accessed December 7, 2008).


\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. p.14.

\textsuperscript{88} Jacques Derrida, Vaclav Havel, Avery Dulles, Reinhold Niebuhr, Loren Mead, Roland Barthes, Martin Luther King Jr., and Ludwig Wittgenstein.
coming decades.89

3.1.21 The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives90

An ecumenical team of six authors contributed to The Church in Emerging Culture. The ministry of McManus has been described already in this chapter, and McLaren is described later (so only four contributors are described here).

Leonard Sweet is the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School, Madison, New Jersey, a sought-after speaker, seminary lecturer, and consultant on missional ecclesiology,91 and in 2006 he was voted ‘One of the 50 Most Influential Christians in America’.92 Andy Crouch is a senior editor at Christianity today international and was formerly the Editorial Director for the Christian Vision Project.93 Michael Horton is J. Gresham Machen Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology at Westminster Seminary in California, the editor-in-chief of Modern Reformation magazine, and the main host of The White Horse Inn radio broadcast.94 Frederica Mathewes-Green is an author from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and pastors the Holy Cross Orthodox Church near

89 Kenneson writes, ‘One of the powerful and consistent themes that run throughout these essays is the need for the Church to internalize theologically in its own life the postmodern emphases on ambiguity, paradox, contradiction, particularity and plurality… Yet Jinkins is the first to admit that his brief treatment of these matters can only be understood as a preface to a new ecclesiology, and so he is to be commended for undertaking the risky project of trying to articulate some of the crucial issues with which any postmodern ecclesiology will likely have to wrestle.’ P.D. Kenneson, “The Church Faces Death,” Anglican Theological Review 82, no. 4 (2000). p.847. See also: G. Jones, “The Church Faces Death,” Reviews in Religion & Theology 7, no. 3 (2000).; and, D.H. Compier, “The Church Faces Death,” Journal of Religion 81, no. 2 (2001).
90 L. Sweet, ed. The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan,2003).
91 For the remaining contributors to this work I will provide a link to where further details regarding their career can be found. For instance, details about Sweet’s career can be found at http://www.leonardsweet.com/bioCurriculumVitae.asp (Accessed December 7, 2008).
Baltimore.  

In *The Church in Emerging Culture*, Sweet attempts to put five Christian thinkers from differing traditions and backgrounds into conversation about the emerging shape of the church in the evolving, postmodern western culture. The book’s strength is the variety and multi-dimensionality of the ecclesiological conversation that ensues, with each thinker contributing to the chapters of the others through inserted comments and critiques.

The weaknesses of the work, in my opinion, are considerable. These include the lack of ecclesiological or logical cohesion of the chapters, the annoying tendency of the writers to attempt to create novel phrases (‘the tedium of te deums’, for example), and the muddied logic created by the authors’ contradictory understandings of postmodernity and culture. There is consequently a considerable amount of discussion given over to semantics rather than to more significant ecclesiological and missiological issues and a failure by the authors to provide any concrete examples or applications for local communities of faith. Sweet’s analogy in the opening chapter, which is supposed to describe the various ways of understanding the gospel-culture relationship, is unconvincing, overly-simplistic, and rejected by some of the work’s contributors, and Mathewes-Green’s understanding of soteriology as primarily a notion of ‘restored health’ may disenfranchise many evangelical readers, as might McLaren’s postmodern hermeneutics.

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97 Ibid. p.262-263.
98 Ibid. p.173ff.
99 Ibid. p.198ff. Yount, in attempting to navigate through this book’s complexities, writes with some frustration, ‘I feel as if I’m in the middle of a game of Myst, seeking clues and solving puzzles, moving from world to world, figuring out meaning as I go along, with no true confirmation that I’m headed in the right direction. Is there a “right direction”?... Perhaps objective meaning is intentionally
3.1.22 The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix

Brian McLaren is possibly the most influential voice of the Emerging-Missional church in North America. He is the founder of Cedar Ridge Community Church, Spencerville, Maryland, and is an accomplished author, coach, consultant, educator, trainer, and networker for Emerging-Missional church leaders in North America and around the world.\textsuperscript{101}

*The Church on the Other Side* is primarily concerned with providing church leaders thirteen strategies for transitioning their churches from traditional or modernist structures and programs, to those relevant for postmodern culture. These strategies provide innovative and imaginative guidance for postmodern ecclesial expressions of change-management, systems-thinking, vision-casting, evaluation of traditions, expressing theology as art and science, apologetics, modes of discourse and rhetoric, leadership, and mission. McLaren not only suggests thirteen concrete strategies for negotiating the transition to church expressions and forms that are meaningful to postmodern culture, but also suggests how congregations can become learning communities that discover and implement their own strategies.\textsuperscript{102} In addition, McLaren helpfully provides an appendix with extensive and specific examples of how local congregations might implement his thirteen strategies.


\textsuperscript{100} B.D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

\textsuperscript{101} Details about his career can be found at \url{http://www.crcc.org/section.php?SectionID=162} (Accessed December 7, 2008).

\textsuperscript{102} McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*. p.6.
‘emerging churches’ will be relevant to postmodern generations of the future, and that unless the church evolves into something other than ‘a dinosaur at the end of the Jurassic’ it will probably not survive. He also tends to elevate the benefits of postmodernism for the life of the church, and minimize the dangers or threats that might be present. The closest he comes to admitting the potential threats of postmodernism for the western church is a passing reference to D.A. Carson’s concerns about the matter. In general, however, this is an imaginative, provocative, and very practical book on missional ecclesiology.

3.1.23 The Complex Christ: Signs of Emergence in the Urban Church

Kester Brewin is a schoolteacher in Inner London, and the cofounder of the ‘Dreamspace’ weekend in London, and the alternative worship group Vaux.

*The Complex Christ* is Brewin’s thesis on the nature of the ‘Emergent Church’, that is, as an evolution of self-organising, reconfigured, emergent communities, which develop from grassroots missional initiatives, are networked together in complex relationships, and emerge spontaneously with the movements and cultures of contemporary urban life. For Brewin, these are communities of disciples who imagine, create, evolve and grow together. They naturally seek to make the gospel relevant in their cultural contexts. They also explore the church’s historical practices and teachings for fresh insights for mission and spirituality in postmodern contexts, and who no longer define themselves in contrast to the establishment, but by what they value and embody as churches. Such a community rejects the polarities of

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103 Ibid. p.13.
104 Ibid. p.171.
107 Details about his career can be found at [http://thecomplexchrist.typepad.com/about.html](http://thecomplexchrist.typepad.com/about.html) and [http://www.vaux.net](http://www.vaux.net) (Both accessed December 7, 2008).

rigidity and anarchy. ‘Christ’s life, the life of the city, and the growing science of complexity come together with unique synergy to provide spiritual, social and rational imperatives for the church to become an emergent system.’

The weaknesses of the work are its oversimplified caricatures of other ecclesiological systems, its deification of urbanity over rural and suburban alternatives, its uncritical adoption of complexity and emergence theories, its simplistic assertion that change always happens from the bottom up, and its unfortunate disregard for thorough ecclesiological reflection and theologising. While it has these deficiencies, it is a prophetic and original addition to the EMCM material.

3.1.24 The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations

Dan Kimball founded the ‘Graceland’ worship services at Santa Cruz Bible Church, and a sister missional church called Vintage Faith Church, in Santa Cruz, California.

In *The Emerging Church*, Kimball asserts that the church needs to return to what he calls “‘Vintage Christianity’: a refreshing return to an unapologetically sacred, raw, historical, and Jesus-focused missional ministry”. Kimball’s work is a smorgasbord of useful and creative ideas for Emerging-Missional churches, including designing multi-sensory, experiential, creative-arts-oriented worship

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109 See the review by Mayo in Cray et al., "Book Reviews." p.120-121.
111 Details about his career can be found at [http://dankimball.typepad.com/about.html](http://dankimball.typepad.com/about.html) and [http://www.vintagefaith.com/](http://www.vintagefaith.com/) (Both accessed December 7, 2008).
gatherings, integrating narrative forms of communication into church services, and experimenting with ancient and innovative forms of leadership, spiritual formation, and mission.

The problem with Kimball’s thesis is that in the final analysis he equates ‘vintage’ Christianity with postmodern, experiential, young adult, and creative-arts oriented worship. One is left with the question whether this truly represents ‘vintage’ Christianity. At best, its missiological impulse resonates with the spirit of the people of God whenever they are at their best, but one could hardly assert that such an emphasis on multi-sensory, novel, and post-seeker-sensitive innovation is at the heart of ‘vintage’ Christianity. While the EMCM has much to contribute to ecclesiology, and especially contemporary missional ecclesiology, a book like Kimball’s only serves to support or encourage critiques like that of DeWeese, when he writes that the movement and its cultural underpinnings may already be passé.113

DeWeese is probably wrong, but Kimball’s book does not serve to discredit his assertion. However, for those who are looking for fresh resources for creative worship gatherings in Emerging-Missional church settings, this book makes a worthwhile contribution.

3.1.25 The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity114

Douglas Hall is Emeritus Professor of Christian Theology in the Faculty of Religious

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113 “To be blunt: I believe that "postmodernity" as a cultural condition is already passé, and if I am right about that, then the whole emergent movement will be seen a decade from now to have been simply the fad du jour, an irritating distraction at best, a disillusioning waste of time and effort at worst… Or so I claim.” Bramer et al., “The Church in Emerging Culture.” p.409.

Studies at McGill University, Montreal.  

In *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*, Hall describes the demise of Christendom, ecclesiastical responses to the new realities this demise presents to the churches of the West, and processes of ‘intentional disestablishment’, ecclesiological faithfulness, and mission in a post-Christendom age. The strengths of the work include Hall’s piercing and critical analysis of the various theologies and methodologies employed by the liberal and moderate churches in their attempt to regain the centre-ground in the face of their increasing marginalization. He also calls articulately for the church in the West to embrace disestablishment and witness in a missional and prophetically-oriented manner, as well as seeing disestablishment as a ‘work of theology’ leading to the church ‘being salt, yeast, and light’. While Hall attempts to rescue his thesis ‘from abstraction by providing concrete illustrations of what is meant by disengaging-in-order-to-engage’, his illustrations tend to be too philosophical and abstract, and to leave one wondering what local churches might be expected to do, both in response to his thesis and to his so-called ‘concrete illustrations’.

Hall is clear, however, that disestablishment from the dominant western culture is not the same as abandonment of that culture, or a process of ‘ghettoisation’. In fact, Hall

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115 Details about his career can be found at http://people.mcgill.ca/douglas.hall/ (Accessed December 7, 2008).
117 Ibid. p.35 and 51.
118 Ibid. p.57.
119 Holst notes this when he writes, ‘Hall's writing attempts to probe the heart of Christian faith, bereft of its cultural and institutional trappings. He asks penetrating questions about how the central message of the faith can be purposefully expressed in the contemporary church. Hall is not a trained sociologist but a highly intuitive reader and interpreter of modern North American culture. His propositions lack the empirical substance of a Reginald Bibby. Yet, his prescriptive vision and insights provide much material for reflection, discussion and debate. It would be helpful if Hall could be more specific about the forms a future disestablished and prophetic church might take.’ W.A. Holst, “Review: The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity,” (1997), http://www.gocn.org/files/092-newsletter.pdf#page=5 (Accessed December 7, 2008).
criticizes Hauerwas for being too ready to encourage a form of ecclesial life and discipleship that is segregated and overly disengaged. Hall’s vision of disengagement-in-order-to-engage is a constructive and positive one for those churches who are seeking to proactively deal with the realities of post-Christendom in their local communities.

3.1.26 The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit

The ministry of Craig Van Gelder has been described already in this chapter. *The Essence of the Church* attempts to outline a contemporary and essential ecclesiology, with these four ambitious goals:

1. To translate available scholarship and research into an applied perspective for ministry…
2. To integrate diverse perspectives from a variety of disciplines…
3. To focus on the church within the context of North America…
4. To work from an understanding of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit - as being central to our understanding of the church.

While it is debatable whether Van Gelder robustly achieves aims two and four, this work is a serious integration of ecclesiology, organisational and leadership theory, multidisciplinary perspectives, and missiology, and it develops the solid basis of a missiological ecclesiology. The expansive missiological ecclesiology developed by Van Gelder also takes into account historical ecclesiology, perspectives on the reign and kingdom of God, trinitarian theology, cultural analysis, spiritual formation,

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120 Hall, *The End of Christendom*. p.67. It is on this page that he uses the term ‘ghettoisation’ also.
122 Ibid. p.9-11.
123 Ibid. p.31-32.
biblical images of the church, and the relationship between local congregations and wider ecclesial bodies. This work, therefore, makes a substantial contribution to the theological and ecclesiological reflection within the EMCM.

The book would have been enhanced, however, by more in-depth trinitarian ecclesiological perspectives, such as those undertaken by Zizioulas and Volf, by a more rigorous and exegetical examination of the biblical material available to ecclesiological study, and by the integration of considerations from christology and the gospel narratives. Van Gelder’s missiological ecclesiology seems too far removed from any serious christology or studious exegetical method, and his treatment of organisational life and leadership development bear all the marks of an academician rather than a practitioner. The multidisciplinary approach, while intelligent and clearly valuable, at times contributes to a sense of superficial analysis and conclusion, and one wonders whether this work might better serve as a primer for a large and more comprehensive treatment of the same themes.124

3.1.27 The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church125

The ministry of Alan Hirsch is described under the text he wrote with Michael Frost entitled The Shaping of Things to Come.

In The Forgotten Ways, Hirsch attempts to define the core ingredients of emerging-missional ecclesiology, and ‘to describe Apostolic Genius and the constituent elements of mDNA’.126 This ‘Apostolic Genius’ and ‘emerging-missional DNA’ (or

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126 Ibid. p.24.
‘mDNA’) is, according to Hirsch, the emerging-missional emphasis on christology, discipleship, missiology, apostolic leadership, organic systems, and *communitas*. Hirsch claims to identify these six elements from his study of both the underground church in China and the pre-Christendom church.\(^{127}\)

The book has a number of considerable shortcomings. These include its inability to differentiate between the challenges of the modern underground Chinese church, the pre-Christendom early church, and the church in the post-Christendom, postmodern western world. Hirsch has not demonstrated or considered how these quite different set of cultural and other challenges might have influenced the various ecclesiologies and missional approaches that emerged in these eras. Moreover, Hirsch conducted no firsthand qualitative or quantitative research of the underground Chinese church, so his assertions are merely speculative.

Hirsch also claims that a number of streams are converging spontaneously to form the emerging-missional church as he describes it, but does not demonstrate any evidence or verifiable research for this beyond his own assertion. It might be some surprise to the house church movement, evangelical theology, Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement, the radical discipleship movement, post-evangelical thinkers, practitioners of urban mission, the alternative worship movement, the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America, and others listed by Hirsch, that they are now spontaneously converging to form an emerging-missional church of Hirsch’s description.\(^{128}\) His claim to have recently invented the term the ‘Emerging-Missional Church’ seems very strange given how long the term has been around the EMCM conversation in the West, and given that a Google search of the term returns over

\(^{127}\) Ibid. p.22-26.

\(^{128}\) Ibid. p.269-270.
eleven thousand results, many of which predate his book. While Hirsch’s claims are novel and interesting, they are researched and defended poorly.

3.1.28 The McDonaldisation of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity, and the Future of the Church

John Drane was formerly Head of Practical Theology in the Department of Divinity at the University of Aberdeen, and he left that position in order to pursue writing and teaching about emerging culture and the missional nature and vocation of the church.

The McDonaldisation of the Church is Drane’s application, modification and extension of ‘the McDonaldisation thesis’ developed by sociologist George Ritzer to the shape of the contemporary western church. This thesis proposes that a ‘formal rationality’ dominates consumer capitalism in order to ensure efficient production and consumption, ‘that is, a collection of rules, regulations, and procedures, and the growth of the bureaucratic systems necessary to ensure the smooth operation of such practices.’ Drane suggests that this rationality has come to dominate much of the western church, its leadership and organisational structures, ecumenical endeavours, ecclesiological expressions, worship services, evangelistic methods, and even its self-understandings. While he appreciates that some forms of rationality are beneficial, he is deeply concerned about the uncritical adoption of pre-packaged

130 A Google search of the term ‘emerging missional church’ returned 11,800 results on December 7, 2008.
133 Drane, The McDonaldization of the Church. p.28-29.
programs and approaches in the life and ecclesial shape of the western churches. Drane articulately calls for the western churches to pursue creativity, missionality, spirituality, embodied forms of faith, indigenous solutions (that is, ‘home-grown’ or local solutions), and contextualization, as opposed to some form of McDonaldisation.

Interestingly, a recent work by Ritzer uses the ecclesial metaphor of the ‘cathedral’ to examine the relationship between enchantment, formal rationalization, the human person and social systems, patterns of consumption, and late consumer capitalism, and to challenge western culture to examine the influence of consumption.\(^\text{134}\)

Regarding Drane’s work, at times he seems to lean too heavily on Ritzer’s ‘McDonaldisation Thesis’ in this project. He also reverts to marketing proposals that seem rather ‘McDonaldised’ in their outlook, to theorize without giving local congregations any concrete examples of the implications of his thesis, and to entertain ‘a Cartesian dualism between mind and body which is at the heart of modernism.’\(^\text{135}\)

### 3.1.29 The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World\(^\text{136}\)

The ministry of Alan Roxburgh has been described already in this chapter. Fred Romanuk is an organisational consultant who has worked with large national and international organizations in the management of change and in leadership

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The Missional Leader is Roxburgh and Romanuk’s thesis on the nature and capabilities of missional leadership in emerging-missional communities. Missional leadership cultivates the skills of coaching the missional imagination of the congregation, equipping and releasing people for mission in their own contexts, asking questions and teaching scripture in such a way that spurs people on to mission, facilitating tension and conflict in the process of change, and creating missional environments and imagination.

According to the authors, churches go through a number of zones in their lifecycle, from emergent to performative as they begin to mature, and then on to reactive as they experience decline. Each zone requires a different kind of leadership to help a community reinvent itself. There also needs to be a thorough application of a missional change model, which takes the community through the relevant stages of remissionalisation, from the stimulation of awareness of the issues at hand, to a deeper understanding of the situation, and on to evaluation, missional experimentation, and ongoing commitment. Effective missional leaders take stock of their personal and congregational readiness in order to lead a process of difficult but worthwhile change.

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138 Missional leadership, write Roxburgh and Romanuk, is about creating ‘an environment that releases and nourishes the missional imagination of all people through diverse ministries and missional teams that affect their various communities, the city, nation, and world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.’ Roxburgh and Romanuk, The Missional Leader. p.13.

139 Ibid. p.41, 105 and 144.
3.1.30 The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality

Again, the ministry of Alan Roxburgh has been described already in this chapter. *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership and Liminality* argues that the church in the West is struggling to come to terms with its marginality, that is, with the loss of being at the centre of the culture. Drawing heavily on Victor Turner’s theory of liminality, which is ‘the transition process accompanying a change of state or social position’, Roxburgh presents the process of liminality as a model for understanding the current condition and future possibilities of the church and Christian community in post-Christendom. From this analysis of liminality, and what Turner regards as the consequent formation of ‘communitas’, Roxburgh postulates a missionary ecclesiology shaped by leaders with prophetic, apostolic, and poetic giftedness. Social roles and status are reconceived in communities during times of liminality, and this can lead to deeper bonds within the community, and a renewed sense of identity, purpose, vision and belonging, which is what Turner calls ‘communitas’.

Roxburgh’s insight into the relationship between Turner’s anthropological and sociological analysis and missional ecclesiology has had a significant effect on the EMCM literature. It does leave one pondering, however, whether, given that Turner’s research was conducted in the 1970s, academics and researchers in the field of sociology and anthropology have, in fact, deepened their understanding of the

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processes involved in liminality, or conceived of the phenomena involved in such communal change and upheaval in entirely different terms. Since Turner’s work is no doubt dated, what are the implications for Roxburgh’s analysis, and what might recent research have to contribute to our understandings of communities in marginality, reconfiguration, and transformation? Since Roxburgh’s thesis is built on dated research, it needs to be read with some scrutiny and scepticism.

3.1.31 The Out of Bounds Church: Learning to Create a Community of Faith in a Culture of Change

Steve Taylor planted Graceway Baptist Church in Ellerslie, New Zealand, pastoring it for eight years, and is now the lead pastor of Opawa Baptist Church in Christchurch, where he is leading the church through a period of missional transition and change.

The Out of Bounds Church is a compelling and well-researched piece of writing that outlines the need for the western church to respond to the dramatic cultural changes of postmodernity by adopting culturally relevant and incarnational forms of ecclesiology. The response must also include, according to Taylor, ‘midwifing’ new communities, providing spaces for spiritual sojourners, embracing creativity and narrative forms of communication, experimenting with spiritual practices, discerning the potentials of the new postmodern culture-gospel dynamic, and confidently releasing the future of the church to a new generation. Taylor artfully combines mature theological reflection with practical examples and applications, sprinkling

148 Details about his career can be found at http://www.laidlaw.ac.nz/laidlaw/index.cfm?77A18D9E-188B-4E3C-5D03-291882FB4502 (Accessed December 7, 2008).
throughout the work references to other resources, including literature, film, music, works of practical theology and ecclesiology, websites, books on his ‘bedside table’ and ‘book shelf’, and interactive feedback on select portions of *The Out of Bounds Church* from chosen EMCM thinkers and practitioners.

The only shortcoming of the work, in my opinion, is that while Taylor regularly refers to additional, rich resources in philosophy, theology, and missional ecclesiology, which he has presumably used in his PhD thesis on mission and worship in postmodernity, at times his chapters seem poorly informed or seasoned by those very same resources. It is also written in a flourishing style at times, and ‘for those unfamiliar with the emerging church this book may be frustrating: it offers an artistic impression rather than a comprehensive survey or penetrating analysis.’

Taylor may have done this intentionally however, in order to make the work as accessible as possible to the average reader, and, as Murray suggests, in line with ‘the emerging church’s current state of development.’

### 3.1.32 The Post Evangelical

Dave Tomlinson led within the house church movement of the United Kingdom for twenty-five years, was formerly the leader of Holy Joe’s, an innovative Emerging-Missional church meeting in a London pub, and is the vicar of St Luke's Church, West Holloway, in North London.

The primary thesis of *The Post Evangelical* is that in the context of postmodernity many evangelicals are becoming post-evangelical, meaning that they ‘take as given

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150 Ibid.
many of the assumptions of evangelical faith, while at the same time moving beyond its perceived limitations.¹⁵³ In a sympathetic and advocatory fashion, Tomlinson eruditely describes what he perceives to be the benefits of this shift toward post-evangelicalism. These include the post-evangelical appreciation for the presence of God in contemporary culture, the enjoyment of a variety of theological styles and methods, and the desire to grow holistically and through eclectic experimentation. The benefits also include an understanding of ecclesiology that is formed by the engagement of many ecclesiological traditions, and a desire to express and shape church and faith through a constructive dialogue with their cultural situation.

The weaknesses of Tomlinson’s assertions are present in his somewhat naïve or optimistic distinction between post-evangelicalism and what evangelicals call liberalism, his distinction being that post-evangelicals maintain genuine evangelical roots, and that liberalism is grounded in modernity, whereas post-evangelicalism is embedded in postmodernity. At times this seems like the reasoning of an evangelical attempting to ward off what he considers to be the worst charge imaginable – that of being a liberal. Furthermore, Tomlinson does not give a great deal of attention to the concrete differences between evangelical and post-evangelical ecclesiology and missiology. While post-evangelicals expect something different of Christian community and the churches they are involved in, in line with their postmodern yearning for authenticity, experiential learning, incarnational mission, community, positive conversation between the gospel and culture, and the like, Tomlinson does not give much indication of the practical implications of this for the ecclesial structures and realities within evangelicalism. Yet this book served as a wakeup call for many within evangelicalism who have sensed that something is stirring,

especially among the young adults in their congregations.\textsuperscript{154}

### 3.1.33 The Prodigal Project: Journey into the Emerging Church\textsuperscript{155}

Cathy Kirkpatrick runs seminars on alternative and emerging styles of worship, and is involved in leading Café Church in Glebe, Sydney.\textsuperscript{156} From 2004 to 2007 Mark Pierson was the Executive Director of an inner city mission organization called Urban Seed.\textsuperscript{157} Mike Riddell is a free-lance journalist, playwright, novelist, screenwriter and author.\textsuperscript{158}

In *The Prodigal Project*,\textsuperscript{159} the authors describe their personal spiritual pilgrimages, including their dissatisfaction with the established churches, while seeking to validate and articulate the struggle of many people with the existing institutional life of the churches. The authors outline some of the effects of postmodernity on culture and churches, explain new, alternative, participatory, experiential, interactive, and communally oriented approaches to worship and Christian gatherings, and tell the stories of communities in the United Kingdom and New Zealand that are seeking to be culturally sensitive and relevant. They attempt to wrestle transparently with the problems of the alternative worship movement in the West, and conclude by offering a significant range of resources for experimenting communities, including a CD-ROM.

The ecclesiology of the authors seems noticeably fluid at times, meaning that one is


\textsuperscript{158} Details about his career can be found at [http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~mriddell/](http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~mriddell/) (Accessed December 7, 2008).

left with the impression that cultural movements and perspectives are instrumental in shaping their ecclesiology, rather than such things as historical ecclesiology, scripture, tradition, church creeds, et cetera. For the main part, the ecclesiologica
reflection in the book is informed by culture, postmodernity, that which connects with the human spirit, and, at times, dissatisfaction with the established church. This contributes to both the strengths and the weaknesses of the final product.

3.1.34 The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church

Michael Frost is Vice Principal of Morling Baptist Theological College in Sydney, and the Founding Director of the Tinsley Institute, which ‘is a resource and study centre committed to equipping and mobilising mission-minded leadership in the Australian church.’ Alan Hirsch is the Founding Director of Forge Mission Training Network, a missional action-learning network focused on developing missional leaders in Western contexts, and especially in Australia and New Zealand.

The Shaping of Things to Come is arguably the clearest and most influential summary of missional ecclesiology written from an Australian perspective. The work has many strengths of style and content, not least of which is the authors’ regular use of real stories-of-missional-ecclesiology-in-practice throughout the book. As the subtitle suggests, Frost and Hirsch believe that the church is missional at its core, and needs to express itself in missional and innovative ways in order to make inroads into

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contemporary western culture, and in order to be faithful to its divine purpose. As opposed to the Christendom model of ecclesiology, the missional church, according to the authors, is incarnational not attractional in its ecclesiology, messianic not dualistic in its spirituality, and apostolic not hierarchical in its mode of leadership. In order to connect with their communities, missional churches cultivate *proximity spaces*, that is, places or events where Christians and not-yet-Christians can interact meaningfully, *shared projects* with their non-churched community, *commercial enterprises* to serve the community and ensure financial viability, and *emerging, indigenous faith communities*, so that the gospel is locally contextualized. Incarnational theology must shape ecclesiology, just as christology informs missiology, which in turn moulds ecclesiology.

Furthermore, assert Frost and Hirsch, the three broad commitments of the church, according to Acts 2:42-47, are communion with Christ, community with one another, and commission to go into the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In conjunction with attention to these commitments, the church functions at its optimum when all the ‘APEPT’ leadership gifts are released for mission and ministry, both within the leadership community of churches, as well as exercised by the whole church (‘APEPT’ is shorthand for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers).

This work is something of a textbook summarizing the best available material on missional ecclesiology, rather than a groundbreaking piece of research in its own right. At times concepts are polarized in an overly simple manner, such as ‘incarnational not attractional’. However, this book is an in-depth, worthwhile, and serious treatment of EMCM ecclesiology and practice.
3.1.35 Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness

An ecumenical team of seven authors contributed to *Treasure in Clay Jars*, which was a research project commissioned by the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. The ministries of Barrett, Guder, and Hunsberger have been described already in this chapter (so only four contributors are described here).

Walter Hobbs is the Associate Professor Emeritus, Educational Organization, Administration and Policy, in the faculty of Higher Education, at The State University of New York at Buffalo. Linford Stutzman is the Director of the Coffman Center for Evangelism and Church Planting and Associate Professor of Culture and Mission at the Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Jeff Van Kooten is a senior consultant with The Center for Generational Studies, Aurora, Colorado. Dale Ziemer is the Managing Director of the Center for Parish Development in Chicago, which is a centre that seeks to equip churches to be missionally effective in their given cultural contexts.

*Treasure in Clay Jars* examines nine missionally oriented congregations from North America, from a range of denominations and styles, and identifies eight features common to each of these churches, which, although they are contextualised in each

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164 For the remaining contributors to this work I will provide a link to where further details regarding their career can be found. For instance, details about Hobb’s career can be found at [http://www.buffalo.edu/directory/find-people-detail-page.html?uid=wchobbs](http://www.buffalo.edu/directory/find-people-detail-page.html?uid=wchobbs) (Accessed December 7, 2008).


setting, are the marks of churches seeking to be genuinely missional.\textsuperscript{168}

The eight patterns that the authors identify from the nine researched congregations are missional vocation, biblical formation and discipleship, taking risks as a contrast community, practices that demonstrate God’s intent for the world, worship as public witness, dependence on the Holy Spirit, pointing toward the reign of God, and missional authority. These and other patterns are explained in section 4.1.2 of this thesis. This work is a useful extension of the Gospel and Our Culture Network’s earlier work \textit{Missional Church},\textsuperscript{169} which tended to be too theoretical, and provides helpful examples of congregations seeking to be missional in their unique contexts.

While these eight patterns are a beneficial introduction to the study of the qualities of missionally oriented congregations in the western church, they also seem too generic to be appropriately challenging to existing churches. Such generic patterns might have difficulty challenging the concrete structures of local churches, or challenging whether they are indeed embodying and implementing missionality. This is evidenced by the nine congregations chosen for the research project, which seem to be doing very little to re-imagine or reinvent themselves missionally. This is especially so when compared, for instance, with the innovative missional projects and local church re-missionalisation happening through groups such as the Forge Mission Network in Australia, Christian Surfers Australia, Reframe Australia, and the internationally dispersed projects of the Doctor of Ministry (Missional Leadership Cohort) students at Fuller Theological Seminary in California. At best, the congregations studied in this book are conservative examples of North American

\textsuperscript{168} According to the authors, ‘A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission… Missional churches see themselves not so much sending, as being sent. A missional congregation lets God’s mission permeate everything that the congregation does… It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God’s mission.’ Barrett, \textit{Treasure in Clay Jars}. p.x.

\textsuperscript{169} Guder, \textit{Missional Church}. 
congregations attempting to engage their communities missionally, rather than examples of creative missional contextualization.

Frost and Hirsch write of the three overall characteristics of missional congregations, and provide some very challenging examples of such communities, so their work *The Shaping of Things to Come* is an important supplement to *Treasure in Clay Jars*.  

**3.1.36 Write the Vision: The Church Renewed**

Wilbert Shenk has been the Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture in the School of Intercultural Studies of Fuller Theological Seminary since 1995, coordinated the Missiology of Western Culture Project, and was North American coordinator, North Atlantic Missiology Project/Currents in World Christianity.

In *Write the Vision*, Shenk writes that church history demonstrates that the people of God regularly move between the two poles of apostasy and renewal, and of missiological fervour and missiological disinterest. For Shenk, this is no more clearly seen than in the unfortunate legacy of Christendom, such as waning missiological attention, cultural conformism, moral ambiguity, the dilution of the gospel, and the archaism of the church’s institutions and practices, and, thankfully, in the renewed missiological passion and desire for integrity and holistic witness present in post-Christendom. In a scholarly fashion, Shenk examines the historical record of the

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170 Incarnational not attractional in their ecclesiology, messianic not dualistic in their spirituality, and apostolic not hierarchical in their mode of leadership. Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p.12.


western church with regard to its integrity, missiological vision, evangelization, and understanding of ecclesiology, demonstrating how the church is constantly called back to faithfulness of integrity and mission. In post-Christendom, the church is again being called back to such faithfulness, for, in the Rahnerian understanding of post-Christendom, ‘The community… although a minority… stands under order to engage in missionary activity’.  

While at times Shenk seems overly and doggedly critical of the historical manifestations and present vestiges of the Christendom era, and while it would be interesting to see what church historians might make of Shenk’s historical examination of Christendom, the Reformation, Kierkegaard, Barth, Wesley, et cetera, Beeby, in my opinion, is justified in asserting that the work is visionary in its outlook due to its scholarship.  

3.1.37 Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World  

Robert Webber was William R and Geraldyn B Myers Chair of Ministry and Director of MA in Worship and Spirituality at Northern Seminary, Lombard, Illinois, before he passed away on April 27, 2007. 

Younger Evangelicals is Webber’s sequel to Richard Quebedeaux’s The Young Evangelicals, which was published in 1974 and examined the neo-evangelical

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175 ‘Shenk’s work is visionary in the best sense because it is the vision of a historian who sees the Western church in crisis and yet who looks forward with hope. He begins with the church and ends with the church. The Western church has lost integrity because it has lost its soul to the culture and because the Christian faith is marginalized… The final chapter - on the church - sees the church, which exists between apostasy and renewal, truly renewed, possessing integrity, and living with a clear sense of mission to its own culture. Bosch and Shenk, true prophets, prophesy woe and live in hope.’ D. Beeby, “Write the Vision,” International Bulletin of Missionary Research 20 (1996). p.89.  
177 Details about his career can be found at http://www.seminary.edu/about/WebberMemorialTributePage.htm (Accessed December 7, 2008).
movement that was emerging in that era. Webber contrasts and compares what he calls the traditional evangelicals (1950-1975), the pragmatic evangelicals (1975-2000), and the younger evangelicals (2000 to the present). The comparisons he makes are with regard to their cultural situation, communication styles, generational makeup, attitude toward history, theological worldview, apologetic style, ecclesial paradigm, church and leadership style, model of youth ministry, educational approach, spirituality and personal formation, worship and the creative arts, evangelism, and form of social concern and activism. This is a considered treatment of the younger evangelicals, many of whom are aligned with the EMCM, and their emphases on culturally relevant communication, narrative theology, embodied apologetics and mission, relational and incarnational ecclesiology, and missionally formed practices of ecclesiology, church leadership, and spiritual formation.

The work has several inadequacies. Firstly, Webber bases many of his assertions on North American research, without paying enough attention to the influence of younger evangelical voices from, for example, Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Secondly, Webber’s partisan-like critique of the traditional and pragmatic evangelical generations is too schematic and blinkered, while betraying his commitment to the worldview of the younger evangelicals. Thirdly, Webber’s analysis of the younger evangelicals conveniently, or possibly suspiciously, describes the forms in which they hold exactly the same range of convictions that he does. This begs the question about his method of research and analysis, and whether it is broad or objective enough, especially when his interviews with younger evangelicals are only with

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persons favourable to his position.\textsuperscript{179} Despite these and other shortcomings, such as those mentioned by Mouw in his book review, \textsuperscript{180} this work provides a valuable framework for understanding the EMCM evangelicals and their relationship with culture, the discipline of ecclesiology, and evangelicalism.

3.2 The Chronological Trajectory of EMCM Themes

This section will provide a brief chronological trajectory of EMCM themes, tracing the development of the literature over the timeframe of the study (1995-2008), its initial philosophical concerns, its new ideas, and its dominant concepts that have informed and remained in the conversation throughout these years.

Firstly, let us consider the historical development of the EMCM literature during the period of the study, and I will footnote examples of each period throughout this section. While some concepts and ideas have remained present and dominant in the literature throughout the thirteen years of the material examined in the study, from approximately 1995 to 1999 the literature was primarily concerned with philosophical issues. These included the emergence and shape of post-evangelical faith and postmodern spirituality, and how a missiology of western culture needs to be conceived and embraced which is adequate for the associated challenges and

\textsuperscript{179} These issues cause Warner to write of The Younger Evangelicals, ‘There is no attempt to quantify the proportion of younger evangelicals sympathetic to Webber’s approach. Nor does he identify creative dialogue with ‘older evangelicals’ or conflictual priorities among divergent experimentalists. In short, Webber provides more advocacy than analysis. He is too partisan to identify weaknesses, tensions or contradictions; too involved to provide a rigorous and nuanced critique; too committed to a particular reinvention of evangelicalism to explore alternative post-modern trajectories… For those unconvinced that Webber has identified a homogenous emergent tradition, this book is more symptom than diagnosis… For those sympathetic to post-modern evangelical experimentation, particularly of a liturgical kind The Younger Evangelicals will be informative and inspirational. However, Ancient-Future Faith remains Webber’s more substantial contribution.’ R. Warner, “The Younger Evangelicals,” Evangelical Quarterly 76, no. 4 (2004). p.378.

\textsuperscript{180} Mouw writes, ‘Webber portrays this emerging generation of leaders as sensitive to the challenges of “postmodernity,” even while they eagerly explore the resources of “premodern” Christian traditions. It would be nice to get clarification here about what exactly “modernity” is and why we should rejoice that we are “post” it. It is really true, for example, that “the modern era, with its reliance on reason and science,” has simply “come to an end”? Still, this is a movement to be reckoned with, well beyond the reaches of evangelicalism.’ R.J. Mouw, “Younger Evangelicals,” Theology Today 60, no. 3 (2003). p.471. See also: R. Riess, “The Younger Evangelicals,” Publishers Weekly 249, no. 34 (2002). and B. Boydston, “The Younger Evangelicals,” Review of Religious Research 46, no. 1 (2004).
opportunities of these phenomena.\textsuperscript{181} Entering and ministering within the postmodern world through cultural reflection, contextualisation of the message, abandoning existing ecclesial structures and evangelistic styles for emerging-missional ones, and developing a missiology of western culture in response to the challenge of missiologists like Bosch and Newbigin, were important philosophical themes shaping the early EMCM literature.\textsuperscript{182} These themes did not disappear, but have continued to evolve and become richly informed by other concepts.

From approximately 1999 to 2005, the literature’s concern moved to how these philosophical concerns might inform more concrete ecclesiological and missional practices. For example, how post-evangelicalism had become embodied in message, mission and ecclesial life by the younger evangelicals and by ecumenical dialogue, and how innovative emerging-missional communities who were redefining what churches in the West looked like were engaging postmodern spirituality. In addition, how a missiology of western culture might be expressed in concrete incarnational ecclesiology, the networking together of people and groups, the new forms of ecclesial communities in post-Christendom, and the activities of apostolic leadership.\textsuperscript{183} These themes were an attempt to build on earlier theological convictions and philosophical considerations through concrete ecclesiological forms and practices.

Since 2005, the material has become concerned with additional matters, such as how

\textsuperscript{181} For example, S. Grenz, \textit{A Primer on Postmodernism} (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996); P.G. Hiebert, \textit{Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts} (New York: Trinity, 1999); McLaren, \textit{The Church on the Other Side}; and, Tomlinson, \textit{The Post Evangelical}.

\textsuperscript{182} For example, D.J. Bosch, \textit{Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture} (New York: Trinity, 1995); Guder, \textit{Missional Church}; and, Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., \textit{The Church between Gospel and Culture}.

denominations, movements and agencies might facilitate the planting and spread of emerging-missional churches, how an examination of the historical missional movements in church history might inform the conversation, and how systems, leadership and organisational theories might contribute to the formation of emerging-missional churches. Additionally, there has been an emphasis on the practical ways in which individual Christians might live ‘missionally in a post-Christian culture’.

Broadly speaking, therefore, we have witnessed a chronological development in the literature from philosophical and missiological speculation (1995-1999), to the proposing of concrete ecclesiological and missional practices (1999-2005), and finally to the examination of the implications for individual spirituality, denominational responsibility, and inter-disciplinary research (post-2005). The older considerations have not entirely vanished, but they have been expanded as the conversation has matured.

Secondly, some dominant concepts have remained with the conversation throughout the period 1995-2008. These include the concepts, with their associated implications, of mission and ministry in post-Christendom, postmodern and post-evangelical culture, the challenges faced by the western church in an age of marginalisation and liminality, the foundational nature of missional ecclesiology, the gospel, church and culture relationship, and the pressing need to ground missional ecclesiology in local communities of faith.

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3.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, each of these EMCM texts and authors wields considerable influence within the burgeoning body of EMCM literature and discussion, and collectively they have significance beyond that to the wider contemporary ecclesiological debates and dialogues of our time. Furthermore, they make worthwhile dialogue partners with Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. Chapters 4 and 5 examine both their implicit and explicit ecclesiology in detail, in order to, firstly, describe analytically EMCM ecclesiology, and secondly to put these ecclesiological perspectives into a critical conversation with the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in Part 4 of the thesis, Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context.
4 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGIES 1: ESSENTIAL AND FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTIONS

4.1 Emerging-Missional Ecclesiology

The purpose of Part 2 of this thesis, called Critical Survey 1, is to describe and examine the ecclesiologies of the EMCM literature. This chapter provides an analytical survey and evaluation of the obvious, essential and bedrock ecclesiological notions in the EMCM literature. The purpose of the chapter is to, firstly, describe analytically the explicit elements in EMCM ecclesiology, and secondly to put these perceptions into a critical conversation with the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in Part 4 of the thesis, Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context.

Each of the thirty-seven EMCM books selected was thoroughly examined for the presence of explicit ecclesiological themes. This consideration outlines their ecclesiological perspectives on the church in an age of post-Christendom, marginalisation and liminality, on missional and incarnational ecclesiology, and on the relationship between the gospel, church and culture. From there I investigate their views on incarnational, postmodern mission, evangelism and apologetics, and on grounding missional ecclesiology in local, worshipping communities. This chapter then finishes with some brief summarising comments, leading in to the next chapter on the more implicit and subtle ecclesiological themes in the EMCM literature.

4.1.1 The Church in an Age of Post-Christendom, Marginalisation, and Liminality

There is consensus in the EMCM literature examined that the church in the Western
world is in an age of post-Christendom,\textsuperscript{1} marginalisation,\textsuperscript{2} and liminality.\textsuperscript{3} The author who best captures the shape of this change is Stuart Murray in his work \textit{Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World}.\textsuperscript{4} Murray defines post-Christendom in the following helpful way, and this definition of post-Christendom is accurate and will be used as the basis of the discussion regarding this phenomenon:

Post-Christendom is the culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within a society that has been definitively shaped by the Christian story and as the institutions that have been developed to express Christian convictions decline in influence.\textsuperscript{5}

A variety of statistics is quoted by Murray, Gibbs and Moynagh in order to demonstrate the significance and effects of post-Christendom in the West. These include statistics demonstrating that many mainstream denominations, such as the Methodist Church, Church of Scotland, Church in Wales, the Salvation Army, the Anglican Church, the Uniting Church, the United Reformed Church, and even the Catholic churches, are declining sharply in membership and attendance. There is

\textsuperscript{1} In thesis section 5.1.1, called \textit{Interpreting History: Constantine, Christendom, Modernity and Church History}, I will examine the EMCM understandings of Christendom in greater detail. The definition of post-Christendom offered by Murray in this section is the one being used in this thesis for post-Christendom.

\textsuperscript{2} Marginality is being used here as 'the position of being on the margins of the dominant culture.' A. Arrowsmith, \textit{Critical Concepts: Some Literary/Cultural Theory Keywords}. \url{http://royal-holloway.org.uk/ltsn/english/events/past/staffs/Holland_Arrowsmith/Critical%20Concepts%20edit.html} (Accessed December 7, 2008).

\textsuperscript{3} Liminality is being used here as a term for the transitional state that groups go through (like the Western church) when they are experiencing significant cultural and social change, and, as such, it might be 'regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values or axioms of the culture in which it occurs.' Turner, \textit{The Ritual Process}. p.167. Liminality can be dangerous for a cultural or social group, but it is necessary for significant change to occur successfully. The status of those groups (of persons) going through such liminality 'becomes ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification,' and thus it is a period when much of the life and structure of the group is being redefined. V. Turner, \textit{Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974). p.232.

\textsuperscript{4} Murray, \textit{Post-Christendom}. Especially his reflections on post-Christendom on pages i-ii, XVI, 1-22, 178-188, and \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid. p.19.
evidence of an increasing shortage of people seeking ordination, which, in turn, aggravates the decline. The church is aging rapidly, the church is ‘haemorrhaging children’, and even growing ethnic churches in the West seem unable to reach beyond their own ethnic groupings.\(^6\)

While Christianity is expanding in the developing world (for example, Africa, Asia and Latin America), and the churches in those regions are experiencing their own kind of Christendom (this is examined in Jenkins’ book *The Next Christendom*),\(^7\) western cultures are facing quite a different phenomenon. Even renewal movements such as the Pentecostal churches have been unable to stem the decline or change the overall pattern of marginalisation. Guder emphasises the diminishing attendance of churches, but also leadership burnout, lack of interest in denominationalism, the exodus of younger people, biblical illiteracy, irrelevance of forms of worship and liturgy, and various other expressions of post-Christendom.\(^8\) For many postmodern people, church has come to be seen as ‘ingrown, tired, petty, crotchety, and out of touch – or else manic, wild-eyed, and lunatic.’\(^9\) Drane even goes as far as to suggest that ‘we are now faced with the serious possibility – likelihood, even – that the Christian faith might disappear entirely from our culture within the first half of this

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\(^7\) Jenkins describes how Christianity has moved from the West into Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and he predicts that by the year 2050, only about one-fifth of the world’s three billion Christians will be non-Hispanic Caucasian (see the editorial reviews by the Library Journal and Ray Olson at http://www.amazon.com/Next-Christendom-Coming-Global-Christianity/dp/0195146166, Accessed December 7, 2008). This will result, suggests Jenkins, in religious, political and social transformation and struggle, especially with the corresponding growth in Islam. The Christendom that is forming in the developing world is not middle-class; it is the faith of poor nonwhites living south of Europe, North America and Russia, and will be shaped by the concerns, values, spiritualities and social and religious concerns of those outside of the wealthy global north.


Underlying these discussions is the awareness that a ‘clash of epistemologies’ is occurring, as Christendom and post-Christendom paradigms, Modernity, postmodernity and pluralism, the forces of globalism, and the revival of traditionalism and religious fundamentalism in some quarters, are engaged in a complex coexistence in our culture. There is also a conviction that while institutional recognition and numerical growth are poor ‘primary indicators of the church’s health’, these drastic symptoms of post-Christendom ‘point to an aetiology to be found within the church itself’.

The EMCM literature suggests, then, that a disease is rooted in Christendom and in the paradigmatic approaches constructed within the context of what the EMCM literature often calls the ‘Constantinian’ church. Shenk considers this aetiology to be particularly expressed in Christendom’s fostering of an ecclesial life in the churches where ethical and moral standards are noticeably lower than the gospel’s expectation and vision. It is also expressed where the church has conformed and compromised culturally to the systems of the world and its attendant powers and principalities, where ecclesiastical structures are archaic, and, therefore, where lack of integrity and identity are embedded and ‘enervating’. In order to understand what it means to be the church in a post-Christendom context, we need to understand Christendom, its history, vestiges, and inner and societal dynamics, as well as the relationship

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12 Shenk, Write the Vision. p.5.
examined by Niebuhr and others between gospel, church and culture.\textsuperscript{14}

Murray believes that post-Christendom moves the Christian church, congregations, and the Christian story into marginality and liminality (using the definitions of these provided earlier in this section), and, hopefully, a renewed understanding of itself as essentially missional.\textsuperscript{15} For Murray, post-Christendom does not necessarily mean post-Christian, because he is not convinced that Christendom always represented what is truly Christian. It does mean, however, that the Christian church is experiencing the demise of its centred, majority, privileged, controlling, and settled status in western culture.\textsuperscript{16} Reflecting the tone of most of the works in the EMCM literature examined, Murray wrote \textit{Post-Christendom} with a missional expectation and sense of ecclesiological and eschatological hope in the missional imagination and possibilities of the churches in this present post-Christendom context. His sentiment about the regrets and achievements of Christendom capture the mood of the EMCM literature regarding this phenomenon well.\textsuperscript{17}

Christendom’s demise, even though the expression and extent of this demise has varied greatly in western cultures, was facilitated by a number of factors: disillusionment with Modernity, the institutionalisation of the Christian church in the Western world, by the emergence of such phenomena as postmodernism,

\textsuperscript{14} H.R. Niebuhr, \textit{Christ and Culture} (New York: Harper and Row, 1954). Niebuhr’s work is examined elsewhere in this thesis, and although it is becoming dated it is still a valuable book.
\textsuperscript{15} Murray, \textit{Post-Christendom}. p.20.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p.1-22.
\textsuperscript{17} He writes, ‘(This book) celebrates the end of Christendom and the distorting influence of power, wealth and status on the Christian story. It grieves the violence, corruption, folly and arrogance of Christendom. It rejoices that all who choose to become followers of Jesus today do so freely without pressure or inducements. It revels in a context where the Christian story is becoming unknown and can be rediscovered (by Christians and others). It welcomes the freedom to look afresh at many issues seen for so long only through the lens of Christendom. It anticipates new and liberating discoveries as Christians explore what it means to be church on the margins that operate as a movement rather than an institution. And it trusts that history will turn out how God intends with or without Christians attempting to control it.’ Ibid. p.21. His assertion is poorly defended however, and is open to significant critique. For instance, can the church just be a movement without an institutional aspect? Is that a sort of ahistorical ideal that really is not essentially Christian?
pluralisation, globalisation, urbanisation, multiculturalism, and fragmentation in the cultures of the allegedly Christian nations. Murray quotes Alan Roxburgh in agreeing with the assertion that for western culture ‘The fourth and twentieth centuries form bookends marking transition points in the history of the church… Christians must now struggle to understand the meaning of their social location in a decentred world.’ Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313, reversing the persecutions of his predecessor Diocletian, and proclaiming religious toleration throughout the Roman Empire, preparing the way for the legal recognition of Christianity as the religion of the Empire. Yet Murray contends that this assertion by Roxburgh must be investigated theologically. The ecclesiastical, social and paradigmatic vestiges of Christendom need to be examined. I will outline in more detail in this and the next chapter that this post-Christendom context must be responded to with imagination, missionality, and anticipation.

According to the EMCM literature, the postmodern, post-Christendom Western world is characterised by secularity, which does not mean un-spirituality or irreligiosity, and by ‘its radical anthropocentricity.’ Any privileged position that

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the church may have enjoyed in the public sphere of western culture in the past is
gone. The church has been marginalised to the privatised world of personal piety,
which is a role that it has often embraced uncritically and with little resistance. Although Christendom is a failed experiment, the church’s memory, images and
instincts are still shaped by its legacy. The caretaker days of the church are over,
however, and the culture no longer looks to the church for moral, ethical or spiritual
guidance. Maddox would debate this contention. She suggested that in the
Australian context, the former Prime Minister John Howard harnessed the
conservative social agenda of some forms of evangelicalism, and put Australia’s
egalitarian, democratic culture under threat. Frame, however, defends the church-
state separation in Australia, believing that churches are often engaged in misguided
activism. He contends that churches should dialogue on the issues around the relation
of church and state in an informed, intelligent and honest fashion. They should
develop a comprehensive Australian position on the relationship between the two, as
well as a description of the limits on their communication, relation and
engagement.

Hauerwas and Willimon insist that the church and individual Christians in the
present post-Christendom context need to conceive themselves as ‘resident aliens, an
adventurous colony in a society of unbelief.’ The Christian church in western

23 Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., *The Church between Gospel and Culture*. p.6-7.
24 Ibid. p.17. Cf. p.16-17. The culture still works on some of the assumptions in these areas that
historically come from Christianity. See A.E. McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of
25 M. Maddox, *God under Howard: The Rise of the Religious Right in Australian Politics* (Crows
Christian Assessment of Culture and Ministry for People Who Know That Something Is Wrong*
(Nashville: Abingdon, 1989). p.44-49. Hauerwas continues the tradition first developed by John
Howard Yoder and his critique of the Constantinian church. J.H. Yoder, *The Priestly Kingdom: Social
Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1985); ———, *The Politics of Jesus*
(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).
culture needs to rediscover its exilic nature as an alternative *polis*, and a countercultural movement. It needs to become a discipling community that,

> Again asserts that God, not nations, rules the world, that the boundaries of God’s kingdom transcend those of Caesar, and that the main political task of the church is the formation of people who see clearly the cost of discipleship and are willing to pay the price.\(^{28}\)

Hunsberger suggests that this is concretely outworked as the church forms an alternative community, articulates a ‘wider rationality’, heals people’s fragmentary lives, and fans into flame a ‘subversive witness’. In the same work, Van Gelder proposes that the church not only needs to accept its changed status. It also needs to develop a public theology that can contextualise and communicate theology, scripture and the wider rationality of faith to contemporary culture.\(^{29}\) Disestablishment, then, may be a constructive way forward as the church rediscovers its missional ecclesiology. According to Hall, intentional disestablishment is a work of theology.\(^ {30}\)

Therefore, for the EMCM authors, the church is clearly in an age of post-Christendom, marginalisation, and liminality, and this is further evidenced by the following:

1. There is a burgeoning group of Christians who have ceased to attend formal Christian gatherings and churches, but who still maintain some kind of faith.\(^ {31}\)

These people often experience their sense of dissatisfaction with church life as

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being bored, isolated, disconnected, passive, misunderstood, pressured and superficial, write Riddell, Pierson and Kirkpatrick. While this exodus occurs, the church is often engaged in irrelevant issues and arguments. It is failing to recognise that the plausibility structures it has relied upon have disintegrated. The ‘playing field’ is no longer the same. ‘I think that we are standing on a watershed. Times of transition… I think that the big church is in for an even bigger shock’;\textsuperscript{32}

2. Christianity’s privileged position in the postmodern world has evaporated. It is now in a position similar to that of the early church.\textsuperscript{33} The roles that it has played in the development of western culture are greeted with disinterest, disdain or aggression.\textsuperscript{34} According to Harvey, Christianity now needs to self-critically analyse what went wrong in the Christendom era, and develop an appropriate post-Christendom ecclesiology;\textsuperscript{35}

3. The urgency and, hopefully, re-imagining and re-visioning the churches are experiencing in this period of ‘death’ is evident, as illuminated by a quotation used by Jinkins: ‘Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully’.\textsuperscript{36} For Jinkins, the anxiety that the churches are engulfed in during this movement from ‘youth to decrepitude’ is a sign pointing toward a more complete, faithful and adequate ecclesiology and self-understanding. This entails an examination of identity, responsibility, the rebirth that comes from giving oneself over to death (the

\textsuperscript{32} Riddell, Pierson, and Kirkpatrick, \textit{The Prodigal Project}. p.103, and pages 1, 12-14, 18-19, 33, and \textit{passim}.


\textsuperscript{34} Sweet, ed. \textit{The Church in Emerging Culture}. p.39 n.21, and McManus, \textit{An Unstoppable Force}. p.43.

\textsuperscript{35} Harvey, \textit{Another City}. p.x, 12-13, and 64-65.

\textsuperscript{36} Dr Samuel Johnson, September 19, 1777, in James Boswell’s \textit{Life of Johnson}, quoted in Jinkins, \textit{The Church Faces Death}. p.vii.
assurance of life after death), and the attractiveness inherent in a church secure enough in God’s providence and activity to be unconcerned about its survival.

Jinkins perspectives are a welcome corrective to some of the ecclesiological shortsightedness of the churches in Christendom, especially in its ‘McDonaldised’ manifestations, and of some of the EMCM writers.

4. Kelly notes that Post-Christian spirituality has grown exponentially with the exploration of Eastern faiths and practices, the delving into pre-Western spiritualities, the recovery of nature religions, and the emphasis on spiritual experience and pragmatism. Kimball characterises this spiritual search as ‘anti-Christian, anti-church, post-Christian’. This post-Christian era is saturated with elements of both Modernity and Postmodernity. It makes it even more difficult for the church to navigate an appropriate response or stance if it is taking its cues from the rapidly evolving culture.

Roxburgh’s explication of marginalisation and liminality has had significant

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37 J.W. Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Consumer Culture and the Church’s Future* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2001), p.28-33, and 75. In line with Weberian social analysis, McDonaldisation is “the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world”… the most optimum and efficient ways to achieve given ends (always results in) “formal rationality”, that is, a collection of rules, regulations, and procedures, and the growth of the bureaucratic systems necessary to ensure the smooth operation of such practices.’ Drane is here quoting Ritzer from Ritzer, *The McDonaldization*.: Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church*. p.28-29.

38 Jinkins, *The Church Faces Death*. p.3-8, 37-38, 58, and 101-104. Jinkins suggests, ‘When the church faces the prospect of its own demise (for whatever reasons), it faces a critical moment when its vocation is called into question, when it has the unparalleled opportunity to comprehend and to render its life. When the church faces death, in point of fact, it encounters a critical moment when it may know the power of the resurrection. But the church can only know this power in actually facing its death. Resurrection is not an abstraction, or a mere possibility; resurrection is impossibility… It is not a guarantee… Only by letting go of our grasp on institutional survival can we possibly recover our vocation.’ ———, *The Church Faces Death*. p.13-14. He also writes, (The church’s life) ‘does not depend ultimately upon its skill, its wiles, its wisdom… its executive competence, its technical expertise, its strategies, and its long-term planning… (or) its faithfulness, theological or moral. The church’s life depends upon the power and faithfulness of God to raise the Body of Christ from every death, because its life is a continuing participation in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ ———, *The Church Faces Death*. p.28. See the whole section on p.27-32 of that work.


influence on the other EMCM writings. Agreeing with the other writers that Post-Christendom entails an experience of marginalisation, Roxburgh argues that liminality is a model for engagement that needs further exploration, since liminality is a concept that ‘describes the transition process accompanying a change of state or social position.’\(^{41}\) While this definition is reasonable, footnote 2 of this chapter has better definitions of liminality that clarify the kind of issues Roxburgh is identifying here. For Roxburgh themes of Modernity such as individualism, instrumental rationality and self-interested fragmentation have previously shaped the functional paradigms of Christian leadership.\(^{42}\) However, post-Christendom requires that the church creatively engage its liminality in such a way that new models of leadership, missional engagement, and perspectives on missionary ecclesiology emerge, such as the leader as pastor/poet, pastor/prophet, and pastor/apostle.\(^{43}\)

Groups experiencing liminality go through three stages that are very informative for the church in its current context. These are *separation* (separation from traditional roles), and then *liminality* (marginalisation with the purpose of transformation and discovery of new roles, which might correspond to where the church finds itself today in contemporary western culture). The third stage is *reaggregation* (reintegration with a new character and roles, and, ideally, with a fresh value on *communitas*, as the people of God discover a new vision for being a community of faith and mission in the world).\(^{44}\)

The EMCM literature’s perspectives on the western churches’ appropriate missional responses to post-Christendom will be explored in greater detail further on in this and


\(^{42}\) Ibid. p.22.

\(^{43}\) Ibid. p.57-66.

\(^{44}\) Ibid. p.27-56.
the next chapter, and the next section will examine the EMCM views on a post-Christendom, missional, and incarnational ecclesiology.

4.1.2 Missional and Incarnational Ecclesiology

David Bosch, the regarded Protestant missionary statesman, and one of the fathers of the EMCM movement, asserts that missional ecclesiology views the relationship between mission and the church in such a way that mission is ‘a permanent and intrinsic dimension of the church’s life’ and being.45

The development of a missional and incarnational ecclesiology is of primary concern to the EMCM literature analysed.46 Roxburgh, in a postgraduate seminar on Issues in Forming Missional Leaders,47 proposed that there are at least thirteen sources for the escalating interest and innovation in missional ecclesiology in the West, and, by

45 ‘Mission refers to a permanent and intrinsic dimension of the church’s life. The church “is missionary by its very nature”… and it is impossible to talk about church without at the same time talking about mission. Because God is a missionary God, God’s people are missionary people. The church’s mission is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for its mission… Ecclesiology does not precede missiology; there cannot be church without an intrinsic missionary dimension. And Shenk (1991:107) quotes Emil Brunner’s famous adage: “The church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning.” ’ Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.32. Cf. p.29-32.


47 Roxburgh, A. Issues in Forming Missional Leaders – a postgraduate subject with the Australian College of Theology, taught at Burleigh College, Adelaide, in 2005. Roxburgh’s seminars on the sources of missional ecclesiology in the West, and on how churches can be better equipped to reach a changing world, have been widely acclaimed in North America, Canada, New Zealand, Europe, Britain and Australia.
extrapolation, of the burgeoning EMCM conversation. I will list these here, with my own comments on their perspectives or influence:

1. Post-Christendom – The churches of the West have experienced significant cultural change and flux, that is, the end of Christendom, and are now navigating the experience of marginality and liminality. There is a need to make sense of this ecclesiologically and missiologically.\(^{48}\)

2. Missiology at Home – A realization that evangelism in western culture needs to be broadened by the perspectives of missiology, and that missiology begins at home in our own culture.\(^{49}\)

3. Disenchantment with Abstract Rationalism and Unreflective Pragmatism – Some have become disillusioned with expressions of Protestantism that they find either too abstract and rationalistic on the one hand, or too unreflective and pragmatic on the other.\(^{50}\)

4. Decentred church – A discussion of the forms of church that are less centralised and ‘solid’, such as the writings of Ward in *Liquid Church* and Simson in *Houses that Change the World*.\(^{51}\)

5. Modern/Postmodern Conversation – The perspective in some quarters that modernity’s worldview is in question in western culture, and that its foundationalism, anthropocentrism, excision of memory and traditions, and shifting of identity to individualism needs examination. Postmodernism and postmodernity, according to the EMCM, needs to be engaged missionally, being critiqued for its possibilities and pitfalls.\(^{52}\)

\(^{48}\) Murray, *Post-Christendom*.

\(^{49}\) Williams, *Mission-Shaped Church*.

\(^{50}\) Tomlinson, *The Post Evangelical*.; Drane, *The Mcdonaldization of the Church*.


6. Globalisation – Globalisation not only spreads theological perspectives widely and quickly, it also affects western culture in ways that require a missional ecclesiology, such as its pluralism, multiple narratives, social mobility, networking of society, and the like.\textsuperscript{53}

7. New Testament Studies – Particularly the writings of Bishop N.T. Wright. Wright has been warmly embraced by the EMCM, and his insights into the historical Jesus, and Pauline and narrative theology, have been helpful for that movement, as it has theologised missiologically. Other New Testament scholars have been exploring narrative, christology and Paul in fresh ways also, and this is feeding the imagination of the EMCM – for instance, the questioning of the individualistic reading of Paul by Augustine and Luther, in Stendahl’s writing.\textsuperscript{54}

8. Insights from Communication, Network, and Change Theories – Western theologians and pastors are beginning to consider the implications of communication theory for their churches and missions. They are also considering the networked nature of western culture and its profound implications for the economic and social relationships forged in this new age of information.\textsuperscript{55} In addition, some consideration is being given to how churches are required in this time of significant cultural upheaval to move beyond mere technical forms of change, and learn the skills and capacities to negotiate radical, discontinuous, and adaptive change.\textsuperscript{56}

9. Radical Orthodoxy – A mainly British theological movement, which is heavily


influenced by postmodernism and Neo-Platonism, and which seeks to mine patristic, medieval and renaissance material for contemporary theology. It asks, what are the foundations of our theology, missional activity and ecclesial life, and how can christology be recovered as the source of these things.  

10. Post-liberal/Narrative Theology – A reaction to modernist and rationalistic trends in theological liberalism, postliberal (or narrative) theology focuses on a narrative presentation of Christian faith, doctrine, and theological formation. It suggests that the very nature of the biblical text is narrative, and that other frameworks of systematic theology, which have domesticated or controlled the biblical text, have eclipsed this. A recovery of narrative theology and readings is therefore necessary.

11. Incarnation/christology – Discussions on incarnational theology and christology, which have stimulated EMCM thought about the nature of missional activity in the church.

12. Missiologists – Writers such as Newbigin, Bosch and Bonk being read widely in the western church, and have influence in the emerging-missional and wider church conversations.

13. Moreover, many more factors, and far more complexity than this list might suggest.

It is possible to outline the contours of a missional ecclesiology in the EMCM texts considered. The missional ecclesiology that emerges has as its core conviction that

60 Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, etc; Bosch, Transforming Mission, etc; J.J. Bonk, Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem, Revised and Expanded ed., American Society of Missiology Series (Markyknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007). etc.
the church is essentially missionary. It is demonstrated in the quotation above from Bosch, that ‘the church should define itself in terms of mission – to take the gospel to and incarnate the gospel within a specific context’. 61 There is also a conviction that a biblical ecclesiology places mission at the centre of the church’s being and ministries. Mission is the essential character of the church as it seeks to participate in God’s redemptive activity in the world. 62 Missional ecclesiology, therefore, should be biblically shaped, historically informed, contextually relevant, eschatologically oriented, and able to be practically applied in local church settings. 63

Unfortunately, ecclesiology and missiology have often developed in isolation from each other. In recent years, there has been an integration of the two in some quarters of Western theology. 64 This has entailed an understanding of the Triune God as a missionary God who calls his people in the world to be a missionary church with an eschatological outlook. Consequently, ‘ecclesiology and missiology are not separate theological disciplines, but are, in fact, interrelated and complementary.’ 65

The concept of the missio Dei draws our attention to ‘a profoundly theocentric reconceptualisation of Christian mission’ and theology, 66 in which God is seen as missionally healing and restoring all of creation through the nature and ‘movements’ 67 of the Trinity, and in which the church is drawn into missional participation. While the perichoretic nature of the Trinity reveals the communal

63 Guder, Missional Church. p.11-12. Cf. p.3-5, 6-8, 79-83, and passim.
65 Ibid. p.30-31, and 96-98.
66 Guder, Missional Church. p.3.
nature of the church as ‘a temporal echo of all the eternal community that God is’,\(^{68}\) the ‘sending that characterises that divine communion’\(^{69}\) is reflected in missional ecclesiology and the missional endeavours of the church, and is fundamental to the character of the church. This is a central idea in this thesis, which connects the nature of God, ecclesiology and missiology.

The fourth characteristic of the church mentioned in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381), that is, *apostolic*, has been welcomed by the EMCM literature as critical to the church’s foundation and missionary commission in the world.\(^{70}\) Along with this is the claim that when approaching the Scriptures a missional hermeneutic must complement and partner a missional and incarnational ecclesiology.\(^{71}\)

Van Gelder writes that an adequate missional and incarnational ecclesiology embraces other ecclesiological perspectives and seeks to reconceive them missionally. Such perspectives include God’s redemptive reign and the nature of the church, New Testament portrayals of the church, core biblical images of the church (such as the ‘people of God’, ‘Body of Christ’, ‘communion of saints’, and ‘creation of the Spirit’), and historical descriptions of the church. It also reformulates missionally other conceptions of the church, such as its holiness and humanity, Spirituality and sociality, catholicity and locality, universality and contextuality, diversity and unity, institutionality and missionality, and its apostolic-missionary-sent dimensions.\(^{72}\) Missional ecclesiology must be firmly grounded in an adequate, rich, and biblical understanding of the nature of the church. Jinkins, drawing on


\(^{69}\) Guder, *Missional Church*. p.82.


\(^{71}\) Guder, *Missional Church*. p.11.

Avery Dulles’ *Models of the Church*, measuredly emphasises that an adequate ecclesiology must take into account the variety of ways the church has been understood throughout its history – missionally, institutionally, communally, sacramentally, and the like – and must be constructed through a critical engagement with the various ecclesiological taxonomies we have available. The church is a mystery and we need various models to try to understand it.

There is also a deep conviction that there must be concrete expressions of missional ecclesiology in local congregations. According to the North American Gospel and Our Culture Network, Michael Frost of the Morling Baptist Theological Seminary, and Alan Hirsch of the Forge Mission Network, churches that embrace a missional ecclesiology will demonstrate the following ‘indicators’. Frost and Hirsch propose that the first three provide ‘energy and direction’ for the remaining twelve, and indeed shape their book chapters around these first three themes or indicators. For each of these fifteen indicators I begin with quoting the indicator verbatim, which in each case is the first sentence, then briefly elaborate on each one, drawing from their source’s description, and then add insights on missional ecclesiology from other EMCM writings as appropriate. In Barrett, the North American Gospel and Our Culture Network outline their twelve key ‘indicators of a missional church’ and describe what each one looks like in practice, as well as providing concrete examples of churches who are genuinely attempting to apply a missional ecclesiology in their local contexts in these ways:

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75 Barrett, *Treasure in Clay Jars*. p.159-172, and Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*. p.11-12. The North American Gospel and Our Culture Network articulates the following aims: 'To provide useful research regarding the encounter between the Gospel and our culture. To encourage
1. ‘The missional church is incarnational, not attractional, in its ecclesiology.’ It incarnates the gospel in contemporary culture, rather than attracts people to sacred or contemporised sanctuaries. All leaders of communities that embrace a missional ecclesiology are sensitive to the current post-Christendom and postmodern context, and senior leaders especially understand how to lead incarnationally through the transitional processes inherent in marginality and liminality. As mentioned previously, according to Roxburgh such leaders complement their pastoral gifting with the skills of the poet, prophet, missionary, and apostle.

2. ‘The missional church is messianic, not dualistic, in its spirituality.’ Like Jesus, allege Frost and Hirsch, its worldview is ‘holistic and integrated’, rather than dualistic (although how ‘messianic’ is ‘holistic and integrated’ is not clear in their work in my opinion).

3. ‘The missional church adopts an apostolic, rather than a hierarchical, mode of leadership.’ The fivefold gifts of Ephesians 6 are all equally recognised, and a flat rather than hierarchical leadership approach is maintained.

4. ‘The missional church proclaims the gospel.’ A faithful, creative and contextually sensitive presentation of the gospel narrative is present.

5. ‘The missional church is a community where all members are involved in local action for the transformation of the life and witness of the church. The network offers companionship for Christian leaders and groups eager to work together with others who share similar concerns. It brings together people from a wide spectrum of churches – from Mennonite to Roman Catholic, from Anglican to Southern Baptist – and range of local ministry settings.’ The Gospel and Our Culture Network. http://www.gocn.org. Accessed December 7, 2008.

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76 Again, for clarification, the first sentence of each of a, b and c are taken from Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*. p.12.


learning to become disciples of Jesus. Discipleship and learning to live in God’s reign are valued, expected, and sought after. Mentoring, training and nurturing are intentionally shaped so that ‘the skills and habits of Christian discipleship’ are ingrained in individuals and the community.

6. ‘The Bible is normative in this church’s life.’ Knowledge of the Scriptures is complemented by a passion to obey them, processes for hearing and following them communally, and a desire to put them into conversation with the community’s context.

7. ‘The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord.’ Therefore, there is an evidenced longing to conform to Christ instead of the plethora of cultures surrounding them, and a willingness to be different, to take risks, to embody Christ’s love, and to suffer.

8. ‘The church seeks to discern God’s specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all its members.’ Missionality is embraced by the whole community and is its clear priority, the community’s faithfulness to its particular missional vocation is pursued and recognised by all, and giftings in the community are identified, developed, and released.

9. ‘A missional community is indicated by how Christians behave toward one another.’ The world knows who their Lord is by their love, generosity, self-sacrifice, and the fruit of the Spirit.

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79 Ibid. p.163-164.
80 Ibid. p.163.
81 Ibid. p.164.
82 Ibid. p.165.
83 Ibid. p.165-167.
84 Ibid. p.167.
10. ‘It is a community that practices reconciliation.’ A heterogeneous community intentionally evolves as barriers are removed, conflicts are constructively resolved, difference is valued, and peacemaking and reconciliation are honoured.

11. ‘People within the community hold themselves accountable to one another in love.’ They covenant with each other in this regard, evaluating the quality of their structures, relationships and community, and seeking honest and transparent unity of spirit.

12. ‘The church practices hospitality.’ Welcoming strangers into the love and care of the community is pivotal to their missionality and communal values.

13. ‘Worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God’s presence and God’s promised future.’ Communal worship is culturally sensitive, but also transformational, communally unifying, and eschatologically oriented.

14. ‘This community has a vital public witness.’ Its public witness demonstrably influences the church’s immediate surroundings and social contexts, as it seeks practical justice, peace, transformed lives, and the like.

15. ‘There is recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.’ There is an eschatological and providential vision that undergirds the life of the church and this vision is of the reign of God, and the

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85 Ibid. p.167-168.
86 Ibid. p.168-169.
87 Ibid. p.169-170.
88 Ibid. p.170.
89 Ibid. p.171.
90 Ibid. p.171-172.
chuch’s frailties are viewed in the light of the broader realities of the kingdom
of God.91

How missional and incarnational ecclesiology is expressed in the local community is
discussed further in section 4.1.5 of this chapter. It is clear from my analysis that the
ecclesiology of the EMCM literature places mission at its core. In fact, some even
propose that authentic ecclesiology and theology must be missiology, based in a
missiological hermeneutic,92 as seems to be the case in much Asian and African
theology,93 or at least it must be missiological. There is a range of positions on this
matter:

1. For Bosch (an important missiologist who influenced the EMCM but cannot in
   any way be considered an explicit EMCM ‘member), a missionary theology is
   far more critical than a mere theology of mission, since ‘we are in need of a
   missiological agenda for theology, not just a theological agenda for mission;
   for theology, rightly understood, has no reason to exist other than critically to
   accompany the missio Dei.’94

2. Frost and Hirsch suggest that christology should lead to missiology, which in
   should lead to ecclesiology, so that ecclesiology is grounded in the prior
   christological and missiological agendas.95

3. Kreider writes that missiological theology reflects the paradigm of the early

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91 Ward, Liquid Church. p.8-10. It might be considered that these characteristics cumulatively point to
a ‘sectarian’ view of the church, in their dogged adherence to a narrowly defined point of view. While
’sectarian’ is probably too strong a word, such mild parochialism seems evident.
94 Ibid. p.32. Cf. p.36.
Christians, and McManus even proposes the tenuous suggestion that Jesus employed a missiological hermeneutic as opposed to his detractor’s theological interpretations, and that Christians should move from a theological to missiological view of the Scriptures, whatever that is supposed to mean.

4. Webber more soberly writes that all theological reflection needs to be embedded in the missio Dei as the people of God communally discern God’s historical actions and their faithful, contextual response, since, as Kaehler affirms, ‘mission is the mother of theology.’

As a summary remark that reflects well the sentiment of the EMCM literature, Van Gelder offers the proposition that every ecclesiology should be a missiological ecclesiology, and, even more controversially that every historical ecclesiology has performed as a missional ecclesiology.

4.1.3 The Gospel, Church and Culture Relationship

Niebuhr’s Christ and Culture has influenced much of the discussion about the relationship between the gospel, church and culture in the EMCM writings, even though, as we will see, it has been significantly criticised lately. Niebuhr’s work articulates the ways in which contextualisation might work to construct a mutually

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98 Ibid. p.94.
101 Van Gelder proposes, therefore, that, ‘To some extent, every historical ecclesiology has functioned as a missiological ecclesiology, even if it has not defined itself as such. There are not multiple missions of God. God is one. His mission in the world is one. The church’s understanding of its existence in the world, therefore, regardless of its presence in different contexts, should reflect an understanding of the mission of the Triune God.’ Van Gelder, The Essence of the Church. p.37-38.
102 Niebuhr, Christ and Culture. See, for example, Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.15-18; and Jinkins, The Church Faces Death. p.53-57.
constructive and critical relationship between the gospel and culture. He offers a
schema by which we might understand contextualisation as a grounded, theologically
rigorous process of missional ecclesiology. Niebuhr suggested five possible ways
that the church has approached culture. Missional ecclesiology involves taking both
the gospel and culture seriously, thereby avoiding irrelevance and the process of
civilisation (Christ-against-culture), or syncretism, universalism and the pitfalls of
the purely subjective (Christ-of-culture). This position might be conceived of as a
fluid dialogue between all of Niebuhr’s five types, with a clear emphasis on Christ-
above-culture, and Christ-transforming-culture (while seeing possibilities of
describing Christ-and-culture-in-paradox). Therefore, some EMCM authors
suggest that this ongoing conversation between the five types is informing and
enriching. This is because all five types are sometimes appropriate, no one of the
types is simply and always correct, and it is impossible to find any one correct
answer to this ongoing problem (that is, the problem of the relationship between
Christ and culture in developing an appropriate missional ecclesiology).

Niebuhr’s framework has been criticised for some inherent weaknesses. Hauerwas
and Willimon even write, ‘we have come to believe that few books have been a
greater hindrance to an accurate assessment of our situation than Christ and
Culture.’ While this seems far too strong an assertion, since it views Niebuhr
through a particular Radical Reformation paradigm, their main criticisms of
Niebuhr’s construct and assumptions are worth noting, along with the evaluations
articulated by Barrett, Clapp, Sweet and others, since these appraisals have been very

103 M. Frost, Translating the Gospel (Macquarie Park: Morling Baptist Theological Seminary, Tinsley
Institute, 2002). Available at http://janalanmckenzie.squarespace.com/download-files/pastoral-
ministry/Translating%20the%20Gospel.pdf, and see especially pages 4-5. Accessed December 7,
2008.
104 See, for example: Jinkins, The Church Faces Death. p.53-57.
105 See Bosch’s criticism as an example, in Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.63 n.2.
influential in the EMCM literature: \(^{107}\)

1. While Niebuhr’s framework seems to suggest it, no monolithic ‘culture’ exists for the gospel or Christians to engage. Instead, we live among a plurality of postmodern cultures, and there are a variety of ecclesiological and missiological responses possible within this plethora of cultures; \(^{108}\)

2. Niebuhr’s categories are too individualistic and modernist, and comparing or juxtaposing Christ and culture is misleading since these are not parallel concepts, and is ‘like comparing apples and organisation’; \(^{109}\)

3. A ‘Constantinian social strategy’ is effectively endorsed, as Christians are encouraged to indiscriminately or undiscerningly accept culture and politics and be involved with what God is doing in those spheres;

4. Niebuhr’s typology is too dependent on the assumptions of Modernity, and, contrary to the postmodern condition we now find ourselves in, considers cultural and ecclesiological change to be ‘incremental, not exponential’; \(^{110}\)

5. Endorsing the transformist and inclusive approach over the others is a form of ‘repressive tolerance’, and such pluralistic theology supported political and cultural pluralism in Christendom;

6. Marginalising the ‘Christ against culture’ position as sectarian and undesirable is tenuous, and reveals Niebuhr’s own bias, since the category cannot exist in

\(^{107}\) Ibid. p.40-48.


\(^{110}\) Sweet, ed. The Church in Emerging Culture. p.16-17.
practice because no one can actually withdraw completely from the world;\textsuperscript{111}

7. Niebuhr did not question the status quo between the Christendom church and western culture, ‘he merely justified what was there – a church that had ceased to ask the right questions as it went about congratulating itself for transforming the world, not noticing, that in fact the world had tamed the church’;\textsuperscript{112}

8. The church may have been effectively encouraged to suppress the uniqueness or counter-cultural impetus of the gospel in order to engage non-sectarianally in a pluralist culture and state, yet the church is uniquely transcultural, and should ‘be able to say and show, in its life together, that God, not nations, rules the world’;\textsuperscript{113}

9. Therefore, Hauerwas and Willimon, and those EMCM writers aligned with the Radical Reformation, suggest the following correctives:

a. John Howard Yoder’s typology is more useful than Niebuhr’s, and its implications should be explored in the present post-Christendom context. Yoder describes ‘the activist church, the conversionist church, and the confessing church’;\textsuperscript{114}

b. The church’s engagement with cultures is complex, and the church should regard itself as culture;\textsuperscript{115}

c. The church is to be a countercultural, public, political, visible, and

\textsuperscript{111} Guder, Missional Church. p.116.
\textsuperscript{112} Hauerwas and Willimon, Resident Aliens. p.41.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid. p.43.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid. p.44. For Yoder’s description of these categories see J.H. Yoder, ”A People in the World: Theological Interpretation,” in The Concept of the Believer's Church, ed. J.L. Garrett (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969). p.252-283.
\textsuperscript{115} Clapp, A Peculiar People. p.176-177.
alternative *polis*, which transforms the world while being distinctively a people of the Cross.\(^{116}\)

Influential to the EMCM writings, Clapp agrees with the above critique of Niebuhr. He asserts that ecclesiological domestication has resulted from the Christendom allegiance with liberal and Gnostic tendencies, and that the church needs to be re-politicised, embracing and ‘practicing the politics of Jesus’ as an eschatological, alternative *polis* and way of life.\(^{117}\) While *Christ and Culture* was written in an age when the church was unable to see itself as a distinct culture, and while Niebuhr relied too heavily on the differentiation between church and sect and on Troeltsch’s *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* in the construction of his five types,\(^{118}\) the current culture wars can re-sharpen the Christian vision. This proposition is one that Clapp writes about enthusiastically.\(^{119}\)

Milbank, however, sounds a cautionary note with regard to Clapp’s perspectives in his *Theology and Social Theory*, re-narrating the history of secular social theory from the perspective of Christian theology. He calls for theology to stop deferring to secular social theory, to see and position itself as an alternative or at least an enhancement to the secular theories available, and to become the social theory for the

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\(^{116}\) Ibid. p.56-57.

\(^{117}\) See Chapter Five of *A Peculiar People* titled ‘The Church as Church: Practicing the Politics of Jesus’; Ibid. p.76-93.


\(^{119}\) ‘The culture wars can be welcomed on the count that they help return us to a place where we can conceive of Christianity as a way of life, as a specific manner of being and doing in the world. And they make it possible for Christians… to move easily and directly into the public, the social, the political and the economic realms – and to do so specifically as Christians. The culture wars free the church of the Constantinian shackles that have confined it for seventeen centuries. They make it possible for the church not merely to be relevant to culture but to be a culture… They return the church to an existence that can become distinctively, exhilaratingly Christian – a social and political existence quite like that of the church in its earliest days.’ Clapp, *A Peculiar People*. p.75.
people of God.\textsuperscript{120}

Clapp goes on to insist that a healthy sectarianism may be beneficial for engaging the outsider, practicing a discerning, faithful and truthful ‘eavesdropping’ on the world in which we are on mission, and maintaining an authentic tension between the church and the world. Embracing the concept of ‘Christians as nomads and resident aliens who will never be completely at home in a fallen world’ is vital, as is resisting any allegiance with the state or other manifestations of prestige, power and position.\textsuperscript{121}

His vision is shared by those EMCM authors with a Radical Reformation (Anabaptist, Mennonite or Confessing Church) leaning or sympathy, such as the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America, Hall, Kreider, Harvey, Guder, Hunsberger, Kenneson, Barrett, Shenk, and Murray.\textsuperscript{122} Indeed, the perspectives of this tradition within Western Protestantism have significantly influenced the EMCM works analysed, and especially in respect to the gospel, church and culture relationship. Barrett, for instance, in Chapter 5 of *Missional Church* articulates this Radical Reformation position concisely, in one of the main EMCM books published in recent years.\textsuperscript{123}

Barrett’s main assertions are listed below, along with references to, and addition perspectives of, other EMCM literature that support this Radical Reformation perspective on the relationship between gospel, church and culture, and these contentions should be added to the affirmations made by Hauerwas and Willimon in points 9 a-b above:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).
\item \textsuperscript{122} While some of these authors mentioned are unashamedly aligned with the Radical Reformation, others hold a sympathy for its views that are more implicit than explicit.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Guder, *Missional Church*. p.110-141. Cf. p.7-8, 10, 14, and 79.
\end{itemize}
1. By rejecting a Christendom accommodation of the principalities and powers, by intentionally disestablishing itself, and by removing itself from the problems of a positivistic view and culturally shaped suppression of mission and conversion grown in the soil of Modernity, the church is able to be apostolic and to unmask and critique these entities;

2. The church is a culture, and particular congregations are to be ‘in, but not of, the world’, transforming and engaging their respective surrounding cultures without compromising themselves or conforming to the world;

3. ‘The missional church in the world is a holy nation among the nations... in contrast to contemporary understandings of the church as voluntary association, chaplain to society, or vendor of religious goods and services.’ The New Testament church was politicised from its inception, and the contemporary church must be engaged in worship as a political activity, and in expressing itself, like the church of the Radical Reformation, as an alternative culture (altera civitas), polis and community that witnesses to the dominant society through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the transforming

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126 See Clapp, *A Peculiar People*. p.145-146 for his analysis of the ‘alternatives’ of syncretism and sectarianism, and their limited perspectives. See also Bosch’s description of what it means for the church to be counter-cultural, ‘although not in an escapist way’. Bosch, *Believing in the Future*. p.56-57. Guder writes, ‘The faithful church critiques its cultural environment, particularly the dominant culture; affirms those aspects of culture that do not contradict the gospel; speaks the languages of the surrounding cultures and of the gospel; constantly tries to communicate the gospel in the surrounding cultures; and is cultivating and forming the culture of God’s new community, a culture not of the world. To do so is part of its being apostolic, sent into the world.’ Guder, *Missional Church*. p.114-115.

reality of being ‘resident aliens’ in culturally-engaged exile;\textsuperscript{128}

4. Mission is about the essential nature of the church as a ‘city set on a hill’ that shares in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not merely about what activities or programs it undertakes. This holy, set-apart, reign-of-God-shaped, eschatological nature needs to be faithfully and visibly lived out in the dominant culture if the church is to be the ‘light of the world’, and involved in God’s redeeming activity in the world and of all of creation;\textsuperscript{129}

5. Apostolically, the church is to continue the work of Jesus and pattern itself after him in relation to cultures, by preaching (announcing the reign of God), teaching (developing citizens for the reign of God), and healing in the broadest possible range of meanings. The church is called to embody the ‘narratives, practices and convictions’ of the reign of God,\textsuperscript{130} through being a contrast-society that serves as a light to the nations, through being a sign, foretaste and herald of the coming kingdom. This embodiment is also through incarnating an alternative politics and ‘city’, through communally discerning all things in the light of the Lordship of Christ, and through rejecting the label of sectarian by striving to be the contrast-society envisaged by him.\textsuperscript{131}

6. Murray proposes that the Anabaptists teach us much about being the church in a marginalised context, doing mission in a post-Christendom mode, relating to


\textsuperscript{129} Van Gelder, \textit{The Essence of the Church}. p.135-140; Barrett, \textit{Treasure in Clay Jars}. p.xiii, 74-83, 124, 151, 159, and 165; and Murray, \textit{Post-Christendom}. p.xiii. ‘The church knows to expect a life full of ambiguities because it is shaped by its context as the gospel reshapes the context. Such a calling never leaves the church in a finished, settled, or permanent incarnation… The interaction between the gospel and all human cultures is a dynamic one, and it always lies at the heart of what it means to be the church.’ Guder, \textit{Missional Church}. p.14. This paragraph is quoted verbatim by Gibbs with a footnote reference to Guder, but no quotation marks indicating which part of the paragraph is a direct quotation, in Gibbs, \textit{Church Next}. p.58. One can only imagine that this is an editorial oversight.

\textsuperscript{130} Kenneson, \textit{Beyond Sectarianism}. p.87.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. p.83-104.
the cultural and political authorities as a counter-cultural movement, and forming a ‘hermeneutic of justice’ that provides a radical critique of our surrounding cultures. He also suggests that the church in post-Christendom can learn from other radical Christian groups marginalised during Christendom, such as the Donatists, Waldensians and Lollards. The church is to embrace the opportunities of marginality and liminality, develop kingdom values, and trust God to work out his purposes in history. It is to take risks that reflect the pioneering opportunities that are before it and be a reconciling and prophetic voice. This involves relinquishing pretensions and the despair that comes with unrealistic expectations, and trusting that a grass-roots movement is capable of spreading the reign of God.\textsuperscript{132}

7. In The Church Between Gospel and Culture, which was written by a range of authors associated with the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America, Hunsberger offers a ‘missiology of culture’ that establishes a triangular conversation between the gospel, particular cultures, and the church, and that builds on Newbigin’s ‘theology of cultural plurality’.\textsuperscript{133} While not offering much to Newbigin’s original vision, this chapter by Hunsberger does demonstrate the enormous influence Newbigin, Hauerwas and the tradition of the Radical Reformation have had on the current EMCM conversation about the relationship between the gospel, church and culture.\textsuperscript{134}

Naturally, those EMCM authors not implicitly or explicitly aligned with the Radical Reformation have various views on the relationship between the gospel, church and

\textsuperscript{132} Murray, Post-Christendom. p.143-177, 239-250, and 318-339.
\textsuperscript{133} Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., The Church between Gospel and Culture. p.7-10.
\textsuperscript{134} Note the influence of Newbigin, Hauerwas and Willimon, Brueggeman, Bosch, Snyder, and the Radical Reformation on this particular theme throughout Ibid., such as p.3-25, 46-47, 156-157, 194-195, 198-227, and 289-297.
culture also. Firstly, Sweet proposes an alternative typology to Niebuhr and Yoder, one that depicts the relationship between churches and culture through four interpretive categories: the Garden (preserving message/preserving methods); the Park (preserving message/evolving methods); the Glen (evolving message/preserving methods); and the Meadow (evolving message/evolving methods). These categories proposed by Sweet are too simplistic, however, placing theological and ecclesiological traditions in narrowly defined ‘ecosystems’, which would be rejected by those caricatured in this way. I have not found any evidence that serious scholarly treatment has been afforded this typology however, and this may indicate the lack of academic interest in Sweet’s typology.

Secondly, engagement with the dominant culture and specific subcultures is as important as community and worship in ecclesial life. Creative, relational, networked, and innovative expressions of church are necessary in order for the gospel to make sense to contemporary postmodern cultures.

Thirdly, an ‘otherworldly dynamism’, a differentiation from the powers, ideologies and values of the world, a missional ecclesiology and hermeneutic, an elevation of the sacraments, a compassionate welcoming of our neighbours and the ‘stranger’, and a christocentric spirituality are profoundly more prophetic and attractive than a

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136 Michael Horton even rejects the ecological typology in his chapter in this very same work, and suggests an architectural typology: Ibid. p.120-121.
139 McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*. p.33. Cf. McLaren’s challenge for Christians to enter the postmodern world in order to understand and engage it and start a ‘revolution’ in ———, *The Church on the Other Side*. p.159-201.
church that compromises its commission in order to be relevant or contemporary. Such compromise leads many ‘post-evangelicals’ to despair of the ‘culture-religion’ they find in the church, since, writes Tomlinson. They want to be ‘positively worldly’ by conforming their lives to Christ rather than middle-class values. The church is to be a revolutionary, transforming influence on culture that rewrites history, proposes McManus enthusiastically.

Fourthly, rather than giving into despair with regard to how difficult it is for the church to be the church in our current cultural climate, Christians should trust God’s provision, presence and sovereignty over history, the universe, and the redemption of both individuals and cultures.

Fiftly, Frost and Hirsch note that the human context is critical for defining and understanding the gospel, since the gospel is essentially God's revelation and self-disclosure to humankind. Frost suggests, therefore, that although the gospel is unchanging, and although classical theology tended to emphasise objective realities transcending subjective persons, the contexts and cultures in which it and its ecclesiological expressions must be communicated will be constantly evolving. Human beings create meaning as they seek it, and, therefore, contextualisation and inculturation entail far more than some superficial or token reworking of church symbols or language, for it will be something more rich, complex, daring and

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140 Webber, The Younger Evangelicals. p.126-130, 135, 228-232, and 242-243; Riddell, Pierson, and Kirkpatrick, The Prodigal Project. p.126-127; Grenz, A Primer on Postmodernism. p.167; Drane, The McDonaldization of the Church. p.87-89; and Sweet, ed. The Church in Emerging Culture. p.94. In terms of the consequences of compromising to the values of the prevailing culture, Kelly quotes Barna as rashly pronouncing in 1998 'I believe the church in America has no more than five years – perhaps even less – to turn itself around and begin to affect the culture, rather than be affected by it… We have no more than a half-decade to turn things around.' Kelly, Retrofuture. p.182. Such statements are alarmist, theoretically questionable, and possibly (though hopefully not) sensationalist.


143 Kelly, Retrofuture. p.78; and Sweet, ed. The Church in Emerging Culture. p.179.
dangerous.\textsuperscript{144} Frost and Hirsch write that critical contextualisation involves the process of inculturation, facilitating the interaction between the gospel message, ecclesiological manifestations and cultures. This allows the respondent culture to be inserted, engaged, transformed, and validated, and to participate actively in the process.\textsuperscript{145} Such contextualisation not only involves a dialogue between gospel, church and cultures, but also a rigorous engagement with biblical principles and narratives, theological themes, hermeneutical interpretations within communities,\textsuperscript{146} cross-cultural voices, multi-disciplinary studies, ecclesiological traditions and taxonomies, and historical lessons.\textsuperscript{147}

\begin{itemize}
    \item Frost and Hirsch, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come}. p.83. Frost and Hirsch insist that contextualisation is important in ecclesial and missional practices because Jesus and the early church contextualised, and because it works. They outline the six types of ‘Christ-centred communities’ proposed by John Travis (his C1 to C6 spectrum) to illustrate the kinds of contextualisation that might need to occur in the post-Christendom West. \textit{———}, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come}. p.91-93. See Travis’ framework in P. Parshall, "Going Too Far?,” \textit{Evangelical Missions Quarterly} 34, no. 3 (Oct. 1998).
    \item Darragh is particularly insightful in this regard, providing guidance for contextual theologising that is much more than merely subjective or relative. His guidelines for communal reflection, that begin with what is characteristic and at issue in the particular context, include: examination of our own involvements in the world; listing the important cultural values of our society or of cultural groups within it, then comparing these with the biblical revelation; writing self-examining socio-cultural histories; analyzing socio-economic cultural realities; exploring major social issues; recording relevant myths and legends; and documenting personal or family histories. This broad perspective and participation helps contextualisation be a more communal, less subjective, activity. N. Darragh, "The Who and the What of Theology," in \textit{Doing Theology Ourselves: A Guide to Research and Action} (Auckland: Accent Publications, 1995).
    In these articles Frost notes that critical contextualisation is a risky enterprise. I suggest that the process of critical contextualisation may be enriched by:
\end{itemize}
Finally, our understanding of all three – gospel, church and cultures – will evolve and be enriched as we establish a conversation between them. McLaren believes that ‘our understandings of the gospel constantly change as we engage in mission in our complex, dynamic world, as we discover that the gospel has a rich kaleidoscope of meaning to offer, yielding unexplored layers of depth, revealing uncounted facets of insight and relevance.’

4.1.4 Incarnational, Postmodern Mission, Evangelism and Apologetics

Central to the EMCM literature is an emphasis on incarnational, postmodern mission, evangelism and apologetics, and even though this might be more a missiological than ecclesiological perspective, it is still a plea for communities of faith to attempt to communicate relevantly and incarnationally the Christian faith to contemporary western cultures and individuals. Therefore, it is a call for ecclesial communities to embody and incarnate the gospel in relevant postmodern, apologetic, evangelistic and missional ways.

In the EMCM literature, mission, evangelism and apologetics should be practiced unaggressively. Rather than seeing the world as an antagonistic place that needs to be brought into subjugation and exploitation, the church should see itself as ‘a catalyst of blessing for the good of the world’. Therefore, according to McLaren, this necessarily involves a rejection of apologetic styles that employ circular reasoning,

5. Arbuckle’s process of preparing spiritual leaders to facilitate contextual movements: Arbuckle, "The Purpose of Formation."

Kimball, The Emerging Church. p.9. Kimball has invited both Rick Warren and Brian McLaren to write Forewords for this book. Intriguingly, the Forewords by Warren and McLaren contradict each other, as Warren asserts that ‘the world changes, but the Word doesn’t.’ ———, The Emerging Church. p.8.

McLaren, for instance, asserts, ‘Jesus was short on sermons, long on conversations; short on answers, long on questions; short on abstractions and propositions; long on stories and parables; short on telling you what to think, long on challenging you to think for yourself; short on condemning the irreligious, long on confronting the religious.’ B.D. McLaren, More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002). p.15.

defensiveness, combativeness, the worldliness of post-Enlightenment methods of demonstrating credibility, distraction from wrestling with the more significant questions, and various forms of dishonesty. Apologetics should seek to embrace mystery, dialogue, plausibility rather than credibility, respect and humility, patience, and incarnational approaches. Specific evangelism strategies will not cease to exist, however the new apologetic and mission will be more holistic, incarnational, narrative-based, communal, and embodying of missional ecclesiology.

Hunter is quoted by many of the EMCM authors as describing clearly the shape of incarnational and contemporary apologetics and evangelism in his book *How to Reach Secular People*, so it is worth dealing in some detail with his perspectives here, while demonstrating how these views are echoed or affirmed in the thirty-seven EMCM texts examined. Hunter proposes that the western church is faced with the reality and opportunities of a new ‘Apostolic Age’, and like the early church Christians today have to contextualise and present the gospel in a relevant and meaningful way to thoroughly secularised people, striving to convince them of its truth and plausibility. No longer are Western people willing to trust blindly the church or its claims. Nor are they convinced of its relevance or necessity, and many foster an attitude toward institutional Christianity that is nothing other than hostile. Thus, the church must demonstrate its credibility, relevance, approachability, and sincerity. Individual Christians must live credible lives of honesty, vulnerability and

152 McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*, p.73-93, 148-149, and 178-179. For EMCM treatments on the central features of ‘incarnational’ mission, evangelism and apologetics, see: Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p.73-75 and 228;
154 Hunter III, *How to Reach Secular People*, p.35.
integrity in order to build relationships of trust whereby they can invite people to accept faith in Christ and join the messianic community.

Hunter's profile of secular people is adequate to the extent that it recognises that secular people are not a single homogeneous group, and that western cultures are proliferated by sub-cultures and divergent groupings based on socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, education, philosophical adherences, needs, culture, urban or rural situation, familial ties, exposure to Christianity, political stance, et cetera. Generally, there is a fundamental ignorance of basic Christianity, and a widespread biblical illiteracy. In order to reach utterly secular people, Christians must grasp a biblical epistemology that is characterised by critical realism, rather than arrogance or naivety. In this environment of biblical ignorance, opportunities arise for Christians to model and proclaim in their evangelism a holistic kingdom, not mere institutionalism, religiosity, or verbal formulas. The gospel can be presented as a holistic kingdom proclamation, confronting the systematic, structural, intellectual and spiritual powers that dominate the lives of so many secular people.

It is disappointing that Hunter does not seem to fully embrace, or at least does not adequately articulate, this concept of holistic kingdom proclamation, that is, a view to the liberation of the whole person that may hopefully (an ideally) occur through the gospel message and Christian community. This neglect, in my estimation, is a weakness in Hunter's book. A thorough treatment of the relationship between holism and evangelism would have been invaluable for the book, not as a mere augmentation, but as a foundational principle of evangelism.

Hunter does seem to place evangelism in the realm of discipleship, assenting to the

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155 Ibid. p.41-54.
conviction that only disciples should evangelise. However, his understanding of discipleship could be more holistic - the fuller picture being that evangelism is a discipleship to be engaged in by the whole person, not merely a formula to be parroted, a dialogue to be entered into, or a mindset to be appreciated and engaged. Such dialogue and empathy toward paradigms, are important, but must be placed in the context of a fuller portrayal of evangelism, and it seems that the EMCM literature does, often, attempt a more holistic portrayal of evangelism and apologetics.

Another problem with Hunter’s description of secular people is his emphasis on secularism. While secularism is certainly present within contemporary western culture, it is complemented, parallel and accompanied by syncretism, as pluralistic Western people pick and choose which features, paradigms and ‘divinities’, from a wide range of religions and systems of thought, best suit their individual preferences.

Most effective dialogue with secular, syncretistic, post-Christian Western people occurs within their relationships with honest, humble, empathic and vulnerable Christian friends.156 The majority of people will not be reached through evangelistic or apologetic programs. They will be reached as Christians build genuine relationships with them across social networks. Moreover, the church’s culturally alien and intimidating forms of ministry may need to be sacrificed, and all that we do as churches may need to be contextualised in order to meet the needs of secular, yet spiritually-sensitive, Western people, and to reduce barriers to their reception of the gospel.

According to the EMCM literature, secular, syncretistic people must be met in their own familiar contexts - whether that is football matches, pubs, work functions, or the

156 Ibid. p.59, 65, and passim.
like - and Christians must be willing to step out of their comfort zones to reach others with the gospel. Christian truth is to be communicated in the vernacular, and alienating jargon must be eradicated. Kelly rightly believes that the church needs to creatively navigate the postmodern tensions between dogma and deconstruction, reason and intuition, progress and pessimism, creed and community, and commitment and choice and change. It does this by ‘reimagineering’ the church through exploring afresh the themes of biblical metanarrative, nonlinear thinking, spirituality, process and discipleship, holistic service, the structures and institutions of mission, et cetera. In addition, new congregations must be planted that are serious about paying the price to reach secular people. It is clear, therefore, that the EMCM predisposition is toward incarnational, postmodern mission, evangelism and apologetics, and, again, it is an appeal for Christian faith communities to embody these things.

4.1.5 Grounding Missional Ecclesiology in a Local, Worshipping Community

Local, worshiping communities are considered in the EMCM literature as the natural place in which missional ecclesiology is grounded, in which the witness of the Christian church is made credible, and in which Christians are disciplined into a radical engagement with people in their culture. Bosch quotes Newbigin as suggesting ‘that the only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.’ Furthermore, Bosch asserts:

> Theology has no life unless it is borne by a community. The same is

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true of mission. Thus, the question about the feasibility of a missionary enterprise to Western people hinges on the question of the nature and life of our local worshipping communities and the extent to which they facilitate a discourse in which the engagement of people with their culture is encouraged… It is not, however, as though we still have to invent this community… As Hauerwas and Willimon (1989; 1991:424) put it, what we want already exists: “Christians are sitting on a gold mine called the church, but unfortunately the very categories we have taught as Western Christians make it difficult for us to notice that it is gold.”

When missional ecclesiology is grounded in such communities of faith, these communities have the following features, as well as the fifteen indicators mentioned in thesis section 4.1.2, according to the EMCM works. These features may seem idealistic given the inadequacies and failings of actual Christian communities, yet they are expressed, even if only embryonically, in communities of faith that embrace and pursue genuine missionality:

1. They facilitate transformation within cultures through their constitution as alternative communities. Roxburgh writes that in a liminal setting, where the structured, institutional status of the church has been eroded, the concept of communitas becomes increasingly important. This is because Christian communities need to be bonded together as alternative, distinct, and visible communities ‘offering an alternative form of life’, ‘rediscovering the tradition as a reservoir for transformation’, and experiencing ‘the intersubjectivity of

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159 Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.60. Bosch is quoting from Hauerwas and Willimon, Resident Aliens. p.424.
persons formed by a new center, Jesus Christ as the head of the
communitas. In this authentic koinonia, they may also stand in contrast to
the disintegration of communality and social cohesion in western culture.
Like the early church, the contemporary marginal context provides
opportunities for Christian communities to be intriguingly attractive through
differentiation, embodying an alternative way of life, inculcating the faith,
and as ‘an “outpost of heaven” on earth’.

2. They are characterised by fluidity and networking, propounds Ward, by which
he means that they emphasise relationships, commodify religious products in
order to enable fluidity and contextualisation, communicate through networks,
and have fuzzy edges that facilitate growth. As Riddell, Pierson and
Kirkpatrick propose, ‘In the context of meal, of friends and wine and dreams,
let us wipe the slate clean of our presuppositions and begin to ask some basic
questions about the gathering of the people.’ However, Ward’s location of
hope in the commodification of goods and services that circulate through
networks seems somewhat commercialised and market-driven however, and

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160 Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation*. p.49-56. This view of the missional church as an
alternative community has been dealt with in more depth in thesis section 4.1.5, and is also found in
the EMCM writings in such passages as: Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals*. p.118-120; Shenk, *Write
the Vision*. p.16.

106.


163 ‘Christianity entered history as a new social order, or rather a new social dimension. From the very
beginning Christianity was not primarily a “doctrine,” but exactly a “community.” There was not only
a “Message” to be proclaimed and delivered, and “Good News” to be declared. There was precisely a
New Community, distinct and peculiar, in the process of growth and formation, to which members
were called and recruited. Indeed, “fellowship” (koinonia) was the basic category of Christian
existence. Primitive Christians felt themselves to be closely knit and bound together in a unity which
radically transcended all human boundaries – of race, of culture, of social rank, and indeed the whole
Cf. also ———, *Another City*. p.58-59, 140, and 150.


165 Riddell, Pierson, and Kirkpatrick, *The Prodigal Project*. p.45. See also 39, 52-53, 130-131, and
139.
his reliance on ‘liquid’, self-regulating and forming groups, instead of ‘solid’
ecclesial structures, again seems somewhat culturally shaped, theologically
questionable, and idealistic.

3. They are given definition and direction by the four dimensions of worship,
community, mission, and relationship to the wider Body of Christ, therefore
their experimentation and missionality is grounded in a holistic expression and
understanding of church. In a similar vein, McManus, mirroring Rick
Warren\textsuperscript{166} in a creative but rather uncritical manner, suggests that there are
‘five environments for spiritual health’ in Christian communities. To describe
these he uses the metaphors of wind (mission and evangelism), water
(fellowship and community), wood (service and ministry), fire (worship and
celebration), and earth (discipleship and formation of the whole person), and
each of these needs to be set in the context of a missional community steeped
in concrete expressions of faith, hope and love.\textsuperscript{167} Furthermore, there is an
appreciation of both a multi-layered approach to gatherings - recognising the
value of small, medium and large meetings and celebrations - and a need to
cultivate communities based around common interests, natural networks, third-
places, and the rediscovery of ‘place’.\textsuperscript{168}

4. Murray maintains that they will be simpler than we have known some
ecclesiality in the past to be, ‘recovering friendship… as our relational
paradigm… (which is) non-hierarchical, holistic, relaxed and dynamic…’\textsuperscript{169} as
well as enjoying the rich benefits of being community around meals and

\textsuperscript{166} Warren, \textit{The Purpose-Driven Church}.
\textsuperscript{167} McManus, \textit{An Unstoppable Force}. p.147-183.
\textsuperscript{169} Murray, \textit{Post-Christendom}. p.275.
laughter. He invites his readers to ‘imagine’ communities that are enriched by apostolic and prophetic poets and storytellers, that are characterised by the mission, social action and contemplation of a monastic missionary order, and that are safe places to pioneer, experiment and take risks.\(^\text{170}\)

5. They are hermeneutical communities, since they are ‘communities of interpretation’, which determine ‘the actual enculturated meaning of Scriptures’, while being open to certain checks-and-balances that guard against theological relativism.\(^\text{171}\) Missional hermeneutics ‘affirms the postmodern emphasis on the contingent, local, and particular’,\(^\text{172}\) while recognising that the gospel’s claims have a much broader mandate and claim than that which is merely local or particular, and that specific communities of faith are a part of a larger Body of Christ.

6. Based on his analysis of the works of Newbigin, Hunsberger, the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America, and other materials in the field of missional ecclesiology, Hendrick notes the following about the characteristics of missional congregations:\(^\text{173}\)

   a. They understand that they exist in a cross-cultural situation;

   b. They enter into dialogue with their context and culture;

   c. They provide opportunities for their members to reflect on culture from a biblical view;


\(^\text{171}\) Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*. p.94-95, and 101-103.

\(^\text{172}\) Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., *The Church between Gospel and Culture*. p.258.

\(^\text{173}\) Ibid. p.302-307.
d. They pray for and seek their own transformation;

e. They accept the marginal position in which they find themselves;

f. They bear witness in their social and cultural situation;

g. Hunsberger, in the same book, *The Church Between Gospel and Culture*, may be considered to add to this list by including some practical shifts congregations need to make in order to move from religious vendor to mission:¹⁷⁴

i. A shift from program to embodiment;

ii. A shift from committee to team;

iii. A shift from being clergy dominated to being laity oriented;

iv. A shift from recruitment to mission;

v. A shift from (the leader as) entrepreneur to missionary.

7. Their formation through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit is evidenced and ‘cultivated through the practices by which they are formed, trained, equipped, and motivated as missional communities.’¹⁷⁵ The activity of the Holy Spirit builds the *koinonia* that is demonstrated in the love, integrity, sacrifice, compassion, justice, reconciliation, et cetera, which is distinctive of the people of God, as they witness to the new, eschatological identity, social reality, and reign of Christ that they have experienced, and are missionally making visible to the world. Dietterich writes that Christian communities are

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p.344-345.
the ‘social embodiment of the reign of God’ that need to be formed by the ecclesial practices of such things as baptism, the Eucharist, hospitality, missional engagement, reconciliation, discernment, and the like.\textsuperscript{176} These social and ecclesial practices shape the internal dynamics of missional communities, and well as determining the quality and substance of their missional engagement with the world. For support, and as the defining statement for her argument, Dietterich turns to Kraus: ‘The life of the church is its witness. The witness of the church is its life. The question of authentic witness is the question of authentic community.’\textsuperscript{177}

These, then, are some of the features of local, worshipping Christian communities that are grounded in missional ecclesiology.

\section*{4.2 Conclusion}

This chapter has provided an analytical survey of the explicit and most obvious ecclesiological notions in the EMCM literature. Again, the purpose of the chapter is to, firstly, describe analytically the explicit elements in EMCM ecclesiology, and secondly to put these perceptions into a critical conversation with the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in Part 4 of the thesis, \textit{Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context}.

The EMCM outlook on the church’s prospects in an age of post-Christendom, on missional and incarnational ecclesiology, on the gospel-culture relationship, on contemporary evangelism and apologetics, and on grounding missional ecclesiology

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{176}Ibid. p.153-182.
in particular settings have been examined and outlined.

In the following chapter, I will move on to implicit but vitally important ecclesiological perspectives in the EMCM material, for the same analytical and dialogical purposes as this chapter. The implicit themes are integrated with the more explicit ones, help give substance to emerging-missional ecclesiology, and are critical in making EMCM ecclesiology a worthwhile dialogue partner in ecclesiology.
5 EMERGING-MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGIES 2: CHARACTERISTIC, GUIDING AND MORE SUBTLE CONCEPTIONS

This chapter provides an analytical survey and evaluation of the more implicit ecclesiological frames of reference, guiding assumptions, implied biases, and submerged ecclesiological perspectives in the EMCM literature. This chapter will outline, firstly, their ecclesiological critiques of such things as Modernity, Evangelicalism, and existing church leadership practices; secondly, the ecclesiological implications of their outlook on such things as eschatology, christology, and trinitarian ecclesiology; and thirdly, their views on such ecclesiological practices as apostolic leadership, the ministry of the laity, worship and the creative arts, and denominationalism and ecumenism. Some comments are made on (a) what it might mean to place the emphasis on emerging or on missional in the emerging-missional ecclesiological conversation, and (b) on some of the primary criticisms of the EMCM. This chapter concludes with some brief summarising comments and critical reflections, with especial attention given to examining EMCM ecclesiology in the light of the Reformation ‘marks of the true church’.

The purpose of this chapter is, firstly, to describe analytically the more subtle elements in EMCM ecclesiology, and secondly to put these perceptions into a critical conversation with the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in Part 4 of the thesis, *Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context.*
5.1 Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Critiques

An examination of the ecclesiological critiques and critical assessments found in the EMCM literature

5.1.1 Interpreting History: Constantine, Christendom, Modernity and Church History

In section 4.1.1, the EMCM’s understanding of mission and ministry in an age of post-Christendom was described. However, it is important to note that their ecclesiological perspectives arise out of some particularly critical interpretations of history, and especially of Constantine, Christendom, Modernity, and some other distinct eras in church history. Such interpretations are often narrowly critical and negative, and seem to dismiss some of the benefits of these periods of history for the mission, spread, contextualisation, and positive evolution of the church.

Again, as in his portrayal of post-Christendom that was described in 4.1.1 above, Murray’s analysis in Post-Christendom of the problematic features of the church steeped in Constantinianism, Christendom and Modernity is the most lucid of the EMCM works. It is also probably the most measured, academic and sober analysis among the EMCM literature of both the positive and negative features of these periods of history in which the church was forced to evolve and respond. Therefore, it is worth summarising his perspectives here as a catalyst for analysing the broader interpretations of history found in the EMCM materials considered in this thesis. Murray’s main points about the church in Christendom are summarized in the eight points below, along with additional supporting material for each point, from other EMCM writings.
After weighing carefully the achievement of Christendom, and the part that Constantine and others had to play in its development, Murray summarises the Christendom shift in a schematic overview. This is unfortunately not as nuanced as it could be. It suggests that it involved the following ecclesiological and missiological changes. These are merely eight points selected from his more extensive list. As I have emphasised above, they are being used as a framework to provide additional supporting material for each point from other EMCM texts:

1. The adoption of Christianity as the state and official religion of the Empire, facilitating the movement of Christianity from marginality to centrality in western culture, and the Christianisation of Western civilisation and culture, including the sacralisation of society. Church and society were philosophically and practically integrated, the church embraced a chaplaincy role, and groups that took a counter-cultural stance were persecuted as schismatic;

2. Theological orthodoxy and Christian ethics were determined by church leadership who were sanctioned by the state, and who were given the legal authority to restrain heresy, dissention, immorality and schism. Murray’s assertion is questionable, however, since there were a range of developing strands regarding ethics in the patristic period, and centralisation really did not occur until much later;

3. Hierarchical ecclesiastical structures were adopted that reflected those of the Empire, the construction of massive and ornate cathedrals, and the regulation

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1 See Murray, *Post-Christendom.* p.82-87 for his complete list and schematic overview of the shifts in Christendom, in the areas of ecclesiology, discipleship, soteriology, missiology, and ethics. Cf. p.44-46, 63-73, 102-104, 109-144, and passim.

2 For an analysis of ethics in the Patristic period (and other periods) see Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches.* Volume 1.
of a tithing system in order to fund the system. This, again, is a questionable proposition, given the cathedrals were often an expression of popular faith and their spread did not really come until late in the first millennium, and commitments to tithing were not as regulated as Murray suggests;³

4. The professionalisation of the clergy, and the passivity of the laity, accompanied by the division of the spiritual expectations of these groups (only clergy and the ‘religious’ were expected to be able to reach high spiritual stature);

5. The alliance of the Western military and political objectives with those of the church, and the use of military might to extend both the Empire and the church (the case Murray is making here is weak, given he does not provide concrete examples of this alliance);

6. An appeal to Old Testament theology in order to justify these new emphases on buildings, the military expansion of the church and the ‘just war’, tithing and observances of holy days, the development of a ‘sacral society’, hierarchical church structures, Old Testament standards morality and ethics, and the like. An exclusion or reinterpretation of New Testament perspectives on faith and discipleship, church and society, church life, mission, and ethics that were pivotal to the pre-Christendom church;

7. Faith and discipleship was individualised, regulated, compelled, equated with state citizenship, and removed from the original realm of the radically counter-cultural or kingdom-oriented;

8. Mission was marginalised, the apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic gifts were neglected, and the centrality of the eschatological kingdom of God and the role of peacemaking was replaced by a concern for the expansion of the Empire by whatever means were necessary;

This assessment of the problematic Christendom or Constantinian shifts experienced by the church may be unfairly critical and un-nuanced, especially given the complex societal, ecclesiological, missional and political challenges that were facing the church at the time (although, what ‘time’ that was is not clearly specified by Murray, to the fault of the work). I have significant concerns about the way they cover an unnamed scope of centuries, are too sweeping and unspecific, and fail to take into account other ecclesial history, such as the monastic movements in the fifth and sixth centuries, the later reform movements in the Catholic Church, the rise of the friars, and other major developments in the twelfth century.

Discussing alternatives to Christendom-shaped ecclesiology that may be of use in post-Christendom, such as those embodied by marginal Christian groups throughout the church’s history, is a valuable exercise nonetheless. Newbigin and Bosch, who are some of the missiological fathers of the EMCM, insist that humility and nuance should be brought to our analysis of this period of church history.⁴

⁴ On this point Newbigin and Bosch write the following: ‘How else at that moment of history, could the Church have expressed its faithfulness to the gospel which is a message about the universal reign of God? It is hard to see what other possibility there was at that moment. The experiment of a Christian political order had to be made.’ L. Newbigin, The Other Side of 1984 (Geneva: WCC, 1983). p.34; ‘When the ancient classical world… ran out of spiritual fuel and turned to the church as the one society that could hold a disintegrating world together, should the church have refused the appeal and washed its hands of the responsibility for the political order?… It is easy to point… to the glaring contradiction between the Jesus of the Gospels and his followers occupying the seats of power and wealth. And yet we have to ask, would God’s purpose… have been better served if the church had refused all political responsibility?’ ———, Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986). p.100-101; ‘Given the historical choices he (Augustine) and others had before them, they were the only choices that made sense to them. And it is appropriate to ask whether our choices, in similar circumstances, would have been any better, even if
Murray extends his historical critique to the Reformers, suggesting that they failed to
challenge genuinely the failings and ecclesial structures of Christendom. He is also
critical of what he sees as the captivity of the Christendom mindset of the western
church in Modernity. Furthermore, he develops a helpful taxonomy of the choices
the church can make with regard to the Christendom ecclesiological legacy, now that
she is in postmodernity and post-Christendom: denying, defending, dismissing,
dissociating, demonising, disavowing, disentangling, deconstructing, and
disembarking.5

It is clear that in the centuries prior to the Reformation interest in the study of
Augustinian theology dramatically increased, to the extent that there was what may
be termed an ‘Augustinian Renaissance’.6 It is also evident that the stance that
Augustine took on the issues of grace and salvation, the church and the sacraments,
and predestination and freewill powerfully influenced Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli.
However, while the Reformers certainly seemed more interested in reforming
theology and in engaging with the patristics than in changing Christendom church
structures, this criticism of the Reformers does not take into account the dramatic
impact they had on the shape and future ecclesiological possibilities of their
contemporary Christendom-formed communities. Nor does it take into account the
missiological and innovative ecclesiological achievements of the western church, in
its vastly varied forms, in Modernity. Unfortunately, it is all too easy to criticise our
forebears offhandedly.

5 Murray, Post-Christendom. p.150-160, and 178-216.
6 T. George, Theology of the Reformers (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988). p. 48. See section 5.5 of
this thesis for further discussion on this topic.
5.1.2 Postmodernity and Ecclesiology

Surveying some of the EMCM literature and websites, Hammett claims that the defining premise of the EMCM is that ‘churches must change to respond to postmodern culture’. This is a claim that some in the EMCM, such as Andrew Jones, strongly deny. It seems, however, that in developing their missional ecclesiology, the EMCM authors refer often to postmodernity and postmodernism, yet there seems to be some misunderstanding and confusion about just what the postmodern is. Adams notes that postmodernism has been described as ‘intellectual Velcro dragged across culture’ which ‘can be used to characterise almost anything one approves or disapproves.’ He also observes that Umberto Eco wrote ‘I have the impression that postmodernism is applied today to anything the users of the term happen to like.’

Daniel J. Adams, a Presbyterian theologian teaching at Hanil Theological Seminary in Korea, insightfully writes that postmodernity and postmodernism have the

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10 U. Eco, *Postscript to the Name of the Rose* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989). p.65. In Adams, "Toward a Theological Understanding of Postmodernism." p.2. Adams, therefore, postulates, 'The process of definition is further confused by the frequent interchange of the terms postmodernity and postmodernism… We might say that postmodernity is the condition in which late twentieth-century culture finds itself; postmodernism is a reflection upon that condition and a response to it… In addition, the postmodern is primarily a phenomenon of western culture… The postmodern is, therefore, a movement that has arisen in reaction to the modernism of Western civilisation. At the same time, "it is a part of the broader and deeper changes going on in the world today"… The postmodern era can best be understood in terms of four major characteristics: the decline of the West, the legitimation crisis, the intellectual marketplace, and the process of deconstruction. Indeed, we can say that these four characteristics define the meaning of postmodernity.’
following distinguishing characteristics, including the four mentioned in his quotation above, and it is worth noting these here since postmodern considerations so deeply influence much of the EMCM ecclesiology.\footnote{Adams, "Toward a Theological Understanding of Postmodernism."}

1. ‘The unsecularisation of the world’: Where Modernity loved the secular, postmodernism carries the sacred. Zygmunt Bauman wrote that ‘postmodernity can be seen as restoring to the world what Modernity, presumptuously, had taken away; as a \textit{re-enchantment} of the world the Modernity tried to \textit{dis-enchant}.’\footnote{Z. Bauman, \textit{Intimations of Postmodernity} (London: Routedge, 1992). p.vii.}

2. ‘The widespread rejection of classical metaphysical thought and metanarratives’: Metanarratives (universal truths and stories) are no longer accepted as authoritative. ‘Simplifying to the extreme, I define \textit{postmodern} as incredulity toward metanarratives.’\footnote{J. Lyotard, \textit{The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge}, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1984). p.xxiii-iv. On the experience of metanarratives in postmodernity Eagleton writes, ‘Post-modernism signals the death of such ‘metanarratives’ whose secret terroristic function is to ground and legitimate the illusion of a ‘universal’ human history. We are now in the process of awakening from the nightmare of Modernity, with its manipulative reason and fetish of the totality, into the laid-back plurality of the post-modern, that heterogeneous range of life-styles and language games which has renounced the nostalgic urge to totalse and legitimate itself… Science and philosophy must jettison their grandiose metaphysical claims and view themselves more modestly as just another set of narratives.’ T. Eagleton, "Awakening from Modernity," \textit{Times Literary Supplement} (February 20, 1987). p.194.}

3. ‘A rejection of the modern Western worldview’: Western values and ways of doing things were assumed as the ideal that would be adopted universally and globally – this is no longer the case, in fact, such assumptions are ridiculed as naïve or ethnocentric. This is an anti-Enlightenment and anti-Modernity paradigm.

4. ‘The intellectual and spiritual marketplace’: Cultural, intellectual, political,
economic and religious knowledge and value are no longer controlled by the intellectual and political elite.

5. ‘Deconstructing the meaning of texts’: Every text is conditioned by a web of cultural, human, situational and metaphysical relations that affect the meaning of the text; therefore no single text can possibly have one single ultimate meaning. Meaning is always endlessly deferred.

6. ‘Widespread pluralism’: These postmodern elements described above combined to encourage almost unlimited pluralism without any means of evaluating this situation. Bauman writes, ‘The main feature ascribed to “postmodernity” is the permanent and irreducible pluralism of cultures, communal traditions, ideologies, “forms of life” or “language games”… or awareness and recognition of such pluralism’.  

7. ‘The rejection of human autonomy’: Individual human beings are considered, in postmodern thought, as part of a larger sociological matrix that defines and shapes who we are. We are persons in community. It is debatable, however, whether ‘human autonomy’ is actually being rejected; it may, in fact, be ‘the rejection of individualism’.

8. ‘Concern for praxis’: Praxis means that all theology must be concerned with the practical ethical aspects of human life. ‘Orthopraxis replaces orthodoxy.’

9. ‘Theological nonfoundationalism’: This is the theological expression of the rejection of the metanarratives, and it seeks to sever theology from objective or ultimate foundations such as Scripture, creeds, confessions, or ecclesiastical

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14 Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity*. p.102
tradition. The impact of culture and history on communities is perceived as
shaping or forming the theologies that emerge from those same communities.
Thus, although the foundations may be referred to respectfully from time to
time, their contextual nature severs their authority for theological life and
work.

The ecclesiology of much of the EMCM texts examined in this thesis is heavily
influenced by postmodernity and postmodernism, usually implicitly rather than
explicitly, or at least is concerned with making the church relevant and accessible to
postmodern western culture. Some examples follow. Moynagh, quoting Oestreicher,
equates his ecclesiological thinking directly with the outlook of postmodernism, and
at times even seems to equate the two concepts of ‘postmodernity’ and ‘emerging
church’. For him the realities of the postmodern world should shape the church’s
ecclesiological responses and shape, including such postmodern dynamics as
urbanisation, hyper-choice, consumerism, the experience economy, the liquidity of
people’s lives, and relational recreation.\textsuperscript{16} Kelly agrees, writing that the evolving
world and outlook of ‘Homo Xapiens’, that is, Generation X and Y, needs to shape
the church, and that this postmodern generation are even ‘the key to understanding,
and perhaps healing, the pain of the western church.’\textsuperscript{17} The postmodern realities that
will shape the future of the church include, postulates Kelly enthusiastically, post-
industrial technology, post-literate communications, the postmodern worldview, the
post-imperial world order, and post-Christian spirituality.

More critical and reflective perspectives on the place of postmodernity in
ecclesiology, missiology and church life, include those of Hiebert and Wright.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{16} Moynagh, \textit{Emergingchurch.Intro.} p.30, and 64-84. See Oestreicher’s comment in Kimball, \textit{The
Emerging Church.} p.58.
\textsuperscript{17} Kelly, \textit{Retrofuture.} p.32-42, and 52-194.
\end{flushright}
Hiebert writes, for instance, that firstly postmodernism, and its overarching paradigm of instrumentalism (subjective realism), and secondly modernism, and its overarching paradigm of positivism (naïve realism), should both be replaced in the epistemological considerations of the church by critical realism. Critical realism affirms that knowledge is both objectively present and subjectively apprehended, and therefore provides a more nuanced position than the positivism of Modernity, a firmer footing than the instrumentalism or idealism of postmodernism. It also offers a better position from which to engage contemporary questions about not only ecclesiology, but also Christian faith, missiology, hermeneutics, science, conversion, discipleship, and inter-religious dialogue.\textsuperscript{18} N.T. Wright, who is a New Testament scholar, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, and a theologian often referred to in the emerging missiological discussion in the West, agrees when he supports the notion of critical realism.\textsuperscript{19}

Frohlich, resonating with the EMCM exploration of ancient theology for present and future postmodern ecclesiological dilemmas, writes that Thérèse of Lisieux is a ‘foundational’ theologian for the postmodern age.\textsuperscript{20} This is because her theological formation, spirituality, and praxis were experientially based and autobiographically expressed (subjectively framed, without simplistically claiming that her own experience was the ‘final authority’). Her encounter with Christian myths, traditions and texts was conversational (‘mutually reinterpreting’), since she was not only personally transformed, but she reinterprets these myths and texts in fresh,

\textsuperscript{19} ‘...I propose a form of critical realism. This is a way of describing the process of "knowing" that acknowledges the reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower (hence "realism"), while fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence "critical").’ Wright, The New Testament. p.35.
contextual, and deeply grounded ways. According to Frohlich, Thérèse may also have had an ability to ‘differentiate the contents of mind from the primordial ground of knowing’\(^{21}\) in her holistic spiritual and theological formation (speaking into the contemporary dilemma of personal fragmentation). Her existentially profound ‘night of faith’ has definite resonance with the postmodern nihilistic darkness and despair (the sense of being a ‘small and naked person standing in the abyss’). Frohlich suggests that this may have been a kind of ‘intellectual conversion’ that allowed her to see beyond her psychological and cultural frameworks, at least to some degree.

Thérèse’s sense of the ‘mutual coinherence of eternity and each moment of time’ again has significant resonance with postmodernism. These points of connection include the appreciation of the both the transcendent and the imminent, the global and the local, and personal limitations and transpersonal possibilities. It also includes the discovery of truth that is immersed in particularity that ‘blossoms into a communion accessible to all without exception’\(^{22}\), the now-but-not-yet of our lives and endeavours, and the like. EMCM authors are exploring such characters as Thérèse in their attempt to form theological and ecclesiological perspectives relevant to postmodernism.\(^{23}\)

5.1.3 Church and its Leadership Navigating Change, Crisis and Confusion

In the EMCM literature, there is an emphasis on the idea that the churches of the West and their leadership and structures are navigating a time of profound change, crisis and confusion, and that this is being outworked practically in their

\(^{21}\) Ibid. p.37.
\(^{22}\) Ibid.
ecclesiological forms and experimentations.

The realities of rapid cultural change and ecclesial marginalisation result too often, according to the EMCM materials, in such negative ecclesial expressions as extractional\textsuperscript{24} instead of incarnational forms of church life and mission, and as compromise and chaplaincy to the prevalent culture, and clericalisation and professionalisation of the clergy. Other expressions include bureaucratic and business-like approaches to church governance and attempts at church growth, and a retreat into manageable, controllable and technical approaches to leadership and change, rather than risky experimentation or radical-adaptive change. Baptising secular society, encouraging dualistic forms of spirituality, spiritualising materialism and consumerism, nostalgically holding to past practices and perspectives, or pursuing pragmatic, psycho-social, cosmetic, centripetal or megachurch approaches will at best only delay the decline of the churches in the West.

McManus sees this as a process of atrophy, as in a desperate bid for survival the churches become adept at biblical exegesis but unskilled at cultural exegesis, entrenched in the past and its preservation, pursuant of safe and familiar modes of theologising and ecclesiology, and ultimately threatened by storms within and without.\textsuperscript{25}

Roxburgh considers the marginalisation of the church in the West to be expressed in current pastoral roles, and to be expressions of the primary characteristics of modernity. As evidence, he cites therapeutic approaches to ministry, counselling and

\textsuperscript{24} ‘Extractional’, in the EMCM material, is considered the opposite of ‘incarnational’, since it is about extracting people out of their cultures and immersing them in church life, rather than empowering people to be missional witnesses in their host cultures. Frost and Hirsch, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come}. Part 2.

\textsuperscript{25} McManus, \textit{An Unstoppable Force}. p.8, 14 and 21-36.
spirituality, an emphasis on technical rationality in pastoral education, often at the expense of theological reflection, and a relegation of pastoral leadership to the arena of the personal and private. In contrast, only a radical envisioning of the church as missionary and a theological and intelligent embrace of our current state of liminality is adequate to the challenges that inevitably lay ahead of it in post-Christian culture. In Hunsberger’s words, the western churches have moved from the Reformation heritage of being ‘a place where certain things happen’, to its contemporary variation of ‘a vendor of religious goods and services’, yet it needs to reflect a missionary vision as ‘a body of people sent on a mission’. Frost and Hirsch, lamenting the inability of the western churches to come to terms with the time of crisis and change that they find themselves in, propose that the Christendom-shaped models of the churches are attractional rather than incarnational, dualistic in their approach to spirituality and community, and hierarchical in their leadership and governmental styles.

Much of the EMCM literature seems to have lost hope in the established ecclesiological forms and values of the western churches; however, Jinkins reminds his readers of the church’s unique relationship with both the notion and the reality of ‘death’, and the corresponding possibility of ‘resurrection’. Such ‘resurrection’


27 Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., The Church between Gospel and Culture. p.333-341.

28 Frost and Hirsch provocatively argue that the established church has some fundamental flaws. ‘The overly produced Christendom-mode church has at its core a number of fundamental flaws. These flaws occur in the model’s very DNA. The way forward it not to tinker with its external features, but to rebirth a movement on different ground. Those flaws can be generally categorized into three broad areas… it is attractional, dualistic, and hierarchical.’ Frost and Hirsch, The Shaping of Things to Come. p.18 and cf. p.ix-xi, 10-11 and 18-21.
cannot be institutionally manipulated.\textsuperscript{29}

For the EMCM, navigating this cultural and societal tsunami\textsuperscript{30} of change must involve experimenting with ecclesiological practices and shapes that are on the one hand \textit{emerging} in their cultural appropriateness and on the other hand \textit{missionary} in their counter-cultural dynamics and momentum to reach beyond themselves with the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

\subsection*{5.1.4 Deciding Whether to Merely Criticise Other Ecclesiologies or to Constructively Inform Them Missionally}

Part of the impulse of the EMCM works is to inform other ecclesiologies missionally, and especially the variety of evangelical Protestant ecclesiologies that many of the authors have as their heritage. The EMCM writings are particularly critical of ecclesiologies and models of church that, in their opinion, support an edifice complex, or encourage the traditional-attractional values of what they deem to be a Christendom mindset, or which seem to be unreflective adoptions of seeker-sensitive, charismatic, megachurch, clergy-centred, centripetal or church growth approaches and programs.

Their critique of other ecclesiologies and church models (that is, non-emerging-missional church models) can be gracious or, at times, almost scathing. Clapp is scathing when, for instance, he lists ‘the predominant strategies of retrenchment’

\textsuperscript{29} On ecclesial death and resurrection Jinkins writes, ‘The church has always, throughout its history, almost routinely faced death… But wherever the church has faced death, the church has not faced death as those who have no hope, and it has not faced death as though death were only a thief who must wrest life from an unyielding grip… When the church faces death, it faces its historical particularity, its singularity, its visibility… Ironically, the church is most attractive when it pursues its vocation unconcerned with its own survival. But this fact tenaciously resists institutional manipulation.’ Jinkins, \textit{The Church Faces Death}, p.27.

\textsuperscript{30} L. Sweet, \textit{Soulsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).
found in established churches in the West that hinder them from ‘seeing and practicing church as itself a culture and a political community’ and as ‘a way of life’.\textsuperscript{31} He provides a range of what he considers unhelpful ecclesiological strategies. These include the Gnostic privatisation of Christianity to the detriment of the political, social and cultural. He also notes what he considers the syncretistic amalgamation of western consumerism and privatised faith and, in North America in particular, the confusion of the nation-state with the church.

Another example is the work of Pete Ward. Building on Bauman’s notion of ‘Liquid Modernity’,\textsuperscript{32} Ward proposes that ‘liquid’ forms of church are preferable to ‘solid’ ones. ‘Liquid churches’, writes Ward, are culturally sensitive, a series of relationships and communications, community-oriented, built on natural networks, evolving, unstructured, missionally-shaped, and only regulated by immersion in scripture, the presence of the Spirit, and abundant expressions of grace. His criticism of ‘solid churches’ (that is, of forms of church that do not have the characteristics of ‘liquid churches’), is that they place undue emphasis on gathered congregations and church services, are formulaic and mass produced, obsess with attendance and size, and are too often exclusive rather than inclusive. For Ward, these ‘solid churches’ regularly mutate into forms that serve the notions of heritage, refuge and nostalgia.\textsuperscript{33}

However, in another EMCM text examined,\textsuperscript{34} Moynagh finally confesses that one of the profound dilemmas of the EMCM is its disillusionment with the mainstream

\textsuperscript{31} Clapp, \textit{A Peculiar People}. Chapters 2 and 3, p.33-57.

\textsuperscript{32} Bauman, \textit{Liquid Modernity}.

\textsuperscript{33} Ward, \textit{Liquid Church}. p.13-30.

\textsuperscript{34} Moynagh, \textit{Emergingchurch.Intro}.p.17-25, 37, 105-106, and 119-120. Moynagh says this after writing about after writing about the limitations of (and difference from emerging church of) traditional church planting, established forms of church, home and cell church, the alternative-worship movement, evangelicalism, contemporary seeker-sensitive, megachurch, purpose-driven and charismatic models of church.
church and the negative consequences of that position.\textsuperscript{35}

In a seminal EMCM book, Brian McLaren cautions his readership on being ‘more careful about applying a degree of scrutiny to others (other Christians, non-Christians, postmoderns, “the world”, megachurches, or whomever) that we cannot ourselves withstand’.\textsuperscript{36} While advocating the abandonment of church structures as they are outgrown, McLaren also cautions his EMCM understudies against a form of ‘anarchist ecclesiology’\textsuperscript{37} that is predominantly anti-institutional and anti-organisational.

In the EMCM text by Moynagh, Stuart Murray, the author of Post-Christendom and Church After Christendom,\textsuperscript{38} notes,

> Hope for the future of the church in western culture does not lie with the inherited church. Nor does it lie with the emerging church. It lies in conversations between inherited and emerging churches that enable each to learn from the other and together find fresh ways of incarnating the gospel in a changing and diverse culture.\textsuperscript{39}

Therefore, as long as the EMCM engagement with other forms of ecclesiology remains constructive, dialogical and gracious, its emerging-missional voice offers a valuable ecclesiological and ecumenical conversation partner.

\textsuperscript{35} ‘Some pioneers of emerging church feel disillusioned with the mainstream... Initially they may define church by what it is not... But they cannot go on defining church in negative terms. After a while, they need a positive view: not what church isn’t, but what it is. What is at the heart of church? What kind of Christian community should they be trying to create?... (Their) bracing radicalism risks throwing out the accumulated wisdom of the church with the bathwater.’ Ibid. p.145 and 164.

\textsuperscript{36} McLaren, The Church on the Other Side. p.176.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. p.95-107.

\textsuperscript{38} See bibliography.

\textsuperscript{39} Moynagh, Emergingchurch.Intro. p.153.
5.1.5 Critiquing Evangelicalism’s Epistemology and Methodology

Hunsberger paraphrases part of a 1991 lecture by missiologist David Bosch that relates specifically to the influence of the Reformers’ ecclesiologies on Protestant views of the nature of the church. In that paraphrase he reflects a vigorous critique of Protestant, and more often western Evangelical, epistemology, methodology and ecclesiology present in the EMCM literature. In 5.5, we will look at the Reformers’ ecclesiological understandings of the nature of the church, and the notion of the ‘marks of the true church’, and ask how these may or may not correspond with the EMCM definition of what is necessary to constitute a church.

However, on the matter of evangelicalism, while western evangelicalism takes various forms around the globe, and one author has even suggested sixteen distinct strands, with variations occurring between denominations, countries, and the like, it does have some distinct and identifiable characteristics. These include an acceptance of the Protestant Bible as reliable and the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice, holding to the historicity of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the centrality of the person and work of Christ, his divine/human nature, and his saving work.

Bebbington, in what has become known as the Bebbington Quadrilateral, suggests four defining characteristics of British Evangelicalism:

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40 Hunsberger paraphrases Bosch as saying, ‘The churches shaped by the Reformation were left with a view of the church that was not directly intended by the Reformers, but nevertheless resulted from the way that they spoke about the church. Those churches came to conceive the church as ‘a place where certain things happened.’ The Reformers emphasised as the ‘marks of the true church’ that such a church exists wherever the gospel is rightly preached, the sacraments rightly administered, and (they sometimes added) church discipline exercised… Over time, these ‘marks’ narrowed the church's definition of itself toward a 'place where' idea… This perception of the church gives little attention to the church as a communal entity or presence, and it stresses even less the community's role as the bearer of missional responsibility throughout the world, both near and far away.’ Guder, Missional Church, p.79.

1. **Conversionism** – an emphasis on a personal conversion experience;

2. **Biblicism** - holding to the Protestant Bible as God's self-revelation to humanity, and as the primary source of religious authority (there are Catholic evangelicals who include other scriptures);

3. **Activism** – a concern for evangelism, social transformation through the proclamation of the gospel, and mission;

4. **Crucicentrism** – an understanding of salvation and personal forgiveness of sins as only being achieved through Christ’s redemptive work on the cross.\(^\text{42}\)

Green, in the *American Religious Landscape Report*, proposes that contemporary North American Evangelicalism has the same core beliefs, with very slight differences in nuance.\(^\text{43}\)

Most of the EMCM authors have their theological heritage in western Protestant evangelicalism. While they have affection for and affiliation with evangelicalism,\(^\text{44}\) they are often very critical of its epistemology, ecclesiology and methodologies. Others have had similar criticisms, for a variety of reasons, and often with regard to its perceived inflexibility in an age of pluralism and relativism, as in the EMCM evaluation. Dale, in an article on evangelical seminarian’s epistemology in an age of

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\(^{44}\) For instance, responding to Carson’s critique of the EMCM the leaders of Emergent-US write: ‘We are aware that there is some debate about whether we should be considered evangelical. This is a cherished part of our heritage, but we understand that some people define this term more narrowly than we and in such a way that it applies to them but not to us. We will not quarrel over this term, and we will continue to love and respect evangelical Christians whether or not we are accepted by them as evangelicals ourselves.’ *Response to Recent Criticisms*, written by Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, Spencer Burke, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Andrew Jones and Chris Seay, Available at [http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/files/response2critics.pdf](http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/files/response2critics.pdf) (Accessed December 7, 2008).
relativism, writes that evangelical epistemology is built on foundationalism. It understands revelation to be ‘the source of truth… certain, valid and authoritative in religious matters, defining beliefs and informing conduct.’ Yet such epistemology is being challenged in postmodern western culture, where ‘there are no beliefs that cannot be revised, and there are many kinds of connections among beliefs in the web.’ Dale upon researching a wide range of evangelical seminary students preparing for Christian ministry, sees such evangelical students as poorly equipped to deal with such pluralism and relativism. She concluded in her research that evangelical seminarians did not alter their epistemic assumptions while undertaking theological studies, and displayed inadequate analytical abilities needed to cope with cultural relativism and flux.\(^{45}\)

Not all the EMCM authors examined would share Dale’s conclusions, or be keen to relinquish evangelical epistemological foundationalism. Yet there are common concerns: evangelicalism’s insufficient ability to deal with the enormous change in western culture; its unreflective, rigid or formulaic ecclesiology and ecclesial methodologies. There are key words and concepts that are negatively used by the EMCM writers to describe aspects of evangelicalism that they find distasteful or at best a hindrance to their emerging-missional ecclesiological agendas.\(^{46}\)

Tomlinson’s work *The Post Evangelical* is probably the prime example of such concern among the EMCM. While begin thankful of what evangelicalism has given him personally and theologically, Tomlinson attempts an apologetic and pastoral


\(^{46}\) Such as like rationalistic, formulaic, propositional, overly Pauline, non-Hebraic, dogmatic, abstract and speculative, reformationally-entrenched, suburban and middle-class, and the like.
appeal for an understanding of post-evangelicalism in the postmodern West.\footnote{Tomlinson submits that, ‘Most of those who contemplate the possibilities of being ‘post’- evangelical do so because of a difficulty they find in reconciling what they see and experience in evangelicalism with their personal values, instinctive reactions and theological reflections. For some the agony created by this conflict is very considerable.’ Tomlinson, \textit{The Post Evangelical}. p.2.}

Tomlinson’s post-evangelicalism should not be confused with neo-evangelicalism, which is an evangelical response to fundamentalism within evangelicalism.\footnote{R.P. Lightner, \textit{Neo-Evangelicalism} (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1965).} Nor is it ex-evangelicalism, as Dallas Willard states in the forward to the revised North American edition, ‘post-evangelicalism is by no means ex-evangelicalism… post-evangelicals are evangelicals, perhaps tenaciously so.’\footnote{Tomlinson, \textit{The Post Evangelical}. p.ii.} After offering a forceful critique of what it considers to be evangelicalism’s main defects,\footnote{Ibid. p.1-30, 44-46, 139-145 and \textit{passim}. These defects are listed as: inability to come to terms with a changing cultural context, location within a modernist cultural worldview, embrace of naïve rather than critical realism, reliance on propositional truth claims, and comfortable marriage with middle-class culture and values.} he proposes a model of post-evangelicalism: one informed by postmodern culture and critical realism, missionally sensitive to culture, ‘positively worldly’, ecclesiologically flexible and adaptive, and capable of engaging creatively in an environment of relativism and pluralism. Some have objected, however, to what they consider Tomlinson’s theological inexactness and his compromise with the excesses of postmodern epistemology.\footnote{See, for example, Albert Mohler’s evaluation of Tomlinson’s book at \url{http://www.almohler.com/commentary_read.php?cdate=2004-02-20} (Accessed December 7, 2008).}

While recognising the difficulties with too narrowly defining evangelicalism and its expressions, the EMCM author Webber writes that at the beginning of the twenty-first-century there are three movements within evangelicalism that are competing for attention. He writes that the third movement is the one that is most attractive to emerging-missional or younger evangelicals. The first is traditional evangelicalism, with its emphasis on ‘theological propositionalism, evidential apologetics, a cautious
pragmatic regard toward evangelical diversity, and a negative view of postmodernity’. The second is the pragmatic evangelicalism typified by the Willow Creek and Saddleback churches. The third is ‘younger evangelicalism’, which takes a different and more missional stance ‘on how Christianity is presented and practiced in a twenty-first-century culture’.\textsuperscript{52}

In regards to evangelical ecclesiology then, EMCM ecclesiology and church practice is more often than not rooted in evangelical heritage (though not always and not exclusively in this heritage). However, it considers itself to be more flexible, missionary, capable of responding to a changing culture, and constantly evolving than traditional or pragmatic evangelicalism. Younger evangelical or emerging-missional ecclesiology is located within a postmodern worldview and is participatory and communicative. It finds its theological commitments and ecclesiological perspectives through an ancient/Reformation/postmodern blend, is shaped around the notions of community and networked relations, is counter-cultural and missional, and is most comfortable with church styles that are smaller, urban, intercultural and eclectic. Authentic embodiment of community, apologetics and spirituality is desired, worship is a convergence of the ancient and the contemporary, mission is seen as a process, and EMCM churches are often moved more toward rebuilding neighbourhoods and communities rather than need-driven social action.\textsuperscript{53} Such perspectives and values shape their ecclesiology.

### 5.1.6 A ‘Second Reformation’ and Revolution

The EMCM evaluation of existing ecclesiological approaches and church structures, leads them to advocate a recalibration of church life and systems, a revolution rather

\textsuperscript{52} Webber, \textit{The Younger Evangelicals}. p.40-44.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. p.14-25.
than evolution of missional thinking and practice, and what some in the movement have called a ‘Second Reformation’.

Within the EMCM literature there is evidence of a desire for the western church to pursue a missionary recalibration and cultural reshaping, in order to engage the West with the gospel, or, as Roxburgh puts it, ‘a radical re-formation into the next millennia’, and a re-founding rather than merely a renewal.

While there is a range of terms used in the material to indicate a similar theme, it is worth asking what such a ‘Second Reformation’, thoroughgoing recalibration, revolution, ‘new evangelical awakening’, re-founding, reinvention, or missional reformulation of the church might look like in practice. It is too simplistic to suggest that each of the EMCM writers studied have the same vision in this regard, but some consistent themes certainly emerge.

These themes include the call for a missiological revolution that deemphasises church buildings, and embraces an innovative fivefold ministry and the Reformers’ notion of ‘Ecclesia semper reformanda est’ (‘the church is in continual need of renewal’). It also calls for a local church missional life that is stimulated and carried forward from within congregations themselves, ‘redeems, re-sacralises, ritualizes new symbols and events’, discovers hopeful missional ecclesiology in its marginality, and is inclined toward an incarnational and missionary engagement with

\[58\] That is, the Pauline fivefold list of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers in Ephesians 4:11.
\[60\] See the list by Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*. on p.9.
culture. At times, there must be dissent from the mainstream churches and ecclesial leaders, especially as the renewed church seeks integrity of substance, witness, and gospel-faithfulness, and the formation of communities that live counter-cultural lifestyles that address issues of justice, environmental degradation, and the systemic evils and broader needs of western cultures and society. ‘Tinkering at the edges of the church will not be sufficient to meet the challenge of this millennium.’

For McLaren, who is probably the foremost voice for the EMCM, this missional ‘revolution’ must be characterised by a concentration on the primary task of remissionalisation. It should also be characterised by a fresh desire for ecumenical cooperation, making room for innovators and experimenters, a fresh passion for God, a graciousness of spirit that rejects negativity, a tenacious clinging to hope, and a willingness to continually learn and evolve. He gives this advice for the ‘revolution’ after proposing twelve concrete strategies for ensuring such recalibration of the western churches, including the practice of systems thinking, the design of a new apologetic, the resurrection of theology as art and apologetic, and the abandonment of redundant structures.

Such a missional reformulation of the church needs to be characterised by provision of the permission and space for radical change, the genuine desire for reform, the acceptance of the possibilities inherent in liminality and marginalisation, ‘a thoroughgoing recalibration of the church’, and the rejection of anything in this

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61 Shenk, Write the Vision. p.12 and 29.
64 See McManus’ use of this term also, in Sweet, ed. The Church in Emerging Culture. p.118. Cf. p.125-128, 131, 247 and 259.
process of radical change that might lead to ‘schism and self-righteousness’.\textsuperscript{68} Shenk captures the heart of such arguments, and sounds a cautionary note to its proponents, when he notes that missiology is at the heart of all authentic ecclesial renewal.\textsuperscript{69}

Murray breaks with the tone of some of the other EMCM authors, when he advances the notion of \textit{survival} rather than \textit{revival}, writing that in post-Christendom the annihilation of the church is very unlikely, but we will see decline, confusion, mergers and some despair. Yet the future is also hopeful, if the churches of the West learn to navigate this cultural shift through genuine missionary engagement, embracing the opportunities present in marginality, and disavowing Christendom and its negative vestiges and reflexes. They also need to seek enduring and thoroughgoing transformation, create nimble, adaptable structures, forge partnerships between established churches and emerging-missional initiatives, and, finally, pray and work for Spirit-formed post-Christendom Christianity.\textsuperscript{70} His scholarly and sober voice is a respected one in the EMCM community.

\textbf{5.2 Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Theologies}

\textit{An analysis of the ecclesiological implications of the theological perspectives found in the EMCM literature}

\textsuperscript{68} Kenneson, \textit{Beyond Sectarianism}. p.83-84.

\textsuperscript{69} ‘The church was instituted for the service of the \textit{missio Dei}, and this remains its essential purpose. However, the church of modern western culture lives out of the inheritance of Christendom, a church severed from mission. Renewal that does not result in a church renewed in mission is not genuine. The sole source for renewal of the church is the \textit{missio Dei} as the basis for its life in relationship to the world.’ Shenk, \textit{Write the Vision}. p.32-33. Cf. p.37. Shenk also writes, ‘A renewed church will be a church with integrity and a clear vision of its missional responsibility to its own culture.’ \textit{———}, \textit{Write the Vision}. p.80.

\textsuperscript{70} Murray, \textit{Post-Christendom}. p.283-285.
5.2.1 Theological Orientation and Imagination

While some in the EMCM are theologically conservative evangelical Protestants, others are more open to theological experimentation. In other words, their theological orientation and imagination is flexible, and not necessarily shaped entirely by one tradition. This has implications for their ecclesiology, and for their understanding of the nature, practices and institutions of the churches in which they are involved. McLaren, for instance, considers evangelical conventions such as ‘the sinner’s prayer’ or advocating a ‘born again experience’ as being too narrowly defined by this one tradition in church history, and by the perspectives of Modernity, and writes ‘we are fooling ourselves if we say the message never changes.’ Murray agrees in the same EMCM work, challenging emerging churches to be as theologically creative as they are culturally, and to move beyond tinkering with style and structure to finding ‘new ways of interpreting the Bible and new theological insights’ so that ‘new ways of being church are to have lasting missiological significance’.  

Moynagh, however, distances himself in his book from the stance of McLaren and Murray, asserting that all persons on the theological spectrum are welcomed under the emerging church ‘umbrella’. Similarly, Webber, in his EMCM text that focuses on emerging-missional leaders and characteristics in evangelicalism rather than in the EMCM as a whole, writes of the rise of evangelical diversity, particularly with regard to their theological perspectives associated with social, ecumenical and intellectual issues, and suggests that two dominant camps have emerged in evangelicalism, being traditional and pragmatic evangelicalism. According to Webber, the younger, emerging evangelicals are a third and distinct group growing

71 These quotations by McLaren and Murray are found at Moynagh, Emergingchurch.Intro. p.51-53. Cf. p.143.
72 Ibid. p.53.
within evangelicalism, and their approach to theology is characterised by a clear commitment to much of evangelical orthodoxy, ‘but they differ with both the traditionalists and the pragmatists on how Christianity is presented and practiced in a twenty-first-century culture.’

Webber suggests very insightfully that their theological perspectives while very diverse and pluriform have the following characteristics, and he notes the associated ecclesiological implications:

1. Their theological approach draws on a conversation between ancient and emerging theologies, rather than being systematic or reductionistic, and their theological type is both narrative and contextual, rather than propositional or merely contextual;

2. Their hermeneutics are typological, communal and based on questions of relevance, rather than reformed, historical or grammatical, and their ecclesiological emphasis is on the visible rather than the invisible church;

3. Their theological understandings of the church are shaped around incarnational ecclesiology, and their primary ecclesiological paradigm is missional;

4. Their attitude toward other Christian groups is intentionally ecumenical, rather than separatist or merely interdenominational, and their relationship with secular governments is as resident aliens, rather than aligning themselves with any one political group;

5. Their historical ecclesiological attachment is pre-Constantinian, rather than Constantinian or ahistorical, and they seek to be eschatological communities living out a vibrant faith in the world;

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6. Church polity is mostly congregational but networked with all Christians and church governance and leadership emphasise servanthood and participation.

The theological orientation and imagination present in the EMCM, therefore, is diverse, and usually experimental, imaginative and innovative, and such willingness to explore theological possibilities shapes their ecclesiological perspectives.

5.2.2 Considering Eschatology, Sovereignty and Providence

In the EMCM works analysed, there is present on the one hand an expectation and awareness that God is sovereignly, eschatologically, actively and providentially working in the world and in the church, and on the other hand a sense of urgency that if the church does not change then many opportunities for renewal and mission might pass.  

For Gibbs, sluggishness in the form of inertia, over-analysing the cultural challenges, or indecision, must be replaced by an eschatological urgency that inspires true mission in the western world. Moynagh claims that the choice the churches in the West will have to make is between ‘three futures’, being the ‘slide into oblivion’, isolated and uncoordinated missional experiments, or the coordinated and strategic effort to establish new emerging-missional communities and approaches to church development.

While also encouraging decisive mission, Harvey, however, emphasises providence, mystery and destiny, when he writes that the Modern impulse is to seek to colonise

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76 ‘Local churches and entire denominations must not assume that they have divine immunity to the consequences of failing to move at the kairos moment, which is a special God-appointed time when significant factors converge to provoke the need for decisive action.’ Gibbs, Church Next. p.37-38. Cf. 53 and 66-67.
the future, to manage risk, and to render external realities predictable. These ‘technical mechanisms’ have so risen to ascendancy in the modern mind that ‘human moral imperatives, natural causes, and chance reign in place of religious cosmologies’, and the ‘reflexive organisation of the self around knowledge environments’ moves spirituality, awareness of the presence of God, and theology to the peripheries, both in the private and the public domains. Harvey’s perspectives might challenge the other EMCM authors, when he asserts that while it is clear that we cannot embrace a Constantinian theological triumphalism that equates the eschatological redemptive story with the dominant story of the prevailing culture, neither can we develop a despairing, disillusioned picture of the present. Instead, a middle-distance approach needs to be upheld, which neither maintains a triumphalistic optimism nor a ‘near-sighted’ despair, but which is rooted in Christian narrative memory and its associated hope.

In the EMCM material, we see a variety of theological responses to the decline and marginality of the churches in the western world. Jinkins notes that these kind of responses range ‘from Stanley Hauerwas’ acerbic comment, “God is killing mainline Protestantism in America, and we goddam well deserve it,” to Lorean Mead’s more sanguine spin, “God is always calling us to be more than we have been”. Jinkins goes on to reflect on the anxiety, rationalism, entrepreneurial orientation, enlightenment groundedness, and humanism of much of the literature addressing the decline of the church in the West, and proposes that their ecclesiology needs to recover the notions of resurrection, death as a gift that leads to a rediscovery of divine vocation, and God’s sovereignty and providence. Instead of having our

78 Harvey, Another City. p.125-126.
79 Ibid. p.142-144.
ecclesiological imaginations shaped by either thanatophobia or triumphalism, they should be shaped by attention to the Christian narrative, which is one of death and resurrection.\footnote{Ibid. p.12-13 and 27-32.}

The EMCM pastor and writer McManus, surveying the great challenges that are before the contemporary church, asserts the following in this spirit of hope. ‘I am convinced and inspired that God would not allow us to live in a time of such great opportunity if he did not have on his heart the desire to pour out the greatest movement of his Spirit in human history.’\footnote{McManus, \textit{An Unstoppable Force}, p.48. Cf. p.93.} Therefore, we have a variety of ecclesiological responses to the state of the western churches in postmodern culture in the EMCM literature, and each is an attempt to make sense of the prevailing cultural and ecclesial issues related to decline, marginality, liminality and post-Christendom.

\subsection*{5.2.3 Pneumatological Considerations for Ecclesiology}

Van Gelder, an EMCM scholar, writes that ecclesiology needs to take into account pneumatological considerations, since the church ‘are a people of God who are created by the Spirit to live as a missionary community.’\footnote{Van Gelder, \textit{The Essence of the Church}, p.25.} According to Van Gelder, our missiological and ecclesiological rethinking of the church in western culture begins with the recognition that the church is created and empowered by the Spirit as a unique, spiritual community.\footnote{Ibid.} It is the Spirit who ‘creates, leads, and teaches the church to live as the distinctive people of God’,\footnote{Ibid. p.31.} who develops and renews the church as his ongoing and dynamic creation,\footnote{Ibid. p.42-44.} and who forms the community of faith.
into a counter-cultural community embodying the reign of God.\textsuperscript{87} The Spirit is the advocate-helper of the church who helps it be faithful to the redemptive reign of God and indwells it with his power and presence,\textsuperscript{88} who works in it so that it is holy,\textsuperscript{89} and who establishes the marks of the true church, which Van Gelder defines as being led and taught by the Spirit himself.\textsuperscript{90}

The presence of this theme of the work of the Spirit in shaping missional communities, and in forming individual disciples who are dedicated to personal mission, is recognisable in other EMCM works also. Examples of such pneumatological themes that are informing EMCM ecclesiology include:

1. Citing Moltmann and Edwards, Ward suggests that missional communities are not only attentive to the work of the Spirit in their midst when they are gathered for worship. They are also aware of the presence of the Spirit in popular spirituality and contemporary spiritual quests, in postmodern and consumer culture, in discipleship expressed and experienced in the world, and ultimately in creation as a whole.\textsuperscript{91}

2. There should be inward and outward expressions of the Spirit in missional communities and individual believers, since the Spirit fills with inspiration and grips with enthusiasm. The breath or Spirit that blows from the invisible world of the divine is usually evidenced by its transformational effect on the recipient and on the community of faith, in the realms of morality, boldness in witness, passion for God, a renewed enthusiasm, and the like. The activity of the Spirit

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. p.78-81.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. p.86, 112,
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. p.118.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid. p.142-146. Cf. 152-153, 157-162 and 180.
\textsuperscript{91} Ward, \textit{Liquid Church}. p.78-86.
should have a noticeable impact on the life of the Christian, and consequently, on the community of believers when gathered for worship and when engaged in mission. An emphasis is placed on the transformational work of the Spirit in missional communities, not only as ‘important in the past but also as an experience in the present.’

3. Grace is the source of the gifts of the Spirit, and this should influence our understanding of the nature of the charismata in emerging-missional churches. These gifts are a free gift of grace, and thus should not be a source of pride, self-exaltation, or elitism in the life of the individual Christian, nor in the assembly of believers. God has given a variety of gifts according to his abundant mercy and graciousness, and all recognition must go to him alone. The Pauline emphasis on grace-relatedness is pronounced and may not be ignored. In addition, there are numerous ways in which God’s grace is evident in the midst and lives of his people. Narrow definitions or understandings of the gifts and evidences of the Spirit must be avoided. Pressure for Christians to conform to certain expressions or manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit must also be avoided, since the gifts are varied, present in forms that edify the community at their point of need, and divinely originated. Spiritual gifts should be used in a way that is permeated by grace, Christocentric, and characterised by a form of spirituality that is self-giving, rather than individualizing or self-centred, for all Spiritual gifts have their origin in divine grace, and serve to edify the community of believers. Leaving aside the grand dreams of Christendom and Modern culture, our churches are called to be places of grace, Christocentric mission, humility and ‘littleness’, as these are the constraints of

the Spirit.  

4. Various Christian groups have proposed numerous measuring sticks for determining whether the Spirit is active in the life of the believer or in the Christian community. However, the main evidence of the Spirit’s activity is the glorification of Jesus Christ. The holistic exaltation of Christ as Lord, that is, the testimony to this truth in every aspect of the believer’s private and public life, is the primary evidence of the activity of the Spirit in the believer’s life, and similarly, in the assembling of Christians for public worship. Within the scope of this unwavering commitment to the Lordship of Christ, ‘the missional community confesses its dependence upon the Holy Spirit, shown in particular in its practices of corporate prayer.’ Christ gives his authority to the church for mission, according to Newbigin, in the form of ‘a living community, a tradition of teaching, and the continuing work of the divine Spirit illuminating the tradition in each new generation.’

5. The Apostle Paul’s analogy of the body focuses on the edification of the community through diverse manifestations of the Spirit, as opposed to individual indulgence. Diversity in the church is essential to true unity, and to mutual edification. The diverse manifestations of the Spirit are valuable as they contribute to the edification of the community, and the exaltation of the Head. Therefore, when the people of God gather for public worship or seek fresh expressions in their missional lives, conformity should not be imposed, nor diversity suppressed, for God gives diverse manifestations of the Spirit for the maximum edification of the body. The variety of spiritual gifts is evidence of

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95 Newbigin is quoted in Ibid. p.141.
the unifying activity and presence of the Spirit, and each Christian should seek to contribute, as the Spirit moves and leads them, during the public gathering of the people of God for worship, and in the missional life of the congregation. The Spirit has both outward and homeward movements that are expressed in diverse ways by the people of God, and communities should celebrate and encourage such double movements, which are at the heart of missional communities. That is, outward in a variety of missional endeavours, and homeward in community formation and in ‘drawing the church toward its destination, unity with Christ in heaven.’ The image of the church as a body should shape the missional imagination of the people of God as they seek together to incarnate the gospel as ‘an extension of God’s presence in the world.’

6. Order and missional attentiveness must be preserved in the public assembly of believers. This is not inhibiting restraint, but rather order for the sake of edification and witness, which is applied in all situations where the people of God are gathered together, and especially for public worship, in order that such gathering might be missionally fruitful and credible. The individual Christian is responsible for cultivating a lifestyle of godliness, self-control and love, which is a life of godly orderliness enabled by the Spirit, contributing to the edification of the body and its witness in a pagan, post-Christian, postmodern and secular society. An orderly, Spirit enabled, missionally sensitive and holistic balancing of ‘word, emotion and will’ in public worship is necessary,

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97 ‘The church as the “body” participates in the incarnation as “an extension of God’s presence in the world”… The church is the presence of the eschatological future in the world. In this sense the church does not “have” a mission, it is mission, by its very existence in the world.’ Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals.* p.112-113.
since ‘postmodern people will not tolerate any separation of the body, mind and will’, according to Gibbs.98

These, then, are some of the pneumatological themes present in the EMCM missional ecclesiology.

5.2.4 Christocentric and Messianic Ecclesiological Foundations

Insightfully, within the Catholic tradition, Haight notes Rahner’s attention to two theological methodologies that are quite useful within the sphere of high christology - they are methods from below and above.99 Haight suggests that this is different from the distinction between high and low christology, which respectively place emphasis on Christ’s divinity and humanity. Christology from below reflects on the human Jesus through the narratives of the gospels and present in our personal life and contemporary experience. This ‘ascends’ into reflection on his saving work and divinity. Christology from above is typically dogmatic theological reflection, and ‘descends’ in order to bring it to bear on and make sense of the human Jesus.

According to Haight, the contemporary search for the ‘authentic’ person of Christ, not to mention the postmodern quest to apply authentic experience and history to existential questions of meaning and spirituality, has called into question and largely abandoned the methodology from above. In the EMCM literature, we certainly see a christology and associated soteriology that takes the approach from below, searches for the authentic person of Jesus in relation to contemporary cultural and ecclesial challenges, and resonates with the postmodern mindset and spiritual search.

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98 Gibbs, Church Next. p.165.
The writings of Frost and Hirsch, who are probably the most influential of the Australian EMCM authors, are the clearest example of this in the EMCM body of work examined in this thesis. They propose a ‘christology from behind or within, rather than from above’,\(^{100}\) which both prioritises Jesus in ecclesiology, and which views Jesus particularly through his Jewish, cultural and ideological context. In their missional ecclesiology christology is central, since for them ‘the person of Jesus stands at the epicentre of what we do’\(^{101}\) and shapes our ecclesiology when we do missional ecclesiology in a biblically faithful way. In their understanding of emerging-missional ecclesiology there is a progression from christology to missiology to ecclesiology.\(^{102}\) Their latest work ReJesus has been criticised in some quarters of the EMCM however, for possible christomonism and revisioning of christology.\(^{103}\)

It is clear then that christology is pivotal to their ecclesiology. They consider issues of church governance, worship and liturgy, leadership styles, and the like, to be ecclesial issues of form and function that should be secondary to the primary matters of christology and missional faithfulness. Christian spirituality and ecclesiology is to be essentially messianic, according to Frost and Hirsch, in their attention to the example of Jesus, their structuring around the person and commands of Jesus, and in their extension of the messianic kingdom.\(^{104}\)

\(^{101}\) Ibid. p.208.
\(^{102}\) On this progression they theorize that there is a ‘nonnegotiable movement from Christ as the source (in the center) to our peripheral decisions about the specific forms and functions of doing church (the edge). Our christology informs our missiology, which in turn determines our ecclesiology. If we get this the wrong way around and allow our notions of the church to qualify our sense of purpose and mission, we can never be disciples of Jesus, and we will never be an authentic missional church.’ Ibid. p.208-209.
In fact, Frost and Hirsch prioritise ‘messianic spirituality’ alongside ‘incarnational ecclesiology’ and ‘apostolic leadership’ in their three critical strands of emerging-missional ecclesiology, and dedicate three chapters of their book to this theme.\footnote{Ibid. Chapters 7, 8 and 9, on p.109-162.} The person and missional modelling of Jesus, particularly in the gospels, shape this messianic, missional spirituality, since, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer claims, ‘Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.’\footnote{Bonhoeffer is quoted in Ibid. p.113.} For these Australian EMCM authors, Hellenistic speculative overtones in christology need to be replaced by what they consider a Hebraic focus on messianic spirituality, which is preoccupied with the concrete, historical, practical and earthy dimensions of Christian discipleship formed by attention to the person of Jesus Christ.

For Ward, our connectedness as believers in Christ is due to his unifying presence indwelling us individually and corporately, which is especially experienced in the sacraments and the ministry of the Spirit, and this connectedness takes precedence over all ecclesial forms. ‘The reason for prioritising union with Christ is that it makes room for new ways of being church. Paul’s use of the phrase “in Christ” shifts us beyond an institutionally bound church life’.\footnote{Ward, Liquid Church. p.36. See the whole chapter for his understanding of Liquid in Christ in p.33-39.} Churches, according to Ward, should emphasise loose, institutionally fluid networks that are committed to being ‘in Christ’ rather than ‘in church’, that is, to be ‘the body of Christ’ in ways that are imaginative, ‘outside the institutional box’,\footnote{Ibid. p.38.} and relevant to an emerging postmodern culture.

Murray argues that Christendom placed ecclesial forms at the center of mainstream
Christian institutional life. Post-Christendom churches, if they are to engage contemporary western culture, must move Jesus from the margins of their life to the center. For Murray this involves highlighting the implications of Jesus’ humanity for discipleship, understanding the death and resurrection of Christ in the context of his life, and ‘indwelling the gospel narratives in ways that shape our priorities, stir our imagination and train our reflexes.’

It also involves ‘reading Scripture from a Jesus-centred perspective’, denying systems of interpretation that ‘muffle’ the voice of Christ, and allowing pre-Christendom and dissident movements, such as the Anabaptists, to help us understand what it means to follow Christ in contemporary culture. The Sermon on the Mount and the Lord’s Prayer need rediscovery, writes Murray, as passages that offer a form of spirituality, political engagement, marginal discipleship, and resistance to ungodly powers, which are crucial to post-Christendom Christianity. The example of Jesus as a cultural subversive on the margins, an unpredictable evangelist, a storyteller and question-poser, an uncompromising political activist, and as an awkward dinner guest who challenged prevailing powers and perspectives, needs to be rediscovered in emerging-missional communities. For Murray and Guder, Jesus’ incarnational life was often misunderstood in Christendom, and is very pertinent in post-Christendom discipleship and ecclesial life, since ‘the essential character of the incarnation as the definition of Christian existence was largely diluted for the majority of Christendom.’

Therefore, in EMCM ecclesiology there is much evidence of messianic and Christocentric ecclesiological foundations.

109 Murray, Post-Christendom, p.311.
5.2.5 Embodying and Proclaiming the Kingdom and Reign of God

One of the pivotal themes in the teaching of Christ was the kingdom of God. In the EMCM books examined, the kingdom of God is understood as the scope of God's rule, and more particularly the place in which, at any particular time, his rule is recognised and accepted. The kingdom of God has a place in human history and in eschatology. It has substantial implications for our understanding of the missional nature of the church and of how we should live and hope as the people of God.

Moreover, in the EMCM literature, Jesus’ teaching on the kingdom of God in particular, its mystery, scope, righteousness, and requirements must affect not only our daily lives but also ecclesial institutions and imaginations. This kingdom is counter-cultural, or antithetical, to the values, structures, and ethical systems of the kingdoms of this world. This has radical implications for our lifestyles and churches. We must renounce all that is not of the kingdom of God and pursue the righteousness, peace and joy, which are some of the crowning characteristics of the kingdom. We must be prepared to be hated, persecuted and disowned, or at least misunderstood, as a counter-cultural institution. The kingdom requires all that a person has, and is. It may not immediately demand that we give up all that we have, but it certainly requires that we be willing to do this. Sacrifice is one of the hallmarks of the kingdom. Such denial of self is complete dedication to Christ, an act of self-surrender to his ownership, a willingness to die with and for him. Grace is a gift from God - and yet it will cost us all that we have, and all that we are.

112 Harvey, Another City. p.57-63. Cf. 43, 46, 68, 89 and 92.
113 Luke and Matthew records Jesus as saying, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross...‘ Luke 9:23 and Matthew 10:38.
In the midst of the incredible demands that are presented by the kingdom of God, we are given hope by its eschatological nature. This age is at times characterised by grief, sinfulness, struggle, and evil, but the age to come will be one of joy, holiness, peace, rest, and comfort. The whole created order will be transformed so that it reflects its original glory. We will live a transformed existence characterised by resurrection life, fellowship will be restored with God, and this restoration is likened in Matthew to a wedding feast.\(^{114}\) Such descriptions of the future kingdom of God nourish our hope and encourage us to continue proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.

### 5.2.6 Trinitarian Perspectives

Trinitarian themes are not as prevalent in the EMCM literature as the last few theological themes dealt with above. Their presence needs to be noted because of the consideration they receive by our comparative ecclesiologists, and especially by Miroslav Volf. In his EMCM work, Van Gelder suggests that trinitarian perspectives are now widely discussed in ecclesiological literature. They are central to his understanding of the nature of the church. He writes that ‘a trinitarian understanding is now the common starting point for thinking about God’s people in the world, about the church, and about how the church participates in God’s mission in the world.’\(^{115}\) For Van Gelder, ecclesiology and missiology are not only ‘interrelated and complementary’; they are both grounded in the doctrine of the Trinity, ‘the Triune God in mission to all creation’.\(^{116}\)

All missional ecclesiology is located in this understanding of the ‘mission of the


\(^{115}\)Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, p.11.

\(^{116}\)Ibid. p.31.
Triune God’ to all creation. Each member of the Trinity is crucial to this mission of the Godhead, from the inauguration of the redemptive reign of the Father by the person and work of the Son in his death and resurrection, to the empowerment of the church by the Spirit to engage in this mission of the Triune God to all things created.\(^{117}\) Trinitarian foundations are important for missiological ecclesiology. These include the various missiological and ecclesiological implications of our understanding of the relationship between the nature of God and the nature of the church. They also include the social reality of the Triune God and the social community of the church, and the roles of each member of the Godhead in relation to the divine mission of God ‘within creation, re-creation, and the final consummation’.\(^{118}\) All three persons of the Trinity are involved in all these three works of the Godhead. The sending activity of Triune God is the source of mission, as the Father sends the Son, the Father and Son send the Spirit, and the Godhead sends the church missionally into the world.\(^{119}\)

Other EMCM works examined in this thesis articulate similar trinitarian perspectives as foundational in emerging-missional ecclesiology. Ward, for example, devotes a whole chapter to describing how ‘the liquid dance of God’ might inform the ecclesiology of a ‘liquid church’. He uses the notion of *perichoresis* to describe how the relationships in the Trinity draw our mission and worship into ‘the divine trinitarian dance of God’, shape our understanding of the ‘dancing flow of relationship’ in our Christian communities, and lead us away from individualism\(^ {120}\) and monolithic institutionalism. ‘The static monolith of the congregation is replaced

\(^{117}\) Ibid. p.33.  
\(^{118}\) Ibid. p.35 and 97.  
\(^{119}\) ‘This perspective helps us understand the creation of a church in light of God’s being, God’s social reality as a Trinity, and the work of all three persons. The ministry of the church, in turn, must reflect all three aspects of the Godhead.’ Ibid. p.130.  
\(^{120}\) Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, p.168.
by a dynamic, inclusive, and fluid dance of intimate communication.\textsuperscript{121}

Frost and Hirsch, however, are concerned that speculative pondering of such trinitarian matters has caused the church at times to abandon its attention on practical matters of discipleship, mission and orthopraxy.\textsuperscript{122} Here they suggest that a Hellenistic worldview has replaced a Hebraic one, and that much trinitarian thought is evidence of this, which is a questionable and overly simplistic assertion.

Again, although trinitarian considerations are slim in the EMCM works, these considerations are usually deemed important in the formation of an adequate emerging-missional ecclesiology.

5.3 Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Practices

An investigation of the EMCM views on particular ecclesiological practices in missionally oriented communities of faith

5.3.1 Apostolic, Missional Leadership in Churches

Mark Lau Branson, who teaches in the Fuller Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry ‘Missional Leadership Cohort’ alongside Alan Roxburgh, asserts that apostolic, missional leadership needs to function in at least three ways in a congregation:

1. Interpretive leadership creates and provides resources for a community of interpreters who pay attention to God, texts, context, and congregation;

2. Relational leadership creates and nourishes all of the human connections in

\textsuperscript{121} Ward, \textit{Liquid Church}. p.49-55.
\textsuperscript{122} Van Gelder, \textit{The Essence of the Church}. p.120-121.
various groups, partnerships, friendships, and families;

3. *Implemental leadership* develops strategies and structures so that a congregation embodies gospel reconciliation and justice in a local context and in the larger world.

For Branson, therefore, these arenas of leadership enable congregations to interpret the meanings of the cultures and communities they are engaged with, build healthy relationships, and implement organisational practices, strategies and structures that will ensure their missional effectiveness. ‘It is crucial that a congregation’s primary leaders nurture capacities and skills in all three spheres, and that they are attentive to cohesive and coherent practices in the context of constant change.’

Like Branson and Roxburgh of Fuller Seminary’s DMin missional training program, who themselves might be considered EMCM scholars, the EMCM is very concerned with the nature of apostolic, missional leadership in churches. The characteristics of such leadership presented in the texts include the following:

1. *Leadership as Incarnational, Apostolic and Collegial (APEPT)* – The Christendom churches of the West have placed undue, triangular and hierarchical emphasis on pastors and teachers, and this needs to be replaced by a rediscovery of the fivefold leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:11-13. Apostles, prophets and teachers (‘APEs’ is the acronym used in much of the EMCM literature) complement the other gifts, and restore the cross-cultural

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124 Roxburgh is the author of two of the EMCM books examined in this thesis.

125 ‘APEPT’ is used of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, and ‘APEs’ for Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists. For example, Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*. p.165-181.
missionary impulse of the congregation in apostolic and incarnational ways.\textsuperscript{126} Their various functions act in synergy to build communities of faith, lead communities through the stages of their organisational lifecycle, and to create a leadership system. Without the groundbreaking leadership of APEs, however, and their apostolic spirit, imagination and missional pioneering, the effectiveness of this system breaks down.\textsuperscript{127} Each of the APEPT gifts is necessary for congregational wholeness and missionary effectiveness, and in order to counter the leadership excesses of traditionalist or renewalist ecclesiology.\textsuperscript{128}

2. \textit{Leadership as Cultivation, Rather than Caretaking or Entrepreneurship} – In recent times, images of the pastor as counsellor, spiritual guide, caregiver and caretaker have been paralleled by an image of the pastor as an entrepreneur and strategic builder. Banks and Ledbetter have examined the origins and developments of such leadership images in ecclesiology.\textsuperscript{129} Leadership in missional contexts, however, and according to Roxburgh, needs to be the art of cultivating cultural and congregational awareness, while also cultivating colearning networks, fresh ways of engaging scripture, and new practices, habits and norms.\textsuperscript{130} This understanding of leadership in emerging-missional contexts is echoed elsewhere in the EMCM.\textsuperscript{131}

3. \textit{Leadership as Service, Missiology, Spirituality and Team} – Servant leadership, a missiological understanding of leadership, the priesthood of all believers,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{126} Ibid. p.67-68.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid. p.170-200 and 218-222.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Roxburgh, \textit{The Missionary Congregation}. p.57-66.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Roxburgh and Romanuk, \textit{The Missional Leader}. p.15-35.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., \textit{The Church between Gospel and Culture}. p.325-332.
\end{itemize}
team ministry consensus, and leadership recognition because of a deep spiritual life and calling, are all interrelated and reoccurring themes in the EMCM material.\textsuperscript{132} Webber claims that this ‘new leadership is a dynamic, unfolding interplay of “action – reflection – action” that touches every aspect of Christian life, thought, and ministry.’ The reflection that accompanies action is of various kinds, including cultural, missiological, ministerial, collegial, spiritual and theological, and is biblically informed primarily by the \textit{Missio Dei}. All forms of reflection and action are ‘immediately connected and interrelated to each other all at once.’\textsuperscript{133}

\textbf{5.3.2 Missional Systems, Structures and Programs}

The EMCM material regularly asserts that churches need to adopt missional systems, and by consequence reflective structures and programs, if they are to fully embody a missional ecclesiology.\textsuperscript{134} These systems, structures and programs are to be guided by scripture, culturally diverse and contextualised, and grounded in the ‘basic missional structure of the church’, which is the local church. The meaning of ‘local church’ has changed in postmodern, multi-cultural, post-denominational, post-Christendom culture, however, and is no longer tied to geographical boundaries. Urbanisation, mobility, multiculturalism, and the breakdown of community in many cities, require that the local church explore scripture and missiology for guidelines in the necessary remissionalisation of their structures.\textsuperscript{135}

In this context, the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America call for a conceptual movement ‘from parish to mission community’, with an associated

\textsuperscript{132} Webber, \textit{The Younger Evangelicals}. p.147-153.
\textsuperscript{133} Both quotes are at Ibid. p.241, and see 239-241 in its entirety.
\textsuperscript{134} McLaren, \textit{The Church on the Other Side}. p.41-51.
\textsuperscript{135} Guder, \textit{Missional Church}. p.222-236.
revisiting of ecclesiological structures and systems. ‘We now propose that the structural formation of the church in North America for its mission must be a disciplined, intentional process.’\textsuperscript{136} This structural formation involves attention to scripture and the insights of missiology, the scrutiny of organisational, leadership and governmental processes by missiological and theological scholarship, and the revision of public worship. It involves social and cultural research, the theological examination of all applied forms of strategic planning and organisational theory, an openness to contextualised diversity in missional experiments. It also entails the prioritisation of particular, local communities in the broader church’s imagination and ministerial and missiological approaches (that is, the reorientation of much denominationalism).

Traditional forms of church and worship might be abandoned for fresh expressions, leadership will see mission as its priority, the structural dilemmas of established congregations will be addressed ‘prophetically and critically’, structures will be abandoned as they are outgrown, and all structures and systems that are geared toward maintenance will be intentionally reoriented toward mission.\textsuperscript{137} The meaning and practice of church membership will be examined, the sacraments will be celebrated in culturally meaningful ways, hospitality and generosity will become pivotal in community life, and approaches to family support, church discipline, and social service will need to be supported by appropriate missional structures. It is possible, however, that these proposal for structural and systemic revision by this North American emerging-missional agency might be daunting for the average church and pastoral leader, and will require significant support to be enacted. McLaren, for instance, lists thirteen missional strategies that might be adopted for

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. p.237, and see p.236-250 for their entire discussion on structural formation.

\textsuperscript{137} McLaren, \textit{The Church on the Other Side}. p.95-107.
churches to become ‘learning organizations that discover and implement their own strategies’, and suggests that they by applied and discussed in the context of a learning community.  

Organisations often operate with either bounded-set or centred-set structures or relationships. Bounded-set churches established rigid spiritual, social and cultural boundaries that define who is in or out in the community. Centred-set churches are more flexible, and are about inviting people to join them on a pilgrimage toward a central set of values and commitments. Missional communities will have structures and systems that reflect both of these dynamics, being welcoming centred-set congregations with incarnationally shaped mission strategies, who nonetheless have a bounded-set identity as a counter-cultural covenant people. The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America dedicate a significant portion of their book describing the complex interaction between bounded and centred sets in the structures of missional congregations, and on how the shape of a missional community may act as ‘a continuum from centred to bounded set.’

The systems, structures and programs of missionary communities will be christologically oriented, and, according to Frost and Hirsch, ‘designed as (1) organic, (2) reproducible, and (3) sustainable learning systems.’ Organic means that is ‘is a dynamic, living organism as opposed to a mechanistic-style structure’ (contextually missionary and not program driven), reproducible means that it is simple enough to naturally reproduce itself, and sustainable means that it has the ability to sustain its mission in the long term. They suggest that bi-vocationalism,

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138 Ibid. p.209-221.  
centralised denominational funding, APEPT leadership structures, direct missionary support, and leadership training are all components in ensuring the success of such congregational systems. While other EMCM authors include other ingredients, almost all agree that the missional reorientation of a congregation involves the remissionalisation of its systems, and associated structures and programs; this requires the careful application of systems thinking and theory in congregations.  

5.3.3 Missional and Ecclesiological Experimentation

Missional and ecclesiological experimentation are core values in the EMCM. This is evident not only in the EMCM literature, but also in the EMCM communities that have been formed and the missional experiments that have been attempted. The EMCM material often cites such innovative communities and experiments as examples of missional ecclesiology in practice, and as evidence of the influence of their perspectives. It is worth listing just a few Australian examples here, to illustrate what is being referred to as missional and ecclesiological experimentation in most of the EMCM literature, and a fuller list can be found at the EMCM internet and weblog site The Livingroom:

1. Mars Hill in Sydney – A café with creative arts and symbology, as a postmodern worship experience in a café setting;

2. The Peace Tree in Perth – Inspired by the work of Martin Luther King Jnr,

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142 Section 5.3.1 explains what ‘APEPT’ means.
143 Roxburgh and Romanuk, The Missional Leader. p.61-64.
Dorothy Day, the historic Peace churches and the ministry of Jesus, it is a spiritual community seeking to make a practical difference through attention to peace, education and justice in one of the more demoralized suburbs in Perth.\footnote{http://paceebene.org/the-community/pace-e-bene-partners (Accessed December 7, 2008)}

3. **Small Boat, Big Sea** in Sydney – A community experimenting with a variety of ecclesiological forms, including liturgy, hospitality, social activism and the creative arts;\footnote{http://www.smallboatbigsea.org (Accessed December 7, 2008)}

4. **The Junction** in Melbourne – A missional community attempting to birth hundreds of other missional communities in Australia and overseas, and that meets in homes, worships around meals, and plants contextually shaped missional churches;\footnote{http://www.thejunction.info/about (Accessed December 7, 2008)}

5. **Camberwell Baptist Church** in Melbourne – An older, established church, which is seeking to apply missional ecclesiology through a program of remissionalisation, as the senior pastor is mentored by Alan Roxburgh through the Fuller Theological Seminary ‘Missional Leadership’ Doctor of Ministry program.\footnote{http://www.camberwellbaptist.org (Accessed December 7, 2008)}

Seattle, and many more. In *The Prodigal Project*, Riddell, Pierson and Kirkpatrick tell the stories of some of these same communities, but also include New Zealand initiatives.\(^\text{152}\) The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America examined nine established congregations that are seeking to be missionally experimental, and have demonstrated that missional ecclesiology is being applied creatively in established contexts also.\(^\text{153}\)

Murray, attempting to classify the EMCM, has demonstrated the vast range of missional and ecclesiological experimentation that they are undertaking in western culture. He includes such things as contextualised cell churches, and churches in cafés, workplaces, pubs, club-culture, cyberspace, various specific subcultures, youth settings, indigenous neighbourhoods, and marginalised contexts. He also notes the emergence of midweek church, 7-day-a-week church, post-Alpha-course church, ‘organic’ church, contextual liturgy, multi-congregational church, menu church, multicultural church, new forms of monasticism and monastic orders, ‘common-purse’ communities, and ‘boiler rooms’ (that is, contemporary communities formed around imaginative prayer). What Murray and others are demonstrating is the extent of the EMCM ecclesiological experimentation that is developing alongside the EMCM literature.\(^\text{154}\)

5.3.4 Planting New Missional Communities

Alongside an EMCM emphasis on ecclesiological experimentation is a corresponding emphasis on the planting of new missional communities, and on

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\(^{152}\) Riddell, Pierson, and Kirkpatrick, *The Prodigal Project*. p.103-123.


\(^{154}\) Murray, *Church after Christendom*. p.67-98.
providing specialised training for planters.\textsuperscript{155} Such planting of ‘new, organic, missional-incarnational, communities of faith in multiple contexts’, reflects the true nature of mission theology, is ‘an essential part of any authentic missional strategy’, and is culturally specific and pluriform, not being ‘constrained by the belief in the parish model of church territorialism.’\textsuperscript{156}

A mere regurgitation of a particular formula for church planting, or cloning of a certain style of church in church planting, is to be avoided.\textsuperscript{157} Many such unreflective duplications of one particular style of contemporary church, or a ‘pre-determined mould’ for church planting, have born little missionary fruit, and Murray and Lings propose that, ‘The high failure rate of plants was surely related to replicating obsolescent models of church.’\textsuperscript{158}

Persuaded to reproduce themselves in contextualised, postmodern and non-formulaic ways,\textsuperscript{159} new emerging-missional communities will provide a variety of options for people to discover faith, and will intentionally release leaders to the task of planting.\textsuperscript{160} Moynagh considers the challenges of these new missional plants is located in resourcing, leadership, contextual sensitivity, the complexity of ministry, keeping on track missiologically, relating to the wider church, and becoming self-supporting. Drawing on their experience in planting, Riddell, Pierson and Kirkpatrick believe that such missional plants are sustained by questioning, friendship, eating together, sharing of lives and personal stories, shared projects, active reflection on what has been attempted, perseverance, prayer, and lots of opportunities for shared

\textsuperscript{155} Frost and Hirsch, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come}. p.218-220.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid. p.227.
\textsuperscript{157} Ward, \textit{Liquid Church}. p.19.
laughter and tears. Different forms of planting will have different challenges and opportunities, often depending on their relationship to a mother church and other missionary communities.

Yet the planting of new missional opportunities is vital, according to the EMCM, if the church in the western world in going to be relevant to postmodern cultures. Kelly asserts, ‘somewhere in the genesis and genius of these diverse groups is hidden the future of Western Christianity. To dismiss them is to throw away the seeds of our survival.’

5.3.5 The Gifting of all Believers for Service, Ministry and Mission, and the Participatory Nature of Christian Worship

Sweet laments in his acclaimed EMCM text *SoulTsunami* that modernity resisted the notion of ‘the priesthood of all believers’ since it was an ‘age of representation’. For Sweet, however, postmodern culture is an ‘age of participation’ and access, and a ‘karaoke world.’ The notion of ‘the priesthood of all believers’ is prominent in the EMCM literature. The material affirms that all believers are gifted for service, ministry and mission, and must be empowered to participate fully in meaningful corporate expressions of Christian worship. Missionary witness is more credible and effective if it comes from the whole body of believers and not merely a professional guild. Bosch also suggests that the division between the sacred and the secular in western culture might be diminished when not only a ‘religious class’ is released into ministry, but rather a whole, local, worshiping community. Bosch writes that ‘Newbigin suggests that the only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men

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and women who believe it and live by it.¹⁶⁵

A consequence is that forms of leadership, control and governance that have diminished the participation of the whole people of God in the whole life of the community and its mission to the world are rejected. Jesus’ model of servant leadership involved setting aside ultimate divine authority for service, which is symbolised ‘by the throne and the towel’, and is an image for leadership inspiring the EMCM churches.¹⁶⁶ Murray’s EMCM work Post-Christendom probably makes the clearest emerging-missional church case for revisiting these issues practically. Murray claims that the Constantinian division between clergy and laity has had at least six unfortunate consequences – hierarchical structures and patriarchal ethos that compromise mission, poor recognition of ministry in broader society, the back-to-front emphasis on clergy rather than lay ministry, the dominance of worship styles and contributions by a small, elite group, unrealistic expectations on leaders, and ethical inconsistencies. For Murray, these are only solved by these four practices – developing indigenous leaders within congregations, elevating bivocationalism, training leaders to prioritise lay leadership development and release, restoring the concept of ‘the priesthood of all believers’ in shared mission, and making worship services serve this end, and recognising believers’ baptism as ordination for ministry.¹⁶⁷

This affirmation of mutual giftedness and shared priesthood does not mean that leadership in unimportant in Christian communities, but it does mean that such leadership facilitates, equips and empowers such shared priesthood. While all may

share in the ministries allocated by Christ to his Body, and while this realisation makes very significant assertions concerning the nature of the church and the location of shared ecclesial authority in the congregation, particular leadership responsibilities and ministries are still necessary. Therefore, in EMCM ecclesiology, leaders of congregations serve the well-being and ministry-release of all in the shared priesthood of all believers. Together the community discerns ‘God’s specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members’, and public worship is participatory and commonly led.\(^{168}\)

### 5.3.6 Spirituality and Discipleship in Missional Communities

Authentic spirituality and discipleship, which leads to personal growth and integration and a missionary lifestyle, is developing attention to God, who calls us to a conscious realisation of being persons-in-relationship with him and others, especially in the context of Christian community. Such spiritual development, according to much of the EMCM literature, challenges us to recognise individualistic, disembodied, privatised, self and system-justifying forms of spirituality as unhelpful and potentially destructive. It draws us to reconcile the intra-personal, inter-personal, social-structural, and environmental realities in our lives, through intentional union with self, others, and God as persons-in-relationship. It is also a refutation of forms of spirituality that are otherworldly, and a location of spirituality and discipleship in christology and a genuine missiological engagement in the world.\(^{169}\)

Authentic spirituality desires communion with God and others that is located in community, the grace to see God and grow through suffering and pain, and a holistic

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and inclusive understanding of the human person. It also desires the ability to listen to the voice of the Spirit regardless of what he might say to us, and to pay attention to the mystery present in all things. This attentiveness involves an earthed spirituality, the redemption of pleasure and bodiliness, the submission of all aspects of life to God in view of their holiness and worthiness, the ‘hallowing of the everyday’, and an orientation of heart that views missional action as sacrament.\textsuperscript{170} It involves self-knowledge, reflectivity, stillness, compassion, dedication, recollection, conversion, and desire, and the primary forum for these things is relationship, that is, relationship with self, others and God. Self-in-relationship is the hub of this spiritual expression of growth and development. Authentic Christian community is often where these things are discovered, and emerging-missional communities need to be attentive to this in their effort to form the spirituality and discipleship of their members.

The tradition of Christian spirituality seeks a perspective on personal growth and integration that is relationally shaped, and which values self-in-relationship as a moral and discipleship informer, motivator, and forming agent. Therefore, in the light of spiritual formation, a dry and cerebral explication of the demands of Christian discipleship or the shape of moral prerogatives is not enough to inspire people to live lives of discipleship, missionality or ethical consciousness. Churches in Modernity tried this approach too often.\textsuperscript{171} Contemporary disillusionment with theories and ideas, rejection of meta-narratives, and suspicion of institutional guidelines, means that cerebral theories in isolation cannot inspire people to the good and the right and to personal transformation in our postmodern culture – interpersonal, intersubjective, and interdependent realities inspire people to live a

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid. p.109-162.
\textsuperscript{171} Ward, \textit{Liquid Church}. p.94-98.
spirituality and discipleship that is more whole, counter-cultural and communally based.

Spirituality and discipleship in postmodern congregations, which is adequate for a post-Christian culture, needs to be eclectic, drawn from a broad variety of traditions and streams, led at the grassroots, inspired and informed by ancient forms of spirituality, and postcharismatic in style. Abandoning some of the undesirable aspects of modernity, proposes Kelly, it will contain ‘four strands or developments – alternative worship, ancient paths, contextualisation and postcharismatism.’ 172

Kimball, in an effort to table the shifts in emphases on spirituality that have occurred in the postmodern western church, lists the different ‘values in approach to spiritual formation’ that are noticeable between the modern and emerging churches. His claim is that the EMCM churches approach spirituality more holistically, experientially and communally, with an exploration of ancient spiritual disciplines and the location of discipleship as ‘the center of the mission of the church.’ These churches also see intergenerational connectedness, social action and the ability to be spiritually ‘self-feeding’ as important in spiritual formation, and locate all these things in the context of self-in-relationship. 173

### 5.3.7 Relationships: Networked, Fluid and Organic

For some in the EMCM, and Ward’s *Liquid Church* is probably the prime example of this, relationships and ecclesiological connectedness are ideally shaped around the concepts of fluidity, network and organism. *Fluidity* describes the ‘constant movement’ and changing shape of the relationality and social organisation of


postmodern congregations, and *networked* describes the interconnectedness of lives and forms of communications, and the complex interactions with and between ecclesiological and secular systems. Such congregations are *organically* forming and self-sustaining, rather than structured around solid, organisational, mechanistic structures and programs. In that sense, the relationships and ecclesiological systems are *fluid* or *liquid*. For Ward, congregations in postmodernity must prioritise relationality of this nature, cease to control networks and communications with centralised ecclesiological systems, and be more comfortable with ‘fuzzy edges’ and unclear social boundaries. Relationship will occur around natural social settings, and community and missionality will be intimately connected as such. ‘All of this will allow for a more open connection between those who are Christians and those who are seeking a spirituality and meaning in liquid modernity.’

Drawing on the research of Turner, Roxburgh and Hirsch introduce the concept of *communitas* into the EMCM discussion on congregational relationships. In cultural anthropology, *communitas* refers to the profound community spirit, social solidarity and togetherness felt by groups on a pilgrimage through a period of social liminality and transition. Their social relationships are altered, and their spirituality enriched through the uncertainty, courage, rites of passage, new meanings, common mission and interconnectedness they experience in the phases of social change and transition. Community, then, is experienced in a fresh and profound ways, and social equality is expressed anew. These EMCM authors suggest that such is the experience of many congregations during times of radical cultural change, and that the altering

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of their relationality is similarly rich.176

5.3.8 Reinventing Theological and Ecclesiological Education

Criticisms of established forms of theological and ecclesiological education are strong in the EMCM material examined, especially because of the perceived ecclesiological implications of the shape of established theological education for the church in the western world. Webber writes, ‘The mission of the church in education is not to provide factual information that is memorised but wisdom that forms character and is embodied in life.’177

Such evaluation of traditional, extractional forms of theological education are not, and the primary concerns contained in the EMCM literature can be found articulated systematically elsewhere. Ross Kinsler identified six areas that compel many within the churches to re-assess the traditional pattern of training through residential, established theological institutions.178 These concerns not only mirror those of the EMCM, but also usefully provide a framework by which to summarise the issues raised by the EMCM.

1. Theological - Traditional theological education may create an unhealthy separation and distinction between graduates, who are appointed as ministers,

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176 The ‘communitas paradigm’ of pilgrimage proposed by Turner, however, has been recently challenged by a ‘contestation paradigm’ in J. Eade and M.J. Sallnow, eds., Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

177 Webber’s comments serve as a summary of much of this critique. ‘While our educational institutions are rising in intellectual stature, they are decreasing in influence. The problem lies with the perpetuation of an Enlightenment agenda in a postmodern world. Administrators, clergy, and scholars need to recognise that education in the seminary and in the church should be more than the accumulation of information and knowledge. True education forms character, wisdom, spiritual sensitivity, and servanthood leadership. True education is not only knowledge but also knowledge embodied and lived out individually and in community. The mission of the church in education is not to provide factual information that is memorised but wisdom that forms character and is embodied in a life.’ Webber, The Younger Evangelicals. p.168-171. On the same page Webber quotes Rodin as being of the same mind in these matters.

and their congregations.\(^{179}\) The gifts and talents contained within congregations are inadequately developed and utilised as the people form a dependence on professional ministers.\(^{180}\) Ephesians 4:11-16 mandates the gifts in the community. Moreover, missiology is often marginalised in the curriculum, with little evidence "that mission is the mother of theology."\(^ {181}\)

2.  **Historical** – Viewed historically, traditional forms of theological education may have often been ineffective in providing practical or theological training for missional contexts. Students are so consumed with their studies and academic commitments that they often do not have the time to apply what they are learning in their local church, and key individuals in the local church are usually the ones who are extracted. The potential for local church discipling, missionary activity, adequate ministry formation and church planting is reduced consequently, and requires a significant rethink.\(^ {182}\)

3.  **Sociological** - Traditional theological institutions often select young people who have not adequately proven themselves in society, place them in artificial academic-spiritual, but non-missional, surroundings, effectively exclude them from the normal processes of indigenous leadership development and selection, and after graduation place them in positions of authority over their elders and contemporaries in their churches. Apprenticeship and in-context models of training might be more useful for missiological formation in this regard.\(^ {183}\)

\(^{179}\) Ibid. p.4.
\(^{182}\) Gibbs, *Church Next*. p.100.
4. *Educational* - Educational institutions, whether secular or theological, often create an elite group within cultures, and may not fully integrate theory and practice in the ecclesiological and missiological development of leaders. Such integration is critical in the formation of missional leaders.\(^{184}\) In addition, technical competencies are often taught rather than needed missiological competencies.\(^{185}\) Curriculums need to be redesigned, emphasising the development of missional leaders for congregations in pluralistic cultures.

5. *Economic* - The church's financial resources may be used more wisely through programs of theological and missionary education that are based in churches and in missional experiments. Professional graduates from theological colleges often demand salaries and expect fulltime ministry positions that the average church plant cannot afford. The movement from ‘pedagogue to professional’ in ministry has been unhelpful for mission in the western world.\(^ {186}\) Training for bivocational ministry may become increasingly important and useful in the future.

6. *Missiological* - The missiological mandate of the churches must be facilitated in theological education, however traditional theological institutions are often too introverted to pursue this goal. Rather than developing a passion for mission within their students, denominational colleges may foster competition, criticism and rivalry between denominations. To rectify this, theological


education must operate in partnership with local churches and missional initiatives, in both education and discerning what should be taught.\textsuperscript{187}

Theological education that is missionally effective maintains contextualisation of curriculum and methods, and appropriate accountability and constructive dialogue with its students. Those being developed for missionary contexts need tools for diagnosing their particular, individual, societal and contextual needs. They also need opportunities to plan the optimum integration of theoretical and practical experiences that will adequately address those diagnosed needs, and dialogical forums to evaluate their individual and corporate progress in the emerging-missional task. Training bodies need to demonstrate a reciprocal, democratic, enabling and participatory style of leadership, so that graduates might reflect such a style in their future ministries in established and emerging contexts.

In the midst of the ecclesiological challenges facing the contemporary church, graduates also need skills in what Freire has termed problemisation and conscientisation.\textsuperscript{188} These are core values in EMCM approaches to education.\textsuperscript{189}

1. \textit{Problemisation} - The encouragement of critical, analytical, perceptive, free, open, and uninhibited dialogue between teachers and students, which is carried over into congregations. Problemisation aims to develop students into critical, expressive thinkers, who encourage critical, imaginative thinking and problem solving in their congregations, which is critical in a missional context.

\textsuperscript{187} Gibbs, \textit{Church Next}. p.93-119.
\textsuperscript{189} Webber, \textit{The Younger Evangelicals}. p.163-172, and especially 171-172.
2. *Conscientisation* – Enabling students to develop a ‘deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality.’\(^{190}\) The message of the gospel relates to the whole of an individual's existence and life, and theological education must reflect and acknowledge this truth, and help leaders develop missional congregations that engage their cultures holistically.

The EMCM literature advocates, at times, an *Instruction-Action-Reflection* or *Action-Learning* (*Discipleship*) approach to missionary and pastoral education.\(^{191}\) This involves integrating theological and practical instruction closely with training through fieldwork, and with opportunities for authentic reflection on these experiences and theological issues. Theological reflection, personal and spiritual formation, and missionary/ministerial formation are integrated in this model holistically, at least in theory. The aim is to stimulate the practical dynamics of ministry among trainees at the local level, by allowing those trainees to develop within the context of their local churches and communities, under competent supervision, and to integrate theory, practice and spiritual formation in genuine missional settings.\(^{192}\)

### 5.3.9 Missional and Ecclesiological Holism and Activism: Justice, Ethics and Compassion

EMCM writings regularly emphasise missional and ecclesiological holism and activism, usually as expressed in churches through attention to matters of justice,
ethics and compassion. According to much of the EMCM literature, churches need to form a genuine biblical theology in relation to God’s concern for the poor, oppressed and needy, especially since this was a primary theme in Jesus’ articulation of the concerns and values of the kingdom of God, and since this is our ‘missionary responsibility’. This is integral in any ecclesiology that seeks to embrace a missional ecclesiology. Furthermore, postmodern apologetics and evangelism must be holistic.

The practical implications for churches include the teaching and embodiment of the following perspectives:

1. Unconcerned accumulation of wealth, and indulgence in luxurious living or ecclesiological trappings, especially when coupled with neglect of the plight of those in need, is problematic for the missionary witness of the churches. Mainstream western churches have usually been inadequately placed to minister with the desperate poor, and their association with middle-class values and lifestyles needs examining;

2. Communities and individuals must examine their lifestyles and practices, to see whether they are complicit in the oppression of those in need, whether economically or socially. We must examine our lives for any contribution to the oppression and neglect of the poor and destitute, and when we find seeds of such things, we should work together toward individual and community

193 Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.34-35.
194 Ibid. p.39.
change. ‘Rebuilding the cities and city communities’ and ‘creating alternative communities’ is a primary ministry;198

3. Reform of the churches will not be affected solely by getting Christians to participate in social action. Christian social engagement is a response to the truths of the gospel of Christ, not the source of ecclesiological renewal;199

4. Christians must not pervert or deny justice to those who are in need or who are powerless, but instead should act as advocates on their behalf and as agents of systemic change. ‘Peace churches’ might review ‘personal, political and church approaches to injustice, exploring alternatives to violence’;200

5. Communities of faith must not indulge merely in religious or ‘spiritual’ activities, since genuine faith responds compassionately to the plight of those in need, are holistic and active in the world, and strive for justice and compassion. Members of churches need chances to examine the religious rituals and observances in their context, to shape and own these for themselves, and to develop passionate, socially aware and involved lives. This is not a dichotomised choice between ‘social action’ and ‘evangelism’; it is living in the world as a contrast-society that participates in both of these redemptive dimensions;201

6. Generosity must be cultivated among Christians, as an expression of the love and generosity of God, and as an act of cheerful obedience. When we limit opportunities for financial, ministerial and personal generosity, we limit

201 As one of the fathers of the EMCM, David Bosch, quotes from a statement of the International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne in 1974, ‘There is no biblical dichotomy between the word spoken and the word made visible in the lives of God’s people… We must repudiate as demonic the attempt to drive a wedge between evangelism and social concern.’ Kenneson, *Beyond Sectarianism*. p.51, 90-91 and 114-115; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*. p.406 and quoted in Kenneson, *Beyond Sectarianism*. p.114.
spiritual formation and missional passion, and we reinforce the prevailing attitudes formed in a consumeristic culture;\textsuperscript{202}

7. Ecclesial and personal competitiveness, greed, immorality and envy ruins the missional passion of communities of faith (among other things), and churches should cultivate a spirit of contentment, ethical attentiveness, cooperation and generosity;\textsuperscript{203}

8. The poor and needy should not be discriminated against in the church, but must be treated with due respect as children of God. Christian communities are called to be missionary heralds of peace, equality, justice and personal dignity, to live prophetically so that those in need are elevated in their spiritual, economic, vocational, and interpersonal lives, and to embody a ‘post-dualistic’ approach to the gospel;\textsuperscript{204}

9. Given the ecological challenges of global warming, deforestation, pollution, the depletion of natural resources, population growth, and the like, churches and individual disciples need to live in environmental responsibility, and to be actively involved in possible environmental solutions.\textsuperscript{205}

5.3.10 Worship, Liturgy, the Arts, Sacrament, and Tradition

There are mixed perspectives in the EMCM literature on the place of liturgy, the creative arts, the sacraments, the exploration of ancient and modern worship and contemplative traditions, and the like, in the formation of a missional ecclesiology. Some consider these things central in the formation of relevant postmodern spiritual

\textsuperscript{202} Moynagh, Emergingchurch.Intro. p.129-140.
\textsuperscript{203} McLaren, The Church on the Other Side. p.60-62.
\textsuperscript{204} Grenz, A Primer on Postmodernism. p.171-173.
\textsuperscript{205} Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.55-56; Kelly, Retrofuture. p.174-176; and Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., The Church between Gospel and Culture. p.100-103.
communities, and others see these matters as peripheral in the light of more important missiological considerations, as we will see in this thesis section. Van Gelder places all ecclesiological activities in the context of worship, since even though there are specific forms and occasions of worship, in reality ‘all of life is worship.’

Firstly, to those who consider such ecclesiological dynamics as pivotal in the creation of contemporary postmodern missional communities, and these often identify with, or are sympathetic to, the goals of the alternative worship (alt.worship) movement in North America and Europe. The alternative worship movement is a movement made up mainly of Generation X and Y young adults. It shapes creative, postmodern worship services around the innovative blending of liturgy, hymns, traditional and charismatic/contemporary styles of worship, narrative messages, poetry, the creative arts, hybrids of ancient and contemporary music (for example, Gregorian chants mixed to techno beats), labyrinths and contemplative prayer practices, and other forms of participatory, multisensory worship experiences. The goal is to make churches and their worship relevant for an emerging generation, and to creatively explore worship. While the emerging church movement and the alternative worship movement are not synonymous, there is often overlap in experimental churches, and ‘they share in common the desire to be authentic, to be contextual and to be community.’

For these EMCM authors, the create exploration of worship styles and potentials

through the innovative use of liturgy, sacred space, prayer and contemplation, music, symbols and ritual, creative arts, sacraments, et cetera, provides opportunities for diversity of ecclesiological expression and is missiologically effective. 209 It also provides opportunities to encounter God meaningfully in the context of authentic community, to explore biblical themes as narrative messages, to immerse themselves more fully in scripture, and to rediscover notions of the sacred and the mysterious.

This is a dramatic shift from typical approaches to worship, spiritual formation, liturgy and the creative arts in traditional or pragmatic Protestant churches.210 Whereas some churches in modernity attempted to be ahistorical in orientation in their public worship, emerging churches are returning to tradition as a source of inspiration, ecclesiological formation and resource. Ancient formulations of faith and worship are being explored, especially for their missiological value in postmodernity, and the Church Fathers and classical theology are being examined for apologetic, spiritual and ecclesiological guidance.211 In addition, Webber notes that tradition is being investigated by emerging churches in other fields, and is inspiring ‘a new love for the past’. These fields include Celtic spirituality and missiology, medieval approaches to epistemology, and the catholicity of John Wesley.212

We turn now to those authors who understand matters of worship, the arts, sacramental participation and tradition as peripheral or secondary considerations in the establishment of missional communities. Roxburgh, for example, sees discipleship emerging ‘out of prayer, study, dialogue, and worship by a community learning to ask the questions of obedience as they are engaged directly in

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211 Ibid. p.82.
212 Ibid. p.71-82.
213 Frost and Hirsch see most if not all of these things as optional in missionary communities, but that when they are utilised they should ‘provoke a sense of wonder and awe’, be inspirationally creative, and, in the words of Sweet, corporate worship should be ‘experiential, participatory, image-driven and communal.’ These are not discounting the significance of creativity in worship and corporate gatherings therefore, nor the need for the people of God to worship in public forums, yet they are endeavouring to keep missiology central, and to prevent experimentation in worship from becoming an end in itself.

5.3.11 Denominationalism, Ecumenism, Catholicity, and Unity

Perspectives on denominationalism, ecumenism, catholicity and unity are evident in the EMCM material, but not usually in a systematised or structured way. The texts *Missional Church* and *Church Next* are exceptions to this with regard to denominationalism. *Missional Church* dedicates a chapter to the historic development of denominations, biblical-theological, historical, sociological and organisational perspectives on denominations, and proposals for the purposes of such ‘paralocal’ and ‘parachurch’ organisations.215 The authors conclude that ‘a missional ecclesiology takes seriously the organizational life of the church both in its expressions of local missional congregations and in paralocal missional structures’, and go on to call for a ‘careful evaluation’ of these systems through the lens of missional ecclesiology, and our understandings of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of the church.216

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216 ‘The church’s nature as both one and catholic means that these structures must exist in a symbiotic relationship with local congregations and their denominational structures. The apostolic character of
Some in the EMCM claim that even though we are in an age of post-denominationalism, and though much ecumenical and denominational activity ‘can seem life-emptying, dull and bureaucratic’, denominations and broader-church-gatherings are useful as long as they serve particular functions. These functions include gracious accountability, the encouragement present in broader-church participation (such as regional gatherings and worship events), genuine support and resourcing, encouragement and care, especially in difficult times, networking of pioneers and missionary initiatives, and coaching and mentoring. While funding emerging initiatives and serving as permission-givers, denominations can also fund approaches to selecting and training pioneers, partner with emerging churches in planting, advocate for emerging churches and their leaders, research fresh approaches to church and distribute their findings, facilitate learning networks, create space for theological and ecclesiological reflection, and actively sustain these innovative churches.\(^{218}\)

In *Church Next*, Gibbs calls this the movement ‘from bureaucratic hierarchies to apostolic networks.’ Beginning with the institutional and cultural problems of mainline denominations in the West, the shift in western Protestantism toward ‘super-churches’ and ‘new apostolic networks’, and the emergence of ‘dynamic churches in the majority world’, Gibbs goes on to propose the implications for local churches, regional networks of churches, and denominational and ecumenical institutions. His implications and proposals revolve around notions of relationality, flattened organisational structures, permission giving, resourcing and equipping, diversification and decentralisation, healthy accountability, and the potential of

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\(^{217}\) Moynagh, *Emerging Church Intro*. p.158.

\(^{218}\) Ibid. p.75.

\(^{218}\) Ibid. p.158-165 and 210-242; Williams, *Mission-Shaped Church*. p.125-149.
Ecumenical cooperation is critical to missional effectiveness in postmodern culture, from EMCM perspective. Globalisation, multiculturalism, intellectual pluralism, and the burgeoning dialogue between evangelicals, mainline churches, Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, have facilitated such ecumenical openness in the EMCM and among younger evangelicals. However, missional ecclesiology demands that both denominational and ecumenical structures be examined for their ‘cultural captivity’, so that authentic ‘structures of connectedness’ are developed that facilitate the church’s mission.

In traditional and pragmatic evangelicalism, and the ecclesiology of Reformed churches, the unity of the church is primarily of an internal, spiritual character, rather than an external one. This unity is through being joined in the mystical body of Christ. Whether or not there is visible fruit to such unity, and without denying the visible existence of the catholic and local church, this unity is an invisible bond that is forged by the Spirit of Christ and our common profession of his resurrection and Lordship. All such unity, however, must manifest itself in the local community of believers, and any unity of the church universal is objectified and outlived in the unity of the local church. Similarly, catholicity includes all true believers and is predominantly applied to the invisible church, as emphasis is placed on its spiritual dimensions, that is, all genuine believers are part of one mystical catholic church, and this is concretely expressed in their participation in the local congregation.

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221 Guder, Missional Church. p.248-268.
In emerging-missional ecclesiology, however, there is an emphasis on the visible and concrete expressions of unity and catholicity. Webber notes the wide range of sources for this ‘recovered’ emphasis on the visible unity and catholicity of the church – secularism, pluralism, globalization, the communication revolution, inter-Christian dialogue, charismaticism, the demise of denominationalism, the worship movement, the interest in ecumenical spirituality and theology, Vatican II, and incarnational, Radical Reformation and postliberal ecclesiology. There is a recognisable intentionality about ecumenical cooperation and networking between diverse and differing communities of faith, which reflects a genuine desire for practical expressions of catholicity and unity.\(^{223}\)

### 5.4 Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Considerations

*A reflection on other considerations relevant to an examination of the EMCM*

#### 5.4.1 Placing the Emphasis on Emerging or on Missional

In a response to Carson’s book *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, the most prominent Australian EMCM writers Frost and Hirsch claimed that there is a difference between the North American ‘Emergent’ emphases and the Australian emerging-missional conversation. They claimed that the former is focused on engaging with postmodern culture and philosophy, and with alternative forms of worship (that is, matters that might place more weight on the idea of the church *emerging within emerging culture*). In their perspective the Australian emerging-missional conversation focuses on missional ecclesiology, christology, and the priority of scripture that is, on the church being genuinely *missional or embracing a*

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missional ecclesiology). They published this claim online in a report in July 2005, and it was met with such criticism from people within the EMCM that it was immediately taken offline, and removed at the request of the Forge Mission Network in Australia from all associated EMCM websites. Some within the EMCM claimed that it was unfairly critical of McLaren, the foremost North American EMCM author. Hirsch subsequently wrote an explanatory comment online.

Jones responded by accepting the apology from Hirsch, while questioning the wisdom of ‘position papers’ instead of genuine dialogue. While agreement was reached on the unfair portrayal of McLaren and in the EMCM in Carson’s work, the question about whether the Australian and the North American EMCM conversation place differing emphases on certain issues remained unresolved. Having examined thirty-seven EMCM texts in detail for this thesis, it seems clear to me that the Australian authors are more preoccupied with missional ecclesiology and christology than with engaging postmodern philosophy and culture, while the North American EMCM literature, especially coming out of Emergent-US, is still very concerned with the implications of postmodernity on ecclesiology.

224 Tony Jones, the National Coordinator of Emergent-US, responded to Hirsch and Frost by writing ‘I just read this .pdf, and I must say that I am becoming more and more troubled by the tone of the recent posts around the blogosphere. When a group like Forge distances themselves from Emergent, I am quite sure that it does more harm than good, and I am afraid that they are letting Emergent’s critics define who/what Emergent is rather than being involved with the conversation on its own terms… I happily affirm the document’s statement that we need a robust theology that affirms centrality of scripture and of Christ (we might, however, have some interesting conversations on just what they mean by “firm foundation.”). I continue to believe that position papers that draw lines within the emerging church, taking sides for and against organizations, and the like will be supremely unhelpful, and I ask people to please STOP IT.’


225 Hirsch wrote by way of explanation, ‘Please be assured that what we have written is not a dismissal of Emergent and certainly not a distancing from Brian McLaren and what he stands for. I have immense and abiding respect, nay, reverence, for Brian. Our primary concern in drafting this document was to try and distinguish elements that make us different in terms of nuance and focus in order to try offset the collateral damage on the Australian missional church that has, and is, sadly taking place due to Carson’s book.’


5.4.2 Criticisms and Critics of the EMCM and its Ecclesiology

In his weblog, Mark Driscoll, who is an emerging-missional church author and pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, describes his relationship with the EMCM, his subsequent movement away from some of their theologies and values, and examines the movement as an insider-critic.\textsuperscript{227}

In Driscoll’s article \textit{A Pastoral Perspective on the Emerging Church}, he describes that, in his opinion, there are three kinds of groups involved in the EMCM - Relevants, Reconstructionists and Revisionists.\textsuperscript{228} These, according to Driscoll, while unified in a desire for more missional expressions of church in the West, vary in their perspectives on whether the church needs to merely become more relevant, or reconstructed as missionally incarnational and organic, or even revisioned in both its theological perspectives and ecclesial practice. Driscoll’s pastoral and theological concern is that the revisionists, who are significant within the movement, are moving away from evangelical theology, especially with regard to evangelical perspectives on scripture, Christ Jesus, sin, salvation, gender, the Cross, hell and authority.\textsuperscript{229}

Another prominent critic of the EMCM is Donald Carson, an evangelical New Testament scholar and Research Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, and author of the critical work \textit{Becoming Conversant with...}

\textsuperscript{227} On his movement away from the EMCM he writes, ‘In the mid-1990s, I was part of what is now known as the Emerging Church and spent some time travelling the country to speak on the emerging church in the emerging culture on a team put together by Leadership Network called the Young Leader Network. But, I eventually had to distance myself from the Emergent stream of the network because friends like Brian McLaren and Doug Pagitt began pushing a theological agenda that greatly troubled me. Examples include referring to God as a chick, questioning God's sovereignty over and knowledge of the future, denial of the substitutionary atonement at the cross, a low view of Scripture, and denial of hell, which is one hell of a mistake.’ \url{http://theresurgence.com/?q=node/5} (Accessed December 7, 2008).

\textsuperscript{228} M. Driscoll, "A Pastoral Perspective on the Emergent Church," \textit{Criswell Theological Review} 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006). \url{http://criswell.files.wordpress.com/2006/03/3_2%20APastoralPerspectiveontheEmergentChurch%5BDriscoll%5D.PDF} (Accessed December 7, 2008).

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid. p.91-92.
the Emerging Church.\textsuperscript{230} Albert Mohler, the President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky,\textsuperscript{231} is also critical, as is Millard Erickson, Distinguished Professor of Theology at Western Seminary in Oregon.\textsuperscript{232} The primary criticisms levelled at the EMCM are that some of its authors such as Brian McLaren are abandoning evangelical orthodoxy and the authority of scripture for relativism and experientialism, and that it is reductionistic and overly simplistic in its claims about the relationship between evangelicalism and modernity. There is also significant criticism with regard to its understandings of the essential nature of modernity and the forms of confessional Christianity that evolved within evangelicalism in modernity, and that its emphasis on community is often to the exclusion of the propositional truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is also some concern that it has a tendency toward deconstruction rather than constructing hopeful communities of faith, that its forms of mission are too propositionless, and that it often experiments with spiritualities that have roots in other faith and belief systems.

David Mills, a professor at Cedarville College, has responded evaluatively and sharply to Carson’s critique of the EMCM, claiming that it is too simplistic, poorly researched, narrowly located (that is, in an evaluation of too few EMCM writings), and unbalanced.\textsuperscript{233}

While most of the critics of the EMCM come from a particular North American evangelical persuasion, and have a tendency to underestimate the diversity within the

\textsuperscript{230} D.A. Carson, \textit{Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).


\textsuperscript{232} M. Erickson, ed. \textit{Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times} (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).

EMCM, Mark Driscoll represents some concern about these issues that is emerging from within the movement, and which might gather some momentum over time, helping the movement, hopefully, to be positively self-critical.

5.5 Summary and Critical Reflections for Chapters 3, 4 and 5: Reformation Notae Ecclesiae and Core Aspects of Emerging-Missional Ecclesiology

This chapter has provided an analytical survey of the implicit, embedded, and less obvious ecclesiological views in the EMCM literature. Again, the purpose of the chapter is to, firstly, describe analytically the more subtle elements in EMCM ecclesiology, and secondly to put these perceptions into a critical conversation with the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in Part 4 of the thesis, Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context. Their ecclesiological critiques were examined, the ecclesiological implications of their wider theologies were explored, and their views on particular ecclesiological practices were articulated and analysed.

Following are some further brief critical reflections and implications, set against the backdrop of the Reformation notae ecclesiae. I will summarise what the Reformers considered to be the ‘marks of the true church’ that are evident in authentic Christian communities, measure the EMCM ecclesiology against these Reformation assertions, and in doing so provide a summary and critical reflection on EMCM explicit and implicit ecclesiology.

As we have seen from Hunsberger’s paraphrase of Bosch in point 5.1.5, at times the emerging-missional literature is quite critical of the ecclesiology of the Reformers,
and we have seen that this is also true at times with regard to their assessment of the
cchild of the Reformation, Evangelical ecclesiology. In essence, the EMCM material
particularly engages, at times, with the Reformation and the Evangelical
understanding of the nature of the church, and even, on occasion, of their definitions
of the ‘marks of the true church.’ It questions whether such understandings and
defining marks might be relevant for the emerging-missional churches in
contemporary culture, and, if so, how these marks might be understood missionally.
It also proposes on occasion, as we have seen in 5.1.6, the need for a ‘Second
Reformation’, which might call the churches into a more faithful expression of their
missionality and ecclesiality.

Carson, however, sees the EMCM as measuring up poorly against the Protestant
Reformation. He argues that the Reformation was driven by concerns that the
Catholic Church of the time had departed from scripture in a number of significant
ways, and therefore that the reforms advocated by the Reformers were attempts to
change the church on the basis of Scripture. In contrast, writes Carson, the emerging
church proposes changes based on cultural shifts, and the corresponding need to
adjust to those changes.

However, while Carson is correct in identifying the crucial role that concern for
adaptation to cultural change and postmodern shifts plays in the EMCM literature, it

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234 See, for instance: Williams, *Mission-Shaped Church*. p.22-23 and 96-99, and compare Frost,
235 Carson, *Becoming Conversant*. p.42. An evaluation of a similar nature was delivered by D. Wells,
Professor of Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, at the 2005
Page Lectures, delivered at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, November 9-10, 2005:
(Available at [http://sebts.edu/faithandculture/?p=93](http://sebts.edu/faithandculture/?p=93) – Accessed
December 7, 2008). See also the ecclesiological assessment of the EMCM by J. Hammett, Professor of
Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, North Carolina, at
http://www.sebts.edu/current_students/academics/viewResource.cfm?ResourceId=%24%22P%2FXR
0%20%20%20%20%20A (Accessed December 7, 2008). D. Mills, a professor at Cedarville College, has
responded evaluatively and sharply to Carson’s critique of the EMCM at
http://people.cedarville.edu/employee/millsd/mills_staley_response.pdf (Accessed December 7,
2008).
is also true that there is a desire to recover a biblical emphasis, especially with regard to missional emphasis, authenticity and community. There is a realisation that the purpose of the church is located in the mission of God revealed in the Christian scriptures. Some of the key leaders of the EMCM have responded to such criticism from Carson and others by affirming that they ‘love, have confidence in, seek to obey, and strive accurately to teach the sacred Scriptures’, by asserting that they ‘affirm the historic trinitarian Christian faith’, and by stating their commitment to the person and work of Christ.\footnote{236 Such an affirmation is worth quoting at length here. ‘We would like to clarify, contrary to statements and inferences made by some, that yes, we truly believe there is such a thing as truth and truth matters...; yes, we affirm the historic trinitarian Christian faith and the ancient creeds, and seek to learn from all of church history...; yes, we believe that Jesus is the crucified and risen Saviour of the cosmos and no one comes to the Father except through Jesus; no, we do not pit reason against experience but seek to use all our God-given faculties to love and serve God and our neighbours...; and yes, we affirm that we love, have confidence in, seek to obey, and strive accurately to teach the sacred Scriptures, because our greatest desire is to be followers and servants of the Word of God, Jesus Christ. We regret that we have been either unclear or misinterpreted in these and other areas.’} Having noted this desire to be faithful to scripture, and having engaged with Carson’s critique of the similarity or dissimilarity of the EMCM to the Protestant Reformation, it remains undeniable that in the EMCM literature there emerges a call for a ‘Second Reformation.’ At times, this is in the form of a call for a radical recalibration and reform of the churches of the Western world. There is also an undeniable questioning of what actually constitutes a local church. It is worth examining this EMCM concern with reference to a very brief summary of Reformation ecclesiology, the Reformers’ understanding of church and sacraments, some of their ecclesiological origins in Augustinian thought, and their primary propositions with regard to ‘the marks of the true church’.\footnote{Response to Recent Criticisms, written by Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, Spencer Burke, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Andrew Jones and Chris Seay. Available at http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/files/response2critics.pdf (Accessed December 7, 2008).}
5.5.1.1 Reformation Ecclesiology and its Origins

A powerful contributor to the religious renewal of the sixteenth century was the wide dissemination of the Scriptures and the Church Fathers due to the extraordinary success of the printing press. Remarkable among these Church Fathers, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) has been regarded as the most consequential patristic source for the Reformation. In the centuries prior to the Reformation, interest in the study of Augustinian theology dramatically increased, to the extent that there was what may be termed an ‘Augustinian Renaissance’.  

Augustine's views on the church and the sacraments had a significant impact on specific sixteenth century Reformers, namely Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli. The theology of Augustine greatly affected Calvin. Constant study of Augustine's writings allowed Calvin to liberally quote him, openly appropriate his expressions,

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239 John Calvin (1509-1564) is often regarded as 'the systematiser of the Reformation.' See, for instance, G.D. Hagstotz, Heroes of the Reformation (Mountain View: Pacific Publishing, 1951), p.262. Calvin wrote the first edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536 (the Institutes eventually went through five editions, and were extremely comprehensive, containing 79 chapters).
and studiously use him for support during controversies. Although steering away from Augustine's extensive allegorism, Calvin regarded him as a faithful exegete and interpreter of the Scriptures. Dr. W. Cunningham goes so far as to write that, 'this combination of Lutheranism and Augustinianism is just Calvinism, which is thus the fullest, most complete, and most comprehensive exposition of the whole scheme of Christian doctrine.

The 1889 and 1890 discoveries in the Ratschul Library in Zwickau allow us to estimate that as a young monk Luther began studying Augustine as early as 1509. Luther quickly became enthralled by the writings of Augustine, 'devouring' them eagerly, not merely because he was of an Augustinian order, but rather because of the intrinsic value and truth he found in them. Later he wrote, 'I do not defend Augustine because I am an Augustinian; before I began reading his works he meant nothing to me.' Luther consequently buried himself in Augustine while at the monastery, and became thoroughly acquainted with his works. Augustine's theology was held in great esteem by Luther, and promoted widely while he was at Wittenberg. Luther even appealed to Augustine as a leading proponent of church

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243 Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a German theologian who became a catalyst for the Reformation when in 1517 he wrote his Ninety-Five Thesis, protesting the abuse by the Roman Church in the sale of indulgences. These were translated into contemporary German, sent to the printing press, and circulated throughout Germany.
244 In the Ratschul Library in Zwickau a number of books were discovered which were filled with Luther's marginal notes and underlining.
245 Luther, WAT 1.347; 140.5; 1532.
246 Luther, WABr 1.70, 19-21; to Spalatin, 19 October 1516.
248 'Our theology and St. Augustine prosper and, by the work of God, reign in our university. Aristotle is in continual decline, perhaps to his future permanent ruin. Lectures on the Sentences are treated with distain, and nobody can hope for an audience unless he puts forward this theology, that is, the Bible or St. Augustine, or some other doctor of authority in the Church.' Luther, WABr 1.99, 8-13.
Zwingli\textsuperscript{250} diligently studied the Church Fathers before going to Zurich, especially Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, and Origen. Once arriving in Zurich, Zwingli elevated Augustine to a pre-eminent position among the fathers in his theological development. Gradually Zwingli progressed to a theocentric understanding of Augustine with the doctrine of Grace as central. It is hard to over-estimate the consequences of Augustine's theological influence on Zwingli's doctrinal position. According to Stephens, an author named Kohler asserted that, 'one could construct Zwingli's whole theology from the marginal notes in the nine volumes of Augustine that Zwingli had in his library'.\textsuperscript{251}

Augustine eloquently described the relationship between the visible church and the invisible church.\textsuperscript{252} Regenerated, pious, and persevering Christians are identified by Augustine as the true and invisible church, because not all those who are in the present, visible, earthly institution are the true church. The membership of the invisible church is the whole company of the predestined. The church remains a

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\textsuperscript{252} Augustine, \textit{On Christian Doctrine}. 3.31-34. Augustine writes, 'We, then, call men elected, and Christ's disciples, and God's children, because they are to be so called whom, being regenerated, we see to live piously; but they are then truly what they are called if they shall abide in that on account of which they are so called. But if they have not perseverance... they are not truly called what they are called and are not; for they are not this in the sight of Him to whom it is known what they are going to be.' \textit{———, On Rebuke and Grace}, Chap.22.
visible organisation, characterised by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, however the true church is essentially invisible. While Augustine recognises the primacy of Scripture in the visible and invisible church, he understands the church to have an authority to direct true members to the fullness of these Scriptures. ‘I would not believe the gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church moved me (commovit me).’

The sacramental theology of Augustine is largely deduced from his responses to schisms within the church. Augustine regarded the sacraments as designed to promote and create Christian unity.

The Sacraments initiate an intimate union between outward and inward in Augustinian theology. Therefore, in the Sacrament of Baptism, there is an external manifestation of the Sacrament of Grace in the water, while there is an internal working of the benefit of Grace through the Spirit.

All external sacrifices are symbolical according to Augustine, as they are signs of inward realities. Sparrow-Simpson points out that, 'in the ancient mind Signs were not regarded as suggestions of absent realities but indications of their presence.' Augustine's famous definition of a sacrifice is that, 'the true sacrifice is offered in every act which is designed to unite us to God in a holy fellowship, every act, that is,

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254 ‘He has bound together the new Community of His people by Sacraments in number very few, in observance very easy, and in meaning very excellent; such as Baptism solemnised in the name of the Trinity, the Communication of His Body and Blood, and whatever else is enjoined in the Canonical Scriptures.’ Augustine, *Letter* 54.1. Augustine also recognised some observances that were based on the authority of tradition (non scripta sed tradita). ’My opinion therefore is, that, wherever possible, all those things should be abolished without hesitation which neither have warrant in Holy Scriptures, nor are found to have been appointed by councils of bishops, nor are confirmed by the practice of the Universal Church...’ Augustine, *Letter* 53.35.

which is directed to that final Good which makes possible our true felicity.\textsuperscript{256}

Such theologising about the church and the Sacraments by Augustine had a profound effect on the ecclesiologies of Calvin, Luther and Zwingli.

Therefore, having surveyed the developing ecclesiology of Calvin, Luther and Zwingli, and some of the origins of their thought, we now describe what they saw as the defining ‘marks of the true church’, and we will look at this in more detail later in this section. However, what discussion on the ‘marks of the church’ had preceded the Reformation?

5.5.1.2 The Notae Ecclesiae of the Church

At the First Council of Constantinople (381), the church formulated the confession: ‘We believe (in) the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church’, and the Nicene Creed uses these four terms of the church.\textsuperscript{257} In post-mediaeval theology these four marks were used apologetically, and this became especially so as the Catholic Church of the time opposed Wycliffe and groups in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century such as the Lollards and Hussites. The issue such groups were raising, among other things, was ‘How is the true church to be recognized? What are its marks? The answer came to be given in terms of these four: Unity, Holiness, Catholicity and Apostolicity’.\textsuperscript{258}

Davidson, in his analysis of Reformation theology with particular reference to the examinations provided by George and Avis, writes that the Reformers did not deny these four attributes, and, indeed, they emphasised their adherence to the creeds of

\textsuperscript{256} Augustine, \textit{Augustine: The City of God}. X.6. ‘We must believe, therefore, that the former church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commanded to revere and keep communion with the latter, which is called “church” in respect to men.’ McNeill, ed. \textit{Calvin: Institutes}. IV.1.7.

\textsuperscript{257} A.E. McGrath, \textit{“I Believe”: Exploring the Apostles’ Creed} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

\textsuperscript{258} M. Davidson, \textit{Marks of the True Church, and the Visible and Invisible Church} (Macquarie Park: Morling College, 2005). p.1; George, \textit{Theology of the Reformers}. p.86.
the early church, especially applying the four dimensions of the creed to their developing theology of the invisible church. Having clashed with Rome’s ecclesiology, the issue of ‘What are the marks of the true church?’ became of fundamental importance.

Davidson goes on to suggest that, in summary, their answer was that the true church exists where the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached in its purity and entirety, and where the sacraments are administered properly, especially baptism and the Eucharist. Christians, who are called by God to be a part of the church that is invisible to human beings, are also called to be connected in genuine and intimate fellowship with the visible, earthly people of God, in Christ Jesus. In line with the teaching of Augustine, the Reformers believed that the visible church is a diverse body, including true and false believers, and that there definitely exists a visible *catholic* church, of which ‘particular’ churches are ‘members’.

According to the Reformers, the church is known not by its relationship with Rome or by the apostolic succession of bishops, but by the *notae ecclesiae* – the ‘marks of the church’. Davidson writes that there were two different streams of thought within the Reformation on how the *notae ecclesiae* should be articulated. These two streams were the state churches that came out of the Reformation, who emphasised two or

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262 Davidson, *Marks*. p.1-2. Calvin, for instance, writes, ‘Just as we must believe, therefore, that the former church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commanded to revere and keep communion with the latter, which is called ‘church’ in respect to men.’ McNeill, ed. *Calvin: Institutes*. IV.1.7.
264 That is, ‘local’.
265 For example, Luther, *Westminster Commentaries* 25.2-3.
three visible marks of the church, and the Anabaptists, who developed a more radical ecclesiology regarding the things that characterise true churches.\footnote{Amongst the state churches that emerged out of the reformation, the tendency was to say that there were two marks of the true visible church – ‘the Gospel… rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered’… Some reformed theologians (e.g. Bucer and the early Calvin, and some within the English puritan movement) insisted that alongside ‘the Gospel… rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered’, a third essential mark of the true, visible church was the proper exercise of church discipline. This was not merely a mark of the church’s bene esse (its wellbeing) but of its esse (its very existence)... More radically, the Anabaptists rejected altogether the idea of a visible national church (and its local equivalent, the parish church), in favour of an ecclesiology that was voluntarist (the church is formed by the intentional covenant of its members), primitivist (seeking the restitutio of the NT church rather than reformatio of the existing church), exclusivist (their churches were the only true churches) and disciplined (by the application of the ban)... This tendency was criticised sharply by the mainstream reformers (e.g. McNeill, ed. Calvin: Institutes, IV.1.10-16).’ Davidson, Marks. p.2.}

Although the point made by Davidson is an important one, our focus here will be on the Reformers, since we will look at the presence of Anabaptist ecclesiology in the EMCM literature elsewhere in this thesis.

We will now look at Calvin, Luther and Zwingli individually, and their understandings of the ‘marks of the church’.

5.5.1.3 The Notae and Calvin’s Ecclesiology

During the Reformation, Calvin elucidated the concept of the visible and invisible church that was proposed by Augustine; however, he did not intend to detract from the validity of the visible church in the Christian's experience. The mystery of the invisible church is not easily grasped in this lifetime, because to it belong numerous people who have gone before us, and multitudes who will come after us,\footnote{McNeill, ed. Calvin: Institutes, IV.1, 2, 7.} that is, a congregation of elect people (universal numerus electorum). Many who are members of the visible church on earth do not belong to the invisible church of God, however only God himself can make judgements about this. To Calvin there could be no assurance of salvation without the church, even the visible church, which is our
The theology of the Sacraments adhered to by Calvin is a mixture of elements to be found in Luther, Bucer, and the early church Fathers. He readily accepted the idea of the visible and invisible church, and it enabled him to come to terms with the discrepancies between the ideal church as presented in Scripture and the tainted empirical church as it exists on earth. The invisible and true church is indeed comprised by the whole company of the predestined, and because faith is invisible and unable to be measured, the logical conclusion for Calvin was that the genuine church is invisible.

Calvin believed that the church was to be found where the word of God is preached, where church discipline was practiced, and where the sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution. He associated the marks with testing and verification, which is to say that whereas Luther saw the marks as mere indicators of the visible church, Calvin saw them as more important in authentication, verification and testing.

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268 There is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast... and keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like angels... Away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation (echoing St. Cyprian), and furthermore, ‘What God has joined together it is not lawful to put asunder, so that, for those to whom he is a Father, the church may also be Mother.’ Ibid. IV. 1, 4; IV. 1, 1.

269 ‘I think this definition will be right and simple, if we say that the sacrament is an outward sign by which God seals upon our consciences the promises of his good will towards us, to confirm our feeble faith, and we give mutual testimony before him and the angels no less than before men, that we hold him to be God. One can still more briefly define what a sacrament is, by saying that it is a testimony of the grace of God towards us, confirmed by an external sign, with mutual attestation of the honour we bear him. Whichever of these two definitions one may choose, its meaning will be in accord with what is said by St. Augustine, that a sacrament is a visible sign of a sacred thing, or a visible form of the invisible grace.’ (Emphases added). Ibid. IV. 14, 1. Compare, Augustine, The First Catechetical Instruction, 26, 50.

270 Calvin writes, ‘From this the face of the church comes forth and becomes visible to our eyes. Whenever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists (cf. Eph. 2:20).’ McNeill, ed. Calvin: Institutes. 4.1.9.
Calvin also considered discipline as a ‘mark of the church’. The *Belgic Confession* (1561) included church discipline, ‘if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin’, and Martin Bucer had already stated in 1538 that ‘there cannot be a Church without excommunication’.

**5.5.1.4 The Notae and Luther’s Ecclesiology**

We now turn to Luther. Luther also wrote extensively about the visible and invisible church, describing the church as hidden from the world, and hidden in regards to holiness. Although she is the Bride of Christ the world pictures her as a helpless maid surrounded by aggressive and powerful foes, and although she is made holy in heaven the world understands her as made up of sinners and saints, hypocrites and pious believers, tares and wheat on this earth. The true church, which is the community of believers and the elect of God, is hidden in the visible church. This is the concept of *communio sanctorum*.

Luther agreed and disagreed with Augustine on various aspects of Sacramental theology. Whereas Augustine taught that Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace in their mere observance, Luther taught that they are effectual due to the faith that is connected to the Word of God hidden in those visible signs. Confession, Sacraments, and contrition do not justify, only faith has the power to justify. Luther sums up this theology with the aphorism: 'Not the sacrament of faith but the

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271 Calvin, *Reply to Cardinal Sadoleto* (1539).
272 *Belgic Confession*, Article 29.
273 'If, then, a person desires to draw the church as he sees her, he will picture her as a deformed and poor girl sitting in an unsafe forest in the midst of hungry lions, bears, wolves, and boars, nay, deadly serpents; in the midst of infuriated men who set sword, fire, and water in motion in order to kill her and wipe her from the face of the earth.' Luther, *WAT* 40.3.
274 Luther, *WAT* 1.594.40-595.7.
275 At a conference in Marburg in 1529, Luther and Zwingli disagreed on one particular aspect of sacramental theology. Luther believed in Consubstantiation, whereas Zwingli believed that the bread and the wine are only signs that are a memorial of Christ's sacrifice.
276 Luther, *WAT* 1.286.15-19; 1.596.7-9; 1.631.7-8; 57.170.1-10; 57.206.2-5.

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faith of the sacrament justifies\textsuperscript{276} (non sacramentum fidei sed fides sacramenti iustificat), and by referring to one of Augustine's quotes on sacramental efficacy, 'not because (the sacrament) is carried out, but because it is believed' (non quia fit, sed quia creditur).\textsuperscript{277} The community (communio) of the church is expressed in the Lord's Supper, according to Luther.\textsuperscript{278}

While the so-called unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530 was formulated by Philip Melanchthon in consultation with Luther and others, rather than by Luther himself, it probably articulates Luther's ecclesiology well.\textsuperscript{279}

For Luther, organisational systems, bureaucracies and approaches to church governance are not the core of what constitutes a church; rather it is the assembling of God’s people together in such a way that ‘the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments administered rightly.’ Thus, the word of God and the sacraments are the constitutive elements of the church, and in 1521, he wrote to Ambrosius Catherinus: ‘\textit{Tota vita et substantia ecclesiae est in verbo dei.}’ (‘The entire life and substance of the church rest in the word of God’). By way of explanation he wrote, ‘I don't mean the written gospel, but the word that is proclaimed, neither do I mean every sermon preached in a church and from a pulpit, but the genuine word which proclaims faith

\textsuperscript{276} Luther, \textit{WAT} 1.631.7-8.
\textsuperscript{277} J. Wicks, \textit{Luther's Reform: Studies on Conversion and the Church} (Mainz: Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, 1992), p.126.
\textsuperscript{278} In the Lord's Supper, from the viewpoint of Luther, we receive 'a sure sign of community and incorporation into Christ and all the saints' Luther, \textit{WAT} 2.743; Cf. Luther, \textit{WAT} 35.51.
'\textit{The significance of or effect of this sacrament is the community (Gemeinschaft) of all the saints'} Luther, \textit{WAT} 2.743; Cf. Luther, \textit{WAT} 35.50.
'When I receive the Holy Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper, 'whether I am worthy of it or not, I am still a member of Christendom; this is what the sacrament says and demonstrates' Luther, \textit{WAT} 2.694; 6.63; Cf. \textit{PE} 2.39. Luther frequently quotes Augustine's rule: 'When the Word is added to the element it becomes a sacrament' (Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum). E.g. Luther, \textit{WAT} 30.124; Cf. \textit{BC} 438.
\textsuperscript{279} ‘Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever: The church is the assembly of saints (congregatio sanctorum) in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments administered rightly. For the unity of the church it is enough (satis est) to agree concerning the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions or rites or ceremonies, instituted by human beings, should be alike everywhere. It is as Paul says, "One faith, one baptism one God and father of us all, etc." (Eph.5:6)’ Tappert, ed. \textit{Book of Concord}. p.32.
This genuine proclamation of the gospel and right administration of the sacraments could be expressed in a variety of ways according to the context of the gathered community. Luther disliked the German word *Kirche*, because he considered it to be a term that might lead people to seeing buildings and structures as constitutive of the church, rather than the true church, which is the people called together by the Holy Spirit through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For Luther, the churches were not merely to be a place of dry preaching of the scriptures and participation in the sacraments, even though faithfulness to these things is essential to the genuine church. Churches are also called to be radical communities of service, prayer, social transformation and good works. These are not marks of the church as such, but evidences of the transformation power of those marks (that is, of the authentic and passionate proclamation of the gospel and participation in the sacraments).

Luther also emphasized the universality of the church, and the fact that people through cultures and times have been drawn together into one communion, this

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280 Luther, *WAT* 7.721.

281 Explaining the meanings present in the Apostle's Creed in 1520, Luther declared, ‘I believe that in the entire world there is but one holy universal (*gemeyne*) Christian church. It is nothing else but the congregation (*gemeyne*) or assembly of saints, the godly believing men and women on earth who are called, preserved and ruled by the Holy Spirit and increased daily through the sacraments and the word of God… I believe that in this communion all things are held in common, everyone's property belongs to everyone else and nobody has any private property [*niemand ichts eygen sey*]. Thus every believer and I are aided by the prayers and good works of the whole congregation. They support and strengthen us all and at all times, in life and in death. In this way everybody bears the others burden as St. Paul teaches Galatians 6:2.’ Luther, *WAT* 7.219.

282 ‘If you want to honour the saints distinguish between those who are dead and those who are alive. Whatever you want to do for the saints, turn it from those who are dead to those who are alive. The living saints are your neighbours, the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, poor people with large families, people who suffer shame. Apply your help to them, do your work here, use your tongue to protect them, your coat to cover them, and help to defend their honour.’ Luther, *WAT* 10.3. p.407 ff. Sermon on the 20th Sunday after Trinity (November 2, 1522).
‘communion of saints’ under the supreme and sole Lordship of Jesus Christ.283

‘Wherever you hear the word and preaching of faith and confessing and acting accordingly you have, no doubt, the true *ecclesia sancta catholica*.284

Luther defined the church as holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their shepherd, and as *communio sanctorum*.285 Expanding and developing the thesis that the pure teaching of the gospel and the proper administration of the sacraments mark the true church, Luther wrote in his treatise *On the Councils and the Church* that there are at least seven marks of an authentic church.286 These are:

1. The preaching, profession, obeying and possession of the true and holy word of God, which is the primary evidence ‘that the true *ecclesia sancta catholica*, ‘a Christian holy people’ must be there, even though their number is very small’.

2. The proper administration of baptism, in accordance with Christ’s ordinance

3. The correct form of the Lord’s Supper, administering, believing and receiving it according to Christ’s teaching. ‘This too is a public sign and a precious, holy possession left behind by Christ, by which his people are sanctified so that they also exercise themselves in faith and openly confess that they are Christian, just as they do with the word and with baptism’.

4. The power of the keys, that is, binding and loosing as church discipline both publicly and privately

5. The lawful vocation, consecration and ordination of ministers - These are

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283 Luther, *WAT* 6.287.
284 Luther *WAT* 50.629.
ordained to ‘publicly and privately give, administer, and use the aforementioned four things or holy possessions in behalf of and in the name of the church, or rather by reason of their institution by Christ.’

6. Prayer, public praise, thanksgiving, and the singing of psalms, the Lord’s Prayer or other spiritual songs in the vernacular, in accordance with scripture and genuine faith. The public use of the Apostle’s Creed, intercession, the Ten Commandments and catechisms are also present.

7. Persecutions, sufferings and trials due to faith in Jesus Christ, and because of their steadfast adherence to him and his word

Luther concludes this treatise with, ‘Now we know for certain what, where, and who the holy Christian church is, that is, the holy Christian people of God; and we are quite certain that it cannot fail us.’

5.5.1.5 The Notae and Zwingli’s Ecclesiology

Zwingli described the genuine church as marked or evidenced by a communion of all elect believers, by the fellowship of believers in a particular community of faith, by the correct and unifying use of the sacraments, and by the true unity in this communion of the elect that is produced through the Word of God. He declared that the universal (catholic) church is scattered throughout time, history and place, and only comes together at the end of the ages. Only God knows who comprises this invisible church. It is invisible to us, but visible to God. God distinguishes between those who claim to be followers of Christ, and those who are truly followers. Like Erasmus, Zwingli stands largely in the Franciscan tradition, distinguishing between

288 Ibid. II. 61.22 - 62.13.
the sign and what it signifies in sacramental theology. Saturated in Augustine and Erasmus, Zwingli emphasises unity as a major function of the Sacraments.\textsuperscript{289}

5.5.1.6 The Notae and Contemporary EMCM Ecclesiology

While the group Emergent-US is only one stream within the EMCM, albeit a very influential and vocal stream, their formal response to Carson sums up why it is difficult to define one EMCM ecclesiology or set of perspectives on the ‘marks of the true church’. Their claim is that ‘there is no single theologian or spokesperson for the emergent conversation’, rather it is ‘a conversation and friendship, and neither implies unanimity – nor even necessarily consensus - of opinion.’\textsuperscript{290}

Regardless of that difficulty of classification and definition, it is clear that a range of perspectives on the primary characteristics of authentic missional churches do emerge from the EMCM literature. I will list these as primary and secondary characteristics below, distinguishing these two groups by the priority given them in the EMCM material examined in this thesis, and drawing these conclusions from an examination of this and the previous chapter, and from the associated and analysed

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid. III. 226.16 - 228.28.

\textsuperscript{290} The full text of this quotation by Emergent-US is worth detailing here, to demonstrate the loose connections and associations that characterise the EMCM, and the diversity of personalities and opinions. ‘We have repeatedly affirmed, contrary to what some have said, that there is no single theologian or spokesperson for the emergent conversation. We each speak for ourselves and are not official representatives of anyone else, nor do we necessarily endorse everything said or written by one another. We have repeatedly defined emergent as a conversation and friendship, and neither implies unanimity – nor even necessarily consensus – of opinion. We ask our critics to remember that we cannot be held responsible for everything said and done by people using the terms “emergent” or “emerging church,” any more than our critics would like to be held responsible for everything said or done by those claiming to be “evangelical” or “born again.” Nobody who is a friend or acquaintance of ours, or who agrees with one of us in some points, should be assumed to agree with any of us on all points. Nobody should be held “guilty by association” for reading or conversing with us. Also, contrary to some uninformed reports, this conversation is increasingly global and cross-cultural, and because North Americans are only a small part of it, we urge people to avoid underestimating the importance of Latin American, African, Asian, European, and First Nations voices among us.’ \textit{Response to Recent Criticisms}, written by Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, Spencer Burke, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Andrew Jones and Chris Seay. Available at http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/files/response2critics.pdf (Accessed December 7, 2008).
EMCM material.

1. Primary Characteristics of Authentically Missional Churches According to the EMCM (it should be noted that these are EMCM ecclesiological ‘distinctives’, rather than what they consider to be essential ‘marks’ of true churches)

   a. They embody a missional ecclesiology in theology, structure and missionary/ministry practice. Their ecclesiology is shaped by the Missio Dei, a view of western culture as mission field, a missionary proclamation of the gospel, and a missional reading of scripture;

   b. They engage specific cultures as a contrast society, called-out by God to give witness to his reign and the values of his kingdom, and demonstrate missionary faithfulness from a position of cultural marginality;\textsuperscript{291}

   c. They primarily evidence indicators one, four, seven and fourteen of those listed in the thesis section 4.1.2 Missional and Incarnational Ecclesiology – incarnational/missional ecclesiology, embodiment and proclamation of the gospel (in a variety of ways), behaving as a contrast-society, and a missionary witness to specific culture/s.

2. Secondary Characteristics of Authentically Missional Churches According to the EMCM

   a. As a result of the primary characteristics listed above, authentically missional churches also evidence the remaining indicators listed in thesis section 4.1.2 – messianic spirituality, apostolic leadership, intentional discipleship, scriptural adherence, missional vocation, genuine love,

\textsuperscript{291} Roxburgh, What Is Missional Church? p.5-8.
practicing reconciliation, mutual accountability, hospitality, communal worship, and eschatological vision;

b. They explore innovative ways to be church in a postmodern and pluralistic western culture, and minister with and to postmodern people;

c. They develop missional praxis in worship, experimentation with ancient and contemporary traditions and styles, narrative communication, social concern, orthopraxy, missionary endeavour, church governance and leadership, celebration of the sacraments, and the like;

d. They are holistic communities, where people experience authentic community through doing life together in meaningful and rich ways, where all participate through the use of their gifts and talents, and where the surrounding cultures are transformed through their loving action and social concern;

e. They ground missional ecclesiology in practical ways in their community life, as listed in the Seven Features of Grounded Missional Ecclesiology in thesis section 4.1.5. These are facilitating social transformation through being alternative communities, fluid relational networks, a holistic expression of ecclesiality, simple church structures, an emphasis on missional hermeneutics, the list of practical expressions of missionality provided by Hendrick and Hunsberger, and, finally, the cultivation of eschatological and sacramental practices that are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Building on such missional ecclesiological themes, the very influential EMCM texts
Mission-Shaped Church and Missional Church seek to challenge churches to reflect on the four classic marks of the church (‘one, holy, catholic, and apostolic’), because they ‘remind the church of its true nature and calling. They can act as a call to repentance because they all reflect the church’s missionary vocation’.\textsuperscript{292} Similarly, Missional Church asserts that the Reformation marks of the ‘true church’ (Word properly preached, sacraments rightly administered, and – the Reformed addition – Christian discipline practiced, as we have seen in this section) should be combined with the four classic marks of the church in such a way that missionary and ecclesiological faithfulness is achieved.\textsuperscript{293}

They go on to suggest, along with Charles van Engen, that viewing the four classic marks as ‘adverbs rather than adjectives’ and understanding them in ‘reverse order’, will enable the church to be missionally faithful, as it dynamically seeks to be about the ministry of ‘unifying, sanctifying, reconciling, and proclaiming’. The four classic marks are dynamic concepts, therefore, not merely ‘static concepts defining the nature of the church.’ In reverse order, so that missionary proclamation is the priority, this is missional faithfulness through ‘proclaiming, reconciling, sanctifying, and unifying.’\textsuperscript{294}

They describe and reframe each of the four classic marks through the lens of missional ecclesiology, in a way that is conceivably faithful to their original intent, but which emphasises the missional dimensions and possibilities of each.\textsuperscript{295}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{292} Williams, Mission-Shaped Church. p.96.
\item \textsuperscript{293} ‘In one way or another, the church must express the oneness, the holiness, the catholicity, and the apostolicity of the body of Christ in order to be a church. In one way or another, the church must preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and practice Christian disciplines.’ Guder, Missional Church. p.255.
\item \textsuperscript{294} Ibid.; C. Van Engen, God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991).
\item \textsuperscript{295} Williams, Mission-Shaped Church. p.96-99 and Guder, Missional Church. p.254-264.
\end{itemize}
1. Unity through baptism, unified in mission, and concretely demonstrating what is means for the people of God to be a unified and ‘unifying community’;

2. Holiness through separation to God and for his missionary purposes, and through the church being a sanctified and ‘sanctifying community’, especially in its transformational activities in the world;

3. Catholicity through the inclusion of all who would believe in Christ, that comes through missional proclamation to all peoples, and through the church being a ‘reconciling and reconciled community’;

4. Apostolicity through continuing the original apostolic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, as contextualised and reinterpreted for each culture and time, through the church being a ‘proclaiming community’, and as the foundation for the church’s catholicity, holiness and unity. ‘These marks express the sent-ness of the church; they describe what this sent community does and how it does it.’

How do these perspectives on the marks of authentic missional communities compare with the Reformation ecclesiology examined briefly above?

Firstly, it has already been noted that Bosch and some of the EMCM authors are critical of Reformation ecclesiology, even though for many of them their theological heritage is rooted in the same. Bosch writes of the Reformation views of the ‘marks of the true church’, that the Reformers bequeathed to Protestants an understanding of the church ‘as a place where certain things happen’, whereas contemporary missionary thinkers view the church as essentially ‘a body of people sent on a

While this is an unfair characterisation of the Reformers' understandings of the ‘marks of the true church’, it does reveal something about the ecclesiological priorities of the EMCM.

Secondly, we have also seen that some key EMCM texts assert that the four classic and the Reformation marks are essential for an adequate understanding of missional ecclesiology, and should be concretely expressed in churches so that they might be missiologically and biblically faithful. Church plants, missional initiatives, and emerging EMCM communities should take these marks seriously as they seek to be so faithful, since they assist in understanding the shape of authentic and credible local churches, and since they can assist in fuller and more adequate expressions of missional ecclesiology. An thorough examination of the marks, along with Luther’s fuller ‘seven marks of the true church’, would enrich the development of a missional ecclesiology, and help EMCM ecclesiologists distinguish between that which is necessary for the esse (being) of the church and that which is appropriate for the bene esse (well-being) of the church.  

Thirdly, the primary and secondary characteristics of authentically missional churches, as proposed by the EMCM, add a depth, dimension and texture to the Reformation and classic marks of the church that is helpful and should be welcomed. They are to be viewed as complementary and enriching, rather than contradictory.

Fourthly, this dialogue between EMCM ecclesiology and the ‘marks of the church’ opens up real possibilities for rich and mutual ecclesiological questioning and

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297 Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., The Church between Gospel and Culture, p.337. Referring to lectures given by Bosch at Western Theological Seminary in Michigan in April 1991.

probing. For example:

1. The concept of ‘unity’ might inform EMCM communities that are established in isolation or opposition to established churches;

2. The idea of the ‘Word properly preached’ might open up a conversation about what this actually looks like in postmodern, multimedia, post-textual and dialogical contexts;

3. The various marks might inform missional initiatives about what they need to pay attention to in order to be healthy (or even ‘authentic’) churches;

4. The notion of ‘Christian disciplines and discipline practiced’ might inform a conversation about appropriate boundaries for communities, and especially those which have loose and networked characteristics;

5. The concept of ‘holiness’ is a valuable one as communities seek to navigate the tension between being relevant to culture while being a contrast-society.

Finally, a criticism of EMCM ecclesiology provided by one of my thesis examiners is worth noting here. I am not convinced that the ‘primary commitment’ of EMCM ecclesiology is ‘communicational relevance’, but the eclecticism of EMCM ecclesiology and the results of the early-stage of its theological development are certainly discernible. The examiner writes that EMCM ecclesiology:

Appears an eclectic list of qualities and experiences with no particular undergirding or overriding theological or presuppositional basis... The EMCM is just as modernist, or functionalist, as the models of church it hoped to replace in a quest to ‘reach’ post-modernity with the Gospel or at least some resonant and attractive form of community experience. The
primary commitment is communicational relevance to the pluralist culture of
the West in its present form rather than a serious contextualizing of the New
Humanity. ²⁹⁹

This chapter, therefore, has examined the implicit ecclesiological views in the
EMCM literature, in order to describe analytically the more subtle elements in
EMCM ecclesiology, and to put these perceptions into a critical conversation with
the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas in Part 4 of the thesis, Toward
Dialogical Ecclesioologies for a Missional Context.

²⁹⁹ Report Form for PhD Examiner One, (Flinders University: 2009), p.2.
PART 3: CRITICAL SURVEY 2
6 THE FREE CHURCH ECCLESIOLOGY OF PROFESSOR MIROSLAV VOLF

This chapter is a very brief critical survey of the Free Church ecclesiology of Professor Miroslav Volf, whose influence, importance and career have been outlined in chapter 2. This aim of this survey, along with those of the ecclesiologies of Ratzinger and Zizioulas, is not to put Volf into critical dialogue with Ratzinger and Zizioulas, or even to critically analyse his perspectives, but to establish his convictions for the purpose of an ecclesiological dialogue with the EMCM.

Therefore, while chapters 6, 7 and 8 are not systematic critiques, but are, instead, descriptive accounts or reports, this is within the design of the thesis. Such critical surveys lead the thesis toward further critical lines of reasoning, comparison and conclusions, and are used to establish an analytical dialogue with the ecclesiology of the EMCM in chapter 9 of this thesis.

The first five sections below examine his ecclesiology in the thematic order presented in his major ecclesiological work After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity, ¹ being the nature and ecclesiality of the church, the mediation of faith and a theology of human personhood, trinitarian ecclesiology, structures of the church, and the catholicity of the church. From there I consider his perspectives on the ecumenical nature of ecclesiology, and provide a summary and some brief critical reflections on his Free Church ecclesiology, and initial implications of his ecclesiology are explored for the EMCM.

¹ Volf, After Our Likeness.
6.1 The Nature and Ecclesiality of the Church

Volff grounds his ecclesiology in the theological framework of ‘God’s eschatological new creation’,² for the church is the gathering of God’s people in joyous and diligent expectation of the final eschatological gathering of the entire people of God throughout the ages. Moreover, in this age there is ‘no church without the reign of God’, and there is ‘no reign of God without the church’,³ since the church not only awaits in hopeful expectation the liberating indwelling of the triune God, but also experiences this presence in its present manifestation.⁴ ‘Present participation in the trinitarian communio through faith in Jesus Christ anticipates in history the ecclesiological communion of the church with the triune God.’⁵ Furthermore, this communion with God expressed through the gathered community is a relationship with the triune God enabled through the Spirit, and integrates the present church and particular local churches with the extended history of the people of God throughout the ages.⁶ The internal and external processions of the Trinity are, ideally, instructive for and formative of the communion/mission poles of the church.

For Volff, the presence of the church in the world is necessarily externally perceivable, since, the church is identifiable when through a congregation the presence of the Spirit is mediated, or the effects of this pneumatological presence are

² Ibid. p.128.
³ Ibid. p.x.
⁵ Volff, After Our Likeness. p.129.
⁶ ‘Wherever the Spirit of Christ, which as the eschatological gift anticipates God’s new creation in history (Cf. Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14), is present in its ecclesially constitutive activity, there is the church. The Spirit unites the gathered congregation with the triune God and integrates it into a history extending from Christ, indeed, from the Old Testament saints, to the eschatological new creation. This Spirit-mediated relationship with the triune God and with the entire history of God’s people – a history whose centre resides in Jesus’ own proclamation of the reign of God, in his death and in his resurrection – constitutes an assembly into a church.’ Ibid. p.129.
evident. Therefore, the nature of the church cannot be separated from the evidence of the church, since whenever the church is present it has an eschatological and manifest impact on the world in which it resides. Volf tends to diminish the ‘mystery’ or invisible aspect of the church in his ecclesiology, which certainly receives fuller treatment in the ecclesiologies of Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

In Free Church ecclesiology the constitutive presence of the Spirit of Christ in a church are the word, the sacraments, the presence of the people, obedience to Christ’s commandments, and the biblical organisation of the church. In particular, church organisational life is shaped in such churches by the desire to invest power in the entire congregation, and Volf suggests that the ecclesiality and theological credibility of such congregational structures is evidenced in the dynamism, proliferation, and orthodoxy of the Free Churches. Yet he is not uncritical of the Free Church tendencies toward individualism and a one-sided emphasis on ‘the subjective conditions of ecclesiality’, which risk ‘grounding the church on the faith, holiness, and communal will of its members’, or of the alternative ecclesiological frameworks of the Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

As an alternative to the exclusivity and shortcomings of the Episcopal and early Free Church models, Volf proposes an ecclesial model ‘according to which the objective and subjective conditions of ecclesiality appear as two dimensions of a single process.’ The objective conditions in the Episcopal traditions are the liturgical and sacramental actions of the bishops, the churches and the laity, and the subjective

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7 Ibid. p.130.
8 Ibid. p.131-132.
9 Ibid. p.133.
10 Ibid. p.135.
11 Ibid. p.135.
conditions in the early Free Church tradition are genuine personal faith and obedience to God’s revealed commandments.

In Volf’s vision of the church, he takes Matthew 18:20 as the foundational biblical text that determines what the church is, and how the church is externally evidenced.\(^\text{14}\) In After Our Likeness he expounds this particular text theologically and exegetically in order to build his thesis on the nature and expression of the church.

For Volf, the church is ‘first of all an assembly’\(^\text{15}\) of God’s redeemed people ‘who in a specific way assemble at a specific place’,\(^\text{16}\) that is, in a particular locale. It is a concrete gathering of the people of God in a specific place, since, and Volf proceeds to quote Webber here, the church does not exist ‘above the locally assembled congregation, but rather ‘in, with, and beneath’ it.’\(^\text{17}\) Furthermore, the local church and the universal church are ‘partially overlapping entities’\(^\text{18}\) and it is this overlapping that constitutes them both, through their common pneumatological immersion, as the church of Jesus Christ that waits in anticipation of ‘the eschatological gathering of the entire people of God.’\(^\text{19}\) Christ is pneumatologically present in the local gathering of the people of God constituting it as the church ‘in a proleptic experience of the eschatological gathering of the entire people of God’.\(^\text{20}\)

The church is also a communion of persons who gather in the name of Christ, who consent to the apostolic understandings of the nature of Jesus Christ, and who gather in personal identification with him as their source of salvation, faith, ‘freedom, \(^\text{14}\) Ibid. p.136. 
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid. p.137. 
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid. p.137. 
\(^\text{17}\) Ibid. p.138. 
\(^\text{18}\) Ibid. p.141. 
\(^\text{19}\) Ibid. p.141. 
\(^\text{20}\) Ibid. p.145.
orientation, and power. Explicit faith is put in him as Saviour, commitment is made to allow him to determine the lives of those gathered, and sanctification is invited through the work of the Holy Spirit. Confession of his Lordship is made public, charisms are expressed specific to each individual for the benefit of the entire community, and cognitive assent to who he is and what he has done is paralleled by personal obedience and submission to his Lordship.

According to Volf, the sacraments are essential to the life and esse of the church (baptism and the Lord’s Supper), but only in that they are a public representation and form of the confession of faith of the gathered people of God, and therefore an expression of such faith. In addition, churches are to be in inter-ecclesial relation with other churches not because this communion is itself a church, but because it anticipates the coming together of the whole people of God in the eschaton.

Volf concludes by defining a congregation as a ‘holy, catholic, and apostolic church’ in the following way:

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22 M. Volf, “The Nature of the Church,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 26, no. 1 (2002). p.68. Indeed Volf writes here that ‘It is the presence of Christ that makes the church to be the church.’

23 When writing on the profession of faith in Jesus Christ, Volf suggests that ‘Confession of faith not only distinguishes the church from the nonchurch, it simultaneously connects every church with all other churches.’ Volf, *After Our Likeness*. p.154.


25 In Volf’s words, ‘In the pluriform confessing of a Christian assembly, the objective and subjective conditions of ecclesiality, as the two dimensions of the same personal and ecclesial process, coincide; as an intersubjective occurrence, that in which subjective faith expresses and manifests itself simultaneously constitutes and manifests the church. The precedence of the objective processes involved in constituting the church is preserved, however, despite the fact that these objective processes (confession of faith) express subjective faith, or at least must present themselves as processes attesting faith.’ Volf, *After Our Likeness*. p.151 and Cf. p.146-150. For an analysis of Volf in this matter see Stewart, “The Shape of the Church.” p.544.


27 Ibid. p.154-158.

28 Ibid. p.158.
Every congregation that assembles around the one Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord in order to profess faith in him publicly in pluriform fashion, including through baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and which is open to all churches of God and to all human beings, is a church in the full sense of the word, since Christ promised to be present in it through his Spirit as the first fruits of the gathering of the whole people of God in the eschatological reign of God.29

6.2 The Mediation of Faith and a Theology of Human Personhood

Volf begins his discussion in *After Our Likeness* on faith, person, and church by suggesting that ‘in the complex ecclesial reality of all churches, the relation of individuals to the church depends on their relation to Christ, just as their relation to Christ depends on their relation to the church; the two relations are mutually determinative.’30 In this assertion, he is suggesting that there is a level of complexity in the relations between human persons, Christ, and the church that cannot be captured in simplistic notions about the difference between Catholic collectivism and Protestant individualism.

Volf, in his explication of the ecclesial mediation of faith, goes on to propose by expounding on Matthew 18:20 that Christ’s presence is promised to the entire congregation, and that individuals as part of such congregations partake of this divine presence.31 Therefore, ‘the transmission of faith occurs through interpersonal

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29 Ibid. p.158. Elsewhere Volf writes ‘here, then, you have a definition of the church that is capable of providing impetus for new and fruitful developments: *the church is the continuation of Christ’s anointing by the Spirit.*’ ———, “The Nature of the Church.” p.69.


31 Ibid. p.162.
ecclisesial interaction’ and ‘God’s salvific activity always takes place through the multidimensional confession of faith of the communio fidelium.’

It is in the community of faith that one is introduced to Christ, nurtured into maturity, receives the sacraments and the content of faith, passes on the timeless truth of the gospel, and discovers how such faith is to be embraced and outworked.

This embrace of the ecclesial activity of mediation is placed squarely by Volf, however, in the context of an individual’s personal commitment to God in faith, since ‘the goal of ecclesial mediation must be a person’s own fiducia’ and explicit personal acceptance of saving grace is essential for salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Moreover, since one receives faith through the church as a dynamic local community of gathered worshipping and believing persons, no special priestly office is required to mediate this faith – instead it is received as a gift among the general priesthood of all believers that constitutes the local church. Once encountering the living God through faith persons need to enter a community of believers since there is an ecclesial quality about salvation. Volf writes,

The ecclesial mediation of faith serves to bring human beings into a direct (though not unmediated) relation to God; they must in faith accept salvation from God. These individual human beings, however, do not remain alone with their God. By entering into this relation to God, supported by the communion of believers, they are simultaneously constituted into the communion of believers.

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32 Ibid. p.163.
33 Ibid. p.163.
34 Ibid. p.164.
36 Ibid. p.172. Furthermore, and with real implications for the EMCM, Volf asserts: ‘Just as a person cannot arise, develop, and live apart from her relationships with others, neither can a Christian exist as
Volf proceeds then, in *After Our Likeness*, to develop a theological anthropology, or an anthropologically affirming trinitarian ecclesiology, which neither dissolves Christians into ‘an undifferentiated multiplicity’ nor into ‘pure relationality’, but rather portrays them as unified through the Spirit and in trinitarian fellowship, while respecting ‘the independence of communally determined persons.’

### 6.3 Trinitarian Ecclesiology

In his chapter ‘Trinity and Church’ in *After Our Likeness*, Volf claims that no significant examination of the correspondence between the ecclesial communion and the trinitarian communion has been undertaken. He proceeds therefore to discuss the correspondence between these concepts and the limitations of the analogy between the communions, the nature of the divine communion, and the implications of this communion within the Godhead for the church, personhood, and the structure of ecclesial relations.

For Volf one’s understanding of the Trinity ultimately shapes one’s ecclesiology, and indeed one’s theology in general. Reflecting on the correspondence between trinitarian and ecclesial communion serves not only to form how the church understands the paradoxes of unity and multiplicity in her ecclesial life, but also to

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38 Chapter IV of Ibid. p.191-220.
39 Ibid. p.191.
40 Ibid. p.193.
ground the church’s self-understanding in its core experience and reality. He is writing here of the initiation through baptism into a trinitarian existence, event, and communion, for ‘if Christian initiation is a trinitarian event, then the church must speak of the Trinity as its determining reality.’

This determining reality must lead to the relationships between Christians and churches being characterised by a love that reflects ‘the mutual love of the divine persons’, and when Christian assemble in the name of Christ, even if their number is small, they ‘can be an εἰκόν (‘image’) of the Trinity.’

There are limitations on the church’s ability to image the Trinity, such as our limited understanding of the full glorious nature of the triune God, our limited, creaturely ability to reflect the divine Creator, and the reality of the weaknesses inherent in a sojourning church moving toward eschatological consummation. However, these limitations should not dissuade us, according to Volf, from exploring the correspondence between the communions, as well as the practical implications for ecclesial life.

There is, in Volf’s ecclesiology, a real correspondence between the relationality and mutual interpenetration of the trinitarian persons and that of Christians and congregations. Like the divine beings in the Godhead, Christians cannot live in independence and isolation, but express their ecclesial personhood in community, giving and receiving, and interconnectedness, since ‘a Christian lives from and

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41 Ibid. p.194-195.
42 Ibid. p.195.
43 Ibid. p.197.
toward others. Christians are designed to live in community: a community characterised by relationships corresponding to the trinitarian relations, held together by covenant, demonstrating the love, mutual interpenetration and communion of the Trinity in a real but imperfect fashion, and inter-ecclesially or ecumenically being toward and seeking fellowship with other local churches. And while ‘the indwelling of other persons is an exclusive prerogative of God’, human beings in community have a unique opportunity to influence the formation of Christ-like characteristics in each other, and local churches in rich fellowship can enrich, broaden and influence each other in a way corresponding to the ‘catholicity of the triune God.

Volf’s understanding of the relations in the Trinity leaves no room for ‘pyramidal dominance of the one (so Ratzinger) nor by a hierarchical bipolarity between the one and the many (so Zizioulas).’ This, he suggests, is because he views these positions as asymmetrical, monocentric, and monarchical, but rather a communion of divine persons that has more than one centre of growth, procession, generation and development, and that is harmonious, exhibiting equivalence or correspondence among the divine constituents or persons of God, since unity and multiplicity are equiprimal in God. The ecclesiological implications of this are non-hierarchical leadership in the churches, unity of spirit, multiplicity and equal valuing of giftings, services and activities, and the granting of inalienable rights to ecclesial persons: rights that are grounded in deep love and anticipation of the eschaton. These are the

48 Ibid. p.207 and 208.
49 Ibid. p.211.
50 Ibid. p.211-213.
51 Ibid. p.193 and 214-217. Reimer is critical of Volf’s conclusions, however, suggesting that he projects his understanding of the nature of the church on his trinitarian theology, and then proceeds to use that theology to justify his ecclesiology. Reimer, ”Miroslav Volf.” p.18.
people of God:

A people whose social vision and social practices image the Triune God’s coming down in self-emptying passion in order to take human beings into the perfect cycle of exchanges in which they give themselves to each other and receive themselves back ever anew in love.\(^5^3\)

### 6.4 Leadership, Authority and Ecclesial Structure

Volf emphasises in chapter VI of *After Our Likeness* that questions about ecclesial leadership, authority, office and structure are built on more foundational and primary theological assumptions, such as the nature of the church, the mediation of faith and salvation, and the correspondence between ecclesial and trinitarian realities. Not only so, but once these foundations have been laid these questions about office are themselves critical for forming ecclesiology, and especially ecclesiology shaped within the context of ecumenical dialogue. Therefore, Volf proceeds in chapter VI of *After Our Likeness* to build an ecclesiology that answers the problems of ‘the relationship between universal and particular priesthood, between Spirit and church law, and the understanding of ordination.’\(^5^4\)

The church, according to Volf, is a ‘polycentric community’, rather than episcopocentric, since it is participative, characterised by the broad demonstration of the charismata, a fellowship of interdependent persons mediating faith and salvation to each other, a confessional community constituted by the Holy Spirit, and an

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\(^5^3\) Ibid., "The Trinity Is Our Social Program." p.418-419.

\(^5^4\) Ibid., *After Our Likeness*. p.221-222.
ecclesial reality in which people live for and toward each other.\textsuperscript{55}

Volf’s ecclesiology is essentially a ‘participatory ecclesiology’, emphasising the active priesthood of all believers.\textsuperscript{56} The outpouring of the charismata on particular persons within the life of the churches ‘are empowerments for pluriform service in the church and in the world, empowerments which come from God’s grace and which can change and overlap.’\textsuperscript{57} So for Volf, and this assertion is deeply consequential for the core values and practices of the EMCM, this polycentric-participative understanding and model of church life is firstly a reinterpretation of what is happening in churches already, for the laity’s participation in worship ‘must be acknowledged ecclesiologically as constitutive for the church.’\textsuperscript{58}

Other more episcopocentric models of church life are, in Volf’s opinion, fertile ground for lay passivity,\textsuperscript{59} neglect of the charismata, and missional disinterest, therefore the laity need to be theologically elevated so that they perceive themselves to be the vehicle through which God constitutes the church. This constitution is evidenced and given expression through the distribution of the charismata, which are Christocentric, universally distributed, fundamentally interdependent, guided by the sovereignty of God, synchronically and diachronically plural, and a demonstration of

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. p.224; ———, "New Congregationalism." p.235-237.
\textsuperscript{56} Kärkkäinen sees this as the core of Volf’s ecclesiology in his chapter. V. Kärkkäinen, "Miroslav Volf: Participatory Ecclesiology," in An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2002). p.134-141.
\textsuperscript{57} Volf, After Our Likeness. p.226.
\textsuperscript{58} ‘In all churches, faith is mediated and kept alive above all by the so-called laity, that is, in families, in one’s neighbourhood, or in the workplace; without this lay activity of faith mediation, there would be no living church... In all churches, the laity participates in the worship service through singing, praying, the reading of Scripture, the confession of faith, or simply through their mere presence. All these activities must be acknowledged ecclesiologically as constitutive for the church, for it is through these activities that people confess Christ before one another as Saviour and Lord, and it is in this way that the Spirit of God constitutes them into a church.’ Ibid. p.227.
\textsuperscript{59} ———, "New Congregationalism." p.234-235.
the ‘priesthood of all believers’.  

Institutions and institutionalised procedures are inevitable in church life, in Volf’s ecclesiology, and our understanding of the nature and relations of the Trinity, and the correspondence of these with the new natures and relations of the charismatics, should shape the kind of institution that the church is. Institutional formation is inevitable, yet the churches are able to shape themselves as institutions in trinitarian, Spirit-graced and empowered, charismatic, symmetrical-polycentric, and freely affirmed integrative and cohesive ways. Formalisation of rules of interaction is necessary even in love-dominated communities, yet these must be flexible, adaptable, preliminary and alterable, grace and love-filled, and, ultimately, a reflection of the relations within the Trinity. Rather than resenting or resisting the institutional life of the church, or the church’s boundaries concerning theology and behaviour, Christians are to appreciate and respond proactively toward the reality that ‘their own actions and relations are the institution church’. Especially, he asserts, by exercising the charismata and forming guidelines to protect the open expression of the charismata among all the people of God.

In the light of these ecclesiological perspectives, assigning people to certain roles within the life of churches ‘must always be viewed as provisional’. Other matters of procedure, practice and principle among the communities of faith are also provisional in nature, since only the divine revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not subject to revision, ‘even though this revelation, too, and certainly our own

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60 ———. After Our Likeness. p.228-233.
62 Volf, After Our Likeness. p.234-239.
63 Ibid. p.241.
64 Ibid. p.244.
knowledge of it, is open to eschatological completion.  

Volf draws a number of implications for ordination. Firstly, the charismata of office are given exclusively by the Spirit, and the congregation and other leaders merely receive this charisma publicly through ordination. Secondly, entire local communities led by the Spirit of God confer ordination (rather than other officers perpetuating themselves through ordination). Thirdly, ordination is provisional, revocable, and based on ongoing use of the particular charisma given to the leader for the benefit of a concrete community of faith. 

While the EMCM often focuses on the institutional forms of the church, proposing that its current expressions tend to stifle creativity and missional activity, Volf appreciates that even more importantly, 

The church needs the vivifying presence of the Spirit, and without this presence, even a church with a decentralised participative structure and culture will become sterile, and perhaps more sterile even than a hierarchical church... Successful participative church life must be sustained by deep spirituality. Only the person who lives from the Spirit of communion (2 Cor. 13:13) can participate authentically in the life of the ecclesial community.

6.5 The Catholicity of the Local Church

Volf considers the volatility over the issue of catholicity to be rooted in the nature of catholicity itself, and in the differing viewpoints of the Episcopal churches and the

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65 Ibid. p.245.
67 Volf, After Our Likeness. p.257.
Free Churches. The paradox of catholicity is that all churches desire to be catholic, but only in accordance with their own ecclesiological stance. This, however, is problematic since catholicity is essential to the nature and our understanding of the church, and demonstrates the church’s ‘plurality in its unity’ and effort to ‘find in its plurality its unity.’ Neither plurality nor unity can be compromised in the quest to form a church that is truly catholic, engaged in issues about the relationship between unification and differentiation, and seeking to demonstrate the grace and power of catholicity to a world that is itself becoming increasingly uniform yet pluralised.

Catholicity is primarily an internal problem for the church, but it contains external questions that particularly revolve around issues of ‘exclusivity and inclusivity’, in the interfaith arena for instance.

A quantitative version of catholicity, which focuses on the universal expansion of the church or on that which is universally believed, is rejected by Volf, who prefers a qualitative understanding that emphasises that ‘the church is catholic because the fullness of salvation is realised within it... The catholicity of the entire people of God is the ecclesial dimension of the eschatological fullness of salvation for the entirety

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With regard to the controversy over catholicity, Volf writes, ‘Free churches have always been considered, by the Catholic Church as well as by the Orthodox Church, as quintessentially non-Catholic. Because catholicity qualifies all the other attributes of the Church, all the ecclesiological capital sins of Free Churches can be understood as offences against catholicity. The way Free Churches understand unity, holiness and apostolicity is problematic precisely because it is uncatholic... However, from the perspective of the Free Churches themselves this image is totally turned around. Along with other churches that arose during the Reformation, Free Churches have affirmed their catholicity right from the start, while denying this attribute to the Catholic Church... To become catholic the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church must understand themselves as churches among other churches... Free churches and episcopal churches have diametrically opposed understandings of catholicity which are rooted deeply in their respective ecclesial identities.’ M. Volf, "Catholicity of 'Two or Three': A Free Church Reflection on the Catholicity of the Local Church," The Jurist (1992), p.525-527. Volf’s concern over the inflexibility of the Catholic Church, and in particular Pope Benedict XVI, is quite pronounced in his article: ———, “Changing and Changeless,” Christian Century 122, no. 10 (2005).

Volf, "Catholicity of 'Two or Three'." p.525.

Ibid. p.527-528.

Ibid. p.528; ———, After Our Likeness. p.262.
of created reality’. The catholicity of the church is defined eschatologically, since the sojourning church expresses the realities of the new creation with great anticipation, and since such expression is birthed as the Spirit of God anticipates within it the coming together of the whole people of God in the new creation. This final eschatological consummation is the essential event in which the church is fully realised and completely catholic, and in the meantime, churches are partially or relatively catholic.

For Volf, the catholicity of the local church ‘arises from the ‘manifold grace of God’ (1 Pet. 4:10) and from its encounter with the richness of creation.’ The catholicity of the local church is realised through its connection with the whole people of God, as within its concrete historical setting it anticipates the eschatological new creation. The ecclesiological whole that it is connected too, however, is not the existing universal church, but rather the eschatological gathering of the people of God, which it anticipates with great hope. This anticipatory catholicity is expressed as God graces local churches with the fullness of the charismata so that they might be constituted as a church, and live as a church, through the power of the Spirit, the catholicity of salvific grace and charismata, and the ministerial giftedness of its members. It is also expressed through open relations with other churches, loyalty to the apostolic tradition, embracing all human beings who confess faith in Christ, regardless of race, gender or social class, the relationally produced catholicity of individuals, and through ‘positive integration (not assimilation!)’ of cultural plurality.’

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72 Volf, After Our Likeness. p.266-267.
73 Ibid. p.267-269.
74 Ibid. p.270.
75 Ibid. p.271-282.
6.6 Ecumenical Contours of Ecclesiology

A commitment to ecumenical dialogue, particularly with regard to ecclesiology, embrace and reconciliation, is demonstrated in Volf’s works *Exclusion and Embrace* and *After Our Likeness*. Our understanding of ecclesiology, social justice, conflict resolution, peacemaking, embrace, the new creation, and Christian community must be enriched through ecumenical dialogue.

The emergence of postconfessional Christianity, the decline of the societal and ecclesial significance of denominations, the deepening independence of local churches, and the critical evaluation of the traditional ecumenical movement, all contribute to the profound crisis the ecumenical movement finds itself in today. Yet all Christians are impoverished by division, and ecclesiology is best shaped within ecumenical and interdenominational dialogue.

A plurality of ecclesiological models is desirable and legitimate, demonstrating the vitality of Christianity within ‘multicultural, rapidly changing societies demanding diversification and flexibility.’ Also, postmodern ecclesiology must necessarily be formed in dialogue with premodern traditions and the wisdom contained therein.

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81 Ibid. p.21.
especially as one seeks to build up the ‘communio-structures’ of the vast expressions of Christianity and the local church.\textsuperscript{82}

6.7 Summary and Brief Critical Reflections

I will now summarise Volf’s ecclesiology, and draw some brief implications and connections that are explored further and in greater depth later in this thesis. Volf’s ecclesiology emphasises the idea that the church is constituted by the presence of Christ in the Spirit, and that this is mediated through the entire local community of faith, not primarily through ministers, priests or other ordained persons. Each member of a congregation is to use the full range of their gifts for ministry and leadership, and to participate in the decision-making of the life of the community.\textsuperscript{83}

These issues are of real concern for the EMCM, which emphasises flat, fluid and more grass-root leadership and governance structures in local communities of faith, as we will see.

God’s eschatological new creation, and the consequences of living in anticipation of that reality, forms the theological framework for Volf’s ecclesiology. The mutual personal indwelling of the triune God and his people is the eschatological future and hope of the church and this is both a source of anticipation and present experience.\textsuperscript{84}

Such an eschatological expectation sits well with the EMCM, which regularly articulates dissatisfaction with the marriage of contemporary Western Christianity with the values of Western capitalism and Modernity, to the detriment of an eschatologically formed approach to discipleship and community.

The presence of Christ amidst the gathered people of God is the sole condition for

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid. p.23 and 25.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. p.224-228.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid. p.128-130.
the ecclesiality of a congregation, constituting those gathered believers as a church, whether this church is healthy and whole or completely dysfunctional. The church is primarily, according to Volf, a specific and concrete gathering of people in Jesus’ name, and remains a church when these same people are engaged in mission and service outside their gatherings. These people are to express their ecclesiality through such things as:

1. Cognitive specification and confessional affirmation of faith in Christ, his nature and work,
2. Holding to historical Christian belief and the Scriptures, although these need to be explored graciously and dialogically,
3. Practicing the sacraments of the Lord’s supper and baptism (a necessary condition of the church, in contrast to ordained ministry, yet these sacraments are necessary in that they are an expression of faith and of the confession of faith),
4. Engaging in social concern, as previously articulated in Social Dimensions of Ecclesiology and Eschatological Hope in this chapter, and being intentionally missional, as described in Gospel, Church, Mission and Contemporary Culture below.

These considerations hold profound implications for the EMCM, especially as its practitioners and thinkers seek to understand what exactly constitutes a church in the face of their significant rejection of the forms of Modernity and Christendom. The

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85 Ibid. p.136.
86 Ibid. p.148-149.
87 Ibid. p. 146.
EMCM is deeply concerned with questions about what essentially constitutes a church, so that it can rid itself of peripheral forms, or at least evaluate the relevance of those forms and practices (such as liturgy, buildings, music and clothing styles, when and where to gather, and the like).

Not merely a concrete expression of some abstract, universal church, the local church in Volf’s ecclesiology is ‘the real anticipation or proleptic realisation of the eschatological gathering of the entire people of God.’\textsuperscript{89} However, each local church is joined to all the others through ‘their common relation to the Spirit of Christ, who makes them both into the anticipation of the eschatological gathering of the entire people of God’,\textsuperscript{90} and through their same confession of faith. Fellowship with other churches leads to ‘differentiated unity’, and acknowledging other churches is an ‘interecclesial minimum’.\textsuperscript{91} Later we will see that this is a challenge for the EMCM, which holds to values that lead to very isolated and sometimes cynical communities, and, indeed, this may be problematic within Volf’s ecclesiology itself. Volf may be too optimistic about the willingness of local churches to genuinely engage with other churches, about the ability of local churches to remain unshaped by their immediate ideological, political and cultural contexts, and about the ability of burgeoning local ‘free-churches’ throughout the globe to resist the class differentiation, materialistic tendencies, and entrepreneurial ideologies that surround them. Therefore, Volf’s idealistic portrayal of interecclesial cooperation may not necessarily contain the answers for the problems of isolated and cocooning EMCM communities.

The active presence of the Holy Spirit gives evidence to the existence of a church, writes Volf, as Christ acts within a congregation through the charismata that are

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. p.140.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid. p.141.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid. p.157.
universally distributed, fundamentally interdependent, synchronically and
diachronically plural, and given sovereignly by God himself. Therefore the laity
and their charismatic giftings are critical in Volf’s ecclesiology, which is an
ecclesiology characterised by inclusion, mutuality, participation, commonality, and
the priesthood of all believers. Not only so, but the church is constituted by the Spirit
of God through the medium of the laity. When this is recognised, lay passivity may
be overcome, the division of persons into hierarchical positions may be avoided, and
the charismata may be more widely used. Office-bearers may be valued in an
appropriate manner, and mission and ministry may be extended. All of these things
are values in the EMCM, and are pursued and espoused in the core of their missional
ecclesiology. Culturally insensitive expressions of giftedness or charismata are
usually, however, avoided (whether this avoidance of certain charismata is
detrimental or beneficial to their mission is a topic of ongoing debate among church
practitioners).

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated, therefore, that the Free Church ecclesiology of Volf
contains a range of implications for the EMCM. These bearings are especially seen
in the areas of the church’s participatory nature, the consequences of its explicitly
trinitarian emphasis, its eschatological framework, and its attention to the charismata,
ecumenism, personhood, doctrinal orthodoxy, catholicity, church leadership and
structure, and social justice and concern. The implications of some of these
ecclesiological perspectives, and especially of Volf’s understanding on the

92 Ibid. p.228-233.
93 Ibid. p.221-257.
relationship between gospel, church, mission and contemporary culture, which is particularly pertinent to the EMCM, will be explored in the final chapter of this thesis.
THE CATHOLIC ECCLESIOLOGY OF CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER (POPE BENEDICT XVI)

In a similar format to the critical survey of the Free Church ecclesiology of Professor Miroslav Volf in the previous chapter, this chapter provides a very brief examination of the Catholic ecclesiology of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, whose sway, consequence and vocation have been outlined in chapter 2. Whereas Volf’s ecclesiology is neatly summarised in his work *After Our Likeness*, the ecclesiolgies of Ratzinger and Zizioulas need to be extracted from a wide range of their writings.

This aim of this chapter is to establish the core Catholic ecclesiology of Ratzinger, not to put him into critical dialogue with Volf and Zizioulas, or even to critically analyse his perspectives, but to establish his convictions for the purpose of an ecclesiological dialogue with the EMCM in chapter 9 of this thesis.

An examination of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology is undertaken with respect to his understandings of the nature and essence of the church, the relationship between *communio* and the church’s substance, and his eucharistic ecclesiology and its range of consequences (especially in the areas of leadership, ministry and structures). I also investigate his ecclesiological conceptions on the relationship between structure and content in the mediation of Christian faith and experience. From there his perspectives on ecumenical problems and dialogue are considered.

Thereafter, a précis of his Catholic ecclesiology is made, and brief analytical

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1 As noted previously, I will refer to Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI when dealing with works written in that title, Joseph Ratzinger when dealing with works written in that name, and Joseph Ratzinger when referring to him in general, since most of the ecclesiological works analyzed were written under the name of Joseph Ratzinger.


3 The Latin word *communio* means ‘communion, mutual participation’, and therefore in this thesis I will often be using the words *communion* and *communio* interchangeably.
deliberations are offered. Lastly, some initial implications for the EMCM are suggested.

7.1 The Nature and Essence of the Church

Ratzinger is sympathetic to the impulse to reform or change the church, such as the passion that underlies much of the EMCM ecclesiological conversation or the impetus toward general ecclesial reform. However, he is convinced that questions about the nature and essence of the church precede such efforts, and, indeed, provide the foundation for all such contemplation and activity, since one must understand the essence of an organism in order to heal it and in order to avoid the negative consequences inherent in theologically unreflective reform. Rigorous ecclesiological debates and conversations about the nature and essence of the church also aid in bringing ‘clarity and help in the crisis of ecclesial consciousness through which we are now living.’

Today the question of the Church has to a large extent become the question of how the Church can be changed and ameliorated. Yet even someone who wishes to improve upon a mechanical device, and all the more someone who wants to heal an organism, must first investigate how the apparatus is designed or how the organism is inwardly structured. If doing so is not to prove blind and thereby destructive, it must be preceded by inquiry about being. Today as always, the will to take action in regard to the Church must find the patience first to ask about her nature, her origin, her destination; today as always, ecclesial

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ethos can develop properly only when it allows itself to be illuminated and led by the logos of faith.\textsuperscript{5}

For Ratzinger the New Testament witnesses to the origin and essence of the church through the message of Jesus Christ, the church’s self-description as \textit{ἐκκλησία}, the Pauline doctrine of the church as the Body of Christ, and the vision of the church in the Acts of the Apostles.\textsuperscript{6} While the message of Christ emphasised the kingdom of God, an overview of his teachings, images, parables, prayers, ministry practices, and gathering of a community of disciples reveals that the institution of the Eucharist is an act of covenant and the concrete creation of a new people, who come into being through their covenant relation to God.\textsuperscript{7} Christ’s eucharistic action draws people into relationship with God, into his mission to reach all of humanity, and into unity with each other as a ‘people’ through their mutual communion with the Body and Blood of Jesus. This Eucharist is the centre and permanent origin of the new covenant and of the church, and the multiform celebrations of the Eucharist are participations in the one Body.\textsuperscript{8}

‘Election is not a privilege of the elected but a call to live for others’; therefore the community of faith is elected not for its own exclusivity but for the sake of others. Thus, election and mission are richly connected in Ratzinger’s writing.\textsuperscript{9}

The church’s self-description as \textit{ἐκκλησία} is used, according to Ratzinger, to indicate its self-perception as the final gathering of God’s people. This is a perception that links it with the continuity of salvific history and the new mystery of Christ, which

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid. p.9.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid. p.21-45.
\textsuperscript{8} Ratzinger, \textit{Called to Communion}. p.28-29.
entails its diverse expressions, from the local community of faith to the one all-encompassing church of Jesus Christ. It enlivens the church through the ultimate goal of perfect unity, and is grounded in the christological centre ‘that is made concrete in the gathering of believers for the Lord’s Supper. It is always the Lord who in his one sacrifice gathers his one and only people. In all places it is the gathering of this one.’

According to the Apostle Paul, writes Ratzinger, ecclesiology is impossible without the rich christology made concrete in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and these sacraments open up into the deep community embodied in the Trinity. Paul’s description of the church being the ‘Body of Christ’ is rooted in inner-biblical ideas, including the Semitic conception of the ‘corporate personality’ (such as the idea that we are all Adam). It is also rooted in the words and intent of Christ when he instituted the Eucharist, and the biblical concept of nuptiality (all Christians being unified as they cleave to the Lord through participation in the sacrament). The church ‘must constantly become what she is through unitive love and resist the temptation to fall from her vocation into the infidelity of self-willed autonomy.’ Furthermore, the narrative ecclesiology found in the Acts of the Apostles contains ‘interplay of multiplicity and unity, universality and particularity’ and gives us a guide to how the early church dealt with such questions about diversity in their own context. It is without doubt, however, that Ratzinger’s description of ‘legitimately organised communities’ is far from Volf’s Free Church ecclesiology. It rests heavily on the priestly administering of the sacraments and on recognition by the Catholic church itself, since ‘the church is not something one can make but only something one can

10 Ratzinger, Called to Communion. p.32 and ———, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics. p.18.
11 Ratzinger, Called to Communion. p.33.
12 Ibid. p.39-40.
13 Ibid. p.40-45.
receive, and indeed receive from where it already is and where it really is: from the sacramental community of his body that progresses through history.\footnote{Volf,\textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}. p.10.}

Ratzinger elucidates the idea that the church is the ‘mystical body of Christ’, since Christ is continually founding it, since the presence of Christ is most clearly articulated to the world in the church, and since the church is indeed the presence of Christ – contemporaneous with him while he is contemporaneous with us. Being the presence of Christ it grows from the inside outwards, through prayer, love, community, the sacraments and hope. All Christians are in fact corporately ‘the church’, since ‘we are the church’, and are called to be the presence of Christ in the world, both individually and in community. All Christians are corporately ‘the church' through their co-responsibility for the health of the church, engagement with the social and political realities of the world, and through participating in the church’s development and historical dynamism, since all living things are in a process of continual renewal, and the church is no exception.\footnote{In this matter Ratzinger is scathing of certain forms of Christianity, and his remarks may have implications for some of the ideals espoused by EMCM writers: ‘Anyone who wants to cling merely to the words of Scripture or the patterns of the early Church banishes Christ to the past. The result is either a faith that is completely sterile and has nothing to say to today or an arbitrariness that jumps over two thousand years of history and throws it into the dustbin of failure while dreaming up for itself how Christianity was really meant to appear according to Scripture or according to Jesus. However, what emerges can only be an artificial product of our own making that has no lasting power. Genuine identity with the origin is only to be found where there is also the living continuity that develops in and thus preserves it.’ Ibid. p.7.} Yet even in renewal the church remains a eucharistic community, and the body of the Lord binds together churches scattered throughout the world into one church.\footnote{Volf, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}. p.257.}

\section*{7.2 Communio and the Church’s Substance}

In his analysis of the ecclesiology of Ratzinger, Volf rightly argues that \textit{communio} is
the central and pivotal notion in his ecclesiology,\(^\text{17}\) and that this concept of *communio* influences and guides Ratzinger’s views on faith, sacrament, Eucharist, the Word of God, office, his positioning of the *communio fidelium* in liturgy, and the relationship he draws between trinitarian and ecclesial communion.\(^\text{18}\) Volf observes, 

Ratzinger’s attempt to ground the requisite structure of the church from the inside… is not a purely ecclesiological undertaking; ultimately, he is concerned with the ‘communal shape of the Christian faith’. This is anchored in his basic conviction that ‘only the whole sustains’… Ratzinger locates the essence of the church in the arc between the self and the whole; it is the communion between the human ‘I’ and the divine ‘Thou’ in a universally communal ‘We’.\(^\text{19}\)

While Volf is correct in locating the concept of *communio* at the heart of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, and while at times he is positive about this theme, his extrapolations of the negative consequences of this central idea seem to emerge more from his Free Church presuppositions than from an open examination of Ratzinger’s writings or a qualitative investigation of Catholic communities.\(^\text{20}\)

In this section, I will proceed to outline briefly Ratzinger’s understanding of the concept of *communio* and its implications for his ecclesiology. The concept of *κοινωνία*, in Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, expresses ‘the core of the Mystery of the Church, and can certainly be a key for the renewal of Catholic ecclesiology.’\(^\text{21}\) In the

\(^{17}\) Volf, *After Our Likeness*. p.32.


\(^{19}\) Ibid. p.29-30. It cannot be anything but communion given that it is trinitarian.

\(^{20}\) See, for instance, Volf’s criticism of Ratzinger’s theological interpretation of the Pauline ‘one in Christ’: Ibid. p.34.

same paragraph as this quotation Ratzinger pronounces that the church is a ‘mystery of communion’, and that this central understanding of the church needs to be integrated adequately into ecclesiology in such a way that it shapes the concepts of the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the church as sacrament. Ratzinger maintains that ‘the Church by her inmost nature is communio, fellowship with and in the body of the Lord.’

Human beings may choose to unite with the Trinity and the rest of humankind through faith and immersion in the church, and look forward with eschatological hope to the fulfilment of this communion with the Father and the heavenly church in the eschaton. This communion is a grace from God that ‘involves a double dimension: the vertical (communion with God) and the horizontal (communion with men) (sic)’. Ecclesial communion is simultaneously both invisible and visible, is grounded and located in the Eucharist, is a communion of the saints through the Holy Spirit, prayer, shared mission, giving and receiving of one’s goods, and the sacraments, and is a mutual relationship between the present earthly church and the heavenly church. Christ enables the depth of this communion, since Christians,

Fellowship with the Word of God who became flesh, who through his death lets us share in his life and intends thereby to lead us also toward service to one another, to visible fellowship in living our lives.

has to be the key concept for our (ecclesiological) reflections, since it means ‘Eucharist’ and can equally well denote ‘fellowship’ or ‘congregation’. The two realities, Eucharist and congregation, Communion as sacrament and communion or community as a social and institutional entity, which in our linguistic usage are clearly separated, are united in this term.’ ———, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion (Fort Collins, CO: Ignatius Press, 2005). p.64-65.


Ratzinger, Some Aspects of the Church. p.2.

Ibid. p.2-4 and ———, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith. p.69.

Ratzinger, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith. p.70.
The one, holy, catholic and apostolic church is ‘ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church’, therefore the universal church is far more than a gathering of like-minded churches, since every local community of faith exists through a ‘mutual interiority’ with the whole, and receives its ecclesiality joined with it and out of it. The Eucharist and the episcopate provide the substance of the communion between the churches. This is because the celebration of the Eucharist is never merely an act involving one particular church, but is a participation in the image and life of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and since the episcopate, and especially the Roman Pontiff, is the ‘perpetual and visible source and foundation’ of this communion. Individual Christians immerse in this universal church through faith and baptism, their communion with each other is another expression of the same reality that is the communion between local and regional churches, and they belong to the universal church as much as they belong to particular churches.

The communion that shapes the life of the churches is expressed both through the solid unity found in the universal church, and also through the plurality and diversity of liturgies, cultures, ministries, institutes, societies, charisms, and forms of discipleship and leadership found among the churches. Communion with churches outside the Roman Catholic Church is sought vigorously, and is especially enjoyed with the Eastern Orthodox Church; however, it is imperfect with those churches that do not recognise communion with the universal church represented by the Pope. Ratzinger proposes also, that ‘the Blessed Virgin Mary is the model of ecclesial communion in faith, in charity and in union with Christ’, since she is in communion

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28Ratzinger, Some Aspects of the Church, p.7-10.
with the earthly and heavenly churches, the Apostles, and the church throughout the ages.\textsuperscript{29}

Ratzinger concludes his discussion of communion in \textit{Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith} with these devotional words, which have implications for the missional ecclesiology of the EMCM that will be explored later on in this thesis:

Only a power and a love that are stronger than all our own initiatives can build up a fruitful and reliable community and impart to it the impetus of a fruitful mission. The unity of the Church, which is founded upon the love of the one Lord, does not destroy what is particular in the individual communities: rather, it builds them up and holds them together as a real communion with the Lord and with each other. The love of Christ, which is present for all ages in the Sacrament of his Body, awakens our love and heals our love: the Eucharist is the foundation of community as it is of mission, day by day.\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{Communio}, then, is clearly at the centre of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, and along with his eucharistic ecclesiology has implications for particular understandings of church leadership, ministry, movements and structures.

\section*{7.3 Eucharistic Ecclesiology and its Practical Implications}

Ratzinger’s ecclesiology not only centres on the concept of \textit{communio}, it is also essentially eucharistic in nature, and this idea has already been touched on in the above descriptions of his ecclesiology. In other words, Ratzinger’s ecclesiology is a \textit{eucharistic ecclesiology}, as is illustrated in this quotation from \textit{God is Near Us: The

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. p.11-13.
\textsuperscript{30} ———, \textit{Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith}. p.89.
Eucharist, The Heart of Life:

The Eucharist is instrumental in the process by which Christ builds himself a Body and makes us into a single Bread, one single Body. The content of the Eucharist, what happens in it, is the uniting of Christians, bringing them from their state of separation into the unity of the one Bread and the one Body. The Eucharist is thus understood entirely in a dynamic ecclesiological perspective... The Church is eucharistic fellowship... The Church is, so to speak, a network of eucharistic fellowships, and she is united, ever and again, through the one Body we all receive.\(^{31}\)

As noted earlier, the eucharistic nature of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology has repercussions for his comprehensions of authority, community, service and organisation in the church. A consequence is the idea that the observance of the Eucharist is never merely an act concerning one local church community, rather it is an involvement in the overarching dynamics of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and this has been discussed previously in this section. As such, the Eucharist testifies to, and ultimately unites one with, the reality and importance of the broader structures and articulations of the universal church, and in particular, the Roman Catholic Church and its leadership as expressed through its bishops and pontiff. Therefore, local communities have an organic unity with the Catholic Church, if they are to be authentic, through their eucharistic bond to it, each other, and Christ.\(^{32}\)


Furthermore, Ratzinger’s understanding of ministerial patterns and office emerge from his concept of communio and from his eucharistic ecclesiology, since administration of the Eucharist, which gives form to the vertical (humans with God) and horizontal (between human beings) dynamics of communion, requires a priesthood and ordained offices in his theology. This priesthood that administers the celebration of the Eucharist is characterised by community, the mandate of mission, and the apostolicity and presence of the Spirit in the successio apostolica. It is also characterised by the ecclesial sacrament of the imposition of hands, the expression of the traditional structure of the church, and the binding of ‘apostolicity and Catholicity together in the unity of Christ and the Spirit, which is represented and completed in the eucharistic community.’33 This is not to discount the ministry of the laity, according to Ratzinger, but to establish the leadership and ministry of the eucharistic priesthood who lead the laity to perfection in Christ.34

Ratzinger proposes that he is agreeing with Ignatius when he writes about the significant connection between Eucharist and the office of bishop. He then extrapolates that eucharistic ecclesiology to include the priesthood in general, including a demarcation of the various roles of ‘pope, bishop, priest and layman’, and to formulate the structures of the universal church, and the various consequences for the office and mission of the bishop:35

The figure of the bishop is the expression at once of the unity and of the public character of the Eucharist... The bishop guarantees not only the

34 Regarding the problem of Scripture, tradition and Eucharist in Protestantism, Ratzinger writes, ‘Can the essential character of the word and the essential character of the Church be present where there is a break with the concrete continuity of the Church that celebrates the Eucharist with the bishops? Can the Gospel be found in an isolated approach to Scripture, in sola Scriptura? Or is validity to be found only in Scriptura in communione traditionis?’ Ibid. p.246-247.
35 Ratzinger, Called to Communion. p.82-103.
unity of each individual community but also the unity of the individual community with the one Church of God in this world... If the Church is Eucharist, then the ecclesial office of overseer (episkopos) is essentially responsibility for the ‘coming together’ that is identical with the Church.\textsuperscript{36}

Therefore, eucharistic ecclesiology has profound consequences for Ratzinger’s conceptions of church structure and leadership.

\textbf{7.4 The Relationship between Structure and Content}

According to Ratzinger, it is through repentance, faith and baptism that one enters the Christian community, however this faith in Jesus as the Lord whom God raised from the dead\textsuperscript{37} is sustained inextricably and simultaneously by the church local and universal, and faith is communal in its structure.\textsuperscript{38} The content of faith cannot be divorced from the mediation of faith supplied in the church’s structure.

Now at last we have reached the inmost core of the concept ‘Church’ and the deepest meaning of the designation ‘sacrament of unity’. The Church is \textit{communio}; she is God’s communing with men (sic) in Christ and hence the communing of men (sic) with one another – and, in consequence, sacrament, sign, instrument of salvation.\textsuperscript{39}

Faith and Christian experience, therefore, are mediated through the church, which

\textsuperscript{36}———, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}. p.253.
\textsuperscript{37} Ratzinger defines the content of faith as such: ‘Alongside the \textit{confession} of faith: Jesus is Lord, stands, then, the \textit{content} of faith, which is formulated in the sentence: God raised him from the dead.’ Ibid. p.18.
\textsuperscript{38} Cf. especially ‘One the relationship of Structure and Content in Christian Faith’, which is chapter one of Ibid. p.15-84.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. p.53.
they encounter as sacrament, sign and instrument of salvation. The faith that human beings experience, and articulate in the confession of the Apostles Creed, longs for unity and communion with other believers, since it is fundamentally and intricately related to the church, and its ‘significance lies in the interplay of common confession and worship’. This faith embraces community, is far more than intellectual assent to propositions about the nature and work of Christ, and is liberated from selfish independence through obedience and service in and to the whole. Ratzinger is referring here to immersion in and sacrificial service to the church instituted by Christ himself.

Quoting De Lubac, Ratzinger agrees that ‘the mystery of the Trinity has opened to us a totally new perspective: the ground of being is communio’. Therefore, for Ratzinger, when one professes faith in Jesus Christ a trinitarian understanding of the Godhead compels one to be immersed in community, since fellowship with other Christians is not just ‘an external circumstance of salvation, but virtually enters into its metaphysical existence.’ The individual ‘I’, then, finds fulfilment in entering into this trinitarian community (the ecclesial ‘I’), which is only discovered through the church, since the church, and especially its tradition and memory, is the ‘seat of

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40 It is worth noting here that Volf has given the question of the church’s mediation of faith in Ratzinger’s ecclesiology significant treatment in Volf, After Our Likeness. p.32-41.
41 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity. p.63.
42 Ibid. p.64.
faith’ that exists throughout human history as the unceasing ‘common situs of faith.’ Without the church, faith is merely a catalogue of ideas or experiences. With the church, it is made complete, one and authentic, since it is a gift of the church, and since the church is the only place in which faith is given substance, unity and meaning. The church is a single subject with Christ, and is therefore the mediator of faith and Christian experience.

7.5 Ecumenical Dialogue and Problems

Ecumenism, contends Ratzinger, holds many possibilities for dialogue, while being beset with a range of theological and practical problems. There exists a type of communion that is imperfect, but which is most hopefully and presently to be found between the Catholic churches and the Eastern Orthodox churches, since the Orthodox Church, though separated from the See of Peter, shares a common ‘apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist.’

The existence of these churches that deny the essential internal constituent of the Petrine apostolic succession is wounded however, and this wound is most profoundly realised in the Protestant churches who do not share a valid Eucharist or the apostolic succession. ‘This in turn also injures the Catholic Church… in that it hinders the

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46 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology. p.23.
48 He presents the ecumenical problems in detail in ———, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics. p.68-88. Also, Ratzinger extensively outlines his perspectives on the ‘formal principles of Christianity in ecumenical dispute’, including his ecclesiological analysis of the Catholic-Protestant dispute and of Catholicity as the formal structure of Christianity, in ———, Principles of Catholic Theology. p.191-311.
complete fulfilment of its universality in history.'\textsuperscript{51} Ecumenical dialogue is possible, but complete unity is only achievable when all other churches recognise ‘the Primacy of Peter in his successors, the Bishops of Rome.’\textsuperscript{52}

### 7.6 Summary and Brief Critical Reflections

Ratzinger’s ecclesiology will now be summarised, and I will draw some brief implications and connections that are explored further and in greater depth later in this thesis.

Ratzinger fashions his ecclesiology around a wide range of sources and theological concepts. These include the New Testament teachings, from the gospels through to Pauline ecclesiology, and the tradition of the church and the teachings of the Church Fathers. It also includes the church’s self-description as έκκλησία, the concepts of communio and κοινωνία, eucharistic and sacramental ecclesiology, trinitarian understandings of the nature of God and relations within the Godhead, christology made concrete in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the concept of the church being the present ‘mystical body of Christ’. Therefore, ecclesiology is central in Ratzinger’s theology, and this ecclesiology is shaped by a panoramic and multifaceted theological landscape, and is focused on the notion of communio.

Many of these ecclesiological perspectives welcomed by Ratzinger will be put into a conversation with EMCM ecclesiology later on in this thesis. It is worth noting here, however, that EMCM missional ecclesiology tends to be more narrowly interested, informed and sourced than Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, or at least its ecclesiological origins are to be found elsewhere, and could therefore gain much from a broader

\textsuperscript{51} Ratzinger, \textit{Some Aspects of the Church}. p.12.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. p.13. Ratzinger explores the spirit in which ecumenical dialogue should take place in ‘On the Ecumenical Situation’ in ———, \textit{Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith}. p.253-269.
based of ecclesiological conceptions. Whereas EMCM ecclesiology tends to be shaped by the missional writings of theologians like Bosch or Newbiggin, contemplations on contemporary postmodern culture, missiology in general, and sometimes by self-referential notions, Ratzinger’s ecclesiology includes some of these sources while exploring more far-reaching ecclesiological horizons.

The concept of *communio*, as has been previously noted, is central to Ratzinger’s ecclesiology. Volf summarises its influence on, and presence in, Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, with reference to the following ecclesiological notions:53

1. Human beings enter Christian community through the act of faith, and this same faith is simultaneously sustained by such community. The act of faith is essentially ecclesiological and communal, since people exist ‘from’ and ‘toward’ each other, and this idea is based on Ratzinger’s understanding of the nature of conversion, the church, and trinitarian communion. Inclusion in ecclesial and trinitarian communion correspond, and this communality is expressed in the appropriation and acceptance of faith in the sacraments;

2. Through faith and baptism human beings enter into ecclesial community, however once they are in the community they are sustained spiritually and ecclesially by the Eucharist, as the church itself is grounded in its own ecclesial being in the Eucharist. Only a valid Eucharist achieves these results in individual Christians and in Christian communities;

3. These sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist are complemented by the

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53 Since one of the aims of this thesis is to build on Volf’s work begun in *After Our Likeness*, it is worth surveying his comprehension of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology. These points listed here are a summary of Volf’s analysis of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, with particular reference to the notion of *communio*. Volf, *After Our Likeness*. p.29-72.
communal embracing and mediation of Scripture, and the universal church has a sacramental role in sustaining this dynamic through the constitution of the office, which is a hierarchical order (priests and bishops) and universal manifestation (universal church) of the church willed and manifest by God and his grace. The ecclesiality of the local church is derived from communion with the whole;

4. The laity, as the assembled community of the people of God, are not passive subjects in liturgical or eucharistic events, rather as the communio fidelium they are the active bearers of the word, the Spirit, and the presence of Christ. Communality, then, characterises liturgical and Christian spirituality, leadership, worship, mission and prayer;

5. Trinitarian communion shapes the church’s understandings of ecclesial communion and human personhood.

Ratzinger’s perspectives on the possibilities and limitations of ecumenism are at marked odds with EMCM understandings, as is his standpoint on the role of office-bearers in the ministry and leadership of the church, and his thesis that only a ‘valid Eucharist’ may constitute a local church and connect it with the church universal. However, there is much resonance between the EMCM and Ratzinger conceptions on the nature of social and political engagement, and on the distinguishing features of true reform and renewal in the church, as we will see in the final chapter of this thesis. In fact, some of Ratzinger’s description of the true nature of amelioration and revitalisation are quite prophetic, since they hold a piercing light to some of the EMCM attempts at the same, and could inform and analyse some of the expressions and motivations for reform in EMCM ecclesiology.
7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has established, therefore, that the Catholic ecclesiology of Ratzinger holds real significance for the EMCM. These consequences are especially seen in the areas of the church’s essential nature as communio, and the implications of his emphasis on koinonia, ekklesia, eucharistic and sacramental ecclesiology, the correspondence between trinitarian and ecclesial community, and the concept of the church being the ‘mystical body of Christ’. Ratzinger’s understanding of the relationship between Eucharist, church, mission and contemporary culture are especially relevant, and will be explored in detail in the final chapter.
Like the critical surveys of the Free Church ecclesiology of Professor Miroslav Volf and the Catholic ecclesiology of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in the previous two chapters, this chapter provides a very brief examination of the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology of Metropolitan John Zizioulas, whose influence, significance and vocation have been outlined in chapter 2.

Again, as was the case in my examination of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, while Volf’s ecclesiology is tidily presented in his work *After Our Likeness*, the ecclesiology of Zizioulas needs to be mined from a wide range of his writings. The clearest articulation of his early ecclesiology may be found in his 1965 Doctor of Theology thesis for the University of Athens, on *The Unity of the Church in the Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*. This was published in English in 2001 as *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, and in his more substantial and up-to-date ecclesiological work *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*.

*Eucharist, Bishop, Church* is an English translation of the second Greek edition (1990) of Zizioulas’ doctoral thesis, which differed in only minor ways from the first edition. While it is used in this thesis to open up some aspects of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, it unfortunately suffers from containing dated historical, sociological and ecclesiological scholarship and conclusions, although Zizioulas proposes that in

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1 Ibid. 1998.

2 J. Zizioulas, “The Unity of the Church in the Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries” (Doctor of Theology Thesis, Theological Faculty of the University of Athens, 1965).

3 Ibid., *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001); Knight, ed. *The Theology of John Zizioulas*. p.3.

4 J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985). The book, in fact, is a compilation of articles and papers, and the sources of these are listed on page 261.
spite of this its basic theses is still sound and needs no revising.\(^5\) *Being as Communion* will be used, therefore, as the primary source for understanding Zizioulas’ ecclesiology in this thesis, and the first six sections below examine his ecclesiology in the thematic order presented in this his major ecclesiological work. Zizioulas’ other ecclesiological works will also be examined extensively, including the English translation of his doctoral thesis.

This aim of this chapter is to establish the core Orthodox ecclesiology of Zizioulas, not to put him into critical dialogue with Volf and Ratzinger, or even to critically analyse his perspectives, but to establish his convictions for the purpose of an ecclesiological dialogue with the EMCM in chapter 9 of this thesis.

An examination of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is conducted with consideration of his perspectives on the nature and essence of the church, the relationship between truth, communion and ecclesiology, and the connections between christology, pneumatology and ecclesiology. I also investigate his treatments on eucharistic community and catholicity, and on church structures, eschatology and the eschatological catholicity of eucharistic communities. From there his communal understandings of the local and universal church are considered, as well as his reflections on spirituality in the church.

Subsequently, in the final chapter of this thesis, Zizioulas’ views on the connections and missiological possibilities surrounding ecclesial and missional relationality, church, mission and contemporary culture are explored. In the concluding parts of this chapter, a synopsis of his Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology is made, and succinct exploratory reflections are proposed. Finally, some preliminary implications for the

\(^5\) Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*. p.5.
EMCM are proposed.

8.1 Being as Communion: The Nature and Essence of the Church

The Church is not simply an institution. She is a “mode of existence,” a way of being. The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man (sic), to the being of the world and to the being of God. In virtue of this bond, so characteristic of patristic thought, ecclesiology assumes a marked importance, not only for all aspects of theology, but also for the existential needs of man (sic) in every age.⁶

So begins Zizioulas’ treatment of ecclesiology in Being as Communion, his understanding of the nature and essence of the church, and his belief that ecclesiology is of central concern for all of theology and its considerations, and for human beings and cultures throughout each generation and age. In the light of the above quotation it is helpful to understand community-associations/societal-associations through the distinction between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft made by Toennies.⁷ The first are the predeliberate community-associations that people are naturally a part of and that respond to their members’ deepest existential needs (family, tribe and culture are examples). The second are the deliberate societal-associations people attach themselves to (social groups, academies, and the like). The two naturally overlap in all cultures.

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⁶ ———, Being as Communion. p.15.
⁷ F. Toennies, Community and Society: (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft) (Edison, NJ: Transaction, 1988).
Considered in what it has in common with other human associations, therefore, the Church has the basic form of a community-association. If it has some of the characteristics of a societal-association, these presuppose the more fundamental community form. It is this form which should determine the climate of the Church’s life... What differentiates the Church from all other human associations is the mystery of solidarity it has with the Saviour, whereby through this mystery a permanent presence of Jesus Christ in space and time is given to the world... The specific common good of the Christian Church is the permanent presence of Jesus Christ through the gift of the Spirit.\(^8\)

Zizioulas, in his portrait of ecclesiology, is deeply concerned with *hypostasis*, which means substance or nature, and more especially *persona*.\(^9\) In fact, his ecclesiology is saturated in this concept, and he understands it as ‘an ontology which has its roots in the future, in eschatology’\(^10\). His perspectives on eucharistic and ecclesial hypostasis are explored in this chapter, since Zizioulas leads toward this concept with a description of ecclesial being as being inextricably ‘bound to the very being of God.’\(^11\) By immersion in the church Christians become an ‘image of God’ and assume ‘God’s way of being’\(^12\), especially with regard to his trinitarian relationality and communion, and the church of Jesus Christ has the high calling of being conformed to God’s own essence, in her theological vision, structure, ministries and

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\(^11\) Ibid. p.15.

\(^12\) Ibid. p.15. Kärkkäinen rightly depicts these communal concepts as crucial to Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, in his chapter on Zizioulas: V. Kärkkäinen, “John Zizioulas: Communion Ecclesiology,” in *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
ecclesiality.

God’s being is essentially relational and communal, as is evidenced in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and his being can only be known and experienced through love, relationship and communion. ‘Ecclesiology must be situated within the context of trinitarian theology’,\textsuperscript{13} and it is distinctly the person of the Father who wills the church into existence for his own good pleasure, and to whom the church will be presented in the eschaton; her origins and destination are in the Father.

Trinitarian theological understandings of God are primordial ontological concepts, since ‘the substance of God, “God”, has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.’\textsuperscript{14} All individuality is abolished in this theological realisation, since nothing exists aside from communion, not even God himself, and the Father is the cause and origin of this communion in his very being.\textsuperscript{15} His communion is entwined with freedom, since God chooses this essential nature of his being,\textsuperscript{16} that is, the Father as a person chooses to be the source of God.\textsuperscript{17}

Similarly, when considering the essence of human beings and the church, and the inextricable relationship between this essence with communion and freedom, Zizioulas asserts that freedom is indispensable for true being, that is, a freedom to

\textsuperscript{13} J. Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition," \textit{One in Christ} 24, no. 4 (1988). p.295. Furthermore, Zizioulas contends that ‘ecclesiology must be based on trinitarian theology if it is to be an ecclesiology of communion,’ and that since a trinitarian God is koinonia at the core of his being, then the church is essentially koinonia and relational. ———, “The Church as Communion: A Presentation on the World Conference Theme,” in \textit{On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Santiago De Compostela, 1993} (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994). p.104-105.

\textsuperscript{14} Zizioulas, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.17.


\textsuperscript{17} Zizioulas, "Constantine Scouteris." p.5.
love and be in communion with other persons and with God.\textsuperscript{18} He asserts that his ecclesiology is founded upon the following theses that were affirmed by the Patristics:

(a) There is no true being without communion. Nothing exists as an “individual”, conceivable in itself. Communion is an ontological category. (b) Communion which does not come from a “hypostasis”, that is, a concrete and free person, and which does not lead to “hypostasis”, that is concrete and free persons, is not an “image” of the being of God. The person cannot exist without communion; but every form of communion which denies or suppresses the person, is inadmissible.\textsuperscript{19}

Humans are constituted by a hypostasis of biological existence at their conception and birth, which lacks ontological freedom because of its individuality and temporality, and this form of hypostasis is disintegrated at death.\textsuperscript{20} Therefore, humans need a transformation of the constitutional make-up of the hypostasis, and this is achieved through the hypostasis of ecclesial nature. Through regeneration and rebirth, at the point of baptism, human beings are hypostasised into God’s manner of being, and this is achieved through the mystery of the church and the ecclesial communion and hypostasis it offers.\textsuperscript{21} Humans are brought into a new relationship


\textsuperscript{19} Zizioulas, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.18.


\textsuperscript{21} Zizioulas, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.19 and 50-53. For an analysis of Zizioulas’ contribution to this area of Orthodox ecclesiology see N.A. Jesson, \textit{Orthodox Contributions to Ecumenical Ecclesiology}
with the world that transcends biology, familial ties, and the constraint of natural laws, especially regarding love, communion, hypostasis, and relationality with oneself, others and the divine. Biological hypostasis is not eradicated, for Christians surely live in the body and are subject to death, however biological and ecclesial hypostasis are bridged by a sacramental or eucharistic hypostasis, since ‘the transcendence of the ontological necessity and exclusiveness entailed by the biological hypostasis constitutes an experience which is offered by the Eucharist’.

The ecclesial hypostasis contains the dialectic of ‘already but not yet’, and draws its being from the being of God and from its eschatological future. It is ascetic in its denial of the biological hypostasis (this biological hypostasis is accepted, including eros and bodiliness, but hypostasised in a regenerated way), and is freed from ontological necessity, egocentricity, individuality and exclusiveness. It moves irresistibly and freely into community, love and ecclesiality.

Zizioulas contends that the church comes into existence through the work of Christ and the Spirit in historical events. However, its goal and vision is meta-historical and eschatological. For Zizioulas, eucharistic worship and the institutional dimensions of

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22 Furthermore, on hypostasis and personhood Zizioulas claims that ‘Personhood is not about qualities or capacities of any kind: biological, social or moral. Personhood is about hypostasis, i.e. the claim to uniqueness in the absolute sense of the term, and this cannot be guaranteed by reference to sex or function or role, or even cultivated consciousness of the ‘self’ and its psychological experiences, since all of these have been classified, thus representing qualities shared by more than one being and not point (sic) to absolute uniqueness. Such qualities… become ontologically personal only through the hypostasis (sic) to which they belong.’ J. Zizioulas, "On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood," in Persons, Divine and Human: King’s College Essays in Theological Anthropology, ed. C. Schwobel and C.E. Gunton (Edinburgh: Clark, 1991). p.45.


24 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.61-65.
the church aim to focus the community on the eschatological consummation of
history and on the Holy Trinity is his eternal substance and Lordship, and on the
impetus to incarnate its eschatological essence in the ‘dialectic of this age and the
age to come’. 25

In the Eucharist, the communal nature of the church is most fully realised. In the
Eucharist, writes Zizioulas, she remembers together the ministry and work of Christ,
and accomplishes an eschatological act by reflecting on her eschatological nature and
entering into the life of the Trinity. She is thereby constituted as the church – the
Eucharist constitutes the church’s being, manifests the historical form of God’s
relationship to the world, and leads or unites the people of God with the
eschatological and eternal community. 26 More will be said about the eucharistic
nature of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology later in this chapter.

Zizioulas attempts in his ecclesiology to continue the Eastern Orthodox tradition of
‘eucharistic ecclesiology’, and particularly expand on the insights of the late
theologian Fr Nicholas Afanasiev, however he is keen to differentiate his theology
from some of Afanasiev’s work. This is especially true in Zizioulas’ concern to
expand his ecclesiology to embrace the rest of theology and ecclesiology’s
philosophical and ontological implications. His concern extends to examining
whether a local church can be truly catholic by merely celebrating the Eucharist, to
articulating the relationship between the local and the universal church, and to
achieving something of a ‘neopatristic synthesis’ in the ecumenical dialogue between
Eastern and Western theology. 27 These ideals are noble, but certainly not achieved in

26 Ibid. p.20-23.
27 Ibid. p.23-26. With regard to ecumenical dialogue, Zizioulas views this as a major motivating force
in his ecclesiological writing, and his work Being as Communion was composed partly in order to
any real depth in Being as Communion or his other ecclesiological writings to date.

8.2 Truth, Communion and Ecclesiology

According to Zizioulas, truth may be identified with communion, since if being is constituted as communion, then truth and communion may be ‘mutually identified’. Zizioulas demonstrates the development of this association and synthesis in Greek patristic thought by examining the various approaches to synthesising truth, being and history. Fallen existence has caused a rupture between truth, being and communion, as is evidenced in hypocrisy, individualisation and death, and truth can only be life and redemption from these consequences as communion – ‘truth, once again, must be communion if it is to be life.’ Human beings are a revelation of truth only when they are in authentic communion, a communion in which otherness and oneness coincide harmoniously.

The Greek patristic synthesis between truth, being and history has significant ecclesiological consequences, writes Zizioulas. Firstly, Christ’s whole personal existence, as the truth, ontologically includes his communion with the church, and this is achieved through the Spirit, who consecutively reveals Christ in history and constitutes Christ’s ‘personal existence as a body or community... All separation between christology and ecclesiology vanishes in the Spirit.’ Therefore, Christ maintains personal particularity and union with the church and within the Trinity.

29 Ibid. p.72-100.
31 Ibid. p.106.
32 Ibid. p.110-111.
and exists pneumatologically, giving birth to the church through the economy of the
Trinity and the work of the Spirit.

Thus the mystery of the Church has its birth in the entire economy of
the Trinity and in a pneumatologically constituted christology. The
Spirit as “power” or “giver of life” opens up our existence to become
relational, so that he may at the same time be “communion” (κοινωνία,
cf. II Cor. 13:13). For this reason the mystery of the Church is
essentially none other than that of the “One” who is simultaneously
“many” – not “One” who exists first of all as “One” and then as
“many,” but “One” and “many” at the same time.\(^\text{33}\)

Secondly, the church partakes in Christ’s existence through community, and human
beings partake in it through entrance into this community by way of radical
conversion and baptism. When we receive Christ’s existence as our own, authentic
community in the life of the church is realised. As the Body of Christ, the church
enjoys the same communion with the Trinity and with each other as the historical
Christ, receives the eternal life that is identical with the life of God, and lives in the
world in a transformational manner, with eschatological anticipation.\(^\text{34}\)

Thirdly, it is in the celebration of the Eucharist that this is most clearly perceived and
manifested, since the Eucharist is the locus of truth, the activity in which the church
incarnates and demonstrates its communion with the Holy Trinity in this present
place and time, and the manifestation of the eschatological vision and hope of the
community.

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\(^\text{33}\) Ibid. p.112.
\(^\text{34}\) Ibid. p.113-114.
According to Zizioulas, the concept that the Eucharist is the locus of truth has further implications for the church:35

1. Christ’s revelation as ontological truth is not Christ revealed so much in a community, but as a community, and the Eucharist reveals and demonstrates this Christ-truth in history, creation, community and experience, and in the grace and love of this Christ-truth springing up among us;

2. Conciliar infallibility, the authority of the bishop, and charismatic ministries among all the people of God, owe their existence and irrefutability not merely to historical transmission, but also to the manner in which the eucharistic experience adds a transforming vertical and charismatic-pentecostal dimension to each of these ecclesial realities;

3. Dogmatic formulations of truth in the church are soteriological and doxological pronouncements, which serve to free the Christ-truth revealed in the Eucharist from heresy. Such dogmas are incarnated in a particular time and culture, and they are cultivated in a spirit of acceptance of history and culture, yet they are eschatologised so that truth remains pre-eminent. In their incarnational nature they are relational while being prophetic, transformational and critical, and dogma and communion can no more be broken than truth and communion can be;

4. The Eucharist demonstrates the cosmic dimensions of truth, and the positive implications of this para-eucharistic outlook for science, ecology, humanity, and other contemporary social and global issues;

35 These five implications for ecclesiology are outlined clearly and in this order by Zizioulas in, Ibid. p.114-122.
5. A celebratory, eucharistic and doxological ‘Amen’ is pronounced by the people of God as they gather together eucharistically, choosing to embrace truth, and in doing so embracing freedom – truth is then eucharistically revealed as freedom. Human beings experience freedom only in this eucharistic communion, and ‘truth liberates by placing beings in communion.’

8.3 Christology, Pneumatology and the Church

Zizioulas is concerned that western ecclesiology, and theology in general, while not quite ‘christomonistic’ as claimed by some Orthodox theologians, has been constructed from its christology without due reference to pneumatology, and that while christology has been central to western theology pneumatology has been largely neglected. He believes that has had implications for western understandings of the structure of the church, the sacraments, and ministry; however, he is not uncritical of eastern insufficiencies in this area of the relationship between christology, pneumatology and ecclesiology either. Only a rich dialogue between the two theological traditions can lead to a fuller synthesis of these themes in theology. His conclusions about the nature of the synthesis between christology, pneumatology and ecclesiology are detailed below:

1. Neither christology nor pneumatology should be primary in developing a healthy ecclesiology, rather they should be integrated theologically and liturgically, since both have significant contributions to make to ecclesiology in

36 Ibid. p.122.
37 ——, "The Mystery of the Church." p.295.
40 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.126-142.
their content;

2. The pneumatological ingredients of eschatology and communion must be included in the ontology of christology and ecclesiology. ‘The Spirit is the Spirit of ‘communion’ and his primary work consists in opening up reality to become relational.’\(^{42}\) The Spirit is essential to trinitarian and ecclesial communion (κοινωνία),\(^{43}\) to the idea of Christ having a ‘body’, the church, and to the eschatological significance of the incarnation and the entire work of Christ. Therefore, the eschatological and communal aspects of pneumatology are ‘constitutive of eccesiology’ and the church, since ‘pneumatology is an ontological category in ecclesiology’.\(^{44}\) Zizioulas emphasises pneumatology not because it is primary to christology (it is constitutive of christology rather than primary to it), but because he feels that it is neglected in most ecclesiological considerations;

3. The local churches are as important as the universal church, since the Spirit constitutes the Body of Christ ontologically and simultaneously at both levels, and to speak of the universal having priority over the local, or the other way around, is to deny an ecclesiology that is adequately formed by both christology and pneumatology;

4. There are no levels of ministry that do not need other ministries, and all pyramidal ideas of church and leadership need to be dissolved in an ecclesiology shaped by christology and pneumatology (this does not dissolve the necessity of ecclesial structures, but any hierarchical or pyramidal

\(^{42}\) Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church.” p.299.
\(^{43}\) ———, Communion and Otherness. p.5.
\(^{44}\) ———, Being as Communion. p.132.
understandings of their nature). ‘Christian spirituality… could not be experienced outside the community, which involved a multiplicity and variety of spiritual charisms.’

Local churches, laity, synods, bishops and the like are all caught up in the communion of the Body of Christ, and all need each other’s ministries and graces in order to function fully;

5. Ecclesial institutions cannot take their reference, justification or authority merely from history or tradition, since they must be pneumatically and eschatologically conditioned as sacramental (in the Orthodox sense this means ‘iconic’), depending on prayer and the presence of Christ and the Spirit. An eschatological perspective needs to shape ecclesial institutions;

6. While Christ institutes the church, the Spirit constitutes it. Partaking in the communal nature of the Spirit, the church becomes a part of our very being, rather than merely an institution apart from us, especially since communion is innate to the ontology, dynamism and efficacy of the church and our communion with it. The notion of institution, then, is radically changed;

7. Rightly or wrongly, Zizioulas believes that pneumatology, especially in the liturgy, has mostly saved the Orthodox Church from many of the problems of the western church – clericalism, anti-institutionalism, Pentecostalism, anti-establishment tendencies and the like. However, he understands that the global influence of western culture will add greater challenges that can only be solved by ecumenical cooperation and dialogue.

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8.4 Eucharistic Community and Catholicity

Zizioulas considers that ‘the Church constitutes the Eucharist while being constituted by it. Church and Eucharist are interdependent; they coincide, and are even in some sense identical.’\[46\] For Zizioulas, the concept of the catholicity of the church is inextricably linked to the idea of the church being a eucharistic community. While catholicity is ultimately made known eschatologically, ‘its nature is revealed and realistically apprehended here and now in the Eucharist.’\[47\] Zizioulas’ ecclesiological understanding of the ‘eschatological catholicity of the eucharistic communities’\[48\] leads him to form a conclusion.\[49\] His conclusion is that the catholicity of the church is ontologically and ethically achieved through her union and communion with Christ, as his Body, especially in the Eucharist.\[50\] Therefore, catholicity is a present christological reality for the church, simultaneously given and demanded in her intimacy with Christ Jesus. Her catholicity is ‘neither an objective gift to be possessed nor an objective order to be fulfilled, but rather a presence’\[51\] – the

\[46\] Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.143-145. ‘The Eucharist was understood in the first centuries as the event that brought together the dispersed people of God “in the same place” (epi to auto) not only to celebrate but also to constitute the eschatological messianic community here and now. As such it was the spiritual event par excellence, because it was the eschatological reality manifested and foretasted in history.’

\[47\] Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.158-159.

\[48\] Volf, in writing of Zizioulas’ understanding of ecclesial structures, writes, ‘From the eschatological catholicity of the eucharistic communities, there emerges not only the communal character of their relationships, but also a certain structure of these communities, involving both their internal structure and the structure of their universal unity.’

\[49\] Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.158-159.

\[50\] ———, Eucharist, Bishop, Church. p.117.

\[51\] ———, Being as Communion. p.159.
presence of Christ revealing her catholicity, eucharistic communion with him, and constitution of his presence in history, to all of creation, the world and humankind.

Zizioulas asserts that the catholicity of the church has a pneumatological dimension, since in the celebration of the Eucharist, the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, the revealing of Christ in human history, and through humility, service, prayer, and worship, she dynamically confronts the anti-catholic powers of the world.\textsuperscript{52} Additionally, and this is an ideal based in eucharistic ecclesiology rather than what is often evidenced in the practices, theology or history of the church, the eucharistic community reveals its catholicity to be founded on the abolishment of all dualistic dichotomies and divisions.\textsuperscript{53} A long quotation from Zizioulas is warranted here, since it relates to one of the primary concerns of EMCM, that is, the relationship of the church to the world.

In such a catholic outlook, the entire problem of the relationship of the Church to the world receives a different perspective. The separation and juxtaposition of the two can have no essential meaning because there is no point where the limits of the Church can be objectively and finally drawn. There is a constant interrelation between the Church and the world, the world being God’s creation and never ceasing to belong to Him and the Church being the community which through the descent of the Holy Spirit transcends in herself the world and offers it to God in the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{54}

Ministry, writes Zizioulas, should be conceived of christologically and communally,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. p.160-161. \\
\textsuperscript{53}———, Communion and Otherness. p.6. and ———, “The Early Christian Community.” p.30. \\
\textsuperscript{54} Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.162.
\end{flushright}
since in the eucharistic community all ministries are identical to the ministries of Christ (he has gifted the church with his own ministries), ‘transcend all categories of priority and separation’, are only possible in the context of community, and are possessed by persons in community, rather than individuals in absoluto.\textsuperscript{55} Even the apostolic succession of the bishops should be seen in this light, since each bishop is ordained within a community in order to serve concretely such a community. This is also the case since each bishop represents historically, along with the identification of each local community with the universal church, ‘a continuity of the apostolic presence in the locus apostolicus of each Episcopal community.’\textsuperscript{56}

\section*{8.5 Church Structure, Apostolicity and Ministry}

Apostolic continuity and succession, according to Zizioulas, is preserved in a healthy form when the dualities of tradition/history and worship/eschaton/meta-history are complementary, rather than positioned as a dichotomy.\textsuperscript{57} ‘The Church does not draw her identity from what she is but from what she will be. Eschatology is absolutely crucial to ecclesiology.’\textsuperscript{58} Consequently, apostolic continuity may be conceived of historically and eschatologically – as apostolic individuals sent missionally into the world to plant communities of faith, and as a collegium of apostolic figures (the foundation of the church) that draw the people of God together eschatologically in one place. In the second approach, and this is the one favoured and emphasised by Zizioulas, historical succession throughout generations is not as important as the eschatological and eucharistic convocation of the church into a continuity of communities and churches, through the presence of the apostles and bishops. From

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. p.163–166.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. p.166–169.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. p.171.
\textsuperscript{58} ———, "The Mystery of the Church." p.296.
\end{footnotesize}
the first approach, apostolicity comes to the church historically, with a special emphasis on christology, and from the other it comes eschatologically, that is, from the future, with a greater emphasis on pneumatology.\textsuperscript{59}

A theological synthesis of these two approaches is achieved, claims Zizioulas, when christology is constituted both historically and pneumatologically, and with emphasis on eschatological communion with Christ, that defies the distance of time and space. The implications of this synthesis between the two dimensions of past and future are then carried over into our concepts of communion with the eschatological apostolic succession, the Petrine keys of the kingdom, the kerygmatic Risen Christ, and the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the clearest example of the synthesis between the historical and the eschatological, and the most common form of this synthesis in community life.\textsuperscript{60}

Zizioulas vigorously contends that these understandings of apostolic continuity and succession shape our understanding of apostolic continuity as being both through the apostolic kerygma, and through the apostolic ministry.\textsuperscript{61} Scripture and doctrines are the apostolic kerygma, that is, the doxological forms of dynamic communal faith, both historical and eschatological. They must be open to eucharistic renewal, the life-giving Spirit, communion with the ‘word made flesh’, the future, and new forms of experience.

The idea of apostolic ministry is applied broadly by Zizioulas.

All the orders of the Church are partakers of the apostolic continuity which is realised through an act of ordination… The eschatological

\textsuperscript{59}———, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.172-181.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid. p.181-188.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid. p.189-204.
approach leads to the conclusion that, for the apostolic continuity to take place, the order of the baptised layman (sic) is indispensable. The Church, therefore, relates to the apostles not only through ordination but also through baptism.\textsuperscript{62}

In the context of the eucharistic community, ministries and their associated structures have the following qualities, observes Zizioulas:\textsuperscript{63}

1. The ministry of the church is Christ’s ministry outworked pneumatologically;

2. The structure of the church is relational, embracing both unity and diversity, and characterised by communion and koinonia;\textsuperscript{64}

3. The territorial and geographical structure of the church is partially a consequence of the eschatological mystery of the church, and of the associated sacramental way in which it anticipates the ultimate salvation of all creation and the cosmos – she is an ‘eikon’ of the coming kingdom in her geographical location and form;\textsuperscript{65}

4. Bishops image Christ and the apostles, the presbyterium governs and counsels collegially,\textsuperscript{66} and everyone in a Christian community is indispensable for this ministry and apostolic succession;

5. ‘Apostolic succession through episcopacy is essentially a succession of church structure’;\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid. p.193.
\textsuperscript{63} The assertions in this list that are not footnoted come from Ibid. p. 196-246.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{———}, “The Church as Communion.” p.106-108.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{———}, “The Mystery of the Church.” p.302.
\textsuperscript{66} \textit{———}, “The Early Christian Community.” p.31.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{———}, \textit{Being as Communion.} p.197.
6. Ministry and community are interdependent, and all ordinations need to be within a concrete community and the context of the eucharistic assembly;

7. All persons in the community are ‘ordained’ to ministry within the life of the church, as laity, deacons, presbyters, or bishops, and ministry is essentially relational, interdependent and communal;⁶⁸

8. Church authority and structure is relationally-hierarchical and relationally-institutional, since hierarchy and institution are not done away with, but reconceived relationally;

9. The church needs both the ‘one’ (primacy) and the ‘many’ (autocephaly) in its life, structure and ministry, and ‘institutionally speaking, this involves a ministry of primacy inherent in all forms of conciliarity’, so that an ecclesiology of communion and diversity at the local level is healthily balanced with that of authority and leadership at the level of central authority.⁶⁹ Synodality and primacy must be maintained in such a way that local churches have freedom to be whole and catholic, with appropriate safeguards;⁷⁰

10. In the eucharistic experience of the church, the bishop is, iconologically, alter Christus – ‘the image of Christ’ relationally (that is, only immersed within the eucharistic community), in his (Zizioulas always uses the male pronoun) eucharistic leadership and pneumatological and christological representation, and as the protector of the eschatological dimension of the church. The bishop is also alter apostolus, connecting the local community with the other

⁶⁸———, Communion and Otherness. p.7.
communities of faith and the other bishops, past, present and future, and ecclesiologically, asserts Zizioulas, ‘there is nothing higher than the bishop in the church’.\textsuperscript{71} The bishop makes the church catholic by,

a) expressing the fullness, unity and multiplicity of the eschatological community in each place; b) expressing the historical continuity of the Church in time; and c) expressing the communion and unity of the Church in space.\textsuperscript{72}

11. The ministries of the church facilitate its \textit{double movement} of separation from the world and mission within it;

12. The dilemma between ministry as either functional or ontological is done away with, or transcended, when one conceives of ministry as: (i) relational and non-individualistic (the concepts of functionality and ontology here are markedly individualistic in nature); (ii) ambassadorial, that is, a gift for others; (iii) personally transforming, but mainly for the sake of the community; (iv) typological, in the sense of representing God in the midst of the community; (v) eschatologically oriented and significant, rather than temporal, and; (vi) of value for the ordained person, but never in isolation;

13. Communities are compelled by Christ to minister in communion and unity with other communities of faith in the world;

\textsuperscript{71} J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church,” \textit{Kanon} 7 (1985), p.23-33. ‘The bishop is thus primarily seen by the Orthodox as the manifestation of the arrival of Christ on earth and only secondarily as the successor of the apostles, as part of the apostolic college or even as a teacher.’ Zizioulas, “The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine.” p.35. Cf. Zizioulas’ fuller treatment on the role of bishops in \textit{———, Eucharist, Bishop, Church}.

14. The recognition of ministries must happen within the full life of the eucharistic community, rather than by strict canonical arrangements or a rigid dispensational style.

Therefore, Zizioulas regards church structure, apostolicity and ministry as living realities, most fully expressed in the eschatological visions, hopes and activities of concrete local church communities.

8.6 Locality and Universality

In Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, the local church is of great importance, and these local churches are made catholic through the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. These local churches are rendered churches by their celebration of the Eucharist, and the presence of the whole Christ through the divine Eucharist. They are also rendered as such by their connection with the bishop, and by their conformity to the truths of Christian faith in a concrete, local, geographical setting, rather than in terms of their representation of culture, gender, class, and the like, for genuine Christian communities are characterised by diversity rather than conformity.

The universality of the church complements its localised expressions, and is an indispensable part of it. When church come together a ‘network of communion of Churches’ is the ideal, rather than a new form of church, and such networks commune through prayer and worship, a shared vision of the gospel and the eschaton, and structures that facilitate such cooperation. Confessional Christian

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73 Cf. the appraisals of Zizioulas’ thinking in these areas by Kärkkäinen and Volf in, Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology. p.101. and Volf, After Our Likeness. p.103-104.
74 Zizioulas, Eucharist, Bishop, Church. p.117.
75 ———, Being as Communion. p.247-257.
76 Jesson, Orthodox Contributions. p.18.
77 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.258.
bodies (Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, et cetera) are disincarnate entities and not truly churches, and confessional pluralism has unfortunately added a real problem to the complete ecclesiality of local churches in the present age. This problem, laments Zizioulas, is not easily solved, yet is of ‘extreme importance to the ecumenical movement.’

8.7 Summary and Brief Critical Reflections

What follows is a summary of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, and some initial implications and correlations that are investigated further and in greater penetration later in this thesis.

In this chapter, we have seen that Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is characterised by a diverse and profound range of theological concepts, such as:

1. An emphasis on eucharistic and ecclesial hypostasis, and ecclesial being as being inextricably bound to the very being of God;

2. A situating of ecclesiology within the context of trinitarian and eucharistic theology;

3. An ecclesiological synthesis between communion, truth, being and history;

4. An integration of christology and pneumatology in ecclesiological, missiological and liturgical considerations;

5. A description of the inextricable relationship between eucharistic community and catholicity;

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78 Ibid. p.259-260.
6. An understanding of church structure and apostolic succession that is informed and shaped by history and eschatology;

7. A profound valuing of ministry (both \textit{ad intra} and \textit{ad extra}) and the role of the bishop in the life of the church;

8. A desire to heal confessional tension and pluralism and lead to fuller dialogue;

9. An acknowledgement of the interrelation between locality and universality in the expressions of the church, and;

10. An underscoring of relationality and communion in the missional endeavours and vision of communities of faith.

Ecclesiology and mission, in Zizioulas’ writings, are interwoven, since they are both built on the notion of \textit{being as communion}. Volf summarises the impact of this notion of communion, and the idea of the church being ‘a way of being’,\footnote{Ibid. p.15.} with reference to the following ecclesiological concepts:\footnote{Again, as in the chapter on Ratzinger, since one of the aims of this thesis is to extend Volf’s treatment begun in \textit{After Our Likeness}, there is merit in summarising his appraisal of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology. The points detailed here are a brief synopsis of Volf’s investigation into Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, with especial reference to the view of \textit{being as communion}. \textit{Volf, After Our Likeness.} p.73-123.}

1. An ontology of person at both the trinitarian and anthropological levels is central to Zizioulas’ ecclesiology. This is because, according to Volf, Zizioulas’ ‘\textit{communio}-ecclesiology is based on an ontology of person acquired from a consideration of the nature of the triune God,’\footnote{Ibid. p.75.} and since the communion within the person of the Trinity is the paradigm for human communion and all possible communion within the church.
Deindividuation and personalisation are made possible within the communion of the church and through the salvific grace of God;

2. Both the Christ event and truth are communal in nature, and Zizioulas’ consideration of such communion in these realms is his logical bridge between his ontology of personhood and his theories on the nature and structure of ecclesial communion;

3. Ecclesial communion is manifest in the Eucharist, which is the central point of all deindividualised and fully realised personhood, the locus in which Christ constitutes the church (in a pneumatically-mediated way), and the event in which the church can be found in all its completeness. This eucharistic ecclesiology determines Zizioulas’ understandings of institution, bishop, laity, ministry, apostolicity, and conciliarity.

Zizioulas’ perspectives on the connections between missionality, ecclesiality and the determinative role of the bishop and the institutional church are quite distinguishable from those of the EMCM. Similarly, most of the EMCM authors examined in this study would not be entirely comfortable with his emphasis on truth as essentially relational and communal, rather than grounded in cognitive, propositional or kerygmatic statements. EMCM thinkers have some sympathy for this later proposition, since they are at times concerned with the modernist emphasis on truth as static, textual and propositional, and more open to postmodern conclusions about the experiential and holistic nature of truth, yet their evangelical sensibilities would be aroused by the degree to which Zizioulas views truth as an event of communion. However, there is much resonance between the missional ecclesiology of the EMCM and Zizioulas’ perspectives on mission, which is detailed in much greater depth in
the final chapter of this thesis. These and other points of divergence and convergence are explored in detail in chapter 9 of this thesis.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has established, therefore, that the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology of Zizioulas contains indisputable consequence for the EMCM, and especially for the emerging shape of its missional ecclesiology. Such importance is especially seen in the church’s ontological being as communion, in the implications of his accentuation on hypostasis and on trinitarian and eucharistic communion, and in the creative and insightful integration, he brings to his perspectives on pneumatology, christology, missiology and ecclesiology. Zizioulas’ comprehension of the correlations between relationality, church, mission and contemporary culture are especially relevant, as are his reflections on ministry, discipleship and church life, and these are detailed and explored in greater depth in the dialogue established in the final chapter of this thesis.
PART 4: TOWARD DIALOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGIES
FOR A MISSIONAL CONTEXT
This chapter considers how dialogue between the EMCM literature and Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas might enrich the formation of a missional ecclesiology for contemporary western culture. A concise yet critical conversation between EMCM missional ecclesiology and the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas is established, through an analysis of areas of convergence, divergence and mutual ecclesiological enrichment.¹

The aim of this chapter is twofold, reflecting the two primary research objectives of this thesis. Firstly, it is to continue to analyse critically, in a depth never before attempted in any other research, the primary ecclesiological perspectives in the EMCM, building on chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis. Secondly, it is to build on and extend the discourse in Volf’s After Our Likeness, by putting the ecclesiologies therein into a critical conversation with the EMCM, which demonstrates their similarities, differences, and opportunities for enriching dialogue. This ecumenical ecclesiological discourse begun by Volf is broadened thereby, in order to uncover and examine how EMCM ecclesiology might be enhanced and challenged by such a conversation with the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. It is also to examine how EMCM ecclesiology might augment the ecclesiologies of these three theologians, and how this dialogue might contribute to the formation of a worthwhile missional ecclesiology for contemporary western culture.

¹ For a useful discussion of the issues relating to the theological method of correlation, and similar theological methodology, see N. Ormerod, "Quarrels with the Method of Correlation," Theological Studies 57, no. 4 (1996).
Section 9.1 examines how the primary emphases and ecclesiological contributions of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas might critique and inform EMCM ecclesiology. Volf contributes significantly to our ecclesiological understanding of such themes as faith, personhood, trinitarian ecclesiology, and Free Church leadership structures. Ratzinger emphasises communion, the church’s substance (that is, origins and structure), interreligious dialogue, and eucharistic ecclesiology. Zizioulas highlights the ecclesiological importance of truth, communion, leadership structures, eucharistic community, and the connection between christology and pneumatology in ecclesiological considerations. There are valuable areas of connection and contrast between these three parties and the EMCM material that will be articulated and explored.

Section 9.2 examines the converse, which is how the principal emphases and ecclesiological convictions of the EMCM literature might inform and enhance the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. Missional ecclesiological themes such as the fundamental missionary nature of the church, the core expressions of this missionary nature, and those of liminality, post-Christendom and postmodern contextualisation, offer significant contributions for ecclesiology. These can be set in helpful dialogue with other ecclesiological traditions to enhance their contrasting and parallel perspectives.

Finally, Section 9.3 summarises this ecclesiological interchange, which is an expansion of Volf’s ecclesiological composition After Our Likeness. It is a significant ecclesiological dialogue for the formation of a consequential missional ecclesiology for western culture.

In this chapter I will offer my own analysis of what is valuable in this ecclesiological
conversation, and of where the EMCM and the other ecclesiological subjects of this thesis might develop and inform each other. It will be argued that, at times, there is little or no connection between the various ecclesiological parties, and, conversely and more importantly, that, in some instances, there may be points of connection and possible mutual enrichment.

Not all the aspects of conversation in this chapter are equally important, so they will not necessarily receive similar treatment, but will be treated according to my own estimation of their importance in this conversation. The perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas do not equally converge with the EMCM on each point, so there will not be an attempt to represent each party uniformly on each issue addressed below. Rather, there will be an attempt to deal with the perspectives of those particular parties that most genuinely converse with the EMCM in the issues raised. The concern here is not for proportional treatment, but for sufficient treatment of significant areas of potential discourse. I will indicate where the various parties might need to hear from each other, and will attempt to facilitate a genuine conversation between these ecclesiological parties, with my own comments and analysis offered throughout.

9.1 EMCM Ecclesiology Enriched and Challenged by the Ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas

This section places the ecclesiological perspectives and contributions of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas into conversation with the ecclesiological perspectives of the EMCM, placing a range of perspectives side by side, noting the key points of convergence and divergence. This section examines how the primary emphases and ecclesiological contributions of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas might critique and
inform EMCM ecclesiology.

Again, I note what is valuable in this conversation and ignore that which is not as important in my estimation. On what basis and against what criteria is this judgement formed?

1. Firstly, having careful analysed the ecclesiological perspectives of each subject of this thesis, having placed their theological views side by side, and having observed their main areas of convergence and divergence, I have made an assessment of what unique ecclesiological perspectives Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas offer to the missional ecclesiology of the EMCM;

2. Secondly, having undertaken the detailed process explained in the above point, I have made a judgement about what unique ecclesiological perspectives the EMCM offer the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas;

3. Finally, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis, I am aware how I am reading what the EMCM, Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas have written through my own theology of the church as an evangelical Baptist theologian. I wrote in the Introduction, ‘As I attempt to put the EMCM, Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas into critical dialogue with each other, and as I assess what is important in this conversation and how I might evaluate the various ecclesiologists, I am inevitably influenced by my own theological, confessional and ecclesiological tradition or ‘lens’ – that of Evangelical Baptist ecclesiology.’

No theologian, and indeed no human being, can escape seeing the world and other views but through their own ‘lens’ of convictions, beliefs and ‘theology’.

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2 See point 1.6 in the Introduction to this thesis.
The Evangelical, Free Church, Baptist position that I hold reading ecclesiology has been well summarized in a variety of works, some of which I have footnoted here. I refer to my own personal, confessional and ecclesiological position and orientation here, in order to make it clear that I am aware of possible biases in how I choose and evaluate elements of other people’s ecclesiologies. I have made a strenuous attempt to be objective, impartial, and balanced in my analysis of where the various parties of this study might contribute to each other’s ecclesiologies. However, my particular theological heritage and commitments will inevitably colour my choices and evaluations, as I decide what is valuable in this conversation and ignore that which is not as important in my estimation.

9.1.1 Faith, Personhood, and Trinitarian Ecclesiology – Professor Miroslav Volf

9.1.1.1 Faith, the Church, and a Theology of Personhood

We turn firstly to the ecclesiology of Volf and the ways in which it might enrich EMCM ecclesiology. The Free Church ecclesiology of Volf is centred on trinitarian conceptions and his theology of human personhood. Volf characterizes Free Church and episcopal ecclesiology, in a way that elevates his own particular ecclesiological conclusions in After Our Likeness, when he suggests that ‘both models underestimate the enormous ecclesiological significance of concrete relations with other

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According to Volf, the two dynamics of individual faith in and relationship with Jesus Christ on the one hand, and interpersonal, ecclesial mediation of faith through an authentic immersion in a concrete community of faith in Christ on the other hand, are inseparably interrelated and interwoven. Individual acceptance of salvation and faith through the person and work of Jesus Christ is not diminished in the theological anthropology of Volf. However, he also emphasises the impossibility of faith outside interrelatedness with a concrete Christian community, the transmission of faith ‘through interpersonal ecclesial interaction’, and the necessity of the local church community for nurturing a full and rich faith and personhood.

The ecclesiological and anthropological tensions that are maintained by Volf in these perspectives might inform EMCM ecclesiology. In EMCM ecclesiology, virtually no attention is paid to developing a theology of human personhood, nor, naturally, to connecting such a theological anthropology to their perspectives on the nurturing of faith in concrete Christian communities. While much is written on the nature of Christian communities themselves, including their missionality, ecclesial structures, multiplication, forms of worship, and the like, the EMCM mostly ignores matters of anthropology, the development of faith through participation in local community, or to the connection between theological anthropology and missionary ecclesiology.

When one reads Volf it becomes clear that is not enough to merely suggest that all believers are gifted for ministry and should be equipped for mission, which is often where the considerations on these issues end in the EMCM literature, since one

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5 Ibid. p.159.
6 Ibid. p.172.
should more seriously consider the relationship between individual faith and the interpersonal, ecclesial mediation of faith. ‘In the complex ecclesial reality of all churches, the relation of individuals to the church depends on their relation to Christ, just as their relation to Christ depends on their relation to the church; the two relations are mutually determinative.’\(^7\) Volf’s perspectives on these matters, therefore, might serve to enrich EMC ecclesiology.

9.1.1.2 Trinitarian Ecclesiology and the Structure of Ecclesial Relations

The trinitarian orientation of the ecclesiology of Volf has implications for his understanding of communion within local churches, the nature of human personhood, and the structure of ecclesial relationships. The Trinity is his determining analogy for the nature of the church. In his perspective, it should both shape profoundly the church’s self-understanding, ecclesial life and depth of love, and help her navigate the complexities and paradoxes of unity and multiplicity, as she ‘images’ the Trinity.\(^8\) The depth of love and relatedness between Christians and churches should correspond to the trinitarian relations.

According to Volf, they should be manifest in a corresponding valuing of the gifts and ministries of others, unity of heart and mind, and gracious, non-hierarchical forms of leadership and governance. Ratzinger and Zizioulas might take issue with Volf on this note, since it may imply that hierarchical forms of leadership and governance do not manifest depth of love and trinitarian relations. That is true if it is seen solely as ‘power over’, but if more hierarchical forms are seen as nourishing and deepening the life of the community, namely ‘power for and with’, they can also be a share in trinitarian love and relatedness. Such questions about the nature of

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\(^7\) Ibid. p.159.

\(^8\) Ibid. p.194-197.
leadership and governance in churches and the church, and the case built for the advantages of the various ecclesial models for reflecting trinitarian relations, naturally have their roots in scriptural and historical questions about the origins and nature of the church. Volf’s particular understandings of the implications of the Trinity for ecclesial relations naturally reflect and serve to illustrate Free Church ecclesiology.

It is clear that the theological conceptions of the Trinity vary between Volf, Ratzinger, Zizioulas and the EMCM, based on their theological traditions, and that these differences influence their respective ecclesologies. However, the implications of trinitarian ecclesiological perspectives in general, and the trinitarian ecclesiology of Volf in particular, for the missionary ecclesiology of the EMCM are rich, especially given the minimal attention paid to the doctrine of the Trinity in the EMCM literature.

As noted in 6.2.6 on the ‘Trinitarian Perspectives’ of the EMCM, trinitarian reflections are sparse in the EMCM works, even though, when they are present, they are considered important in the formation of an adequate emerging-missional ecclesiology.

Six implications for the missionary ecclesiology of the EMCM, and the churches planted by this movement, are explored below. These will not be extensively compared with EMCM ecclesiology, since trinitarian themes in the EMCM literature are so thin. Instead, I am making the point here that these six propositions that emerge from the writings of Volf have significant and direct bearing on the formation of a sufficient and robust emerging-missional ecclesiology:

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9 Volf attempts to summarize these differences of understanding of the Trinity, and the influence they have on his own ecclesiology and that of his dialogue partners, in Ibid. p.236.
1. The doctrine of the Trinity encourages Christians to think theologically about God as dynamic and relational, rather than static and individual.\textsuperscript{10} This is because ‘the oneness of God is not the oneness of a distinct, self-contained individual; it is the unity of a \textit{community} of persons who love each other and live together in harmony…They are what they are only in relation with one another.’\textsuperscript{11} God is ‘wholly constituted by relationality, in other words, God is not (first) three independent entities who (then) decide to come into relation with one another; God, is, rather, ‘relationship without remainder.’ …Three participate in one another in a profound way, undermining any attempt to understand them independently of one another’.\textsuperscript{12}

From this emerges the notion of \textit{perichoresis}\textsuperscript{13} as each person of the Trinity exists \textit{in} and \textit{for} the other they are in perfect relationship, and must be worshipped and approached as One. Each member of the trinitarian persons has ‘their Being in each other and reciprocally contains one another, without any coalescing or commingling with one another and yet without any separation from one another… God is known only in a circle of reciprocal relations.’\textsuperscript{14} Zizioulas and Ratzinger agree: Zizioulas writing that God is essentially ‘a relational being’ who has ‘no ontological content, no true being, apart from

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\textsuperscript{10} S. Spence, \textit{The Trinity: Part One} (Unley: South Australian Baptist Union, 2006). p.2. \\
\textsuperscript{11} K. Giles, \textit{Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002). p.11. \\
\textsuperscript{12} D.S. Cunningham, \textit{These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology} (London: Blackwell, 1997). p.165. \\
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. Pinnock writes, ‘God is not an isolated individual but a loving interpersonal communion, to whom we owe our very existence… If God is a loving relationality, grace is primary because it is rooted in the loving divine communion… Relationality features also in the understanding of salvation as union with God... The social Trinity depicts God as beautiful and supremely lovable. God is not a featureless monad, isolated and motionless, but a dynamic event of loving actions and personal relationality.’ Clark H. Pinnock, \textit{Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996). These are select phrases taken from pages 23 through 42, without, I believe, any injustice done to their context.
\end{flushright}
communion’, and Ratzinger suggesting that ‘the church’s action and behaviour must correspond to the ‘we’ of God by following the pattern of this relationship.’

Understanding God in this way, writes Volf, has real implications for our understanding of the nature of the church, human personhood, and relations in church life. This is because,

As baptism into the triune name attests, beginning the Christian pilgrimage does not mean simply to respond to God’s summons but to enter into communion with the triune God; to end the Christian pilgrimage does not mean simply to have accomplished an earthly task but to enter into perfect communion with the triune God.

Understanding God in a fuller and more complete way as relational and dynamic in his trinitarian communion would help the EMCM achieve their goal of forming communities that are deeply relational, and justify and articulate this aim through a richer theological framework. The communitas that missional communities experience as they forge a community spirit while undergoing systemic change and experimenting missionally, is not only evidence of the dynamics of observable cultural anthropology (the liminal process that all cultural groups go through while experiencing significant social change, transition and upheaval), but is also reflective of the relationships in the Godhead.

15 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.17.
16 Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics. p.31.
Not only so, but the EMCM’s rejection of the most individualistic dimensions of Modernity⁹ are supported by a theological understanding of the correspondence between the nature of God and the nature of the church and of individuals.

2. Trinitarian thought becomes meaningful especially ‘in the context of Christian practices’, so Christians and churches need to be attentive not just to the theory, ‘but also to the practice, of trinitarian theology’.²⁰ The practice of trinitarian theology is about the implications of this doctrine for the things that Volf suggests that this doctrine must have implications for, such as our understanding of ecclesiology, anthropology, Christian spirituality and discipleship, and the like.²¹ Thompson suggests that ‘it is generally agreed that many older statements of the Trinity, while true, failed to give more than a static conception of God and were not integrated in any real way either with experience, worship or the whole context of theological thought and action.’²²

Volf, however, writes that,

Conceiving the structure of the church in a consistently trinitarian fashion means conceiving not only the institution of office as such, but also the entire (local) church itself in correspondence to the Trinity... The various gifts, services, and activities that all Christians have correspond to the divine multiplicity. The symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the trinitarian persons finds its correspondence in the image of the church in which all members serve one another with their specific gifts of the Spirit in imitation of

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⁹ See, for instance: Hiebert, Missiological Implications. p.68-116.
²⁰ Spence, Trinity. p.5.
²¹ See, for instance, Volf, After Our Likeness. p.214-220.
the Lord and through the power of the Father. Like the divine persons, they all stand in a relation of mutual giving and receiving.\textsuperscript{23}

Authors like Cunningham, therefore, call for a theological discussion on the Trinity that:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Brings the doctrine out of dry academic or dogmatic speculation, releasing it to dynamic conversations among the people of God in the churches in our present context;
\item Shapes trinitarian thought in such a way that it is more intelligible to both Christians and to non-Christians;
\item Demonstrates how trinitarian considerations influence the shape of Christian discipleship and ecclesiology;
\item Moves beyond mere systematic and theologising language, since, ‘despite the abstract language which it often must employ – (the Trinity) is not just something that Christians think, it is something that they do. It should thus be more than just a device for arranging the Table of Contents in volume after volume of systematic theology. Our belief in the triune God shapes us in profound ways – affecting what we believe, what we say, how we think, and how we live.’\textsuperscript{24}
\end{enumerate}

These suggestions would help EMCM communities not only to consider seriously the correspondence between their community life and the nature of the Trinity, but also to reflect that divine nature in their ecclesial practices, structures and leadership. The quote by Volf that has

\textsuperscript{23} Volf, \textit{After Our Likeness}. p.218-219.
\textsuperscript{24} Cunningham, \textit{These Three Are One}. p.ix.
been detailed in this section, though not written with the EMCM in mind, might well be a clear challenge to both EMCM leadership structures as well as to their entire congregational life. The EMCM is very concerned with releasing people to mission, with the participatory nature of Christian worship, and with the gifting of all believers for service, and Volf asserts that ‘the various gifts, services, and activities that all Christian have correspond to the divine multiplicity.’

3. Our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity influences our understanding of other core Christian doctrines. For example:

   a. Theological anthropology, shaped by trinitarian thought, moves beyond individualism toward the notion of humans-in-community; an understanding for what it means to be human and the nature of community is embraced. ‘Individualism and hierarchy are seriously challenged by trinitarianism’ and ‘the social Trinity is the paradigm not only for the church but for human society. A monotheistic conception of God leads to individualism… Moltmann is right in his perception that social and political views follow from particular conceptions of God and especially the Trinity.’

   Volf calls his understandings of the Trinity, and the implications that he derives from this theology, such as those discussed in this section, ‘social trinitarian in the weak sense of that term’. He is endeavouring to mine

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what he considers the theologically and ecclesiologically helpful dimensions of both social and psychological trinitarian thought from Eastern and Western theology.

The EMCM does not have a clearly articulated theological anthropology, and Volf’s trinitarian theological constructs, as well as his perspectives on faith, personhood and church, would assist the EMCM in its attempt to shape an approach to discipleship that is holistic, community focussed, and embodied in concrete local and relational interpersonal connections and spiritual practices. The EMCM emphasis on persons-in-relationship as fundamental to authentic spirituality and discipleship is supported by a theological anthropology informed by trinitarian considerations.

b. Ecclesiology is conceived relationally, rather than hierarchically (or, at least, relationally rather than the most negative expressions of hierarchical leadership), in the light of trinitarian considerations. Rather than reflecting ‘a monarchical view of the Trinity that is monotheistic, modalistic and subordinate’ in its ecclesial institutions, Free Church ecclesiology suggests that the church might display a love, mutuality and non-hierarchical expression of leadership and governance that images the Trinity.

Without getting into the theological intricacies of the issues of subordination versus mutuality in this section, it is worth noting that the Social Trinity emphasises unity through relationships. Mutual submission and servant leadership is preferable, in Volf’s Free Church

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ecclesiological perspective, from any form of ecclesial institutionalism or hierarchy that might be expressing itself oppressively, whether episcopal, Free Church, congregational, or another form of church governance.

When we give, we often engage in rivalries and set up hierarchies. But when gifts circulate within the Godhead, no rivalry happens; and hierarchy is not reaffirmed. The one who gives is not greater than the one who receives, for all give and all receive. Each gives glory to the other with each gift given... Like gifts among divine persons, human gifts should express and foster equality.  

It can be argued, however, that not all hierarchy and ‘institutionalism’ is necessarily oppressive or constraining, and such a suggestion would be rejected in the ecclesiologies of Zizioulas and Ratzinger. In episcopal polity, a balance is ideally sought between forms of hierarchical authority and a genuine collegiality and community of horizontal equality within the church.

In Free Church ecclesiology, ministry teams, and indeed all members of a congregation, are to explore their diversity and multiplicity of gifting and contributions while maintaining unity. Worship should be conducted through a trinitarian paradigm, ‘power must be seen as a flowing perichoretically through the community’, and both ‘unity and multiplicity’ is embraced.  

A word of caution, however, comes from Chan, who is not convinced by

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all the implications or dimensions of Moltmann’s perspectives on the Social Trinity and an egalitarian ordering of society and church.\textsuperscript{35} Volf, a former student of Moltmann, who also supervised Volf’s Habilitationsschrift that was revised to become his ecclesiological summation in After Our Likeness,\textsuperscript{36} is also subject to these cautionary suggestions, since he embraces much of Moltmann’s ecclesiology. Chan points outs that ‘Confucianism includes a non-domineering hierarchy that is characterized by reciprocity; in fact, reciprocity is a prerequisite for the good ordering of a hierarchical relationship. Reciprocity in this context means that there are mutual obligations.’\textsuperscript{37} Therefore, mutuality and deep relationship do not diminish the need for mutual obligations and ministerial positions in the church. No doubt, the ecclesiologies of Ratzinger and Zizioulas would raise other, similar concerns or objections.

The EMCM is clearly committed to non-hierarchical, Free Church (or at least ‘Free Church-like’) leadership and ecclesial structures,\textsuperscript{38} but does not draw on the doctrine of the Trinity enough in its theological rational for such a position. So Volf’s perspectives are enriching here for EMCM ecclesiology. As human beings we are ‘called into community’ and ‘this is understandable if relationships are what ultimately matter, and the

\textsuperscript{35} Moltmann’s understandings of Trinity are summarized in: J. Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993). ‘By virtue of their eternal love they live in one another to such an extent, and dwell in one another to such an extent, that they are one. It is a process of most perfect and intense empathy… The doctrine of the perichoresis links together in a brilliant way the threeness and the unity, without reducing their threeness to the unity, or dissolving the unity in the threeness. The unity of the trinity lies in the eternal perichoresis of the trinitarian persons. Interpreted perichoretically, the trinitarian persons form their own unity by themselves in the circulation of the divine life.’ Moltmann, The Trinity. p.175.

\textsuperscript{36} Volf, After Our Likeness. p.xi.


\textsuperscript{38} Webber, The Younger Evangelicals. p.147-153.
Triune God who creates the community is himself communal. Here, the social analogy of the Trinity is stimulating. In our church life, this must be a dominant value. True spirituality is expressed in Triune-Godlike relationships.\textsuperscript{39} Plantinga notes that the implications are far reaching for human relationships in the church if we are to image God in our relationships and be baptised into the family of the Triune God.\textsuperscript{40}

Volf upholds such convictions, yet he is also clear about the limitations of the trinitarian analogy, while cautioning his readers not to ‘overestimate’ the influence of trinitarian thinking on political and ecclesial reality.\textsuperscript{41} For Volf, while trinitarian thinking holds great promise for understanding the nature of the church and of human relationships, the ‘conceptualization process’ does not simply proceed ‘in a straight line from above (Trinity) to below (church and society)’ or that ‘social reality is shaped in this way’.\textsuperscript{42} One has to be aware of the limitations of the trinitarian analogy, of the frailties of real people and their churches, and yet the need to reflect with theological consistency on the Trinity and its implications for mission, faith and church.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} M. Davidson, \textit{Living as Trinitarian Christians} (Macquarie Park: Morling College, 2005), p.4.
\textsuperscript{40} ‘In our fellowship and \textit{koinonia}, in such homely endeavours as telling one another the truth or in doing such honest work as will help those in need--above all in that love which ‘binds everything together in perfect harmony’ - we show not only that we have become members one of another, but also that we are restored community, we-in-the-plural, have become a remarkable image of God... Race, class, sex, and other alienations get transformed into delightful complementaries, so that we may know and respect the other as other, but as co-other, loved other, fellow family members... Baptism in the threefold name marks the adoption of human beings into the joy and warmth of the family of God... If some member should be abused or diminished by other Christians, we oppose this injustice... because it a desecration of the communal sacrament.’ C. Plantinga, “The Perfect Family,” \textit{Christianity Today} March 4, 1988. p.27. See also ———, “Social Trinity and Theism,” in \textit{Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays} ed. R.J. Feenstra and C. Plantinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).
\textsuperscript{41} Volf, \textit{After Our Likeness}. p.194.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid. p.194.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. p.198-200.
4. Christians need to feel free to experience God as Trinity, whether they can come to terms with trinitarian theological and philosophical abstraction or not. The Trinity, for many, becomes real to them as a concept through their experiences of God, as they have an experience of connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, not as separate deities or beings, but in their trinitarian unity. Wright, suggests, for instance, that, ‘early trinitarianism was ‘an area in which the axiom lex orandi, lex credendi (literally, ‘the law of praying (determines) the law of believing’) was most evidently operative. From the outset, Father, Son, and Spirit were named together in baptism and in benediction. Christians at worship regularly expressed what theologians struggled to articulate satisfactorily. Believers ‘lived’ tensions and animosities that reasoned faith found hard to resolve’.44

The EMCM makes much of experiential worship, liturgy and communion with God, which they see as important for postmodern expressions of faith and for mission to postmodern people.45 Volf might challenge them to see Trinity as more than philosophical speculation, but as a response to the complex human experience of redemption in Christ, and as concerned with the explanation of this experience of the trinitarian Godhead. It is the lived experience of sharing in the divine community of trinitarian life, and of being brought into communion with the Divine Persons. Volf explains this experience of communion, and it is one that people often feel when they become aware of God’s delight.

When God turns toward the world, the circle of exchanges within the divine communion begins its outbound flow. God gives to creatures because God delights in them and because they are needy. That delight is part of God’s more encompassing relation with human beings, and the name of that relation is communion. It is a different sort of communion than communion among divine persons. Still, it is a communion across the chasm that divides humanity from divinity.⁴⁶

5. Trinitarian thought in the life of a community of faith can help Christians explore theology in fresh ways, and the implications of this theology for everyday Christian practices. Charry argues that ‘under the influence of modern notions of truth, theology became more interested in the coherence of Christian doctrine than in the ability of those doctrines to sponsor a godly life… Classical theology was an exercise in Christian paideia (helping people know, love, and enjoy God) an intellectual and spiritual undertaking – helping people both to understand and to be formed by loving the God they confess.’⁴⁷ Charry goes on to suggest that ‘baptism into the triune life is the foundation of Christian theological identity.’⁴⁸

In the same article in Theology Today, Charry proposes that living in the Trinity leads to a life of humility, a discovery that knowledge is not about mastery of concepts and information but about spiritual knowing, and, although the last suggestion is debatable, a realisation that ‘God’s own being is structured around our needs… For the second and third hypostases of the Trinity are not afterthoughts… the divine triplicity anticipates the full force of

⁴⁶ Volf, “Being as God Is,” p.11.
⁴⁸ Ibid. p.371.
human need from eternity.’ 49

The EMCM is quite critical of some established forms of theological and ecclesiological education, of its perceived rootedness in the rationalism and dualism of modernity, and of its perceived disconnection from embodiment and location in community, character, missionality, ‘wisdom, spiritual sensitivity, and servant leadership.’ 50 Volf’s trinitarian thought might contribute to a theological framework for such a reconceptualisation of theological and ministerial education. For Volf, trinitarian theology is fundamental to Christian theologising, and all Christians should learn to understand their faith in the light of trinitarian thought, in an integrated, systematic, holistic and interdisciplinary fashion, and should proactively seek to integrate their theology with their Christian practices, spirituality, and life in the world. 51

6. A trinitarian theological orientation leads to a fresh perspective on creation, other people, and the world. God has a particular kind of relationship with the world. Gunton suggests that it ‘is personal, not logical, the product of the free and personal action of the triune God.’ 52 The EMCM recognises that as Christians, we are to love the world and others as God’s creation, demonstrate

49 Ibid. p.373-377.
51 Volf proposes, therefore, that, ‘To be concerned with truth claims about God means also to be interested in how beliefs about God and God's relation to the world fit among themselves and with other beliefs human beings hold... If the truth of the Christian faith matters, then the way you understand the Lord's Supper must fit with your account of Christ's death, and this must fit with your doctrine of the Trinity, and all of this must fit with the way you understand the nature and predicament of human beings... Theology must pursue the question of truth and must do so in conjunction with, and not in isolation from, other disciplines. In a word, because Christian beliefs relate to everyday practices as a fitted set of beliefs with a claim to express truth about God and God's relation to the world, theologians must be concerned with just how beliefs relate to everyday practices – and must be so concerned precisely for the sake of everyday practices.’ M. Volf, "Theology for a Way of Life," in Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life, ed. M. Volf and D.B. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002). p.260-261.
52 Gunton, The Promise of Trinitarian Theology. p.72.
appropriate stewardship, avoid Gnostic dualisms and exclusion, and participate in God’s redemptive activities throughout all of creation and human society, as we anticipate the new heaven and earth.\textsuperscript{53} Volf proposes that an adequate and ‘genuinely Christian reflection’ on such issues is only formed in the light of the actions and nature of the trinitarian Godhead, and such theological moorings might enrich EMCM ecclesiology.

A genuinely Christian reflection on social issues must be rooted in the self-giving love of the divine Trinity as manifested on the cross of Christ; all the central themes of such reflection will have to be thought through from the perspective of the self-giving love of God.\textsuperscript{54}

Furthermore, Volf writes in chapter 5 of \textit{After Our Likeness} that a trinitarian approach to ecclesiology has these other specific implications, which need to be taken seriously by the EMCM, especially in the light of their thin trinitarian considerations, and the way in which these suggestions by Volf might enhance their missionary ecclesiology:

1. Trinitarian theology does away with the ‘dichotomy between universalisation and pluralisation’, ideally, since it embraces ‘unity and multiplicity’ at once.\textsuperscript{55} This is a helpful starting point for EMCM ecclesiology, as it seeks to minister to and through post-denominational young adults, and do mission in a pluralistic and multicultural society.

2. EMCM communities seeking to form rich interpersonal relationships within their own churches, and between themselves and other groups, can pursue

\textsuperscript{53} See, for instance: Bosch, \textit{Believing in the Future}. p.39.
\textsuperscript{54} Volf, \textit{Exclusion and Embrace}. p.25.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{———}, \textit{After Our Likeness}. p.193.
‘ecclesial correspondence to the Trinity’ as ‘an object of hope and thus also a task for human beings’.

Human beings (interpersonally) and churches as gatherings of persons (inter-ecclesially) cannot be internal to one another in the same way the divine Persons are internal to each other (perichoretically). However, in ‘mutual giving and receiving, we give to others not only something, but also a piece of ourselves, something of that which we have made of ourselves in communion with others; and from others we take not only something, but also a piece of them.’

3. According to Volf, Free Church polity and ecclesiology tends to move away from trinitarian thought due to its innate individualism, volunteerism, and emphasis on christology. This can be seen in the EMCM literature. However, ‘a trinitarian reshaping of Free Church ecclesiology’ has worthwhile implications and enhancements for EMCM missionary ecclesiology, as has been demonstrated in this section.

It is clear, then, that Volf’s trinitarian considerations have enriching implications for EMCM ecclesiology. Indeed, Tan contends that,

Based on the premise that nature and action are inextricably linked... any construal of missional theology as the church's participation in the missio Dei, cannot disregard the doctrine of the immanent Trinity... The perichoretic model of the Trinity points to the inseparability of the missio Dei and the imago Dei, being and doing, the self and the Other. The oneness of the divine mission implies an integral missional praxis that

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56 Ibid. p.195.
57 Ibid. p.211.
58 Ibid. p.196.
59 Ibid. p.197.
is rooted in the worship of this triune God.\textsuperscript{60}

\textbf{9.1.1.3 Free Church Understandings of Local Church Governance, Structure, Leadership and Ministry}

Volf proposes that a local gathering of believers becomes constituted as a church when there is a biblical participation in the word, the sacraments, and the presence of the people of God, and when such a Christian community seeks to obediently structure and organise itself around biblical guidelines.\textsuperscript{61} These expressions of ecclesiality are mapped out more fully in the chapter on Volf’s ecclesiology in this thesis, and include cognitive specification and confessional affirmation of the person and work of Christ, preserving historic Christian doctrines (especially, for Volf, in their Protestant Free Church manifestation) and scripture, honouring the sacraments, and practicing social concern and mission. As we have already noted, for Volf the truest expression of the church is found in the gathered and concrete assembly that meets to read the scriptures and celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Skira notes that for Volf, ‘these elements belong to the \textit{esse} of the church, while institutional aspects belong to the \textit{bene esse} of the church.’\textsuperscript{62} Biblically faithful liturgical and sacramental actions on the part of the entire congregation and their leaders should never be divorced from the subjective freedoms associated with Free Church congregational ecclesiology.\textsuperscript{63}

The local and concrete gathering of the people of God is the authentic constitution of

\textsuperscript{61}Volf, \textit{After Our Likeness}. p.131-132.
\textsuperscript{63}Volf, \textit{After Our Likeness}. p.135.
the church, and the witness to the entire universal church’s eschatological gathering, writes Volf. Therefore, the form that the local church takes is incredibly significant, and should be approached soberly, prayerfully, and with adequate theological and biblical consideration. The sacraments, for instance and as we have already suggested, are part of the esse of the church, as an essential expression of faith in Christ, and congregations that are biblically faithful are organised around the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, public profession of the Lordship of Christ, mission, and ecumenical communion.

As I noted in chapter 6 on Volf’s ecclesiology, such considerations might have important implications for the EMCM understandings of what constitutes a local church, and what is important for its essence, governance, structure and communal life. It is not enough, therefore, to allow a leadership or governance structure to emerge unreflectively in an emerging-missional church plant. Nor is it healthy for a local congregation to be blasé about such structures, or about what constitutes worship when the people of God are gathered together. While I am not suggesting that disinterest in these matters is present in the EMCM literature, the EMCM emphasis on contextualisation might tend to de-emphasise the notion that some of these matters are essential to the esse of a local church. In addition, in practice, the egalitarian models of church that are planted by EMCM leaders are often too cautious about asserting that there are ‘non-negotiables’ in ecclesial life.

Volf’s ‘participatory ecclesiology’, which focuses on the active priesthood of all believers, along with his ‘polycentric community’ of leadership and mission

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64 Ibid. p.128.
65 Ibid. p.158.
66 Stetzer and Putman, Breaking the Missional Code. p.101-102 is an example of the point being made here.
demonstrated by the whole community of believers, has real resonance with EMCM ecclesiology, since in Volf’s perspective the generous distribution of the charismata by the Spirit empowers a community for service and mission.\textsuperscript{67} This desire by Volf to see all members of congregations using their gifts for ministry and participating in ecclesial decision-making might parallel with the EMCM commitment to grass-root, participatory and egalitarian leadership and governance structures in local churches. Volf’s practical insights and theological advice in this regard might be very valuable in the ongoing formation of EMCM ecclesiology, for example, in his assertion that ‘the polycentric character of the church has a twofold theological grounding, namely, in the Christian call to faith and in the charismata’.\textsuperscript{68} Volf goes on to describe how such charismata, multiplicity of gifting, and a ‘polycentric-participative model of church life’\textsuperscript{69} might be expressed in local communities of faith.

On the other hand, as has been noted in the chapter analysing Volf’s ecclesiology, Volf’s understanding of local communities of faith recognizes the role of institutions and institutionalized procedures; especially when they correspond to the nature of the Trinity, are inspired by grace and love, are viewed as provisional, and are responsive to the church’s broad mission in the world.\textsuperscript{70} Institutional forms, formalised leadership, and pastoral offices need ‘the vivifying presence of the Spirit’ even more than they need decentralisation or egalitarian reformulation, and, for Volf, a rejection of institutions and structures in ecclesial life is simply not possible.\textsuperscript{71}

This has important implications for EMCM communities that may have too readily rejected established ecclesial forms, and for EMCM authors who are too readily

\textsuperscript{67} Volf, \textit{After Our Likeness}, p.228-233.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid. p.225.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. p.227-233.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid. p.234-241.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. p.257.
dismissive of established ecclesial forms, and the role of ecclesial institutions and procedures. For Volf, the aim should not be merely to replace established forms of church with newer, more relevant or dynamic forms; rather, ‘the vivifying presence of the Spirit’ and polycentric-participative expressions of charismata are what should be sought and fostered in all congregations, whether ‘established’ or ‘emerging’.  

In addition, asserts Volf, fellowship with other churches and acknowledging their important place in relationship to one’s own church is an ‘ecclesial minimum’. In anticipation of the Eschaton, all churches are required to genuinely fellowship with other churches and share their confession of faith in Jesus Christ. This might be a challenge for the EMCM. While some of Volf’s perspectives in this regard may be too idealistic, as I have noted in chapter 6, they still might provide a challenge for EMCM communities and missional initiatives that all too easily become isolated, disconnected from established forms of church, and narrowly located within particular sub-cultures and generational groups. A genuinely missional ecclesiology needs to respect the role of other congregations in missionary endeavour and in faithful biblical witness, and in expressing our understandings of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of the church.

Christ acts sovereignly within a local congregation through the charismata, which are distributed universally and graciously, writes Volf. The charismatic giftings of all the people of God in a congregation should ideally be exercised and have opportunity to flourish, and such pneumatological perspectives are vital to Volf’s ecclesiology, which is one characterised, as I have demonstrated, by inclusion, mutuality,

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72 Ibid. p.227 and 257.
73 Ibid. p.157.
74 Guder, Missional Church. p.75.
75 Volf, After Our Likeness. p.228-233.
participation, commonality, and the priesthood of all believers.\textsuperscript{76} The missional ecclesiology of the EMCM values participation in mission and ministry, however, as I noted at the end of chapter 6, culturally insensitive expressions of giftedness or charismata are usually discouraged. The question remains, however, whether such avoidance of certain charismata is detrimental or beneficial to their mission. Volf’s perspectives in the role of the charismata in local Free Church congregational life might help EMCM churches work through this issue in their own context, and in light of the particular people-group they are trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Volf’s writes of the relationship between expressions of charismata and confession,

Confession of Christ as Saviour and Lord is an essential dimension of charismatic activity... If Christ is to act in the charismata, then he must be implicitly or explicitly confessed by charismatics themselves and through their charismatic activities as the one who he is, namely, Saviour and Lord. Just as every charisma is a concrete manifestation of Christ’s grace, so also is every charismatic activity a concrete form of confession to him.\textsuperscript{77}

Therefore, Volf’s Free Church ecclesiology has dimensions that might be enriching for EMCM ecclesiology, such as his perspectives on faith and personhood, Trinity, and local church structure, leadership and governance.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. p.221-257.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. p.229.
9.1.2 Communio, the Church’s Substance, and Eucharistic Ecclesiology – Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

9.1.2.1 Communio, the Church’s Substance, and Cherishing the Church

We turn now to the ecclesiology of Ratzinger and the ways in which it might enrich EMCM ecclesiology. The first challenge that the ecclesiology of Ratzinger provides for the EMCM understanding of the nature of the church is in the priority of thorough ecclesiological reflection before demanding or postulating processes and practices of reform. It is a simple suggestion, and not unique to Ratzinger, but, nonetheless, one that might have profound consequences for the EMCM literature, which does tend to be rigorously missiological and only superficially or sporadically ecclesiological in its outlook and theologizing.

In Called to Communion, Ratzinger asserts that such rigorous ecclesiological reflection before undertaking ecclesial reform will ensure that whatever reform is outworked will be constructive, biblically and theologically sound, genuinely healing, and ‘illuminated and led by the logos of faith’. 78 EMCM missional ecclesiology might seek to both do careful theological reflection before undertaking missional reform, but also to during the process of ecclesial change, ‘building the bridge while one walks on it’ as one EMCM author regularly asserts in his work Crossing the Bridge. 79

Ratzinger cherishes the church of Jesus Christ. The church is the Holy Bride and the ‘mystical body of Christ’, whose presence resides in and with it, and who witnesses most clearly to the world through it. This being the case, and since ‘we are the

78 Ratzinger, Called to Communion. p.9.
church’ and are called to be the presence of Christ in the world, both individually and communally, it is vital for Christians to elevate, cherish and honour the church of which we are a part. Therefore, while some in the EMCM might wish to abandon the established church and pursue new initiatives without any accountability or reference to the broader Body of Christ, both present and past, Ratzinger reminds his readers that all Christians are corporately 'the church', and have co-responsibility for its particular and universal health, mission, development and broader renewal.

I have already noted that the primary notion in Ratzinger’s ecclesiology is that of *communio*. Volf’s critique of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology in *After Our Likeness* concentrates on Ratzinger’s communion ecclesiology and his notion of ‘corporate personality’, which Volf considers fundamental to the way in which Ratzinger views the local church as a part of the universal church, with the universal church receiving greater priority and honour. As was demonstrated in chapter 7, for Ratzinger the universal church is ‘ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church’, ‘since every local community of faith exists through a ‘mutual interiority’ with the whole, and receives its ecclesiality joined with it and out of it’. The communion between the churches is given substance and is sustained through the Eucharist and the episcopate, and this *communio* between the multiple persons and congregations and the universal whole is given expression through the multiplicity of liturgies, ministries, communities, societies and charisms in the manifold churches.

In Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, the implication of this discussion for EMCM ecclesiology is that all ecclesiologies outside of the fellowship of Rome are imperfect. This is because they do not recognise the need for unification through the

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80 See section 5.1.4 for the tension that exists here in the EMCM literature.
81 Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*. Section V of this work addresses these themes.
Petrine office, the way in which hierarchical offices undergird genuine communion, or the correct celebration of the Eucharist through the Christ-established Holy Catholic Church. Such perspectives are, naturally, fundamental to Ratzinger’s ecclesiology and his interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II.\(^83\) Therefore, the view of mission and its accompanying activities that are held by ecclesologies outside of the Catholic Church are imperfect also, since,

> Only a power and a love that are stronger than all our own initiatives can build up a fruitful and reliable community and impart to it the impetus of a fruitful mission... The love of Christ, which is present for all ages in the Sacrament of his Body, awakens our love and heals our love: the Eucharist is the foundation of community as it is of mission, day by day.\(^84\)

For Ratzinger, *communio* is about identity (and ministry to the communion) and mission is the outward movement from communion, just as the Trinity is communion and outward movement in mission. Volf and the EMCM would debate some aspects of these theological assertions vigorously with Ratzinger, given the different theological foundations of their ecclesiologies.

Even given that difference of theological perspective, *communio*, therefore, is a rich and beautiful concept that helps us understand the dynamic relationship between particular churches and the universal church, between the self and the whole, and ‘between the human ‘I’ and the divine ‘Thou’ in a universally communal ‘We’.’\(^85\)


\(^84\) Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*. p.89.

Ratzinger writes,

Ecclesial communion is at the same time both visible and invisible. As an invisible reality, it is the communion of each human being with the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, and with the others who are fellow sharers in the divine nature, in the passion of Christ, in the same faith and in the same spirit. In the Church on earth there is a relationship between the invisible communion and the visible communion in the teaching of the Apostles, in the sacraments and in the hierarchical order. By means of these divine gifts, which are very visible realities, Christ carries out in different ways his prophetical, priestly and kingly function for the salvation of mankind (sic). This link between the invisible and visible elements of ecclesial communion constitutes the Church as the Universal Sacrament of Salvation.\textsuperscript{86}

Even though EMCM authors might reject the hierarchical overtones in Ratzinger’s notion of \textit{communio hierarchica},\textsuperscript{87} the notion of communion might certainly help Protestant churches and leaders, including those in the EMCM, reflect upon how \textit{communio} might inform their approaches to local leadership, ministry, movements and structures. It might help them look beyond the immediate and particular concerns of the churches to the communion with and between individual Christians, the local congregation, and the broader church, and, ultimately, the Lord of the church.

Much has been written in this thesis on Volf’s trinitarian framework, but it should be noted here that one of the reasons why Ratzinger’s notion of \textit{communio} is so valuable for shaping the issues mentioned in the previous paragraph is because, in


\textsuperscript{87} The church’s ‘deep and permanent structure is not democratic but sacramental, consequently hierarchical.’ Ratzinger and Messori, \textit{The Ratzinger Report}. p.49.
Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, communion has its grounding in a trinitarian theology. The love, self-giving, mutuality, and being ‘from’ and ‘toward’ that are evidenced in the Trinity are also, ideally, characteristic for the various expressions of communion found among the people of God.\(^{88}\)

Non-Catholic persons, however, including the EMCM, would not be comfortable with all the implications Ratzinger draws from this linkage of the concept of communio with trinitarian thought. This includes his prioritization of the universal church over the local church. Ratzinger’s prioritization, however, is not necessarily representative of Catholic ecclesiology, especially since Lumen Gentium, and is not necessarily the only possible outcome of grounding a view of the church as communion in a trinitarian, which is important to note as we think about the implications of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology for the EMCM. The recent shift in Catholic ecclesiology toward an emphasis on the importance of the local church and the whole people of God as the church is illustrated by the following quotation from a work on Catholic systematic theology.

> The church is one because of the indwelling of the one Holy Spirit in all the baptized; it is holy because it is set apart by God’s graciousness for the reception of a mysterious love of predilection; it is catholic in the original sense of the word, meaning that it is whole and entire, possessing all the parts needed to make it integral; and it is apostolic because it remains in continuity in essentials with the original witnessing of the first-century apostles... Catholics are often inclined to apply these descriptive characteristics only to the worldwide, universal church, yet they are beginning to learn from the

eastern Orthodox churches and others that these characteristics are meant to apply just as truly to the local church.  

Another matter of theological debate arises in the grounding of communion in trinitarian terms if ‘such a union, emerging from pure relationality, results, however, in a dissolution of the respective individual identities of the various local churches’. 

Volf suggests that emphasising complementary rather than pure relationality would allow the trinitarian dimensions of communion to richly inform ecclesial communities ‘as independent and yet mutually related entities affirming one another in mutual giving and receiving.’ The related ecclesiological notions of *communio* and Trinity, therefore, would help the EMCM literature more fully reflect a love for the church, a respect for its correspondence with the nature of the Godhead, and a richer understanding of the relationship between human nature, faith, church, and the connections between communities of faith. Especially if Ratzinger’s theological vision on these matters is contextualized for Free Church ecclesial environments.

9.1.2.2 Eucharistic Ecclesiology and the Sacraments in EMCM Thought

In the chapters on EMCM ecclesiology I noted that there are mixed perspectives in the EMCM literature on the place of the sacraments, liturgy, the exploration of ancient and modern worship and contemplative traditions, the creative arts, et cetera, in the formation of a missional ecclesiology.

There are EMCM authors who consider these things as crucial for mission to postmodern people and to the formation of a well-rounded missional ecclesiology.

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91 Ibid. p.207.
As I have already demonstrated, these encourage a creative experimentation with participation in the sacraments and the contextualisation of their meanings for relevance to a postmodern audience. They also invite innovative use of liturgy, traditional and charismatic/contemporary styles of worship, hymns and choruses, narrative models of homiletics, poetry, the creative arts, hybrids of ancient and contemporary music (for example, Gregorian chants mixed to techno beats), labyrinths and contemplative prayer practices, and other forms of participatory, multisensory worship experiences.

There are other EMCM authors, however, who consider discussions about sacramental participation and tradition, models and forms of Christian worship, innovative use of the creative arts in worship, et cetera, as peripheral or secondary considerations in the establishment of missional communities.

Both groups in the EMCM literature, however, do not really place the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, as central to their missional ecclesiology. The former group tend to see worship and the creative use of such things as the sacraments, as useful tools of missionary endeavour, and for contemporizing gathered forms of Christian worship. The latter group see such things as peripheral. Neither group forms anything like a eucharistic ecclesiology, or one that gives reasonable attention to the place of the sacraments, and especially the eucharistic, in the life of the church, or in the formation of a well-formed missionary understanding of the nature of the church.

While Ratzinger’s Roman Catholic perspectives on the sacraments may be at odds with the Protestant ecclesiology present in the EMCM literature, the value that Ratzinger places on the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, might be a useful
corrective for the EMCM ecclesiology’s minimal reference to the importance of the sacraments in the formation of a missional ecclesiology. One theological issue that will need to be worked through is the intimate connection between the church as a structural reality and the essential nature of the sacraments. For instance, are they to be understood as symbolic enactments of the worshipping Body of Christ, as an historical and temporal reality, or in some other way in an adequately developed EMCM ecclesiology?

Furthermore, while Ratzinger’s eucharistic ecclesiology is Roman Catholic, it is not necessarily a monolithic view, representative of all Catholic ecclesiology. Some Catholic theologians, such as Ormerod, consider that a much greater place should be given in ecclesiology to the church’s primary call to mission, since it is a community for mission and since the celebration of the sacraments and the vocation of those who follow Christ are intimately connected with the church’s mission to and in the world. Ormerod argues, ‘that the most significant aspect of lay participation in the life of the church is not in ministry, but in their participation in the mission of the church. This is supported by reference to the documents of Vatican II and other church statements.’

Ormerod’s basic position is that contemporary theologies of the church, such as the model of communion, downplay the church’s mission or fail to integrate it into their theology. Ormerod starts with the processions of the Trinity and then the missions of the economic Trinity. Grace gives the church a share in both. Therefore, the church can be a community of faith (communion) but the church is also sent (mission), as

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are the persons of the Word and the Holy Spirit. Mission is core to the nature of the church, as it is of Jesus. Such developing perspectives in Catholicism on the mission of the church in the West are described more fully in the next section on Ratzinger, and have real correspondence with the views of the EMCM.

Ratzinger’s Roman Catholic position understands grace as being conveyed in the sacraments, and each particular sacrament also conveys further grace that is peculiar to that specific sacrament. Davidson, summarizing the systematic theologies of McGrath, Berkhof and Macquarrie, proposes that in such a Catholic view of the sacraments ‘the sign is linked directly with the thing signified, so that participation in the externals is essential to receiving grace, and the sacraments are necessary for salvation. The sign is not the grace itself, but it conveys the grace it signifies. A sacerdotal priesthood is required for the administration of the sacraments’. The principles of *ex opere operato* (‘by the work performed’) and *ex opere operantis* (‘by the work of the worker’) are important in a Catholic understanding of the sacraments, emphasising both the efficacy of the reception of the sacraments, rightly administered, and, concurrently, the minister’s and the recipient’s faith – although *ex opere operato* tends to take precedence.

Davidson notes that ‘modern Catholicism has shifted the emphasis from Aristotelian categories to an existential framework’. Mitchell, for instance, invites readers ‘to ponder the significance of Christian liturgy and sacramental worship by reimagining

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its structure, its sources in human life and experience, and its changing cultural contexts’, especially in the light of postmodernity and the changing more existentially open cultural landscape of the West. This is evident in emerging Catholic understandings of the Eucharist. Authors like the Belgian Roman Catholic theologian Schillebeeckx, who was a notable contributor to the Second Vatican Council, have moved away from the Aristotelian philosophical foundation, but have retained the superstructure. For example, writes Davidson, ‘Schillebeeckx speaks of both transubstantiation and trans-signification, by which he means that the elements in the Eucharist have the significance for the communicant of being the real body and blood of Christ, rather than having their substance changed.’

As noted earlier, the eucharistic nature of Ratzinger’s ecclesiology has repercussions for his comprehensions of authority, community, service and organisation in the church, some of which are accepted only by Roman Catholic Christians. An example is the connection between the correct administration of the sacraments by the priesthood with an authentic relation to the universal church, and with a submission to the authority of the office of the Catholic bishops, and, ultimately, to the Petrine office. In Catholic theology, it is the Eucharist where the church most fundamentally realises itself, as summit and source of the divine life present in the world, as a communion of faithful sharing in the trinitarian communio and missio. This is not merely Ratzinger the theologian suggesting these theological perspectives, since they are a core conviction of the Catholic Church as reflected in the documents of Vatican II. In positive terms, the entire congregation, as the gathered people of the risen Lord, are not meant to be passive subjects in liturgical or eucharistic events. Rather, as the

*communio fidelium* they are meant to be the active bearers of the word, the Spirit, and the presence of Christ, and to participate in this eucharistically possible communion with God’s divine life in the world. This communion with Christ is given expression through liturgical and Christian spirituality, leadership, worship, mission and prayer.

In contrast to Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, the sacramental perspectives of the EMCM tend to be Lutheran, Calvinistic, Anabaptist, Rationalistic, Reformed, Zwinglian, or some other variant of a Free Church Protestant doctrine of the sacraments. The significance of the Eucharist, which is usually called the Lord’s Supper, is usually understood in terms of remembrance (a remembrance that is commanded, visible, strengthening and historical) and covenant (we identify ourselves with the New Covenant in the Lord’s Supper). It is also understood in terms of fellowship (with the risen Lord and his church) and hope (that is, a token of the Eschaton and the eschatological banquet). ⁹⁹

However, the theological perspectives that locate the local community of faith in the context of the universal church every time the Eucharist is celebrated, and that place a greater emphasis on the role of the sacraments in Christian spiritual formation and community cohesion and establishment, might augment the ecclesiology of the EMCM, if applied appropriately in a Free Church theological setting. Furthermore, as EMCM groups plant increasingly contextualized and culturally relevant missional churches and initiatives in their desire to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, participation in the sacraments and the scriptures might also help answer questions about fidelity to the gospel, while honouring the action of the Spirit in the early

⁹⁹ See this type of Zwinglian schema in E.F. Kevan, *The Lord’s Supper* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 1982).
church in developing human structures and symbols necessary for the church’s survival. Crouch, in the EMCM text *The Church in Emerging Culture*, writes,

The sacraments answer the postmodern hunger for a true story after modernity’s impoverished recital of facts and figures. Week after week they allow us to revisit the story of the Christian gospel – another’s death for the sake of our life. But they do so in a uniquely comprehensive way, bringing us the words, images, sounds, tastes, and smells of that story... The sacraments are a “multimedia” experience orders of magnitude more powerful than a Hollywood production because they are enacted with real water, bread, and wine – not pixels, tweeters, and woofers – and because, most of all, they tell the world’s truest story.100

9.1.2.3 Interreligious Dialogue in Ecclesial Life and Spiritual Formation

Openness to interreligious dialogue is present in some of the EMCM literature. There are many ways of mapping the landscape of interreligious dialogue, some of which have been adopted and proposed by eminent comparative thinkers.101 The themes that are often discussed in interreligious dialogue include mutual influence and transformation, the parameters of dialogue, cross tradition textual studies, meditative/contemplative practice and philosophy in the spiritual formation of adherents, philosophical/theological engagements, and the encounter of truth claims. Some of these interreligious considerations have been entertained by the EMCM because of the conviction that such conversation is formative and critical in pluralist, multi-religious, multicultural and postmodern societies.


A fundamental comparative theme that surfaces in the EMCM literature is opportunities for mutual influence and transformation between religious traditions, and an investigation of the parameters of dialogue. David Bosch, who is an influential missiologist for the EMCM, discusses, in his seminal Christian missiological work *Transforming Mission*, three interreligious approaches that Christian thinkers have postulated – exclusivism; Christianity as fulfilment of other religions; and relativism. He reflectively dismisses these three and writes that,

> We are in need of a theology of religions characterized by creative tension, which reaches beyond the sterile alternative between a comfortable claim to absoluteness and arbitrary pluralism… an admission that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live within the framework of penultimate knowledge, that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises… This is not opting for agnosticism, but for humility. \(^{102}\)

Bosch courageously expresses the heart of an emerging postmodern Christian missiological perspective, and sets the agenda for many authors in the EMCM stream; however, within Christian circles the debate over the relationship between mission and dialogue is a heated and ongoing one. This debate also exists within other religious traditions, even though its shape may be different at times. Andrew Olendzki of the *Barre Center for Buddhist Studies* suggests, for instance, that ‘the

Pali canon teaches a commitment to both mission and dialogue’, yet the Buddha, though thoroughly convinced about the truth of his teachings, was a ‘respectful and accepting dialogician.’ A desire for mutual enrichment through interreligious dialogue is evident in EMCM material; however, the question about the relationship between mission and dialogue remains.

Meditative and contemplative practices provide scope for interreligious consultation, according to some in the EMCM, especially in efforts to enhance the spiritual formation of religious adherents. Naturally, mystical traditions determine the values given to the various mystical experiences.

The constructivistic/perennialistic/exclusivistic/vicissitudistic debate is a critical one for understanding the relationship between religious traditions and their mystical practices or philosophies.

Ratzinger’s ‘Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation’ was a controversial event in the development of the interreligious dialogue on Buddhist-Christian meditative practices and philosophy, which indirectly raised issues that the EMCM might consider. This letter was written not only by Ratzinger the theologian, but also by him in his role as Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and received mixed responses from Christian theologians and thinkers from other religions alike. These include:

105 According to Jones, Constructivism proposes that ‘beliefs, concepts, and expectations shape or even constitute the depth-experience itself’, and Perennialism conceives this experience as being merely ‘interpreted differently after its occurrence to fit within the belief system developed from all the experiences, beliefs and values of the mystics of the experiencer’s particular tradition.’ Ibid. p.8-10. Exclusivism declares that a Buddhist’s mystical experience is authentic whereas a Christian’s is inadequate or inauthentic, or visa versa, based on the difference in the essence or object of the experience. Vicissitudism ‘holds, as with R.C. Zaehner, that a personalistic mysticism exemplified in Christian and other forms of deism differs from the impersonalistic mysticism exhibited in certain Eastern religions.’ Smart, The Religious Experience. p.41–42.
1. The question of Buddhist impersonalism - Is Buddhist mysticism impersonal as opposed to Christian contemplation on the relational Divine, or does the charge of impersonalism stem ‘from a misconstrual of the structure and limits of apophatic contemplation in the Buddhist context’?\textsuperscript{107}

2. The question of Buddhist nihilism – Should Christians engage in meditation practices that pursue nirvana when the concept may be nihilistic, or is this a confusion between the concepts of radical annihilation and the extinguished suffering of nirvana?\textsuperscript{108}

3. The use of religious language in dialogical engagements – How does religious terminology interfere with and distort dialogical encounters? How do such misconceptions not only influence interreligious conversation, but also cross-traditional meditational/contemplative practice?

4. Interreligious mystical appropriations – What is the relationship between foreign meditational practices and paradigmatic philosophies, and to what degree must practitioners be conscious of this relationship when involved in interreligious mystical activities and appropriation? Will Christian contemplatives who adopt Buddhist methods be subject to an existential and soteriological abyss of darkness? Will Buddhist contemplatives be led from the path to nirvana by adoption of theological conceptions in meditation? Which meditational practices are most conducive to love of neighbour, action, and the acceptance of trials? Other, similar questions might also be explored.

5. The emphasis on differences in mystical conceptions – When should these


\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
differences be explored and advocated, and when should they be disregarded as superfluous? How can meditational practices be enriched by wise respect for these differences, and empathetic understanding? Merton’s thoughts are worth considering here, written many years before this letter by Ratzinger was published: ‘There must be scrupulous respect for important differences, and where one no longer understands or agrees this must be kept clear – without useless debate. There are differences that are not debateable, and it is a useless, silly temptation to try to argue them out. Let them be left intact until a moment of greater understanding.’

Therefore, while EMCM ecclesiology creates space for interreligious dialogue and exploration, Ratzinger’s cautions might be considered in order to form an interreligious conversation that is reflective. Ratzinger’s admonitions might be examined for their validity in the landscape of interreligious dialogue.

One has to go further than this one particular document written by Ratzinger on non-Christian forms of meditation, however, in order to understand his perspectives on interreligious and ecumenical dialogue in ecclesial life and spiritual formation. 

Dominus Iesus is probably Ratzinger’s most notorious work on this matter, written while he was Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In this declaration, Ratzinger is endeavouring to address what he considers the concerning religious relativism that is evident in pluralistic culture, and in much of the modern church. Ratzinger, referring to forms of Christianity outside the Roman Catholic

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Church, asserts in *Dominus Iesus* that there is a ‘single Church of Christ’ and ‘this Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.’

Rowland comments,

In *Dominus Iesus* it is stated that with this expression (‘subsists in’) the Second Vatican Council sought to harmonize two doctrinal statements: on the one hand, that the Church of Christ, despite the divisions that exist among Christians, continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church, and, on the other hand, that outside of her structure, many elements can be found of sanctification and truth, that is, in those churches and ecclesial communities which are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church.

In her significant analysis of Ratzinger’s theology, Rowland’s conclusion is that he is ‘not prepared to compromise on the Church’s claim to be the universal sacrament of salvation.’ He is open to ecumenical dialogue with other Christian groups, to recognizing them as partners in the faith, and to working toward the sensitive re-entry of all Christians and churches who are outside Catholicism back into ‘the Church’, while helping to maintain their integrity and ‘own cultural patrimony in the process.’

In terms of inter-faith dialogue, Ratzinger suggests the cautions on non-

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111 Ratzinger, "Dominus Iesus." 16.
113 Ibid. p.98. Tracey Rowland is Dean and Associate Professor of Political Philosophy and Continental Theology at the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, and a member of the editorial board of *Communio*, which Ratzinger founded with others.
114 Ibid. p.98-99. Sajda, therefore, writes, 'The Second Vatican Council decided to speak about the ways of communion with the mystical body rather than about the division into members and non-members of the mystical body. The concept that the church of Christ 'subsists in' the Roman Catholic Church was not meant to be exclusive, it was meant to be inclusive. It was supposed to indicate that the Roman Catholic Church has preserved the fullness of the church, but "very many of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church herself can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit and visible elements. All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Him belong by right to the one Church of
Christian contemplation and meditation detailed above, sees very little room for communication with non-monotheistic religions, and is opposed to any theological relativism. \(^{115}\)

As religions evolve in multicultural, post-secular and pluralistic societies, and global realities and dynamics change, new interreligious areas for comparison and mutual enrichment will emerge. These will include consumerism, social engagement, human rights and social justice, environmental and ecological issues, multiculturalism and race relations, gender issues, terrorism, et cetera. While the EMCM will not share Ratzinger’s convictions about the role of the Roman Catholic church in satisfactory ecumenical unity, his cautions regarding too readily adopting various forms of meditation and too uncritically receiving theological relativism might be considered by the EMCM, through the spectrum of their own theological and confessional commitments and concerns.

9.1.3 Truth, Communion, Eucharistic Community, and Other Theological Contributions – Metropolitan John Zizioulas

9.1.3.1 Being as Communion, Eucharistic Community, and EMCM

Connectedness to Christ’s Church

We turn now to the ecclesiology of Zizioulas and the ways in which it might enhance EMCM ecclesiology. Knight, in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, summarizes Zizioulas’ theology and its central concerns and convictions in this way,

\[ \text{Zizioulas’ central concern is human freedom and the relation of freedom and otherness. Freedom is not restricted, but enabled, by our relationships with} \]

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other persons, Zizioulas argues, for the community in which God includes us is the place in which our personal identity and freedom come into being. God is intrinsically communion and free, and his communion and freedom he shares with us. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the source of the communion of the universal Church, and the promise of real freedom for the world. This communion is being actualised by God in the world in the community of the Church. The persons gathered into this communion will come to participate in the freedom of God, and through them the world will participate in this freedom too.\footnote{Knight, ed. \textit{The Theology of John Zizioulas}. p.1.}

It is clear that the idea of communion (\textit{koinonia}) is at the heart of the theology of Zizioulas.\footnote{Kärkkäinen, \textit{An Introduction to Ecclesiology}. p.95.} Zizioulas’ conceptions of \textit{hypostasis}, the substance and nature of the church, the human person, and the Godhead,\footnote{Zizioulas, “The Contribution of Cappadocia.” p.23-25.} are drenched in this communal hypothesis, which is rooted in his theological notions of ontology and eschatology.\footnote{———, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.59.}

The communion of human persons in the church is fundamentally sourced in the being of God,\footnote{Ibid. p.15.} who in his trinitarian nature is relational and communal, and, therefore, through such communion the church ‘images’ him and reflects or embodies his trinitarian ‘way of being.’\footnote{Ibid. p.15.}

This communion, as Knight rightly notes in the quotation above, is both intimate connectedness and freedom and otherness at once, that is, a conformity to the being of God who is ‘intrinsically communion and free’, in the church’s essence and ecclesial life. Communion is equally about ‘unity and otherness, difference as well as togetherness’, neither of these realities precedes or is more fundamental than the

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\footnote{Knight, ed. \textit{The Theology of John Zizioulas}. p.1.}
\footnote{Kärkkäinen, \textit{An Introduction to Ecclesiology}. p.95.}
\footnote{Zizioulas, “The Contribution of Cappadocia.” p.23-25.}
\footnote{———, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.59.}
\footnote{Ibid. p.15.}
\footnote{Ibid. p.15.}
other is (therefore, oneness is no more important than freedom, and neither is plurality more crucial than the one), and ‘being (which we may equally call ‘substance’ or ‘nature’) does not precede relation... (Since) being and relationship are simultaneous.’

Zizioulas might challenge the EMCM toward an understanding of community relations that are shaped by trinitarian notions, especially given the meagre attention given to this theme in the EMCM body of work. This is because, in the theology of Zizioulas, an ecclesiology of communion can only be adequately established upon a trinitarian theology. Our understanding of the communion, freedom and otherness present in the Trinity should do away with ecclesiologies that are individualistic, with any attempt to help people become fully and spiritually developed outside of communion, and, conversely, with forms of church that diminish freedom and otherness. True being is only possible through and in communion, since ‘communion is an ontological category’, yet such communion must be genuinely uncontrolled, an expression of a free and concrete ‘hypostasis’ that images the nature of God, otherwise it is fatally flawed.

The implications of this for the EMCM churches, in the ecclesiology of Zizioulas, is that the people of God are united in both human freedom and in ecclesial communion, entering into a communion that uniquely embraces love, grace, forgiveness, hypostasis, and the presence of others and the divine. It is not possible to keep the sacraments marginal in a missionary ecclesiology, if one pays heed to the

123 Zizioulas, ”The Mystery of the Church.” p.295 and ———, ”The Church as Communion.” p.104-105.
124 Zizioulas, Communion and Otherness. p.4. and ———, ”Constantine Scouteris.” p.5.
125 Melissaris, ”The Challenge of Patristic Ontology.” p.473; ———, ”Orthodox Anthropology”; and Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.18.
126 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.19 and 50-53.
127 ———, ”On Being a Person.” p.45.
theology of Zizioulas. This is because the Eucharist bonds biological and ecclesial hypostasis through its sacramental nature, as the people of God assume their regenerated personhood, made in the image of Christ, are immersed in ecclesial communion, and join freely in love, communion and faith, rather than individuality, separateness, exclusivity and egocentricity.  

As demonstrated in the chapter on Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, Zizioulas attempts to develop both a communion ecclesiology and a eucharistic ecclesiology, identifying truth with communion. The Eucharist is the locus of truth in the community of faith. In addition, ecclesial communion is displayed in the Eucharist, which is the principal and crucial location of all interconnected and authentic personhood, the place in which Christ constitutes the church (in a pneumatically-mediated way), and the event in which the church can be discovered in all its fullness.

While Zizioulas’ Orthodox ecclesiology is at odds with some of the Free Church ecclesiological perspectives in the EMCM, it is worth detailing here some of the challenges and insights Zizioulas’ ecclesiology presents for EMCM ecclesiology, especially with regard to his views on being as communion, eucharistic community, and the nature of the Christian’s connectedness to the church.

We begin this series of challenges to (or points of view worth considering by) EMCM ecclesiology, with reference to the questions that Knight suggests the theology of Zizioulas’ poses to Western theology. While Knight proposes that Zizioulas’ theology raises at least these four questions for the entire body of Western

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130 If not at odds, it is at least quite different given its episcopal rather than Free Church foundations.
theology, we will be addressing these questions directly to the EMCM literature.\textsuperscript{131}

Again, they are Knight’s questions, derived as implications for Western theology from the Orthodox theology of Zizioulas’. They are, therefore, not necessarily the \textit{direct} questions asked by Zizioulas himself. Yet they are well grounded in and supported by the theological writings of Zizioulas (as is briefly evidenced in the footnoting in each question), and are easily supported as some of the \textit{indirect} or \textit{implicit} questions posed by Zizioulas’ theology. Each of these four questions raises important matters that the EMCM would do well to consider.

1. Is Gnosticism deeply rooted in Western theology, and in its soteriological themes of escape from the flesh into disembodiedness?\textsuperscript{132}

Corresponding to the thought of Zizioulas, in the EMCM material the emphasised characteristic of genuine spirituality and discipleship is attention to being persons-in-relationship and communion with God and others. This is expressed, as we have seen in the analysis of the EMCM literature, through a rejection of individualism, disembodied spirituality, privatised faith, self and system-justifying forms of spirituality, and the like, as well as a desire for the reconciliation of human beings in their inner, interpersonal, and structural and environment dimensions. There is an explicit rejection of otherworldly spirituality and a call for an ‘earthy’ missionary and holistic engagement with the world.\textsuperscript{133} There is an embrace of the whole person, a reclaiming of bodiliness, a ‘hallowing of the everyday’ and the ordinary, and a desire to see such down-to-earth things as sacramental and holy.\textsuperscript{134} Kimball, as we saw in our examination of the EMCM, advocates an approach to spiritual formation

\textsuperscript{131} Knight, ed. \textit{The Theology of John Zizioulas}. p.5-6.


\textsuperscript{133} Frost and Hirsch, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come}. p.111-112.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid. p.109-162.
that is holistic, experiential and communal, which draws from ancient spiritual disciplines and releases people to social engagement.\textsuperscript{135}

There is another dimension to EMCM thought, however, that may have gnostic-like qualities. It is important not to overstate this point, yet some of the conversation in the EMCM surrounding alternative worship (\textit{alt.worship}) leans toward otherworldliness and disembodiment. That is, while there is something stimulating and potentially mission empowering about designing innovative, mystical, liturgically experiential, narrative-shaped, participatory and multisensory worship experiences, the goal must remain mission and authentic worship, and not degenerate into a pursuit of gnostic-like experiences.\textsuperscript{136} Zizioulas’ caution about Western theology, whether one accepts its premise or not, is worth heeding for those involved in the alternative worship dimensions of the EMCM.

2. Is the West gripped by soteriological and broader theological notions that inevitably result in an ‘evasion of communion and manyness’, since they prioritise individualism, ‘freedom \textit{from other people}’, and the concerns for otherness that are grounded in the Western intellectual traditions and Modernity?\textsuperscript{137}

This attention to the theme of communion, and to the equality of unity and otherness, communion and freedom, difference and togetherness, is clearly central to the

\textsuperscript{135} Kimball, \textit{The Emerging Church}, p.213-225 and his list of resources for spiritual formation on p.258-259.

\textsuperscript{136} See http://www.alternativeworship.org and http://www.emergingworship.org (Both accessed December 7, 2008) and Baker and Gay, \textit{Alternative Worship}. For Generation X and Y statistics, information and approaches to faith see Rabey, \textit{In Search of Authentic Faith}.

theology of Zizioulas. Some of the key ecclesiological themes in the EMCM literature support this emphasis, and the accent on communion is stronger than those ideas that might lead to individualism. For example,

a. *Incarnational Mission, Apologetics and Evangelism* – Our analysis has shown that this is a central theme in the EMCM writings. These missionary activities of the church are most successful in post-secular, postmodern, post-Christendom western culture when they occur in the context of relationships and when their ‘incarnational’ forms are expressed in authentic, empathetic and vulnerable connectedness with non-Christians. Not only so, but people are often converted into community before they decide to become disciples.139

b. *Grounding Missional Ecclesiology in Local, Worshipping Communities* – The EMCM literature emphasises the local church as the locus of mission and communion. Authors such as Hall and Webber suggest that through genuine koinonia, these communities might contrast the fragmentation, disconnectedness and social disintegration that many people in western culture experience, and might help remedy the apparent minimal social cohesion in western culture.140

We have also seen that some EMCM authors call for a simple ecclesiality in such communities, ‘recovering friendship… as our relational paradigm… (which is) non-hierarchical, holistic, relaxed and dynamic…’141 These are to be missionary communities characterised by koinonia. They are characterised as such because of

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139 *Hunter III, How to Reach Secular People*. p.59, 65, and *passim*. Mission, evangelism and apologetics has no doubt always been best expressed and received in such relationship.
the presence of the Spirit, the cultivation of ‘practices by which they are formed, trained, equipped, and motivated as missional communities’,\textsuperscript{142} the attention to hospitality and reconciliation, and the love and communion that demonstrate that they are reflections of the reign of God.\textsuperscript{143} Authentic witness is only possible where there is authentic community.\textsuperscript{144}

On occasions the EMCM literature, however, explores themes that might lead toward an unhelpful individualism or an evasion of communion. An example of this is the work of Ward in \textit{Liquid Church}, which asserts that churches need to be ‘liquid’ networks of relationships and communications, rather than ‘sold’ institutions and structures. This idea could result in communities of faith that are relational and that express relationality in a way that makes great sense to contemporary western culture. It could have the reverse consequence, however, if postmodern and market-driven forms of community become consumeristic in their orientation, individualistic in their emphases on choice and ‘natural’ networks, and a rejection of the valuable expressions of community that have developed in the history, traditions and sacramental practices of the wider church.\textsuperscript{145} The cautions inherent in Zizioulas’ theology could apply on occasion, therefore, to some of the EMCM ecclesiology.

3. Is the individuality and emphasis on rationality in the Western theological tradition an avoidance of the communal ‘practices and disciplines of the Christian life’?\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{142} Guder, \textit{Missional Church}. Chapter 6, written by Inagrace T. Dietterich, “Missional Community: Cultivating Communities of the Holy Spirit”. p.142-182.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid. p.153-182.
\textsuperscript{145} Kysar, “Liquid Church.”
As briefly mentioned in the chapter on Zizioulas, while some EMCM authors might not be comfortable with all the implications of Zizioulas’ emphasis on truth as essentially relational and communal, rather than merely grounded in cognitive, propositional or kerygmatic statements, they would appreciate some dimensions of this insight. EMCM writers are often concerned that truth in evangelicalism is portrayed as static, rationalistic, textual and propositional; however, they recognize that postmoderns are more engaged by experiential and holistic depictions and expressions of truth, and that missional activities and discipling approaches must consider this in postmodern western culture. Zizioulas and the EMCM agree that the spiritual life is formed communally, and by spiritual practices and disciplines that are discover in community.

Therefore, Zizioulas’ views on the communal and relational nature of truth would find some resonance here, and might help the EMCM think through a richer theological framework for such assertions, rather than merely appealing to the changes that have occurred in western culture. It would have a similar influence on their understanding of a wide range of other matters relating to ecclesiology, including the nature of God, theological anthropology, the church, and the dynamics of spiritual formation.

4. Is Western theology concerned for the present (as is true of many of the intellectual traditions shaped by Modernity and Western philosophical history) without enough reference to the past (the history and tradition of the entire church, as an ongoing ‘manifestation of the eschata’)?147

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For many of the EMCM authors there is a movement to embrace history and tradition as a corrective to the overt pragmatism of some expressions of Western Protestantism. This exploration of the history and traditions of the church is in the areas of ecumenical theology and spiritual practice, pre-Reformation Eastern and Western theological traditions, creative exploration of worship styles and potentials through the innovative use of liturgy, sacred space, prayer and contemplation, music, symbols and ritual, creative arts, and the sacraments.\(^{148}\)

This is a reaction against what is perceived as the ahistorical tendencies of much of Evangelical Protestant public worship. EMCM authors are endeavouring to shape a movement of emerging churches that value tradition as a source of inspiration, ecclesiological formation and resource. As noted in the evaluation of the EMCM literature, ancient and traditional formulations of faith and worship are being explored for mission to contemporary culture. This includes the eastern and western Church Fathers and theological traditions for apologetic, spiritual and ecclesiological insight.\(^{149}\) Celtic spirituality and missiology is being investigated, medieval approaches to epistemology are making a comeback in their literature, and the catholicity of John Wesley is a source of inspiration.\(^{150}\)

Simultaneously, there is a critique of church history, especially what they have designated the Christendom or Constantinian eras of western church history. This analysis is well thought through by the EMCM scholar Murray. However, it is unfairly critical, rarely nuanced, and poorly researched in other parts of the EMCM literature. Often the complex societal, ecclesiological, missional and political challenges that were facing the church at the time have been ignored. There is a


\(^{149}\) Ibid. p.82.

\(^{150}\) Ibid. p.71-82.
similar assessment of the theology and practice of both Evangelicalism and the Reformers, their failure to address the structural ‘problems’ in Christendom, and their adherence to a Christendom and modernist ‘mindset’. Unfortunately these interpretations of church history and tradition, and of the complex theological, cultural and ecclesiological realities faced by the churches at the time (whether that be the church in ‘Christendom’ or the Evangelical church that developed in Modernity) are often too offhanded and poorly researched, resulting in an interpretation of history and tradition that is questionable.

Zizioulas’ view that the history and tradition of the entire church is an ongoing manifestation of the *eschaton* is a helpful corrective to these tendencies in the EMCM material. It is also a helpful remedy to the habit of the EMCM literature to overstate the problems facing the current churches of the West, since it might help them view the present state of the church in the light of God’s ongoing and eternal eschatological purpose.

9.1.3.2 Refusing to Separate Christology from Pneumatology in Ecclesiological Thought

Zizioulas is critical of the neglect of pneumatology and the separation of pneumatology and christology in Western theology in general, and in Western ecclesiology in particular. Such a neglect and separation have had negative consequences for Western ecclesiology, writes Zizioulas, and a similar, though not so distinct, problem has occurred in Orthodox theology. As we noted in the chapter on Zizioulas, he is convinced that only a genuine dialogue between the various theological traditions can help solve this issue and arrest its harmful results in

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Below are the conclusions Zizioulas comes to on this matter, that were provided in detail in the chapter on his ecclesiology, and a discussion of some of the implications of his thought for EMCM ecclesiology:

1. Integrating christology and pneumatology is important in the construction of a worthwhile ecclesiology. This is an important corrective for EMCM ecclesiology. While Frost and Hirsch propose a ‘christology from behind or within, rather than from above’, which prioritises Jesus in ecclesiology and views him in his cultural context, and Murray argues that missiology must move Jesus from the margins of ecclesial life to its center, notions of christology and pneumatology are never systematically integrated in EMCM ecclesiology.

2. Ecclesiological conceptions of communion should be shaped in the light of pneumatological considerations, since all trinitarian, human and ecclesial communion requires the activity and presence of the Spirit. ‘pneumatology is an ontological category in ecclesiology,’ and is constitutive of all of our understandings of christology, missiology and ecclesiology. Therefore, while pneumatology tends to be sporadic in the EMCM literature, a robust missional ecclesiology recognizes the activity of the Spirit in creating and remissionalising the church, leading her into a distinctive witness, so that she

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154 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.126-142.
157 Murray, Post-Christendom. p.311.
159 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.132.
might faithfully proclaim the reign of God, and the person and work of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{160}

3. The activity of the Spirit constituting the Body of Christ ontologically and simultaneously at both universal and local levels means that both the local churches and the universal church are equally important in ecclesiology, so the EMCM literature should pay attention to both in its goal of shaping a missionary ecclesiology for western culture.

4. Ontologically, we are united with the church as a part of our very being through the work of the Spirit, and, therefore, the church is not to be considered as a mere institution that is separate from us, or that we should seek to either control or resist. As we have seen, Zizioulas believes that emphasising both christology and pneumatology in our ecclesiological considerations might help ward off some of the most negative expressions of church life, including clericalism, anti-institutionalism, anti-establishment tendencies, and the like. The later tendencies tend to emerge in the EMCM literature from time to time, as we have already discussed. Zizioulas is aware of the global challenges facing the church, including pluralism, relativism and anti-institutionalism, and is an advocate for genuine ecclesial renewal and ecumenical cooperation and dialogue. He invites his readers, however, to find hopeful solutions in the dialogue between christology, missiology, ecclesiology and pneumatology.

\textbf{9.1.3.3 Apostolicity, Ministry, and the Role of Pastoral Leaders in the EMCM}

Clearly, the Orthodox understanding of apostolic continuity and succession in the writings of Zizioulas, and of the necessary institutional structure of the church, is

\textsuperscript{160} Van Gelder, \textit{The Essence of the Church}, p.31, 42-44, 78-81 and \textit{passim}. 
very different from the Free Church ecclesiology so easily identifiable in the EMCM literature. Some of his perspectives on matters of apostolicity, ministry and ecclesial leadership are instructive for EMCM ecclesiology however, and an attempt is made here to identify these in the following points.

1. Church leadership is positioned to best serve the church when it is not merely shaped by a concern for or reference to history and tradition, but just as readily by the dynamics of worship/eschaton/meta-history.\footnote{Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.171.} Zizioulas is specifically referring to apostolic continuity here, through the eschatological vocation and leadership collegium of the apostles and bishops, historically and eschatologically, but even for EMCM Free Church ecclesiology, the point is well taken that eschatology is crucial for both ecclesiology and our particular understandings of ecclesial leadership.\footnote{———, "The Mystery of the Church." p.296.} The leadership of the church is called to draw together the churches and the people of God for eschatological and eucharistic communion, in the presence and power of the unifying Spirit.\footnote{———, Being as Communion. p.172-181.}

The leadership of the church is also called to extend the vision of the people of God toward historical and future realities. That is, toward the presence of the two dimensions of past and future that shapes the life and existence of the church. These are carried over into our understandings of communion, church and leadership structure, the kerygmatic risen Christ, the mission of the church in the world, and, especially, the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments.\footnote{Ibid. p.181-188.}

The outlook of Zizioulas on these issues might challenge EMCM missional
ecclesiology to be shaped not only be concern for the future of the church in western culture, nor only by a mere survivalist impulse to transform the church that it might be relevant or missionally effective, but by a rootedness in the theological perspectives of history/tradition and eschatology. Leadership is not to be triumphalistic, with an over-realised eschatology, nor defeatist, plagued by a concern for the ‘imminent demise’ of the church. Rather, church leadership is to provide a vision for the people of God that is eschatologically hopefully, ecclesiologically stable and reflective, biblically faithful, grounded in tradition and church history, with a view of the future of the church that demonstrates that we are people of the resurrection.165

2. Leadership structures in the church cannot be dismissed or ignored, as some EMCM authors have a tendency to do, since God has instituted them.166 The apostolic kerygma, being the past, present and future doxological expressions of faith (scripture, theology, tradition and doctrine), and the apostolic ministry, being the apostolic succession through the pluriform ministries and ordained structure of the church, are essential for ecclesiological reflection and local church practice.167

Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is naturally episcopal in orientation, but his thoughts have striking relevance for EMCM ecclesiological structure. The church is to seek the eucharistic and ongoing renewal of the apostolic kerygma on the one hand, and, on the other hand, pursue the transmission of the leadership vocation of the pluriform structures and offices of the church (apostolic ministry), throughout the various layers of leadership in the church. This

167 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.189-204.
leadership vocation expressed among the whole people of God is in need of constant transformation and invigoration by the Spirit. This is a dynamic model for church leadership and structures, which, when contextually explored in the light of EMCM ecclesiological values, might help them remain faithful, stable, historically and eschatologically attentive, and open to renewal. It may be open to the charge of idealism; however, it should always be grounded in the concrete life and activities of local communities of faith.

3. ‘There is no ministry in the church other than Christ’s ministry’ and ‘the identification of the church’s ministry with that of Christ is possible only if we let our christology be conditioned pneumatologically... What, therefore, the Spirit does through the ministry is to constitute the Body of Christ here and now by realizing Christ’s ministry as the church’s ministry.’168 The koinonia of the Spirit forges a ‘fundamental interdependence between the ministry and the concrete community of the church’; therefore, all understandings of ministry must be grounded in the communion of the Godhead and in the ‘community created by the Spirit.’169 In the chapter on EMCM ecclesiology, we examined the pneumatological considerations present in that material, and saw that such pneumatological ideas are scattered throughout the work. Zizioulas exemplifies a more systematic pneumatological orientation, however, and one that grounds such views in the idea of koinonia. EMCM literature leans toward christology and missiology, only dealing with pneumatology in a sporadic fashion, and could well consider the interdependence between the Spirit and the church’s ministry and mission more fully.

168 Ibid. p. 210-211, emphases in original.
169 Ibid. p.212, emphases in original.
4. The configuration and composition of the church is relational, typified by unity and multiplicity, and characterised by communion and koinonia.\textsuperscript{170} This plurality, freedom, otherness, shared leadership and communion should be celebrated in the communal life of the children of God. There is real resonance here between the views of Zizioulas and the convictions of the EMCM. Leadership in the local and broader church should be received and demonstrated at all levels, in a spirit of collegiality and communion. Denominational leadership (‘ bishops’ in Zizioulas’ episcopal structure) are essential for maintaining the integrity of the community, since they image Christ and the apostles. The ordained and appointed leaders of an ecclesial region and a local congregation are called to lead wisely and collegially.\textsuperscript{171} All Christians in a community of faith are to enthusiastically and faithfully use their various charisms for the good of the congregation, for the extension of God’s rule, and as a participation in the governance and leadership of God’s people.

There is no authentic way to separate ministry from community, since they are interconnected and interdependent, and, as we have already noted in this thesis, Zizioulas asserts that all ordinations should occur within a particular community of those who regularly join in eucharistic communion. Although appointed leaders have a particular function in the life of a church, all Christians have their own kind of ‘ordination’ for ministry and leadership, since God wills it such. As we have detailed in the chapter on Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, Zizioulas believes this is also true because laity, deacons, presbyters, pastors, ‘ bishops’ and ministry leaders are essentially relational,

\textsuperscript{170}———, "The Church as Communion." p.106-108.
\textsuperscript{171}———, "The Early Christian Community." p.31.
interdependent and communal, as they ‘image’ the Trinity, and as they participate in the divine ‘mission’ of God. As the EMCM plants new missional communities and initiatives, the insights of Zizioulas in this regard might invite them to consider the theological basis of the ministerial functions and roles they establish, how these contribute to congregational communion, and whether they reflect the nature of the Trinity.

To sum up, we must free ourselves from legalistic and monistic ideas in ecclesiology, and understand the church not simply as an occasional ‘happening’, where the Word of God is preached and listened to and the sacraments are performed, but as the reality of sonship in the Spirit, that is, as a constant movement of filial grace... The church is nothing other than the work of the economic Trinity applied to us and through us and together with us to the whole cosmos, and image of the Trinity and a foretaste of the eschata, when the whole world will become a movement back to the one God, the Father (1 Cor. 15.24) from whom everything, even the persons of the Trinity in their eternal being, comes forth.

5. While it is often too easy to lament the plurality of structures, institutions, territorial designations and groupings within the church, some of this is merely reflective of the eschatological mystery of the church, and of her anticipation of the coming kingdom and the Eschaton. The EMCM have much to say on the demands and eschatological hope that are present in the kingdom of God, on the place of the church in the broader kingdom of God in this world, and on the church being ‘a sign and disclosure of the kingdom of God’. At times,

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172 Communion and Otherness. p.7.
173 Communion and Otherness. p.149.
174 The Mystery of the Church. p.302.
175 Williams, Mission-Shaped Church. p.94.
however, as is demonstrated in the book *Mission-Shaped Church*, it fails ‘to distinguish clearly between the church and the mission of God’, confusing the ideas of church and kingdom.\(^\text{176}\) It would be far better if along with Zizioulas the EMCM understood the church and its plurality of forms as an expression and anticipation of the kingdom and the coming Eschaton, rather than ‘spiritualizing the kingdom of God’ and removing it ‘from the sphere of history, depriving the church of historical significance.’\(^\text{177}\)

6. The episcopal ecclesiology of Zizioulas is attentive to the maintenance of both the primacy and synodality of central church authority on the one hand, and the autocephaly of the local congregation on the other. Primacy and synodality, in Eastern Orthodox theology, means the pre-eminence of the bishops and recognition of the authority of the ecclesiastical leadership above the local congregations. The autocephalous nature of the church, however, means that local communities appoint their own leadership, under the governance of the church, who are accountable both in that local context and to the broader governance of the primates and synods. Zizioulas is concerned for the relationship between freedom, otherness and communion here, as it is expressed in the local congregation, so that churches have freedom to be whole and catholic, with appropriate safeguards, and yet are in communion with the whole.\(^\text{178}\)

While the EMCM may not agree with all of Zizioulas’ assumptions and theological framework in this regard, his cautions about the extremes of hierarchy and non-hierarchy are worth noting in the development of emerging-

\(^{177}\) Ibid. p.3.
\(^{178}\) Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion." p.108.
missional ecclesiology, as are some of his thoughts about how local church leadership and broader ecclesial governance might communion in a trinitarian fashion. Zizioulas explicitly rejects Volf’s ecclesiology (and more broadly Free Church ecclesiology) as too non-hierarchical ‘in which all hierarchical notions are suspected as threatening communion as well as otherness’, however he also repudiates hierarchical ecclesiologies ‘in which otherness is secondary to unity and is understood as existing only in order to serve unity’.

Kärkkäinen writes of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, and that theologian’s view on the relationship between the local church, universal church, the Eucharist, and communion,

Not only is the local church a church by virtue of the celebration of the Eucharist, it is also a catholic church insofar as it involves the coming together of the whole church at a specific place... Volf summarizes it accurately: “The larger church is present in the local eucharistic synaxis; in a reverse fashion, the eucharistic synaxis is an act not only of the concrete eucharistic communion, but also of the larger church. Thus every Eucharist anticipates the eschatological gathering of the whole people of God.”\(^{179}\)

Given that relationship between the local church and the universal church, Zizioulas prefers an ecclesial model ‘in which hierarchical structures are regarded as essential to the church only because of the trinitarian model... otherness is ontologically primordial and is asymmetrical in its character.’\(^{180}\)

He uses a particular trinitarian model to justify this stance and his use of the term ‘hierarchy’ as appropriate. Convinced that in any model of the church

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\(^{180}\) Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*. p.145-146.
hierarchy will naturally emerge, he asserts that ‘the issue, therefore, is not whether there is hierarchy in the church, but what kind of hierarchy it is that does justice to the trinitarian model.’\textsuperscript{181} These reflections invite the EMCM to consider its own expressions of ‘hierarchy’ and leadership, and how local churches and missional initiatives relate to broader ecclesial entities. They might consider whether these things reflect their own understanding of the relations of the Trinity.

7. The people of God live with the tension between being ‘in the world but not of the world’, and therefore the structures and ministries of the church are to practically and theologically assist the double movement of separation from the world and mission within it. Such perspectives resonate with EMCM ecclesiology and its desire to be both counter-cultural and missionary. ‘The relational character of the ministry implies that the only acceptable method of mission is not to be found in the church’s addressing the world but in its being fully in com-passion with it.’\textsuperscript{182}

8. As discussed in the chapter on Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, questions of functionality and ontology in ministry are often too individualistic. Such a dilemma might be solved in EMCM ecclesiology by theologies of ministry that are relational and communal, ambassadorial, as a gift for others, and personally transforming, but mainly for the sake of the community. We have also seen that Zizioulas considers ministry typological, as God is represented in the community, focused on eschatological perspectives, and oriented toward

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid. p.146.\\
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{———}, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.224, emphases in original.
\end{flushright}
service, communion and humility.\textsuperscript{183} Such ministry within and among EMCM churches would lead communities to seek communion and unity with other churches, as well as shared mission and service.

9.2 EMCM Ecclesiology Enriching the Contrasting and Parallel Perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas

This section examines how the principal emphases and ecclesiological convictions of the EMCM literature might inform and enhance the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. Having examined the essential, foundational and more implicit concepts in EMCM ecclesiology throughout this thesis, it is worth defining as clearly as possible what the ‘mission’ is that this literature advocates, in order to demonstrate its contribution to ecclesiology and the ways in which it enriches the other ecclesiologies in this study. Summarising the nature of the ‘mission’ of the church in the EMCM body of work will also provide a concise overview of EMCM missional ecclesiology, and the primary contributions of this ecclesiology to this ecumenical dialogue.

In this section, I will also use this summary of what ‘mission’ is in the EMCM literature as a framework for putting Volf, Ratzinger and the EMCM into a critical conversation that demonstrates how EMCM ecclesiology enriches the contrasting and parallel perspectives in the other ecclesiologies in this study.

Again, the perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas do not receive equal treatment on each point of possible dialogue with the EMCM. The concern here is not equal treatment but adequate treatment of important dialogical issues. Therefore,

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid. p.225-236.
an attempt is made to deal with the perspectives of those particular parties that most genuinely converse with the EMCM, in each of the specific issues and ecclesiological concerns raised.

9.2.1 Mission as an Expression of the Nature of the Church

It is important to note that the EMCM agrees with Bosch’s assertion that the mission of the church is essentially about the nature and essence of the church. It is not merely about the adiaphora (that is, a thing not regarded as essential to faith or to the actual nature of the church) or addresses (that is, a message for proclamation) of the church. Rather than being a contingent, peripheral or optional activity of the church, the church ‘is missionary by its very nature’ and ‘exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning.’

While it is possible to speak of the mission as a set of ‘determining goals or aims’ (such as in a ‘mission statement’), and while this may come across in the following points in this section, mission in the EMCM literature is more about a rediscovery of the nature and essence of the church. It is an ecclesiological vision shaped by missiology, as the following quotations illustrate:

What would an understanding of the church (an ecclesiology) look like if it were truly missional in design and definition?

All true theology is, by definition, missionary theology, for it has as its object the study of the ways of a God who is by nature missionary and a foundational text written by and for missionaries. Mission as a discipline is not, then, the roof of a building that completes the whole structure, already constructed by blocks that stand on their own, but both the foundation and the mortar in the

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184 Bosch, Believing in the Future. p.31-32. Bosch is making his case with support from the Vatican Decree on Mission (paragraph 9) and from a quote attributed to Emil Brunner.

185 Guder, Missional Church. p.7.
joints, which cements together everything else. Theology should not be pursued as a set of isolated disciplines. It assumes a model of cross-cultural communication, for its subject matter both stands over against culture and relates closely to it. Therefore, it must be interdisciplinary and interactive.\textsuperscript{186}

The missional ecclesiology that develops in the EMCM has as its central conviction that ‘the church should define itself in terms of mission – to take the gospel to and incarnate the gospel within a specific context’.\textsuperscript{187} It is convinced that a missional ecclesiology locates mission at the centre of the church’s being and ministries, and that mission is the essential character of the church faithfully participation in the redemptive work of the Father.\textsuperscript{188} As noted earlier in this thesis, there is a steadfast view that an adequate missional ecclesiology is biblically shaped, historically informed, contextually relevant, eschatologically oriented, and able to be practically applied in local church settings.\textsuperscript{189}

For the EMCM, the triune God is missionary in nature, and calls his people to be a missionary church, and so ‘ecclesiology and missiology are not separate theological disciplines, but are, in fact, interrelated and complementary.’\textsuperscript{190} Ratzinger would have no problem with the theological assertions in this section so far, but would perhaps advocate a complementary weight be given to \textit{communio} – the triune God who is a communion that is for mission. That is, the processions of the three persons within the Trinity emerge as missions in their historical expressions (visibly in the

\textsuperscript{187} Frost and Hirsch, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come}. p.xi.
\textsuperscript{188} Barrett, \textit{Treasure in Clay Jars}. p.ix-x.
\textsuperscript{189} Guder, \textit{Missional Church}. p.11-12.
\textsuperscript{190} Van Gelder, \textit{The Essence of the Church}. p.30-31, and 96-98.
incarnation and the church, and invisibly in grace).\textsuperscript{191}

Similarly, a central theme that runs through much of Volf’s writing is the relationship between gospel, church, mission and contemporary culture,\textsuperscript{192} and this has some significant points of connection with the EMCM literature as it seeks to develop a missional ecclesiology. For Volf, the question of how the church and the gospel relate to culture comes less from a consideration of the church as essentially missionary in nature, and more from his awareness of the profound influence cultures have on shaping who human beings are. Volf is concerned with the diversity of cultures colliding and communicating across a shrinking globe, and the rapid evolution of cultures.\textsuperscript{193} Cultures are the substance from within which churches emerge and are immersed, and these cultures have characteristics and expressions that may be adopted, adapted, transformed from the inside, discarded, and replaced.\textsuperscript{194}

There is no single correct way to relate to a given culture as a whole, or even to its dominant thrust. There are only numerous ways of accepting, transforming, rejecting, or replacing various aspects of a given culture from within. This is what it means for Christian difference to be \textit{internal} to a given culture.\textsuperscript{195}

Therefore, while Volf does not develop these considerations of the gospel/culture relationship into the type of missional ecclesiology that the EMCM does, his


\textsuperscript{192} Especially contemporary western culture.


perspectives still have much resonance with their propositions.

For Zizioulas, the relationship between the church and the world is complex, and theological ideas such as incarnation, cosmic redemption, communion, Trinity and inculturation may inform this dynamic interaction and mutual enrichment. Not only so, but the existential needs, longings and concerns of human beings and cultures must be put into a genuine conversation with theology, gospel and doctrine, so that these expressions of Christian faith and belief relate ‘to whatever is human – and not only’. 196 Mission is essentially relational, being shaped by the concept of ‘being as communion’. This relationality of mission embraces human beings, all of creation, and, indeed, the entire cosmos, and the church needs to radically and urgently reject past dichotomies in this area, since,

Perhaps the most urgent mission of the church today is to become conscious of, and proclaim in the strongest terms, the fact that there is an intrinsic koinonia between the human being and its natural environment, a koinonia that must be brought into the church’s very being in order to receive its fullness. 197

The *ad extra* ministry of the church, that is, its missional and active engagement with the world, is fundamental and organically related to its existence, argues Zizioulas. Yet, unlike the EMCM ecclesiology, Zizioulas writes that these *ad extra* ministries of the church to the world are a core part of being a eucharistic community, and, therefore, they must be presided over by the bishop. Whereas the *ad intra* ministries of the church are permanent and related to its eucharistic structure, the *ad extra*

197 Ibid. p.109.
ministries of the church are fluid, contextually responsive, and need-oriented. While attempting to theologically place mission in the centre of the church’s being or nature, these kinds of discussions by Zizioulas does tend to give the impression that mission is a more peripheral concern for Zizioulas than it is for the EMCM. Some scholars have also noted this in their analysis of Zizioulas, such as Torrance, and Knight raises it in a series of questions for Zizioulas’ theology.

What validity does Zizioulas’ theology have outside the church and religious discourse? Is this theology able to establish any positive relationship with the world? If existence comes from God, what existence do those outside the church have?

There is significant correspondence, then, between the EMCM, Zizioulas and Volf on some of these issues. While for Volf the mission of the church is innate to its essence and identity, for ‘if the church is the image of the Trinity, then the church’s very being is a form of mission’, this perspective on the church being intrinsically missionary is not as critical to Volf or Zizioulas’ ecclesiology as it is to that of the EMCM. If mission is central to the nature and essence of the church as the EMCM suggests, then one would think that it should inform the ecclesiology of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas more richly than it in reality seems to.

In the EMCM literature, while the following points describe the concrete and core expressions of mission, and while they give some form to what the ‘mission’ is that the EMCM advocates, firstly and foremostly the church engages in mission as an expression of its very nature and essential being.

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198 _______. Being as Communion. p.225.
199 Knight, ed. The Theology of John Zizioulas. p.4.
9.2.2 Core Expressions of the Missionary Nature of the Church

While the following list of seven points is somewhat idealistic and certainly difficult for local churches to evidence faithfully or consistently, in the EMCM literature points 10.2.2.1 to 10.2.2.7 are clear expressions of the fundamental missionary nature of the church. It is evident from our analysis that the ‘mission’ of the church is multidimensional in the EMCM corpus, with the following central features being expressions of the missionary nature at the core of the church’s being (according to the EMCM material):

9.2.2.1 Faithful Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Volf writes that the church should continue the mission of Jesus, through the proclamation of the truths of the new creation, forgiveness, transformation, trinitarian embrace, and rebirth. According to the EMCM, such proclamation is also and more importantly about the church honouring its elemental missionary nature. It honours this core missionary being when it proclaims faithfully the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that individual human beings, people groups, and even entire cultures and societies might come to a redemptive, personal, salvific faith in him.

In Ratzinger’s writings, such authentic mission, proclamation and *evangelium* should be expressed and experienced as ‘glad tidings’, and as the joyous overflow of faith, especially since the church has often been experienced as being punctilious, joyless and a place of cramped scrupulosity and narrowness of spirit. This is contrary to the heart of Christianity and *evangelium* however. This joy should be expressed in the community of faith in ways that are far deeper than external enthusiasm or entertainment, and might include the renewed celebration of holy days, the vanquishing of loneliness through profoundly rich community, and *evangelium* that
is deeply embedded in the joy of ‘glad tidings’. Mission is not a duty to be performed, and neither is discipleship, and the community of faith should bear witness to the world of the One who has liberate them to joy and hope in the midst of uncertainty, suffering and change. It would be incorrect, however, to focus exclusively on the subjective states coming from faith in the gospel rather than on mission as an integral part of the shared relationship in God – communion. There is ‘glad tidings’ in times of darkness.\textsuperscript{201}

In \textit{Called to Communion} Ratzinger concentrates on communion, and mission is somewhat muted. However, in \textit{Introduction to Christianity} he discusses ‘election’ with regard to the people of God, and sees it as a call to live for others, since Christian identity and communion is for the sake of mission to the world. Thornhill, in a thorough investigation of the nature of the Catholic Church post-Vatican II, and in a work that discusses the missional vocation of the Catholic Church in a rapidly changing Western context, builds on and extends further the convictions of Ratzinger in this matter, while quoting him directly:

\begin{quote}
Election, being picked out by God, is not exclusive; it does not set those chosen apart, in a privileged position which contrasts with that of the others who have not received the call. ‘Election is not a privilege of the elected but a call to live for others’.\textsuperscript{202} The election of Israel, the election of the church, the election of Christ... does not mean being called forth from the rest to have the privilege of \textit{being different}; it means being called forth from the rest to have
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{201} Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}. p.75-84.  
\textsuperscript{202} ———, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}. p.174.
the privilege of **existing for the rest**. This principle has an importance for the theology of the church which will be immediately recognized.\(^{203}\)

According to Zizioulas, the church needs to ‘offer herself to the world for reception’, rather than practice aggressive mission or evangelism, since the *church receives* much from the world, and *is received* by the world – she exists to give what she has *received from God*: the love of the Father incarnate in the Son, the gospel, and the kerygma. Reception always occurs pneumatologically, communally, eucharistically, and both locally and universally, and it requires the inculturation of the gospel.\(^{204}\)

In the EMCM literature, any proclamation of ‘glad tidings’, authentic expression of ‘election’, or culturally sensitive offering of the church for ‘reception’, should include an acceptance of the historicity of the crucifixion and resurrection (this is also true for Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas). It should also include the centrality of the person and work of Christ, his divine/human nature, and his saving work on the cross as the only means for salvation and the forgiveness of sins. While some of the texts are less direct than this in articulating the assumptions behind their use of the term mission, this conviction is nonetheless overwhelmingly present in the material, which probably reflects the Protestant Evangelical heritage of much of the work.\(^{205}\)

While the EMCM material does not contradict these perspectives of Ratzinger and

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\(^{203}\) Thornhill, *Sign and Promise*, p.36.


\(^{205}\) Driscoll and others question whether some so-called ‘revisionists’ in the EMCM community (such as McLaren in Driscoll’s estimate) have loosened their grip on these convictions. See, for instance, Driscoll, "A Pastoral Perspective." However, Emergent Village in North America, of which McLaren is a part, and which is considered to be the most theologically experimental of the EMCM groups, responds to its critics by asserting: ‘We would like to clarify, contrary to statements and inferences made by some, that yes, we truly believe there is such a thing as truth and truth matters… yes, we affirm the historic trinitarian Christian faith and the ancient creeds, and seek to learn from all of church history… yes, we believe that Jesus is the crucified and risen Savior of the cosmos and no one comes to the Father except through Jesus… and yes, we affirm that we love, have confidence in, seek to obey, and strive accurately to teach the sacred Scriptures, because our greatest desire is to be followers and servants of the Word of God, Jesus Christ. We regret that we have either been unclear or misinterpreted in these and other areas.’ Available at http://emergent-us.typepad.com/emergentus/2005/06/official_respon.html (Accessed December 7, 2008).
Zizioulas, and might even warmly welcome such perceptive missiological insights, there is a clear location of proclamation, relational and joyous missional activity, and culturally appropriate evangelism in a core commitment to (especially Protestant) Christian orthodoxy. Ratzinger and Zizioulas no doubt hold similar commitments to orthodoxy within their own traditions, but the EMCM might be considered to be more explicit in its literature about locating mission within an overt commitment to faithful (especially verbal) proclamation of historic Christian understandings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This difference might be explained simply in the fact that the EMCM literature treats such topics on mission and evangelism extensively compared with these other ecclesiologists, because of the Evangelical theological heritage of much of the EMCM work, and because such a heritage has a heavy reliance on the Word and Scripture.

9.2.2.2 Participation in God’s Broader Missionary Purposes

Among other things, Volf is concerned in books such as *Exclusion and Embrace* to place reconciliation, grace and the pursuit of justice at the heart of the church’s social mission, allowing healing to spring forth, even in the context of remembrance. Volf’s insight into such matters is extraordinary and richly informs his ecclesiology. On this note, it is a shame that he does not more deeply explore the feminist issues touched on in his introduction to *After Our Likeness*, as this would have been a welcome contribution by an author dedicated to embrace and reconciliation. EMCM ecclesiology locates this concern for reconciliation and justice in the church’s

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206 M. Volf, "Love's Memory," *The 2002 Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture* (2002). ‘Drawing on the resources from their own rich tradition, the Christian churches should be at the forefront of the struggle for a just peace between cultures. Often, however, they seem helpless in the face of the sinister powers that stir hatreds between cultures and animate destructive urges. Sometimes they even find themselves accomplices of the evil that they have either been too blind to perceive or too impotent to resist. Occasionally they can be found among the worst perpetrators.’ M. Volf and J.M.G. Volf, *A Spacious Heart: Essays on Identity and Togetherness* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997). p.9. See also the brief excursion into feminist issues in his introduction in Volf, *After Our Likeness*. p.2.
essential missionary nature, that is, when it participates in, and where possible ushers in, God’s broad missionary purposes.

God’s missionary purposes are cosmic in scope, concerned with the restoration of all things, the establishment of shalom, the renewal of creation and the coming of the kingdom as well as the redemption of fallen humanity and the building of the church. 207

For the EMCM, this broad missionary activity, therefore, includes the establishment of peace, the perfection of creation, and the championing of justice and mercy. It also includes the participation in the restoration and reconciliation of the whole creation with its Creator, the embodiment, sign and foretaste of the coming kingdom of God, the perfection of the Bride of Christ, the redemption of fallen humanity, individual human beings, and, wherever possible, social structures and systems. 208

9.2.2.3 Establishment of the Kingdom of God

The church evidences this central missionary nature, in the view of EMCM authors, when it is about the establishment, therefore, of the kingdom of God on this earth, in faithfulness to the mission of its Lord Jesus Christ, and the redemption and reconciliation not only of individuals, but also of entire peoples, systems, societies and cultures.

The objective of the mission is the establishment of the kingdom of God which is the reign of God over all the forces of death, the triumph of love over all the forces of hatred, the triumph of peace over all the forces of violence and warfare… the kingdom of God is the object of the mission, and the life of

Jesus Christ continues to be manifest through the church as it witnesses to, embodies and proclaims the kingdom.\textsuperscript{209}

In this regard, EMCM ecclesiology resonates profoundly with the ecclesiology of Volf. Volf’s ecclesiology has rich social dimensions that are demonstrated in his treatment of such themes as reconciliation, embrace, cultural identity and conflict, social ethics and responsibility, interfaith and ecumenical dialogue, and a theology of work.\textsuperscript{210} Volf asserts that the church is to be both a ‘prophetic community and a sign of hope’,\textsuperscript{211} which serves as a sign and instrument of salvation while conducting a prophetic role in the world in which it resides. It is not enough for churches to be places where Christians worship, gather, pursue discipleship and Christian maturation, and celebrate the sacraments, for ‘only prophetic communities can truly worship, and only worshipping communities can truly be prophetic.’\textsuperscript{212} The church needs to discover its liberation and distinction in the new creation, which sets it apart as a sign, even in its manifold frailties and weaknesses, and in so doing provide a prophetic voice that is more than a mere social critique or a reflection of other secular critiques.\textsuperscript{213}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{209} Hull, Mission-Shaped Church. p.5.
\bibitem{211} M. Volf, "The Church as a Prophetic Community and a Sign of Hope," European Journal of Theology, no. 2 (1993).
\bibitem{212} Ibid. p.9.
\bibitem{213} Ibid. p.16-18.
\end{thebibliography}
The ecclesiological realities of the church as both a prophetic voice and a sign of hope, according to Volf, are directly related to its eschatological vision, trinitarian theology, and pneumatological empowerment. An eschatological vision of the mutual personal indwelling of the Trinity in the glorification that awaits the church in the new heavens and the new earth shapes the historical life of the church so that it behaves prophetically, such as in reconciliation and embrace.\(^{214}\) This behaviour is empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit who enlivens and releases the church to be an expression of the new creation.\(^{215}\)

The church as sign anticipates the new creation while being different from it, mediates the new creation in the present age, even when it itself is being renewed in its frailty, embodies, ideally, the role of sign more than merely speaking of this role, while owning the ontological unity between the church’s nature and voice.\(^{216}\) This prophetic role is pluriform and essentially ‘witness’, calling to discipleship, relationship with Jesus Christ, mission and social action, compassion, justice, embrace, reconciliation, and the like. In Volf’s words, ‘There is a need for dynamic relation to God and sympathy with people; for a revival of a *tearful tradition – orthopathy*’.\(^{217}\) Therefore, the church’s prophecy is both to the world and to itself, and through prayer, it is to hear the message of Christ anew.\(^{218}\)

Volf contends that the church’s anticipation of the new creation has social dimensions, including the expectation and present working toward the final reconciliation. The ‘eschatological transition’ of final reconciliation has social

\(^{214}\) Volf writes of this embrace as having four distinct dimensions: ‘(1) the will to embrace the other, (2) inverting perspectives, (3) engagement with the other, and (4) embracing the other.’ ———, “Living with the Other,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 39 (2002). p.16.

\(^{215}\) Volf, "The Church as a Prophetic Community." p.9.

\(^{216}\) Ibid. p.19-20.

\(^{217}\) Ibid. p.10.

\(^{218}\) Ibid. p.11 and 26.
dimensions, and implications for present social ethics, a theology of work, justice, and the church’s conscious participation in social reconciliation and compassion as it collaborates in the ushering in of the new creation. Volf proposes that it is ‘both possible and theologically wise to construct Christian social ethics within the framework of belief in the eschatological continuity between present and future creation’. He writes of the array of implications of this theological framework on the church’s social and ecological involvement as a critical and necessary way of loving one’s neighbour and embracing the ‘other’ of a different cultural identity to our own. For Volf, the individual and ecclesiological practice of compassionate, forgiving, grace-filled and concrete love is rooted in eschatological hope. Self-centeredness should be relinquished for generosity expressed as giving and forgiveness in the personal and communal realms, as churches seek to be a demonstration of the kingdom of God.

The EMCM agrees with such assertions, adding that modern ecclesiological grammar and metaphors that associate the reign or kingdom of God with spreading, building or extending are culture bound and unbiblical, according to Guder and the North American Gospel and Our Culture Network, as ‘the New Testament employs

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223 'In the context of transgression, grace… is thinkable only against the backdrop of the affirmation and the setting aside of the claims of justice… This is paradigmatically instantiated in forgiveness.' ——— , "Against a Pretentious Church: A Rejoinder to Bell’s Response," Modern Theology 19, no. 2 (2003). p.284.

the words *receive* and *enter*... Taken together they indicate the appropriate way for a community to live when it is captured by the presence of God’s reign. As a gift received and a realm entered, the kingdom and reign of God is not to be equated with the church, but it must also not ‘be divorced from the church’.

When speaking of the church’s testimony to the kingdom of God, it is worth noting that Zizioulas considers confessional pluralism to run the risk of complicating mission to cultural pluralism, and, without downplaying the difficulty of this task, the church needs to deal with the issues related to confessional division if it is to be effective missionally. Zizioulas is not proposing an amalgamation of confessions here, but a more effective ecumenical cooperation and dialogue, so that the mission of the church in its witness to the kingdom of God might be more effective.

For the EMCM, the ‘church represents the divine reign as its *sign* and *foretaste*, its ‘*agent* and *instrument*, its ‘community, its servant, and its messenger.’ Therefore, the writers of *Missional Church* assert,

> Testing and revising our (ecclesiological) assumptions and practices against a vision of the reign of God promises the deep renewal of the missional soul of the church that we need. By daily receiving and entering the reign of God, through corporate praying for its coming, and longing for its appearance, and in public living under its mantle, this missional character will be nourished and revived.

The embodiment and proclamation of the themes associated with the kingdom of God are especially embedded in the ecclesologies of Volf and the EMCM. Missional

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228 Ibid. p.109.
ecclesiology is richly shaped by considerations on the nature of the kingdom of God, and the relationship between this kingdom and the church, and thus has much to contribute to other ecclesiological traditions in these areas of theology. However, some of the EMCM literature does confuse the distinction between the kingdom and the church, as Hull notes in his critique of *The Mission-Shaped Church*, and should consistently maintain ‘the view that the church is an instrument or agent of the mission of God, the outcome of which is to be the kingdom of God.’

### 9.2.2.4 Five Streams of the Missionary Vocation of the Church

Scot McKnight, a well-regarded EMCM scholar at North Park University in Chicago, notes that there are five ‘streams flowing into the emerging lake’, which, while they are not unique to the EMCM literature, ‘together they crystallize into the emerging movement.’ These five streams are the prophetic (or provocative), postmodern, praxis-oriented, post-evangelical, and political. Being interwoven they give some indication about what the EMCM considers to be the missionary vocation of the church, and on what the EMCM ecclesiology might contribute to the other ecclesiologies examined in this thesis. Faithful missionality, through the lens of these streams, is expressed when the church engages in the following activities or ‘missions’:

1. **Prophetic**: For the EMCM the church is missionary when it is prophetically challenging the powers and principalities present in the world and in its own ecclesial structures and life. For the EMCM, this prophetic and apostolic role was too often forfeited in Christendom, and especially in the ecclesial

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relationships between church and state in the institutions represented by Zizioulas and Ratzinger, and in the post-Reformation institutional churches. A prophetic (or at least provocative) examination of ecclesial structures, leadership practices, and the like, is a key component of EMCM ecclesiology, and has much to say to the approaches to ecclesiology adopted by Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas – how rigorously, for example, do they challenge the ecclesiological norms in their own traditions?

Ratzinger demonstrates this kind of critical ecclesial reflection when he writes about the nature of true reform in the church, and about the church’s responsibility to maintain a prophetic witness through social justice in the world and culture. Reflecting on the bitterness, anger and disappointment that many people feel toward the church, on their sense of hope that the church might be liberating and different from the institutions of this world, and on the passion by which many seek to reform the church, Ratzinger writes:

In their heart of hearts people expect more of her (the church) than of all worldly institutions. It is in the church that the dream of a better world should be realised. There, at least, one would hope to know the taste of freedom, of redeemed existence – to emerge from the cave…\footnote{Ratzinger, \textit{Called to Communion}, p.135.}

True reform in the church, however, in Ratzinger’s point of view, has certain distinguishing elements and features.\footnote{Most of these points about the features of true reform come from: Ibid. p.140-156. Those that do not come from that text have their references footnoted.} These reflections can enrich the EMCM prophetic/provocative goals, just as the EMCM prophetic voice might enhance Catholic ecclesiology, so they are worth noting:
a. It (true reform) is not driven by humans with personal agendas, nor shaped according to our tastes or inventiveness, but by the grace of the Lord of the church, which precedes us, leads us to pure freedom, and causes us to uncover and release what God has fashioned the church to be – not make the church ourselves;

b. It is the realisation of a double act of both purification and renewal in the church;

c. It entails human constructions, institutions and accommodations to culture, place and time, yet these become obsolete and ‘risk setting themselves up as the essence of the church and thus prevent us from seeing through to what is truly essential’. 234 These are to be dismantled and revisited regularly in order for the Bride to be perfected. This reforming activity must be characterised by a removal or dismantling that is steeped in faith and leads to communio and gathering;

d. It is the expansive manifestation of faith itself, since in every age ‘faith itself in its full magnitude and breadth is the essential reform that we need’. 235 Such faith is the substance by which we view and engage the church that God is shaping in our midst;

e. It involves mutual responsibility for the church, and reciprocal service among its people. Office-bearers engage in ever-greater self-dispossession, and the presence of the Spirit is preferred over administrative machinery;

234 Ibid. p.142.
235 Ibid. p.145.
f. It ought to embrace an examination of conscience throughout the church that releases healing and removal of all that is not of God;

g. It is expressed in the context of authentic and passionate worship and Christian spirituality, which extends into all areas of this ecclesiological consideration, since Christian spirituality is expansive. True reform will also be expressed in such things as liturgy, a liturgical spirit, prayer, spiritual disciplines, and the like. In *The Spirit of the Liturgy* Ratzinger writes that the liturgical spirit is normative in the Christian life, and that it is remedial and subversive against religious individualism, religion of the spirit, pragmatism, religious formalism, cultural dilettantism, and worldliness of the worship;\(^{236}\)

h. It has a personal centre in morality, forgiveness and expiation, since the church is a communion of those who need healing, grace and liberation, and who transmit these to others;

i. It involves pain and possibly martyrdom, but is sustained by the joy of redemption and the hope of the eschatological gathering and communion of God’s people.

2. *Postmodern*: Ratzinger notes that Christians cannot overcome the challenges of this age through either compromise or withdrawal, and the church has always had to be faithful and make sense in the times in which she exists. She has had the task of being faithful throughout each epoch of human history, from early

church persecutions, to Constantinian institutionalisation, to the struggle between *imperium* and *sacerdotium* in the Middle Ages, to the age of the secular state and of Marxist messianism, to the current challenges of postmodernity, science, globalism, and the information age. While she must relinquish security, let go of the past, and demolish longstanding bastions, she must also cling to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and his truth in her effort to be his in the world, and to serve the world as he intends.\textsuperscript{237}

While not disagreeing with Ratzinger on these points, the EMCM declares that the church is missionary when it is contextualising its message and ecclesial life in such a way that they make sense to postmodern culture (or whichever culture the message is presented to). McKnight suggests that ministering *to* or *with* postmoderns is never as controversial as ministering *as* postmoderns, given the Evangelical commitment to propositional truth and particular linguistic structures.\textsuperscript{238}

EMCM writers, however, are generally concerned both with contextualisation and with relevance to postmodern culture on the one hand, and forming counter-cultural, alternative, kingdom-shaped communities on the other. Attention to matters of compromise or withdrawal and syncretism or irrelevance is evident in the EMCM literature. Balancing these tensions is greatly emphasised in the EMCM literature. Similarly, Volf asserts that churches must provide a ‘robust alternative to the pervasive culture of late capitalism’ in anticipation of the new creation. They do this by being aliens and


\textsuperscript{238} McKnight, "Five Streams." p.3.
sojourners who engage in a ‘soft missionary difference’ of both difference to and acculturation in contemporary culture (that is, both commensurability and incommensurability), and by being both a prophetic community and a sign of hope in the context of Modernity and postmodernity. Consequently, for Volf it is important to anchor the mission of the church in trinitarian theology rather than in the ever-changing landscape of cultural practices or the tired, lifeless traditions of cultic forms.\textsuperscript{239} EMCM thinkers would rather anchor the mission of the church in a missionary ecclesiology as outlined in the Chapters 4 and 5, however, than in an overtly trinitarian theology.

Zizioulas contributes to this discussion insightfully, when he writes that the church is not one culture among many (for instance, in the plurality of cultures in postmodernity); rather she is the tremendous \textit{mysterium fidei}, drawing her identity from the \textit{eschata} instead of history. She is an \textit{eikon} of the future kingdom of God. As an \textit{eikon} she is eternal, prophetic and more than she would appear to be, and yet her existence is \textit{iconic} since she has no \textit{hypostasis} of her own apart from Christ and his kingdom.\textsuperscript{240}

Therefore, the EMCM and the other ecclesiological sources in this thesis are mutually instructive in their perspectives on the relationship between postmodern culture and the Christian churches, and have much to learn from each other.


\textsuperscript{240} Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church.” p.300-301.
3. Praxis-oriented: According to the EMCM, the church is missionary when it is seeking to holistically and missionally engage the world through creative and experiential worship. This engagement is also through the practices and lifestyles that are reflective of faithful discipleship to Jesus Christ, and through demonstrating the alternative-community and missionary dynamics that should quite naturally occur when it is intentionally participating with God in his redemptive purposes.

These perspectives are echoed in Volf who considers that the church should focus on the cross of Christ, through the celebration of the Eucharist, in such a way that injustice, deceitfulness and violence in our world are resisted, and public engagement is inspired by remembrance of the Lord’s death ‘until he comes’. For both Volf and the EMCM, this practice of radical worship is both an act of adoration of God and a testimony to the world, since it is fulfilled through vigorous and concrete action in the world.\(^{241}\)

Ratzinger has a different, more eucharistic but less missionary understanding of the nature of liturgy and worship, when he writes,

In order for mission to be more than propaganda for certain ideas or trying to win people over for a given community – in order for it to come from God and lead to God, it must spring from a more profound source… This centre… is the Eucharist.\(^{242}\)

Ratzinger is cautious about shaping the liturgy as a ‘missionary liturgy’, by

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\(^{242}\) Ratzinger, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith. p.122-123.
what he considers to be a reducing of the didactic elements of the liturgy to contemporary and relevant cultural forms, since he perceives within this attempt some grave anthropocentric errors that may reduce the liturgy to banality, anthropocentricity, socialisation rituals, temporal needs, or experiential happiness. For Ratzinger the Eucharist and the liturgy are not primarily missional in orientation, but are about nurturing faith, communion with God, and shaping our discipleship and lives, and, in so doing, are the origin of mission.243

The Eucharist is the source and heart of all authentic missions, according to Ratzinger, and when it is celebrated, with no other motive than to please God, faith springs out of it, and it is lived out in martyrdom, Christian life, and apostolic service. Martyrdom is liturgical in character, since it is about becoming one with the death of Jesus Christ, and is an act of worship. Christian life is about being drawn into communion with God in our entire bodily existence, and in the movement becoming one with each other and the one living Christ. The apostolic and missional service that proceeds out of that communion is a service in the cosmic liturgy, since mission has a sacramental basis, which Paul the Apostle portrays as involving,

Being united in a concrete sense with the Body of Christ, which was sacrificed and is living eternally in the Resurrection… Thus, the missionary work of the Apostle does not exist alongside the liturgy; rather, both constitute a living whole with several dimensions.244

While being somewhat unconvinced about the need to shape liturgy as a

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243 Ibid. p.92-94.
244 Ibid. p.111-120.
‘missionary liturgy’, or design worship with missionary activities primarily in mind, Ratzinger does concede that the church does not exist for her own sake. For Ratzinger, the church exists for God and for the sake of humankind, and is to be on mission, and steeped in a reawakening of joy in God, a rediscovery of obedience and purification, and a passion for ecclesial communion, so that God might be made known.\textsuperscript{245} Liturgy, rather than being a servant or tool of missionary engagement of the world, is a remedial norm against the ailments of contemporary culture, including religious individualism, religion of the spirit, pragmatism, religious formalism, cultual dilettantism, and worldliness in worship.\textsuperscript{246} Therefore, the perspectives of the EMCM and Ratzinger are quite different with regard to these issues, and the EMCM might challenge Ratzinger’s ecclesiology to view liturgy and worship in the light of the church’s missionary vocation.

4. \textit{Post-evangelical}: Turning its attention to its evangelical heritage and providing a direct critique of that particular Christian tradition, the EMCM material is uncomfortable with some of the categories of systematic theology. It is also uncomfortable with the ‘in versus out’ mentality of Evangelicalism, and sees a broader exploration of theology, traditions, ideas and ecumenical relationships as being important to a rich and diverse missional ecclesiology. This attention on being post-Evangelical is clearly not a concern for Volf, Ratzinger or Zizioulas (their theological traditions are not Evangelical). Yet Volf’s critique of the ecclesiologies of Ratzinger and Zizioulas includes little criticism of his own Free Church ecclesiological heritage or its shortcomings, when compared with the EMCM rigorous analysis of its own heritage, worldview and

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid. p.284-298.
\textsuperscript{246} ———, \textit{The Spirit of the Liturgy}. p.91-110.
Reformation/evangelical standpoint.

Volf’s *After Our Likeness* might have benefited from a similarly more critical analysis of Free Church ecclesiology, and the degree of analysis of its heritage is one of the EMCM ecclesiological strengths. It is a shame, however, that EMCM analysis of Evangelicalism does not extend readily enough to a critical analysis of emerging-missional ecclesiology and its assumptions and presumptions.

5. *Political:* In the theology of the EMCM, the church is missionary when it is engaged, as an alternative political community, with the political and social issues of the wider society in which it is located, taking a clear stance for social justice and concern, and for the marginalised and poor. Likewise, Volf maintains that churches should care for human beings in their entirety – their bodies, spirituality, and larger social and ecological environments – and in this endeavour discover the presence and inbreaking of the Spirit of God going before them.²⁴⁷ On a related matter, while Volf advocates for the practice of an ‘unaggressive evangelism’, by recognising that it is God’s task to change a person’s heart and religious or spiritual allegiances,²⁴⁸ the EMCM is not only concerned with gentle, inoffensive forms of persuasion, but also with missionary zeal in its more assertive and confrontational forms. Both approached are respected, when contextually appropriate, in the EMCM material.

Therefore, while Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas might all be concerned with the

church’s social and political activities, the EMCM explicitly places such concerns in the missionary vocation and essence of the church, which is an important theological approach that might possibly inform the traditions of these ecclesiologists.

9.2.2.5 Understanding Ecclesiological Dimensions Missionally

In the ecclesiology of Ratzinger, ‘the Church exists so that she may become God’s dwelling place in the world and thus be “holiness”,’ 249 and therefore Christians, whether church leaders or not, are to dedicate themselves to this pursuit in all areas of their life in this world: the pursuit of making God’s presence known, and of mission, discipleship and holiness.

In ‘The Church as Communion’, Zizioulas writes the following about the paradigmatic shift that has occurred in Christian mission, the positive and negative relation of the church to the world, some theological ideas relating to mission, and the relationship between mission and the ecclesiological theme of communion:

For quite a long time, Christian mission was regarded as a kind of sermon addressed to the world… But the relation of the church to the world is not just negative: it is also positive. This is implied in the incarnation and ideas such as the recapitulation of all in Christ… if communion is made a key idea in ecclesiology, mission is better understood and served not by placing the Gospel over against the world, but by inculturating it in it.” 250

This quotation is an example of Zizioulas’ limited, though not insignificant, attempts

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at putting missiological themes into conversation with ecclesiology.

The EMCM would almost certainly acknowledge these insights by Ratzinger and Zizioulas, but might assert that, moreover, and even more importantly, the church pays due attention to its core missionary nature when it seeks to understand its ecclesiological dimensions missionally. These missiological understandings and ‘readings’ of theology include the New Testament representations of the church, core biblical images of the church, many of the ecclesiological conceptions in the history of the church, and notions of the church’s holiness, frailty, sociality, catholicity, universality, unity, institutionality and apostolic. Therefore, an adequate missional ecclesiology is reflective and embraces a theology of the church that is ecumenically and richly informed, according to the EMCM.

9.2.2.6 Concrete Expressions of the Church’s Missionary Nature in Local Communities of Faith

When examining the relationship between churches and their cultures, Volf writes that local churches and individual Christians make a difference from within a given culture that they and others naturally inhabit, their transformations are piecemeal this side of the new creation, and accommodation to culture should be replaced by an emphasis on difference. Not only so, but disruption from cultural identity is normal at conversion. Yet such disruption remains internal to a given culture and Christians best do inculturation as they wrestle with appropriate expressions of faith in their own cultural context. ‘The key issue is how to maintain the Christian difference from the culture of which we are a part and how to make that difference a leaven in the culture’, since difference is essential to authentic and transforming faith.


and ecclesiology, and without it the church is left with nothing. Discernment is needed in order to identify the appropriate points of difference and non-difference within a given culture, while keeping ourselves open to God’s reign without extracting ourselves from our culture.\textsuperscript{253}

These are insightful reflections on the part of Volf, but the EMCM takes this conversation further as it seeks to articulate the relationship between gospel, church and culture. Therefore, for example, with regard to how these dynamics are outworked in local ecclesial contexts, EMCM ecclesiology asserts that the local church witnesses to its essential missionary nature when it concretely outworks a range of indicators, features and characteristics. These include some or all of the ‘fifteen indicators’ of Frost, Hirsch and the Gospel and Our Culture Network of North America outlined in Section 4.1.2, the additional features of missionary communities detailed in 4.1.5, the primary and secondary ‘characteristics of authentically missional churches’ outlined in 5.5.1.6, and other missional features noted in this thesis, including:\textsuperscript{254}

Incarnating the gospel in contemporary culture, and understanding the context they are in as essentially cross-cultural

1. Cultivating a messianic and whole-of-life spirituality (that is, a spirituality shaped by christology and that is not dualistic)

2. Adopting an apostolic, innovative and participatory leadership model (that is,


\textsuperscript{254} This is merely a summary of some of those features, and the fuller descriptions of each may be found in those relevant and listed previous sections, and in the fuller chapters on EMCM ecclesiology.
non-hierarchical)

3. Faithfully, creatively and contextually proclaiming the gospel

4. Encouraging active and passionate discipleship, especially through systems of formation and learning

5. Following the Scriptures as normative both individually and communally, and helping their members reflect on culture from a biblical standpoint

6. Understanding itself as an alternative culture and society, which facilitates transformation within cultures as an alternative community, and which appreciates its marginality in the wider culture

7. Discerning ‘God’s specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all its members’, entering into dialogue with their context and culture, and facilitating ministry gift identification, nurture and mobilisation

8. Testifying to the world through mutual love and honour, practicing hospitality and social concern, and maintaining a vital public witness in their social and cultural situation

9. An emphasis on Christian relationships through natural interpersonal networks, and the opportunities these afford for mission

10. Practising reconciliation, the pursuit of peace, and the valuing of difference and diversity

11. Holding themselves accountable to one another in love, and earnestly praying for and seeking their own, their church’s and their wider community’s

transformation

12. Enjoying communal worship that is culturally sensitive, personally and communally transformational, open to both ancient and modern liturgical and musical forms, and eclectic in its experimentation and relevance to postmodern culture

13. Seeing itself as part of the kingdom of God, informed by a clear eschatological and ‘glocal’ (that is, both global and local) vision

14. Their missiology is given meaning and bearing by its expression in the four dimensions of their worship, community, mission, and relationship to the wider Body of Christ, and they seek to locate their missiological understanding of the local church in the context of ecumenical partnerships and conversations

15. Appropriation of a variety of forms of gathered-worship, and the development of small groups around shared interests, hobbies, commitments, networks and third-places

16. Recovering simple forms of ecclesial life through relational and friendship paradigms, where apostolic and missionary inclinations keep ecclesial structures minimal, dynamic, fluid and outward-looking

17. Being hermeneutical communities of interpretation, which determine ‘the actual enculturated meaning of Scriptures’ in postmodern western culture, while being open to certain checks-and-balances that guard against theological relativism256

18. And, as finally noted in Section 4.1.5, the activity of the Holy Spirit builds the koinonia that creates the community distinctive of God’s people, as they passionately, though frailly, witness to the new eschatological identity and reign of Christ they have experienced, and are missionally witnessing to the wider culture.

Zizioulas proposes that churches should embrace contextual mission to particular cultures and subcultures, but that these missional groups are not truly churches in their own right, since churches are inter-generational, multi-cultural, and transcending of ‘all the natural and cultural divisions’. The EMCM would take issue with Zizioulas on this matter of what constitutes a true local church, and on what characteristics or ideals are necessary for a community of faith to be authentically considered a church. The EMCM perspectives on the concrete expressions of the church’s missionary nature in local faith communities might inform the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and especially their understandings of the practical and contemporary evangelistic practices and missional approaches of local churches in the Western world.

9.2.2.7 Remissionalisation through ‘Disavowing Constantine’ and Christendom

For Volf, the church is to demonstrate both hiddenness and openness by rejecting the lure to become one more social institution among many, while continuing to offer an alternative vision shaped by the future and present reign of God, and to ‘subvert,

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257 Zizioulas, Being as Communion. p.255-256.
258 ‘Disavowing Constantine’ is the title of Nigel Goring Wright’s PhD thesis and subsequent published version through Paternoster, in which he analyses the insights of Moltmann and Yoder for a post-Christendom understanding of the relationship between Church and State: N. Wright, "Disavowing Constantine: Mission, Church and the Social Order in the Theologies of John Howard Jürgen Moltmann" (Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Published With the Same Title by Wright, N. - Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2000), King's College London, 1994).
challenge, and transform’ the culture around it and in which it is immersed. In doing so, the church pursues ‘the very mission at the core of the church’s identity’. 259

With regard to the relationship between the church and state, Ratzinger examines the conditions in which the early church ministered and sees implications for the present relations between the church, politics and social engagement. 260 The early church understood that the state was by no means the totality of human existence or hope, and so provided an environment and vision that subverted and contradicted the irrationality of political myths and cultures. The church has this role today also. Not only so, but the church remained a positive contributor to society and the state even amidst persecution and misunderstanding, and sought to build the state up within its potentialities and limitations. The church of Jesus Christ also has this role to play today, by championing morality, good works, support for the state where it is virtuous, and resistance to the prevailing culture and political environment when they oppose the will of God. Furthermore, the early church sought to encourage worthwhile human social existence through explicit acts of goodness, the unashamed articulation of what is right, and through being the good that they proclaimed. All this serves as an example and high goal for the church in the contemporary world, and should fashion her appreciation of the dynamic, counter-cultural and life-giving relationship between the church, state and the present world.

The duality of church and state, of the sacral and secular authorities, must be maintained in order to ensure human freedom, asserts Ratzinger. 261 Considering the history of the Roman Catholic Church and its often very close relationship to the

260 His clearest description of this examination is found in: Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics. p.147-151.
261 Ibid. p.160-163.
secular state, Ratzinger writes that whenever either the church or the state is extinguished or subsumed into the other human freedom is lost, morality is compromised, power is grasped, ideology replaces sacral theological vision, conscience is diminished, or totalitarian models emerge. With these possibilities in mind, Ratzinger writes:

> With this the fundamental task of the Church’s political stance, as I understand it, has been defined; its aim must be to maintain this balance of a dual system as the foundation of freedom. Hence, the Church must make claims and demands on public law and cannot simply retreat into the private sphere. Hence, it must also take care on the other hand that Church and state remain separated…

Reflecting on this above-mentioned history, Ratzinger considers the influence of the church, then, to be best expressed through theological perception, moral content and social compassion, rather than by grasping for political power and influence. Influence gained in this manner is to be complemented by the church’s defence of the right to freedom of belief and conscience, exercised as both choice and action. Within the church itself, the synergistic relationship between ministry and theology must be maintained in order for the church to make sense to the world. Such a relationship is also important for each to be of lasting value, for ‘whenever one of these two voices, that of the church’s ministry or that of theology, loses its autonomy then the other side also loses its essential content.’

Ratzinger accentuates that a Christian orientation is to be maintained in a pluralistic democracy and society, and that Christianity is clearly indispensable in the modern

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262 Ibid. p.163.
263 Ibid. p.164.
Its indispensability is grounded in its offering to the world essential spiritual foundations and inner truth - ‘the spiritual foundations of its humanity and its freedom’.\footnote{Ibid. p.204-220.}

The only power which enables Christianity to appear publicly in the best light is ultimately the power of its inner truth. This power, however, is as indispensable today as it ever has been, because human beings cannot survive without truth. That is the sure hope of Christianity. That is the enormous demand it makes on every single one of us.\footnote{Ibid. p.220.}

EMCM literature takes this line of thought in Volf and Ratzinger further, claiming that the church demonstrates its fundamental missionary nature when it prayerfully uproots and seeks God’s gracious liberation from any degenerative elements left to it by Christendom (recognising that not all of Christendom was problematic). Here the EMCM literature is referring to those vestiges of the ‘Constantinian’ church that have hindered its faithfulness to the mission of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom of God. The church is involved in missionary activity when it reclaims for itself the ethical and moral standards present in the gospel’s expectation and vision. Such missionality is also expressed when it acknowledges where it has conformed and compromised culturally to the systems of the world and its attendant powers and principalities, and when it attempts to renew its ecclesiastical structures and to pursue the vision of the kingdom, its integrity and its redemptive passion. The church is evidencing its missionary nature when, by way of a missionary ecclesiology, it attempts to understand what it means to be the church in a post-Christendom context.
and to clearly name and prayerfully renew its Christendom vestiges and inner and cultural dynamics.\textsuperscript{267}

According to the EMCM, this remissionalisation involves carefully and prayerfully revisiting the theological assumptions and missional faithfulness of its leadership and governance structures, and its ecclesial systems, programs and activities. This includes an examination of its paradigms for church planting, its inclusion of all believers in mission and ministry, its theological and ecclesiological education, its worship and liturgy, its concern for social justice and advocacy for the marginalised and poor, and its participation in ecumenical and wider-church opportunities.

These EMCM ecclesiological perspectives might be enriched and informed by Zizioulas, however, when he theologises that all dualistic dichotomies that separate ‘spiritual’ from ‘material’ or ‘sacred’ from ‘secular’ need to be done away with in a ‘catholic’ view of theology, mission and existence. Even the church and the world should not be separated and juxtaposed in an unhealthy fashion, since they are in constant interrelation and interaction, and the presence and ownership of God resides with both. Through each of these things the church offers the world to God: the Spirit, the concrete outworking of the charismata and ministry in the church, the missional endeavours of communities, the incarnational and \textit{comm-passionate} involvement with the world (that is, as opposed to the conception of the church being a society \textit{vis-à-vis} other societies), and the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{268} There are some cautionary notes here that might inform the EMCM as it seeks to revisit its Christendom heritage, and discern how best to relate to its culture.


\textsuperscript{268} Zizioulas, \textit{Being as Communion}. p.162, 224 and 255; J. Zizioulas, \textit{Faith and Order Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow} (Faith and Order Consultation with Younger Theologians Held at Turku, Finland, 3-11 August 1995). p.6.
9.2.2.8 Rediscovery of a Missionary Vocation and Praxis through Recognising Some of the Possibilities Inherent in Marginality and Liminality

It has been demonstrated in this thesis that a number of the EMCM works, and especially those by Roxburgh, Hirsch and Frost, argue that, in order to rediscover a missionary vocation in western culture, the church in the West must come to constructive terms with its marginality, liminality, and movement away from the centre of the dominant culture.\(^{269}\) As I have noted earlier, these considerations build on the anthropological work of Victor Turner,\(^{270}\) who defines liminality as ‘the transition process accompanying a change of state or social position’.\(^ {271}\) Similarly, marginality is about the church in the West moving from the centre of western culture to the margins of cultural significant, power and status.

The EMCM literature, however, does not consider this to be necessarily a tragedy for the church in the West, but rather an opportunity to consider carefully the church’s present position and future possibilities in postmodern, post-Christendom and post-secular western culture. A fresh missionary vocation can be discovered by the church of Jesus Christ in the West, along with a reenergised identity, purpose, vision and belonging, or, to use Turner’s anthropological terms, a thrilling sense of ‘communitas’.\(^ {272}\)

To understand why such processes of liminality and ‘communitas’ are viewed hopefully by the EMCM, and why these ecclesiological considerations might inform the theologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, it is important to understand the core

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\(^{269}\) See especially Frost, *Exiles* and Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation*.

\(^{270}\) Turner, *The Ritual Process* and ———, “Variations on a Theme of Liminality.” p.36-52.


perspectives of Turner that have been adopted by the EMCM. Even though Turner’s work has been criticized recently as too idealized\textsuperscript{273} or as minimalising the role of pilgrimage in ordinary life,\textsuperscript{274} it remains a significant and influential anthropological work.

Turner adopted and modified the processual view on ritual from Van Gennep,\textsuperscript{275} and in his book \textit{The Ritual Process} Turner examined the concepts of liminality and communitas beyond a mere application to Ndembu ritual and society, in such a way that he applied these concepts to more complex, modern societies. Turner wrote of a three-phased process of ritual, and that rituals were constructed or evolved to transition individuals and groups from one state of being or status to another. An interstructural, liminal situation exists between the states, and within this place of liminality individuals are supplied with new names to denote their ‘no longer/not yet’ status, for they are ‘neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.’\textsuperscript{276} During this time of liminality, the liminal individuals have their social conceptions and relations systematically deconstructed and simplified, so that a vital process of reconstruction might occur as the individual moves to the new state of being and social status.

What does this mean for the churches in western culture, which are experiencing a new, and sometimes frightening, marginality? Subjects going through this journey of liminality together, whether they be individuals moving into adulthood or whole communities wrestling to come to terms with their changing social contexts, experience an equality and bond that Turner called ‘communitas’, which is a

\textsuperscript{273} Eade and Sallnow, eds., \textit{Contesting the Sacred}.
\textsuperscript{274} S. Coleman and J. Eade, eds., \textit{Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion} (London: Routledge, 2004).
\textsuperscript{275} A. Van Gennep, \textit{The Rites of Passage} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
\textsuperscript{276} Turner, \textit{The Ritual Process} p. 95.
community ‘of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions’.

Summarizing and examining Turner’s conceptions of communitas, Deflem writes that for Turner communitas is a dynamic comradeship that moves beyond the limitations of social structures and hierarchical arrangements, where real bonds occurs within the contexts of liminality, marginality, cultural deconstruction and reconstruction, the personal examination of values, belief and purposes, and genuine equality.

Rather than resisting such changes as churches, it is worth noting that Turner proposed that social systems, human societies and institutions navigate this dialectic process between the undifferentiated comradeship of authentic communitas and the hierarchical modes of social systems continually, and this movement between these states is quite normal and to be expected. Turner, therefore, demonstrated the movements of liminality and communitas described above in his analysis of particular groups, such as the Franciscan order. He also demonstrated the dynamics of these concepts with reference to broader cultural phenomena, such as ‘the history of religions (Turner 1972), pilgrimages in Christian culture (Turner 1974c; V. Turner and E. Turner 1978), Western literature (Turner 1976b), and rites and ceremonies in the Catholic Church (Turner 1976a). In this way, Turner's work, which he characterized as "comparative symbology" (Turner 1974b; 1976b; 1978), exhibited a shift from tribal studies to analyses of complex industrial societies.

The challenge for the ecclesiologies and the ecclesial structures of the traditions represented by Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, is whether these ecclesiological

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277 Ibid. p.100.
systems and institutional structures can come to terms with the relocation and marginalization of the Christian church in western culture. The different ecclesiological systems represented here will respond to these challenges differently, but, at the very least, understanding the processes and dynamics of marginality, liminality and communitas might help their particular local churches navigate the changed social realities, institutional status, and cultural authority that they entertain. While they might certainly resist any altered understanding of the importance of particular hierarchical forms to ecclesial life, they might be able to find ways to invigorate the missional imagination of their communities within liminal contexts, and stimulate the rich and gospel-honouring dimensions of communitas in local communities of faith, whether those communities be Orthodox, Catholic, Free Church, or emerging-missional. Such insights within the EMCM literature might make a valuable contribution to the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

9.2.2.9 Revisiting the Complexities of the Gospel, Church and Culture Relationship, and the Insights of the Dissenting and Radical Reformation Movements

Guder, in *Missional Church*, writes of the complexities of the relationship between gospel, church and culture, when he speaks of the historical and present culturally shaped, ecclesially embodied and scripturally rooted contextualisations of the gospel.

No culture-free expression of the gospel exists, nor could it. The church's message, the gospel, is inevitably articulated in linguistic and cultural forms particular to its own place and time... The first tellings of the gospel in Scripture themselves have richly varied quality; they are as culturally particular as our own. Nevertheless, they are the root narrative of God's action in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the work, and as such, the church's
It is of the essence of the church to root itself in what those first tellings portray of the character, actions and purposes of God.280

This in-depth analysis of the complexities of the gospel, church and culture relationship, which is found in many places in the EMCM literature, with liberal reference to the insights of the dissenting and Radical Reformation movements, is another area that the EMCM ecclesiology might contribute to the perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas. The EMCM deals with the relationship between these realities in a more systematic and thorough way than does Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

This great variety of features described in the section 5.5.1.6, demonstrate what the EMCM writers consider the evidences of the essential missionary nature and vocation of the church, and which they see as fundamental to the church’s essence and witness. These sections also demonstrate some of the ways that EMCM ecclesiology might inform the perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

Having considered earlier how Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas might enrich the ecclesiology of the EMCM in section 9.1, it is clear from the discussion immediately above that EMCM ecclesiology might conversely enhance the ecclesiologies of its dialogue partners in this thesis.

9.3 Summary of the Ecclesiological Discourse

Finally, this section briefly summarises this ecclesiological discourse, which is an extension of Volf’s ecclesiological work After Our Likeness. Clearly, it is an important ecclesiological conversation for the development of a meaningful

280 Guder, Missional Church. p.87.
missional ecclesiology for western culture.

Volf writes in his Preface to *After Our Likeness*,

In the most general way, I am trying to show that the typically Protestant – above all “Free Church” – form of ecclesial individualism and the classical Catholic and Orthodox forms of ecclesiological holism are not the only adequate ecclesiological alternatives, but that an appropriate understanding of the Trinity suggests a more nuanced and promising model of the relationship between person and community in the church. The goal of my efforts is an ecumenical ecclesiology - not in the sense of a construct that draws on all traditions but is rooted in none, but in the sense that all the great themes of this unmistakably Protestant ecclesiological melody are enriched by Catholic and Orthodox voices.\(^{281}\)

Volf admirably presents an ecclesiology that is ecumenical in the sense of the above quote, and that constructively outlines a non-individualistic Protestant Free Church ecclesiology based on trinitarian theological foundations. Watson notes in her review of this ‘remarkable’ work, how Volf demonstrates the great differences between the ecclesiological models of Ratzinger, Zizioulas and himself.\(^{282}\) Ratzinger prioritizes the substance of God over trinitarian considerations, and consequently places more weight on notions of the universal church than the local church, seeing ‘the church as a single subject represented by the bishop’.\(^{283}\) Zizioulas’ eucharistic ecclesiology emphasizes the formation of the church in the Eucharist, and how this eucharistic life is outlived in the substance and existence of the local church, which is the definitive

\(^{281}\) Volf, *After Our Likeness*, p.xi.


(and for Zizioulas prioritized) manifestation of the church universal. In a similar fashion to Ratzinger, Zizioulas sees this eucharistic communion as enhanced by an appropriate hierarchical and episcopal system and order.

Volf sees the church as the ‘gathered community’, which enjoys interdependent spiritual communion through the presence of Christ, through the variety of concrete interpersonal relationships, through reflecting the nature of the Trinity, and through the catholicity contained in the communion with each other, the Godhead, and the rest of the created order. The symmetrical reciprocity of the trinitarian persons is the model Volf uses to emphasize the importance of the ministry of the laity, and of all persons in the life of the local church as they reflect the Trinity in their ‘mutual giving and receiving.’

I have demonstrated above that this ecumenical ecclesiological discussion is only enhanced by the contributions of EMCM ecclesiology, which understands the nature of the church as being derived from the missionary nature of God, and puts a missional ecclesiology in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity. ‘The classical doctrine of the missio Dei as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit [is] expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.’ Adding EMCM ecclesiology into this ecumenical discussion enhances the possibility of contemporary Protestant ecclesiology reaching Volf’s goal, which he outlines in his Preface to After Our Likeness, and enriching this ‘unmistakably Protestant ecclesiology melody’. Such an ecumenical discussion might help form an

284 Volf, After Our Likeness. p.205.
286 Volf, After Our Likeness. p.xi.
appropriate and contemporary missional ecclesiology for the challenges posed by twenty-first century western culture.
10 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This doctoral thesis investigated the research question, ‘What are the similarities and differences between the ecclesiological conceptions of the Western Emerging-Missional Church Movement (EMCM) and the core ecclesiologies of the theologians presented in Miroslav Volf’s *After Our Likeness*, being Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and how might dialogue between all these parties enrich and inform ecclesiology?’ It answered two primary and consequent research objectives, which were to critically analyse and describe the primary (explicit and less obvious) ecclesiological perspectives in the EMCM literature, and to build on Volf’s *After Our Likeness*, by putting the ecclesiologies therein into a critical and enriching conversation with the EMCM.

A qualitative research methodology was used, utilising Content Analysis, a comparative study of primary sources, and the document analysis software QSR Nvivo. The thesis has four distinct parts. Part 1, *Introduction and Methodology*, served as the introduction, rationale, description of the research methodology, and justification for the research subjects. Part 2, *Critical Survey 1*, provided an examination of the chosen EMCM texts, and an analytical survey and evaluation of both the obvious and the more subtle ecclesiological views of the EMCM. Part 3, *Critical Survey 2*, briefly summarized the core perspectives of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, not to put them into critical dialogue with each other, or even to critically analyse their perspectives, but to establish their convictions for the purpose of an ecclesiological dialogue with the EMCM. Part 4, *Toward Dialogical Ecclesiologies for a Missional Context*, assessed areas of convergence, divergence, and mutual ecclesiological enrichment between the various ecclesiological subjects of this thesis.
This thesis answered the research question and two primary research objectives by presenting the following findings and by forming the following conclusions:

10.1 Findings

1. *Critical Analysis of Each EMCM Text* – Chapter 3 provided a critical analysis of the thirty-seven most influential EMCM texts published between 1995 and 2008. It demonstrated their ecclesiological themes, strengths and weaknesses, and contributions to the EMCM body of literature. Such a systematic analysis of EMCM ecclesiology has never before been undertaken. This evaluation found a wide range of ecclesiological perspectives in the work, some valuable and well articulated, and other questionable or poorly argued. This analysis of each EMCM text laid the formwork for an ecclesiological dialogue with the three scholars ecclesiologists specified in this thesis.

2. *Chronological Development in the EMCM Literature* – Chapter 3 found a detailed chronological development in the literature, expanding from philosophical and missiological speculation (1995-1999), to the proposing of concrete ecclesiological and missional practices (1999-2005), and finally to the examination of the implications for individual spirituality, denominational responsibility, and inter-disciplinary research (post-2005). The initial concerns of the literature have remained and been expanded as the conversation has developed throughout the period 1995-2008. The thesis demonstrated that the ecclesiological themes that have matured, but nonetheless remained with the EMCM material, include mission and ministry in post-Christendom, postmodern and post-evangelical culture, and the challenges faced by the western church in an age of marginalisation and liminality. Other such themes
are the foundational nature of missional ecclesiology, the gospel, church and culture relationship, and the pressing need to ground missional ecclesiology in local communities of faith.

3. *Explicit Ecclesiological Themes* - An examination of the EMCM literature in Chapter 4 expounded their explicit ecclesiological themes, such as missional and incarnational ecclesiology, theories on the missionary agenda of the church in post-Christendom and postmodernity, and suggestions about the relationship between gospel, church and culture. It has been shown that in the EMCM work there is also an unambiguous reference to incarnational, postmodern mission, evangelism and apologetics, and to grounding missional ecclesiology in local, worshipping communities.

4. *Guiding, While More Subtle, Ecclesiological Themes* – Chapter 5 uncovered and examined more subtle and nuanced ecclesiological themes in the EMCM literature, that steer that work's subject matter. It found that these could be divided into three areas: ecclesiological critiques, theological themes undergirding their ecclesiology, and ecclesiological practices.

a. *Ecclesiological Critiques* – The research demonstrated that the EMCM material critically assesses and analyses western church history (especially Constantinian influences, the Christendom era and its consequences, and Modernity), and the way in which western church leadership is dealing with cultural change and ecclesial marginalisation. The material also passes judgement on Evangelicalism’s epistemology and methodology. There is a movement back and forward between mere criticism and constructive reflection, and, at times, advocates a ‘second
Reformation’ or some other radical ecclesiological reorientation.

b. **Theological Themes** – It has been established that distinct theological themes shape EMCM ecclesiology. These pneumatological, christological, messianic, and eschatological perspectives have been outlined, however there is little trinitarian theologising in the EMCM texts.

c. **Ecclesiological Practices** – The thesis has also shown that conceptions of ecclesiological practices are clearly shaped by missiology in the EMCM texts. These include a call for western churches to adopt missionary approaches to church leadership, ecclesial structures and programs, church planting and missional experimentation, and releasing all believers to ministry and mission. According to the EMCM literature, such missionary approaches should also be applied to spiritual formation and discipleship, theological and ministerial education, social justice and compassion, worship and celebration, and ecumenical or denominational alliances.

5. **Ecclesiological Emphases and Criticisms** – Chapter 5 found that there is, generally, dissimilarity in emphases between the Australian EMCM authors, who are more concerned with missional ecclesiology and christology than with dealing with postmodern philosophy and culture, and the North American EMCM literature, especially Emergent-US, which is attentive to the implications of postmodernity, cultural issues and alternative worship styles on ecclesiology. Most criticisms of the EMCM are directed at this latter group, and especially with regard to their perceived theological liberalism and
movement away from established Evangelical theology. A questioning of these dimensions of EMCM theology by EMCM authors like Driscoll, represents, ideally, a development in constructive self-criticism in the movement.

6. *The Reformation Marks of the True Church and Core Expressions of Missional Ecclesiology* – This thesis compared the Reformation ‘marks of the true church’ (*notae ecclesiae*) with EMCM perspectives on the signs of authentic missionality in churches, in Chapter 5. It revealed that at times EMCM authors are critical of Reformation ecclesiology, however some key EMCM texts assert that the four classic and the Reformation marks are essential for an adequate understanding of missional ecclesiology, and should not be discarded. They help missional ecclesiology distinguish between that which is necessary for the *esse* (being) of the church and that which is appropriate for the *bene esse* (well-being) of the church.

This research found that the EMCM adds other characteristics to these ‘marks’ of the church. The primary characteristics of authentically missional churches, according to the EMCM, are the embodiment of missional ecclesiology, the engagement of specific cultures as a contrast society, and the holistic proclamation of the gospel. The secondary characteristics are messianic spirituality, apostolic leadership, intentional discipleship, scriptural adherence, missional vocation, genuine love, practicing reconciliation, mutual accountability, hospitality, communal worship, and eschatological vision, among other things detailed in the research.

7. *Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas* – In order to establish the parameters of the dialogue, the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas were thoroughly
examined through a detailed analysis of all of the ecclesiological works of these theologians, in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. It has been shown that Volf’s ecclesiology emphasises the nature, structures and ecclesiality of the church through a Free Church framework, the mediation of faith and a theology of human personhood, and trinitarian ecclesiology. Ratzinger’s Roman Catholic ecclesiology is eucharistic and sacramental, focusing on the relationship between *communio* and the church’s substance, and a range of other consequences of an episcopal theology. Zizioulas’ Orthodox ecclesiology gives most attention to the relationship between communion and otherness, freedom and unity, the relationship between truth, communion and ecclesiology, and the interconnectedness of christology, pneumatology and ecclesiology. The examination of these established ecclesiologists demonstrated that each one offers valuable insights for dialogue with EMCM ecclesiology, that are explored in the research conclusions detailed below.

### 10.2 Conclusions

*Areas of Convergence, Divergence, and Mutual Ecclesiological Enrichment* – What follows is a summary of this research’s conclusions on areas of convergence, divergence and reciprocal ecclesiological enhancement. These were established and presented in detail in Chapter 9. The following insights in the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas might enhance EMCM ecclesiology:

1. The ecclesiological and anthropological tension that Volf maintains between a theology of human personhood and the nurturing of faith in concrete Christian communities, might solve the neglect of theological anthropology in the EMCM and the minimal connection between theological anthropology and
missionary ecclesiology.

2. The trinitarian theology of Volf contrasts the thin trinitarian reflections in the EMCM literature, and the research has presented six propositions and some other implications that emerge from the trinitarian theology of Volf that have significant and direct bearing on the formation of a sufficient and robust emerging-missional ecclesiology.

3. Volf’s Free Church perspectives on a polycentric-participative model of church life, on church institutions and ecumenism, and on local church governance, structure, leadership and ministry, could assist the EMCM process what constitutes a local church, and what is important for a local church’s essence, governance, structure and communal life.

4. Ratzinger’s prioritization of thorough ecclesiological reflection before demanding or postulating processes and practices of reform might challenge EMCM activism, and while some in the EMCM too readily abandon the established church and pursue new initiatives, Ratzinger calls for a love for the church.

5. The way in which Ratzinger shapes an understanding of the church around the concepts of Trinity and communio might inform EMCM approaches to local leadership, ministry, movements and structures, especially in the light of communion with the Godhead, and between individual Christians, the local congregation, and the broader church, and, ultimately, the Lord of the church. Ratzinger’s ecclesiological ideas would need to be contextualized for Free Church ecclesial environments.
6. Although Ratzinger’s Roman Catholic views of the sacraments are quite different from EMCM Protestant perspectives, the worth Ratzinger gives the sacraments in his ecclesiology might serve as a corrective to the EMCM’s minimal reference to the importance of the sacraments in the formation community, spiritual life and missional ecclesiology.

7. The cautions Ratzinger presents regarding interreligious dialogue and meditation, and with respect to theological relativism, are also worth noting by the EMCM in their missionary endeavours in a pluralistic environment.

8. The trinitarian way in which Zizioulas builds an ecclesiology of communion (koinonia) might challenge the EMCM toward richer notions of community.

9. The broader theology of Zizioulas could counter some tendencies toward gnostic-like experientialism, ecclesial consumerism, theological individualism, and jaundiced interpretations of church history and tradition in the EMCM literature.

10. A concern for the integration of christology and pneumatology is found in the work of Zizioulas, and, since this is absent in EMCM ecclesiology, it might stimulate a more substantial missionary ecclesiology if explored by the EMCM.

11. While Orthodox ecclesiology has differing institutional assumptions that EMCM ecclesiology, some of Zizioulas’ perspectives on apostolicity, ministry and ecclesial leadership are instructive for the EMCM, as explored in detail in the thesis.

The research findings listed in this chapter summarized the explicit and implicit
ecclesiological themes in the EMCM literature, as well as their critiques, theological premises, concrete practices, and perspectives on the visible signs of authentically missional churches. The list was a summary of the findings of Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Combining these findings on the explicit and implicit ecclesiological themes in the EMCM material with the EMCM understandings of the essential nature of the ‘mission’ of the church (which were examined in Chapter 9), demonstrates the ecclesiological perspectives that the EMCM contribute to the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

Without going into detail in this conclusion, these EMCM contributions include seeing mission as a core expression of the nature of the church, remissionalising churches in post-Christendom, discovering possibilities in cultural marginality and liminality, and mining the insights of the dissenting and Radical reformation movements. They also include articulating the concrete evidences of mission in local churches, understanding ecclesiological dimensions missionally, and providing a somewhat provocative, postmodern, praxis-oriented, post-Evangelical and political slant to contemporary missional ecclesiology. The complexities of the gospel, church and culture relationship are examined afresh. Chapter 9 has shown how these and other theological contributions might enrich the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas.

This research, which is an extension of Volf’s ecclesiological dialogue in After Our Likeness, has shown that ecumenical ecclesiological discussion, some established ecclesiological traditions, the burgeoning body of EMCM literature, and especially the formation of a missional ecclesiology for western culture, will only be enhanced by such an ecclesiological dialogue. Ecclesiology is enriched by the contributions of
EMCM ecclesiology, the EMCM might be challenged and extended by the ecclesiologies of Volf, Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and such dialogue may result in the further development of a meaningful missional ecclesiology for contemporary western culture.
11 APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: The Thirty-Seven EMCM Texts Examined in the Research

Listed below are the thirty-seven EMCM texts analysed in this thesis:


Eerdmans, 1996.


Taylor, S. The Out of Bounds Church: Learning to Create a Community of Faith.


11.2 Appendix 2: Content Analysis of Emerging-Missional Ecclesiologies 1: Essential and Foundational Conceptions

Detailed below are the results of the Manual Content Analysis of the thirty-seven EMCM texts, with respect to their essential, explicit, and foundational conceptions.  

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Murray (CAC) xii, 3-8, 23-26, 97-105, 135-136, 147-164;
Murray (PC) back cover, i-ii, xvi, 1-22, 178-188, 286-293, 308;
Riddell ix, 1-2, 12, 18-19, 33, 103, 132, 136;
Roxburgh vii-56;
Shenk 1-2, 3, 5, 16-17, 27-29, 33-52, 99;
Simson 53;
Stetzer and Putman 4-15, 60;
Sweet 17-18, 39;
Tomlinson 139;
Van Gelder 7, 43;
Ward 1;
Webber 26;
Williams 11-14, 84, 90, 159;

Note: Hereafter, ‘Murray (PC)’ is his work Post-Christendom, and ‘Murray (CAC)’ is his work Church After Christendom

| 2a. Missional and Incarnational Ecclesiology | A. MISSIONAL AND INCARNATIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY: |
| (2b. Theology and Ecclesiology as Missiology) | Barrett back cover, ix-x, xii, 13, 159-172; |
| | Brewin 23-65; |
| | Cole xxvii-xxviii, 7-15, 34-45, 47-57, 113-140; |
| | Drane 9-10, 171ff; |
| | Frost 29-32, 125-129, 141-157, 155-156; |
| | Frost and Hirsch xi, 11-12, 3-107; |
| | Gibbs 11, 36, 46, 54-68, 67-68, 80, 82, 94, 106, 145, 168, 182, 212, 215; |
| | Gibbs and Bolger 46, 49, 51-53, 58-89, 59-60, 64, 101, 107, 136; |
| | Guder 3-5, 6, 7, 8, 11-12!, 79-83, 107, 109, 124, 128, 247, 268; |
| | Hall 49-66; |
| | Harvey 14-15, 20, 27, 82, 168, 161; |
| | Hirsch 17, 40-41, 75-82, 82!, 111, 127-148, 142-144!, 218, 236, 239, 274, 283-285; |
| | Jinkins 3, 5-6, 77-80, 102-104; 10, 88, 106, 33 and 111!, 121; 51-53!, 57!, 62, 64-65, 68, 71, 74-75, 78; |
| | Kimball 17, 68-70, 93, 95; |
| | Kreider 101-102; |
| | McLaren 36, 141-142; |
| | McManus 23, 169; |
| | Moynagh 30-31, 56, 146; |
| | Murray (CAC) 135-164, 217-232; |
| | Murray (PC) 251-253, 302-306, 321-322, 337-338; |
| | Roxburgh 57-67; |
| | Roxburgh and Romanuk xiii, xv, 9, 17-18, 120-122, 167-170; |
| | Shenk 2, 6-8, 22, 32-33, 35, 37-38, 41, 45, 48, 73, 86-99, 106; |
| | Simson xii-xxv, 14-16, 209-210; |
| | Stetzer and Putman 3, 30-39, 44-58, 120-121; |
| | Sweet 112, 118!, 128, 251; |
| | Van Gelder 1, 2, 8, 25-26, 27-44, 46, 47, 64, 72, 98-99, 101-126, 116, 139, 125-126, 128, 158, 187; |
3a. The Gospel, Church and Culture Relationship

(3b. Contextualisation and Inculturation in Missional Contexts)

| Ward 8-10; Webber 70, 95, 107-123, 112-113, 121-146, 240-241; Williams 24, 33, 36, 40-41, 81-82, 85, 88-89, 93-96, 102; |
| B. THEOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY AS MISSIOLOGY (as a subset of 2a); Frost and Hirsch 228; Hunsberger 103-104; Kreider 106; McManus 85, 94; Shenk 42-43; Sweet 251; Van Gelder 37-38; Webber 241-242; |
### 4. Incarnational, Postmodern Mission, Evangelism and Apologetics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrett</td>
<td>ix, 10, 13-14, 16, 93, 100, 150-153, 162, 171; Barrett 40-51, 135-152; Clapp Chapter 10, 182-184, 241-244; Cole 75-81, 103-105, 112-113, 177-192; Drane 8, 15-17, 18, 145-150, 162-163, 171-182; Frost 55-62, 73-77; Frost and Hirsch 73-75, 228; Gibbs 43, 45, 59-60, 64, 146, 167-168, 175, 181-187, 189-210, 213, 220-231; Gibbs and Bolger 34-35, 50-56, 71-80, 94, 108-109, 117-135, 145-147, 152-155, 165; Guder 97, 108; Hall 8-9; Harvey 150-151; Hirsch 35, 39!, 64, 127-128, 207-214, 281;</td>
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<td>Authors</td>
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<td>138-139, 148, 155-156, 166-168;</td>
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<td>137, 254, 268-270, 274-276;</td>
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<td>Riddell</td>
<td>ix, 39, 45, 52-53, 130-131, 139;</td>
</tr>
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<td>Roxburgh</td>
<td>49-56;</td>
</tr>
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<td>Roxburgh and Romanuk</td>
<td>9, 24-26, 69-78, 165-170;</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shenk</td>
<td>16, 77-78;</td>
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<td>Stetzer and Putman</td>
<td>16-21, 24-26, 84-85, 108-118, 148-152;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>57-58, 235, 240, 241!;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomlinson</td>
<td>13, 136;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>40-48;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webber</td>
<td>51-52, 101-106, 118-120, 140;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>82, 84, 99-102;</td>
</tr>
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11.3 Appendix 3: Content Analysis of Emerging-Missional Ecclesiologies 2: Characteristic, Guiding and More Subtle Conceptions

Detailed below are the results of the Manual Content Analysis of the thirty-seven EMCM texts, with respect to their characteristic, guiding, more subtle, and implicit conceptions.¹

<table>
<thead>
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<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Critiques</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Interpreting History: Constantine, Christendom, Modernity and Church History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Postmodernity and Ecclesiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Church and Leadership Navigating Change, Crisis and Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Deciding Whether to Merely Criticise Other Ecclesiologies or to Constructively Inform Them Missionally</td>
</tr>
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<td>Critiquing Evangelicalism’s Epistemology and Methodology</td>
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<td>A ‘Second Reformation’ and Revolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Theological Orientation and Imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Considering Eschatology, Sovereignty and Providence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pneumatological Considerations for Ecclesiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Christocentric and Messianic Ecclesiological Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Embodying and Proclaiming the Kingdom and Reign of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Trinitarian Perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Apostolic, Missional Leadership in Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Missional Systems, Structures and Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Missional and Ecclesiological Experimentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Planting New Missional Communities</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Gifting of all Believers for Service, Ministry and Mission, and the Participatory Nature of Christian Worship</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Spirituality and Discipleship in Missional Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Reinventing Theological and Ecclesiological Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>21a.</td>
<td>Missional and Ecclesiological Holism and Activism: Justice, Ethics and Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21b.</td>
<td>Ecological Concern (these two themes are combined in the thesis text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Worship, Liturgy, the Arts, Sacrament, and Tradition</td>
</tr>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Denominationalism, Ecumenism, Catholicity, and Unity</td>
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¹ As in the section above, QSR Nvivo returned more extensive results, which are not detailed here due to the same constraints. That computer program enabled further complementary and detailed analysis.
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<td>Barrett 116; Clapp 13-14, 189-193; Drane viii, 1-2, 6-7, 128, 133-154, 156-157, 175-177, 196-197; Frost and Hirsch 3-6, 95-103; Gibbs and Bolger 15-18, 21, 33-35, 79-80, 93, 119, 132, 218; Gibbs chapters 2-6, pages 25, 28-32, 33-36, 41, 70;</td>
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3. Church and Leadership Navigating Change, Crisis and Confusion

Brewin 1-19;
Clapp 18-23, 32;
Cole 31-34, 91-92;
Drane vii, 2-6, 11, 31-33, 34-54, 49-52!, 54!, 187-188, 100, 198;
Frost 5-8;
Frost and Hirsch ix-xi, 10-11, 18-21;
Gibbs 17, 19-25, 36-38, 54, 243;
Gibbs and Bolger 36-38;
Guder 2-3, 190-199;
Hall 13-15, 18, 20-33;
Harvey 13-14;
Hirsch 16, 21, 49!, 151, 247-248, 273, 283;
Jinkins 3-4, 9-14, 13, 27-32!, 58-63;
Kelly 17, 48, 51, 121-122, 197-198;
Kenneson 92-94, 100;
Kimball 41, 93-95, 101-102, 103-105;
Kreider xiii;
McLaren 21;
McManus 8, 14, 21-36;
Moynagh 16, 74-75, 91-93, 208, 217;
Murray (CAC) 39-56, 100-105, 131;
Murray (PC) 194;
Riddell 1, 11, 30-31;
Roxburgh 13, 16, 18-22, 26, 34, 42-47, 57, 61-62, 64-65, 67;
Shenk 7-8, 41, 56, 73-75;
Simson 1-6, 10-13, 197-205;
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<td>Drane 34-35, 80-81, 155!, 166, 189;</td>
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<td>Simson xvii, xxxi-xxxiii, 9, 20, 25-26, 104-105, 117-118, 103-131, 173-177;</td>
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<td>Stetzer and Putman 4, 49-52, 66, 137-138;</td>
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<td>Van Gelder 1, 20-24, 47, 102;</td>
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<td>Frost 62-63;</td>
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<td>Frost and Hirsch 27, 52, 98-99, 106, 113-115, 118-121, 151, 154-155, 158;</td>
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<td>Gibbs 26-27, 31-32, 33, 39-60, 80, 101, 121-122, 126, 135, 141, 157, 159, 161, 212;</td>
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<td>Hall 21;</td>
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Harvey 174; Hirsch 35-36; Hunsberger xiii; Jinkins 13, 41, 115; Kelly 15, 98, 177; Kenneson 12; Kimball 15, 28, 40, 48, 187-188; McLaren 67, 197-198; Moynagh 27-29, 52; Murray (CAC) 207-209; Murray (PC) 150-151; Riddell 31-32, 128; Roxburgh 10; Roxburgh and Romanuk 209; Shenk 45, 109; Stetzer and Putman 7-9, 33, 67, 99, 185; Sweet 53-54, 105, 113, 129, 131, 133, 158, 191, 200, 244, 248; Tomlinson (entire book!), 1-30, 44, 45-46, 86, 94, 96, 98-99, 122, 129, 139-140, 142-145; Van Gelder 34, 106; Ward 85; Webber 14-15, 16-18, 25, 41!, 44;

6. A ‘Second Reformation’ and Revolution

Brewin 4, 25, 153-154; Clapp 32; Drane 181; Frost and Hirsch ix, 6-7, 16, 33-35, 201-205, 223; Gibbs 75; Guder 12, 77; Hirsch 53!, 99; Hunsberger 26, 310; Jinkins 102; Kelly 14, 208-210, 222; Kenneson 83-84; Kimball 28-29, 96; Kreider 107; McLaren 7, 16-17, 19, 198-201; McManus 11, 31-32, 187; Moynagh 14-15; Murray i, 283-285; Riddell 2, 33, 125-126, 132, 138; Roxburgh 4, 67; Shenk 3-4, 12, 29, 33, 37, 80; Simson xvi, 6-7, 13-14, 225; Sweet 96, 111, 118, 125-128, 131, 247, 259; Ward 1, 4, 10, 30; Webber 15, 20;

Emerging-Missional Ecclesiologial Theologies

7. Theological Orientation and Imagination

Barrett 59ff; 164; Clapp 12-13, 119-120, 126-139, 234-238, 239; Drane 8-9, 11-12, 16-17, 48, 53, 58, 139-145; Frost and Hirsch ix, 27; Gibbs 37, 100, 133, 160-161; Gibbs and Bolger 124; Guder 4, 5, 8, 10-11, 41, 223-224, 228, 246, 247; Hall 48-49; Hirsch 17;
8. Considering Eschatology, Sovereignty and Providence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrett back cover, xi-xii</td>
<td>125, 154-155, 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clapp</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drane 9-10, 15, 45, 145-146, 147, 155-156, 181</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost 238-240, 312</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Frost and Hirsch xi, 17-18, 105, 117, 121-123, 180, 223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gibbs 37-38!, 53, 66-67</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Gunder 11-12, 86, 132, 144, 146, 184, 187-188, 204, 230-231</td>
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<td>Hall ix, 19-20, 41-43, 51, 66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunsberger 21, 136-137, 193-194, 196, 285, 367</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneson 4, 93, 99, 102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimball 12, 89, 243-244</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kreider 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren 7, 10, 145-157, 200-201, 204, 217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McManus 47-48, 93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moynagh 16, 116, 147, 208, 214, 237-241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (PC) i, 184, 253, 285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddell ix, 6, 11, 35, 58, 77, 132, 140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh 33, 52, 54-55, 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenk 55, 58, 63, 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simson 90-91, 158-178, 244-245, 284-286, 298-299</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet 6, 19, 35, 100, 113-114, 115, 118, 124, 130, 131, 250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomlinson 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Gelder 88-90, 98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pneumatological Considerations for Ecclesiology</td>
<td>Barrett xi, xiv, 117-125, 141, 155, 172; Brewin 23; Cole 57, 167; Drane 155; Frost 297-300; Frost and Hirsch 204-205; Gibbs 53, 62, 111, 122, 140, 153, 164-165, 172, 185, 194, 199-200, 203, 215, 237; Gibbs and Bolger 59-60, 126, 170, 208; Guder 12, 96, 142-148, 173-175, 187; Hall 65-66; Harvey 31; Hirsch 17, 193, 271; Hunsberger 196, 211-212; Jinkins 21, 35, 40, 76-77, 88-89, 91, 100; Kelly 21; Kimball 13, 97, 161, 196, 216; Kreider 102; McManus 34; Moynagh 16, 143-144, 146-148, 156-157, 167-168; Murray (PC) 337; Riddell 2, 31, 37, 89, 114, 141; Roxburgh and Romanuk 9, 19, 206; Shenk 28, 74, 85; Simson 38, 282-283; Stetzer and Putman 39-42, 87-88; Sweet 58, 98, 183; Tomlinson 7; Van Gelder 1, 2, 11, 24-25, 31, 34, 42-44, 47, 78-81, 86, 94, 112, 115, 118, 128-130, 142, 143-144, 145, 146, 152, 153, 157, 160, 162, 180; Ward 78-86; Webber 111-113, 139; Williams 14, 85-86, 89-90;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Embodying and Proclaiming the Kingdom and Reign of God

Barrett xiv, 36, 58, 72, 90, 106-109, 126-138, 153, 163, 171-172;
Clapp 167;
Cole 41-45, 55, 64-81, 84-89, 97-99, (59-105), 109, 113-140, 173;
Drane 148;
Frost and Hirsch 7, 12, 26-27, 45, 48, 50, 54, 66, 71, 100, 115, 123, 144, 147, 161, 162, 189, 206, 221, 229;
Gibbs 26, 51, 53, 62-63, 66, 97, 101, 185, 215;
Guder 10, 86-109, 93-94!, 100!, 110, 135-137, 185, 212, 228-230;
Hall 8, 21, 23,
Harvey 43, 46, 57-61, 68, 89, 92;
Hirsch 231;
Jinkins 32, 36, 60, 76, 96, 96;
Kelly 221;
Kenneson 73, 88, 91, 93, 95-96, 99, 102;
Kimball 202-203;
McLaren 36, 152;
Moynagh 48, 133, 135, 162, 189;
Murray (PC) 85, 306!;
Riddell 12;
| 12. Trinitarian Perspectives | Clapp 105, 174, 196, 230; Drane 159; Frost 146-147; Frost and Hirsch 120-121; Gibbs 152; Gibbs and Bolger 194; Guder 4-5, 82, 186, 188; Harvey 27, 154; Hunsberger 94, 285, 288, 369; Jinkins ix, 35, 36, 44-49, 83, 100, 109, 111; Kelly 130; McManus 171; Moynagh 38-40, 56, 144, 148, 152; Murray (CAC) 94; Riddell vii; Roxburgh and Romanuk 123-124; Shenk 86, 101; Van Gelder 11, 31, 33, 35, 96-97, 122, 128, 129-130, 139; Ward 49-55; Webber 243; Williams 20, 81, 84-85, 96, 99; |
14. Missional Systems, Structures and Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Pages/References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brewin</td>
<td>69-93, 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole</td>
<td>124-142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost and Hirsch</td>
<td>201-223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs</td>
<td>36, 83, 106, 111, 112, 226-228, 246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guder</td>
<td>204-212, 221-250, 267-268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunsberger</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren</td>
<td>41-51, 95-107, 224, 203-206, 209-221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McManus</td>
<td>14-20, 66-78, 79-94, 112-130, 186-198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (CAC)</td>
<td>139-144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh and Romanuk</td>
<td>21-26, 38, 40-60, 61-64, 79-108, 105, 167-168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stetzer and Putman</td>
<td>23-28, 44-58, 60-62, 211-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Gelder</td>
<td>15, 22-24, 74, 155-172, 172-179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>71-72, 110-112, 121, 126-135, 147-148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Missional and Ecclesiological Experimentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Pages/References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cole</td>
<td>195-217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drane</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost</td>
<td>100-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost and Hirsch</td>
<td>182-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs</td>
<td>159-162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs and Bolger</td>
<td>45, 71, 77, 160-161, 171-190, 224, 237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirsch</td>
<td>15, 27, 38, 66-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinkins</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>183, 208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimball</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren</td>
<td>7-8, 14-15, 19-26, 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McManus</td>
<td>109-110, 139-140, 182-183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moynagh</td>
<td>13-14, 22, 25, 40-42, 49-50, 76-84, 93-94, 143, 149-151, 173, 200-201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (CAC)</td>
<td>71-98, 113-117, 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (PC)</td>
<td>i, 252-253, 257-258, 275-276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddell</td>
<td>7, 14-15, 36, 42, 48, 96-101, 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh and Romanuk</td>
<td>41-45, 97-102, 146-152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simson</td>
<td>179-217, 236-239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stetzer and Putman</td>
<td>63-64, 66, 108-118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The Gifting of all Believers for Service, Ministry and Mission, and the Participatory Nature of Christian Worship</td>
<td>Barrett 85, 165-166; Brewin 85-90; Cole 131-134; Drane 47, 86, 89, 91; Frost and Hirsch 21, 68, 171; Gibbs 89, 226, 239-240; Gibbs and Bolger 45, 155-172, 168-169, 178, 190, 191-216, 236; Guder 195, 200, 210; Hirsch 163-164; Hunsberger 24, 67, 316, 318, 345; Kimball 257; Kreider 95-96, 97; McManus 172-173, 216; Moynagh 106-108, 115; Murray (CAC) 169-170; Murray (PC) 261-264, 307, 326, 332; Riddell 26-27, 32, 56-57, 125, 127-128; Roxburgh 63-65; Roxburgh and Romanuk 163-164, 167, 177-180; Shenk 35; Simson xvii-xix, xxxiii-xxxiv, 33-34, 57, 102-103, 111, 120-124; Stetzer and Putman 86, 144-147, 201-202; Sweet 261; Van Gelder 58, 145-147, 149, 152, 156, 160, 192; Ward 3, 38-39; Webber 120, 150-153; Williams 72, 135, 147;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Relationships: Networked, Fluid and Organic</td>
<td>Barrett 79; Cole 100-103, 114-118, 160-169; Drane 47, 149, 153-154, 159; Frost 131-135, 140; Gibbs 83, 85, 225; Gibbs and Bolger 52, 90, 97, 102, 110, 113-114; Guder 245; Hall 59-61; Harvey 12, 17; Hirsch 105-106, 168, 196-207; Hunsberger 152; Jinkins 97-99; Kelly 119, 131, 152, 157-158, 226-227; Moynagh 73-74, 80-81, 124-129, 151; Murray (CAC) 64, 83-87; Murray (PC) 254, 257, 275-276, 308-310; Riddell vii-ix, 3-4, 5-7, 11-13, 26, 46-47, 49, 51;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21a. Missional and Ecclesiological Holism and Activism: Justice, Ethics and Compassion</td>
<td>A. MISSIONAL AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL HOLISM AND ACTIVISM: Barrett 2, 6, 11, 27, 77-78, 80, 89, 93, 149-150, 162, 167-168; Clapp 40, 109-111, 113, 123, 199-204, 225; Cole 144-158; Drane ix-x, 14, 60-63, 71, 126; Frost v, 17-18, 45-49, 105-106, 125-129, 184-189, 199-228, 251-272; Frost and Hirsch chapter 8, pages 27, 107, 134-145, 159; Gibbs 64, 165, 238; Gibbs and Bolger 44-45, 53, 66-67, 72, 88, 140-143, 148-150, 227-228, 236; Guder 104-106, 108-109, 121-122, 133-135, 140, 170, 176-177, 179-180; Hall 46, 57-59;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 23. Denominationalism, Ecumenism, Catholicity, and Unity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrett</td>
<td>134-137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drane</td>
<td>17, 41, 48, 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost</td>
<td>136, 154-155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost and Hirsch</td>
<td>22, 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs</td>
<td>20-24, 57, 69-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs and Bolger</td>
<td>19, 29, 37, 111, 189, 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Güder</td>
<td>6-7, 61-73, (esp. 67-73), 74-75, 201, 216, 219, 236, 248-268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>7, 20-22, 26, 35, 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunsberger</td>
<td>4, 24-25, 43-45, 67, 286, 311-313, 334-335, 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinkins</td>
<td>3-5, 11, 39, 46-47, 58, 60-63, 65-67, 74-80, 82, 92, 94-95, 98-104, 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneson</td>
<td>15-17, 20, 103, 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren</td>
<td>44, 53-63, 122-123, 212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McManus</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moynagh</td>
<td>27, 29, 53-56, 83, 92, 97-100, 104, 121-122, 1531, 158-165!, 169, 199, 206-207, 210-242, 234, 236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (CAC)</td>
<td>67-70, 107-125, 139-144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddell</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenk</td>
<td>28, 85, 109-110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simson xxii</td>
<td>10, 37-39, 235-236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stetzer and Putman</td>
<td>170-179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>73, 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomlinson</td>
<td>8, 10, 27, 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Gelder</td>
<td>15-20, 25, 34-35, 46, 58, 60, 65-72, 74, 118-122, 169, 185, 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>94-97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Emerging-Missional Ecclesiological Considerations**  
(These final two subtitles were discussed, but, due to their place in their respective chapters, not analysed in the same way as the above categories) | Webber 18-19, 25, 30-32, 37-39, 59, 82, 110-112, 117, 120; Williams 17, 25, 43-44, 112, 126, 136-138, 140-141, 145-146; |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. Placing the Emphasis on <em>Emerging</em> or on <em>Missional</em></td>
<td>Hirsch 71-72, 280;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. The <em>Notae Ecclesia</em> of the Church</td>
<td>Williams 22-23, 96-99; Frost 144-157;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Background, Academic Qualifications and Professional Experience of the Authors of the EMCM Texts Researched

The purpose of this appendix is to provide more detail on the background, academic qualifications and professional experience of the author or authors of the EMCM texts researched, often with reference to their personal or professional WebPages, than was possible in chapter 3. Some authors will receive more extensive treatment and description than other authors, merely due to the greater breadth of their career and influence on missional ecclesiology and thinking in the West.

11.4.1 Lois Barrett

Lois Barrett was ordained by the Mennonite Church in Kansas, and holds a BA from the University of Oklahoma, an MDiv from the Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and a PhD in historical theology from The Union Institute, Ohio. She is currently the Director of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Kansas, and Associate Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies. She is also the Audit Research Manager of the Gospel and Our Culture Network, the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church, and a congregational and organizational consultant for the Church Innovations Institute. She has served as a pastor of a network of Mennonite house churches, and has written numerous books, book chapters, articles and essays, of which a list can be found on her online biography.¹

11.4.2 Ryan Bolger

Ryan Bolger holds two masters degrees and a PhD from Fuller Theological Seminary, and is Associate Professor of Church in Contemporary Culture in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He co-authored “Postmodern Forms of the Church” with Gibbs in *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation: Essays in Honour of Wilbert R. Shenk*, and co-authored *Emerging Churches* with Gibbs.² He served as the primary editor and convener of "The Local Church in Mission: Becoming a Missional Congregation in the Twenty-First Century Global Context” at the Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization in 2004.³

11.4.3 Kester Brewin

Kester Brewin is a schoolteacher in Inner London, and a writer for education journals. He is cofounder of the ‘Dreamspace’ weekend in London, and the alternative worship group Vaux.⁴

11.4.4 James Brownson

James Brownson is James and Jean Cook Professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary, Michigan, has a PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary, is a researcher for and member of the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North

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⁴ [http://thecomplexchrist.typepad.com/about.html](http://thecomplexchrist.typepad.com/about.html) and [http://www.vaux.net](http://www.vaux.net) (Both accessed December 7, 2008).
America, and is the author of *Speaking the Truth in Love*.5

11.4.5 Rodney Clapp

Rodney Clapp, formerly an associate editor at Christianity Today and, until spring 1999, senior editor for academic and general books at InterVarsity Press, has served on the editorial boards of The Journal of Family Ministry and Marriage Partnership. He has contributed to a range of publications, including *Christianity Today*, *Christian Century*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Perspectives*, *Regeneration Quarterly*, and *Books and Culture*. Clapp is now an editor with Brazos Press, a new imprint of Baker Book House, was the featured speaker at the Missional Church Convocation 2005, sponsored by the Center for Parish Development in Chicago, and was the featured presenter at the Pastors Week 2007 of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Indiana.6 Rodney Clapp has authored and co-authored many books.7

11.4.6 Neil Cole

Neil Cole is one of the founders and the Executive Director of Church Multiplication Associates. He is a seasoned pastor, church planter, author and church consultant. Cole also founded the Awakening Chapels, and other organic church planting movements.8

11.4.7 Andy Crouch

Andy Crouch’s ‘mission is to help North American Christians discover the meaning of the gospel in our cultural and global context.’ A senior editor at Christianity Today International, he was formerly Editorial Director for the Christian Vision Project. He is a columnist at Christianity Today, a member of the editorial board of Books and Culture, and a senior fellow of the International Justice Mission’s IJM Institute, ‘from 1998 to 2003 he was the editor-in-chief of re:generation quarterly, a magazine for an emerging generation of culturally creative Christians. For ten years, he was a campus minister with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Harvard University. He studied classics at Cornell University and received an MDiv summa cum laude from Boston University School of Theology.’

11.4.8 Inagrace Dietterich

Inagrace Dietterich is an ordained minister of the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church, and is the Director of Theological Research for the Center for Parish Development in Chicago, Illinois, which is an institute dedicated to preparing churches to be missional in contemporary western culture. Her PhD in theology was awarded from the University of Chicago Divinity School, she holds degrees from the University of Iowa, and the Wartburg Theological Seminary.

11.4.9 John Drane

John Drane was formerly Head of Practical Theology in the Department of Divinity at the University of Aberdeen, and holds a PhD in which he studied Gnosticism. He

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left that position in order to pursue writing and teaching about emerging culture and the missional nature and vocation of the church, especially in North America and the United Kingdom. Drane has taught theology and mission at colleges worldwide, including Morling College (Sydney), Fuller Seminary (Pasadena), Knox College (Dunedin), Surgeons’ College (London), and the Bible College of New Zealand (Christchurch). He is co-chair of the Mission Theology Advisory Group of the Archbishops Council of the Church of England and of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. He has written many books, and is currently writing the sequel to *The McDonaldisation of the Church*, which will include reflections on community, mission, ministry, education, and worship. The title will be *After McDonaldisation: How Not to Do Theology.*

11.4.10 William Dyrness

William Dyrness is Professor of Theology and Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, California, was a founding member of the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology and the Arts, and has a DTheol from the University of Strasbourg, and postdoctoral degrees from the Free University, Amsterdam, and Cambridge University. He has published work in theology and culture, apologetics, theology and art, and global missions.

11.4.11 Michael Frost

Michael Frost is Vice Principal (Faculty Development) of Morling Baptist Theological College in Sydney, Australia, completed a Doctor of Ministry degree in

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missional ecclesiology through the Australian College of Theology, and holds an MA, BTh, and DipTeach. Since 1999, he has been the Founding Director of the Tinsley Institute (formerly the Centre for Evangelism and Global Mission), which ‘is a resource and study centre committed to equipping and mobilising mission-minded leadership in the Australian church.’

Michael is possibly the leading evangelical evangelist in Australia, and speaks at churches, schools and conferences around Australia and overseas. Along with Alan Hirsch, he has been the co-director in the establishment of Forge, an Australian, innovative, missional training network for young leaders, and is on the board of the Australian Arrow Leadership Development Program. He has written seven books, and is the founding director of the Evangelism Intern Scheme. In 2002, he planted the missional community, *Small Boat, Big Sea* in Manly, Sydney.

11.4.12 Craig Van Gelder

Craig Van Gelder is Professor of Congregational Mission at Luther Theological Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, an ordained minister of the Christian Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church, and previously served as Professor of Domestic Missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan. His education includes a BA and an MDiv, a PhD from the University of Texas in administration in urban affairs, and a PhD from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in missiology.

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11.4.13 Edmund Gibbs

Edmund Gibbs is Senior Professor of Church Growth in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and has been at that seminary since 1984. He is also the Director of the Institute for the Study of Emerging Churches, in the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts. He is in demand as a speaker and teacher in emerging churches, evangelism and church growth around the world. He has been involved in mission in North America, and in Santiago and Quilpie, Chile, and has taught about mission to Western and emerging cultures in North America, Singapore, Korea, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and South Africa. Gibbs holds a BD from London University, and a DMin from Fuller Theological Seminary.¹⁷

11.4.14 Darrell Guder

Darrell Guder is Princeton Theological Seminary’s Dean of Academic Affairs and the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology, and the vice president of the American Society of Missiology. Formerly he has served as the Peachtree Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at Columbia Theological Seminary, the Benfield Professor of Evangelism and Mission at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and completed his PhD at the University of Hamburg. ‘His writing and teaching focus on the theology of the missional church, especially the theological implications of the paradigm shift to post-Christendom as the context for Christian mission in the West.’¹⁸

11.4.15  **Douglas Hall**

Douglas Hall is Emeritus Professor of Christian Theology in the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University, Montreal, where he served on the faculty from 1975-1995, and holds a BA, MDiv and STM, and four doctorates, being a ThD, DD, LLD and DD. Previous to his role at McGill, he held the positions of Principal of St Paul’s United College at the University of Waterloo in Southern Ontario, and then was appointed as a Professor of Systematic Theology at St Andrew’s Seminary located at the University of Saskatchewan. He has authored seventeen books.

11.4.16  **Barry Harvey**

Barry Harvey has been the Associate Professor of Theology in the Honors College of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, since 1988. He holds a BME and MME from the University of Colorado, an MDiv from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a PhD from Duke University. Harvey is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the International Bonheoffer Society, and the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion.

11.4.17  **John Hendrick**

John Hendrick is Emeritus Professor of Mission and Evangelism at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Texas, and served as a pastor in Arkansas and Texas and as executive presbyter for the Presbytery of New Covenant. He is the author of three books on mission and evangelism to western culture, detailed on his

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11.4.18  Alan Hirsch

Alan Hirsch is the Founding Director of Forge Mission Training Network, a missional action-learning network focused on developing missional leaders in Western contexts, and especially in Australia and New Zealand. He has written two books, has been involved in church planting and mission in inner city Melbourne, and has been director of Mission and Revitalization for the Churches of Christ in Victoria, Australia. He was Team Leader of South Melbourne Restoration Community for fifteen years, has recently planted a new missional community in Melbourne, and will head off to the United States in 2007 in order to begin a PhD in missional ecclesiology.

11.4.19  Walter Hobbs

Walter Hobbs is the Associate Professor Emeritus, Educational Organization, Administration and Policy, in the faculty of Higher Education, at The State University of New York at Buffalo. Prior to his retirement, he served as the Director of Institutional Research of that university, as well as a professor in the faculty of Higher Education. He has a PhD in sociology, a JD, and an honorary LLD.

11.4.20  Michael Horton

Michael Horton is J. Gresham Machen Professor of Apologetics and Systematic

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Theology at Westminster Seminary in California, the editor-in-chief of Modern Reformation magazine, and the main host of The White Horse Inn radio broadcast. He received an MA from Westminster Seminary, California, a PhD from Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and the University of Coventry, and he completed a Research Fellowship at Yale University Divinity School. He is the author or editor of more than fifteen books, a minister in the United Reformed Churches of North America, and has served as a pastor in two churches in southern California.24

11.4.21   George Hunsberger

George Hunsberger is the Professor of Congregational Mission at Western Theological Seminary, Michigan. He holds a BA from Belhaven College, an MDiv from the Reformed Theological Seminary, and a PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary, in which he wrote a thesis on Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of cultural plurality. He is the Coordinator of the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. He has authored numerous articles and review on missiology and culture.25

11.4.22   Michael Jinkins

Michael Jinkins is Professor of Pastoral Theology and Academic Dean of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas. He has a PhD from Kings College, University of Aberdeen, a DMin from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, an MDiv from SouthWestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a BA from Howard Payne University. He has been a professor at Austin since 1993, after serving as a pastor in Itasca, Texas and Aberdeen. He has authored over seventy published papers, articles, and reviews, and has written nine books. He was awarded

an Oxford Foundation Fellowship by the Graduate Theological Foundation of Oxford University during research leave in England in 1999. He has been a visiting lecturer at Oxford University, the University of London, Cambridge University, and Regent College in Vancouver.26

11.4.23 E. Dixon Junkin

E. Dixon Junkin is a Presbyterian minister who was formerly Dean of the Institute for Christian Formation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Stony Point, New York.27

11.4.24 Christopher Kaiser

Christopher Kaiser is Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Western Theological Seminary, Michigan, has a PhD in astrogeophysics from the University of Colorado and a PhD in Christian dogmatics and divinity from the University of Edinburgh, and his book *Creation Theology and the History of Physical Science* was awarded a John Templeton Prize for Outstanding Books in Science and Religion.28 He is actively involved in the Theological Commission of the Reformed Church in America, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America.29

11.4.25 Gerard Kelly

Gerard Kelly is senior pastor of Crossroads International Church, Amsterdam, is a director of Spring Harvest, which equips churches through events and courses, and is the founder of Bless Europe, a mission agency working throughout Europe and the

United Kingdom.³⁰

11.4.26 Philip Kenneson

Philip Kenneson has been the Associate Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Milligan College, TN, since 1998, and was the Assistant Professor of the same faculty from 1992-1998. He received a BA from Butler University, an MDiv from Emmanuel School of Religion, and a PhD from Duke University majoring in theology and ethics. He has previously taught at Duke University in the Department of Religion. He has authored over twenty articles and essays, and over twenty-five book reviews, all of which are listed on his personal webpage.³¹

11.4.27 Dan Kimball

Dan Kimball founded the ‘Graceland’ worship services at Santa Cruz Bible Church, and a sister missional church called Vintage Faith Church, in Santa Cruz, California. He is a member of the Emergent-YS (Youth Specialties, El Cajon, California) board.³²

11.4.28 Cathy Kirkpatrick

Cathy Kirkpatrick runs seminars on alternative and emerging styles of worship, and is involved in leading Café Church in Glebe, Sydney, which is an initiative designed to connect postmodern spiritual-seekers with the Christian message through food and the creative arts, and is connected with Glebe Uniting Church.³³

11.4.29  **Jeff Van Kooten**

Jeff Van Kooten is a senior consultant with The Center for Generational Studies, Aurora, Colorado, which conducts research and training on how American generations can better integrate and relate to one another in the marketplace and workplace, as well as associated missional issues. He has served as the senior pastor of The Outpost, which is a Christian Reformed Church of Colorado church plant, teaches Bible and theology to 10th – 12th grades at Denver Christian High School, and holds an MTh, a BA in Communication, and a BA in Psychology. He is president of Mazeway, ‘which exists to explore the interface between cultural change and biblical faith.’

11.4.30  **Alan Kreider**

Alan Kreider was ordained at the London Mennonite Fellowship in 1975, and has been the Professor of Church History and Mission at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary since 2004. He received his PhD from Harvard University, and has been the recipient of a Danforth Fellowship, a Harvard Travelling Fellowship, and an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship.

Kreider was Assistant and Associate Professor of History at Goshen College 1968-1983, and spent 1974-2000 in England as a Missionary with the Mennonite Board of Missions. From 1979-1983 he was also an Adjunct Lecturer in Church History at London Bible College. From 1991-95 he was an Adjunct Lecturer in Church History at the University of Manchester, and a Theologian in Residence at the Northern

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Baptist College. From 1995-2000 he served as Director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture, Regents Park College, Oxford, and was a member of the Oxford University Theology Faculty. In 2004, he was appointed as Associate Professor of Church History and Mission at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He has written many books and articles, which are listed in his online Curriculum Vitae.37

11.4.31  Frederica Mathewes-Green

Frederica Mathewes-Green is an acclaimed author from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, whose writings have been published in the Washington Post, Christianity Today, Smithsonian, the Los Angeles Times, First Things, Books and Culture, Sojourners, Touchstone, and the Wall Street Journal. She has written seven books and over six hundred articles. She has taught theology and other subjects at Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Cornell, Calvin, Baylor, the Smithsonian Institute, the American Academy of Religion, and other institutions. With her husband, she pastors the Holy Cross Orthodox Church near Baltimore. She received a BA in English from the University of South Carolina, and a MA in Theological Studies from Virginia Episcopal Seminary.38

11.4.32  Brian McLaren

Brian McLaren is possibly the most influential voice and author of the Emerging-Missional church in North America. He is the founder of Cedar Ridge Community Church, Spencerville, Maryland. He holds a BA and an MA in English language and literature. He has authored and co-authored many books, contributed chapters to

others, and written many articles. He has served on the boards of Mars Hill Graduate School, http://www.theooze.com, Three Springs Ministries, and Emergent/YS books. He is also a coach, consultant, educator, trainer, and networker for Emerging-Missional church leaders in North America and around the world.39

11.4.33 Erwin McManus

Erwin McManus is the Lead Pastor and Cultural Architect of Mosaic in Los Angeles, California, an Emerging-Missional congregation that is widely acclaimed.40 He consults to congregations and denominations internationally on culture, change, leadership and missional innovation, and serves as Distinguished Lecturer and Futurist for Bethel Theological Seminary. McManus received a BA in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and an MDiv from the South-Western Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.41 He is the founder of Awaken, ‘a collaboration of dreamers committed to creating environments that expand imagination and unleash creativity. Convinced that the world is changed by dreamers and visionaries, Awaken serves the purpose of history by maximizing the divine potential in every human being.’42

11.4.34 Michael Moynagh

Michael Moynagh is the Director of the Tomorrow Project, which analyses emerging trends and issues in British culture, and provides training and consultation on their findings.43 He is a visiting professor and tutor at St John’s College, Nottingham, holds BA, MA and PhD degrees in history and commonwealth area studies, and an

41 McManus, An Unstoppable Force. From the book’s dust jacket.
MA in political theology. He was assistant curate at Emmanuel Church, Northwood, 1985-1989, and team rector at Wilton, Taunton, 1989-1996. He has served as a member of many evangelical, academic and professional boards, and has published a number of articles and books.

11.4.35 Stuart Murray

Stuart Murray is Associate Lecturer in Church Planting and Mission at Spurgeon’s College in London, chair of the UK Anabaptist Network, and director of Urban Expression, which is an innovative church planting agency. He holds a LIB and DipTheol, and a PhD in Anabaptist hermeneutics. For twelve years he was an urban church planter in East London, and he continues to be involved in church planting, urban mission, Emerging-Missional churches, and missional consulting through the UK Anabaptist Network. For nine years, he was Oasis Director of Church Planting and Evangelism at Spurgeon’s College. Murray ‘has written several books on church planting, urban mission, emerging church, the challenge of post-Christendom and the contribution of the Anabaptist tradition to contemporary missiology.’

11.4.36 Mark Pierson

Mark Pierson began working with a dying congregation in Auckland in 1993, and transitioned that church into a vibrant, internationally recognized, missional, alternative-worship-oriented, urban community called Cityside Baptist Community Church. In 2007 he resigned from the position of Executive Director of an inner city mission organization called Urban Seed. He has produced a CD-ROM full of

resources for alternative and creative worship called *Fractals for Worship: Alternative Resources for the Emerging Church*.45

11.4.37 David Putman

David Putman is one of the pastors at Mountain Lake Church in North Atlanta, which has grown to nearly two-thousand attendees in its six years of existence.46 Prior to pastoring, he served with the North American Mission Board’s Nehemiah Project developing church planting internships and training programs, and shaping the church planting strategy for the North American Mission Board and its fifteen-hundred annual church plants.

11.4.38 Mike Riddell

Mike Riddell is a free-lance journalist, playwright, novelist, screenwriter and author. His play about New Zealand poet James K Baxter was met with wide acclaim, and led to him touring New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the Edinburgh Fringe. He holds a PhD from the University of Otago, on James K Baxter’s contribution to New Zealand spirituality, and his novel *The Insatiable Moon* was adapted in New Zealand for film.47 For nine years, he served as pastor of Ponsonby Baptist Church, while working as a journalist for New Outlook and as a part-time lecturer at Baptist College. He also established the Community of Refuge Trust, ‘…a community housing initiative providing accommodation for psychiatric patients and low-income tenants.’48

11.4.39  Fred Romanuk

Fred Romanuk is an organisational consultant who holds a doctorate in clinical and organizational psychology from York University, in Toronto, Canada. Fred has worked with large national and international organizations in the management of change and in leadership development, and has led major strategic planning initiatives for Panasonic in New Jersey, Hoechst Celanese in Montreal, British Electricity International in London, UK, the Canadian Gas Association in Toronto, the United Way in Ottawa, and many other organizations in Canada and the United States. 49

11.4.40  Alan Roxburgh

Alan Roxburgh is the Vice President for Allelon Canada, the team leader for the Mission in Western Culture Project, and an ordained Baptist minister who has pastored several churches over a period of thirty-seven years, including West Vancouver Baptist Church. He was previously the President of the Missional Leadership Institute, North Vancouver, BC, and the Professor of Evangelism and Mission at the McMaster Divinity School of the University of Toronto. The Missional Leadership Institute provided training and consultation to churches and denominations in the area of missional transformation and leadership within western cultures. He holds an MTh in philosophical theology, and a DMin. Roxburgh is a core member of the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. ‘Alan teaches in numerous seminaries as well as lecturing and consulting all over North America, Australia and Europe in the areas of leadership, transition, systems change and missional theology’, and his current research includes ‘a Lilly Endowment

funded research project for the Gospel and Our Culture Network on the nature of systems interventions for the missional transformation of denominations.  

11.4.41 Paul Satari

Paul Satari is lay pastor for missions and evangelism at the Wesley Methodist Church, Singapore, and is included in The Church Between Gospel and Culture because of the insightfulness of his article “Translatability” in the Missional Approach of Lamin Sanneh.  

11.4.42 David Scotchmer

David Scotchmer was Associate Professor of Mission and Evangelism at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, until his sudden death on February 25, 1995. He earned a PhD from the State University of New York at Albany, for fourteen was a Presbyterian missionary in Guatemala, and he remained involved in ministry to the Guatemalan people and church until his death.  

11.4.43 Wilbert Shenk

Wilbert Shenk has been the Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture in the School of Intercultural Studies of Fuller Theological Seminary since 1995. He holds a BA and an MA, and a PhD from the University of Aberdeen. He has previously been the director of the Mission Training Center and associate professor of mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, director of the Overseas Ministries Division of the Mennonite Board of Missions, and is a founding professor of theology at the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York.  

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52 Ibid. p.x.
Wolfgang Simson is a strategy consultant, researcher, theologian and journalist who holds an MTh from the Free Evangelical Theological Academy, Basel, Switzerland, where he has taught courses on church growth and missiology. He is also a church planter who focuses on house-based churches. He is a board member of both the British and the German Church Growth Associations, member of the Lausanne Movement in Germany, editor of the *The Fridayfax*, and author of several books. He has been involved with the DAWN movement since 1996, a church planting movement dedicated to ‘mobilising the whole body of Christ towards the goal of raising 20,000 associates who will train 2 million church planters to plant 20 million churches by 2020’, mainly through ‘saturation church planting’.  

Ed Stetzer is a seasoned church planter, trainer of pastors and church planters, and a former Professor at the Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He holds a PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a DMin from Beeson Divinity School. He serves as the Missiologist and Research Team Director at the North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, GA and co-pastor of Lake Ridge Church in Cumming, GA. He is also a Visiting Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.


and at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.55

11.4.46  Linford Stutzman

Linford Stutzman is the Director of the Coffman Center for Evangelism and Church Planting and Associate Professor of Culture and Mission at the Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia. He has served with Eastern Mennonite Missions in Germany and Eastern Europe for eight years and in Australia for four years, and holds a PhD from the Catholic University of America.56

11.4.47  Leonard Sweet

Leonard Sweet is the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School, Madison, New Jersey, and Visiting Distinguished Professor at George Fox University, Portland, Oregon. He has been Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Theological School at Drew University, President and Professor of Church History at United Theological Seminary, and Provost of Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Divinity School. He is the author of more than one hundred articles, six hundred published sermons, and thirty-seven books. He is the founder and president of SpiritVenture Ministries, the creator of SoulCafe, which is a newsletter for postmodern missional innovators, and a sought-after speaker, seminary lecturer, and consultant on missional ecclesiology.57 He received a PhD from the University of Rochester. In 2006, he was voted ‘One of the 50 Most Influential Christians in America’.58

11.4.48    Steve Taylor

Steve Taylor planted Graceway Baptist Church in Ellerslie, New Zealand,\(^{59}\) pastoring it for eight years, and is now the lead pastor of Opawa Baptist Church\(^{60}\) in Christchurch, where he is leading the church through a period of missional transition and change. He has lectured part-time at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, and the University of Auckland. He holds an MTh in contextual atonement images and communicating the cross within postmodernism, and a PhD in mission and worship in a postmodern world, and is on staff at Laidlaw College in Auckland (formerly the Bible College of New Zealand).\(^{61}\) Taylor runs a popular website for people exploring missional issues at http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.

11.4.49    Dave Tomlinson

Dave Tomlinson led within the house church movement of the United Kingdom for twenty-five years, was formerly the leader of Holy Joe’s, an innovative Emerging-Missional church meeting in a London pub, and is the vicar of St Luke's Church, West Holloway, in North London.\(^{62}\) He holds a masters degree in Biblical Interpretation.

11.4.50    Pete Ward

Pete Ward has been Lecturer in Youth Ministry and Theological Education, and Programme Director for the MA in Youth Ministry and the Doctorate in Ministry, at King’s College in London since 1998, where he teaches courses on theological


perspectives on youth ministry, cultural theology, missiology, youth, worship, and the Emerging-Missional church. He holds a BA in theology, an MA in theology and culture, and a PhD from King’s College in London. He has served as the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Advisor for Youth Ministry, Team Co-ordinator for Oxford Youth Works, and in a variety of local church and chaplaincy settings. Ward has authored seven books, edited several others, and written a few articles, all of which are listed on his webpage.63

11.4.51 David Watson

David Lowes Watson serves as the Interim Senior Pastor of West End United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN, and was formerly the Executive Secretary for Covenant Discipleship and Christian Formation at the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. He has also served as the Professor of Congregational Life and Mission at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC, and has a PhD from Duke University. Before Wesley Seminary, he was Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology and Director of Covenant Discipleship for The United Methodist Church. He has authored six books.64

11.4.52 Robert Webber

Robert Webber was William R and Geraldyn B Myers Chair of Ministry and Director of MA in Worship and Spirituality at Northern Seminary, Lombard, Illinois.65 He held a ThD from Concordia Theological Seminary, a ThM from Covenant Theological Seminary, a BD from Reformed Episcopal Seminary, and a BA from Bob Jones University. He conducted workshops throughout North America

on evangelism, discipleship, spiritual formation in postmodernity, mission to western cultures and worship renewal, and was the president of the Institute for Worship Studies, Jacksonville, Florida, which he founded in 1995. He authored over 40 books on worship, missiology and the Church. He was Emeritus Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, where he served as Professor of Theology from 1968-2000. Webber died of pancreatic cancer on April 27, 2007.

11.4.53 Charles West

Charles West is Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey. He has authored ten books, and co-authored and edited several others.66

11.4.54 Rowan Williams

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who holds a DPhil from Oxford University, is a member of Her Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, and is a member of the United Kingdom’s national academy for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, wrote the foreword to the Mission-Shaped Church report. He is the Primate of All England, senior archbishop of the Church of England, and the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

11.4.55 Working Group of the Church of England’s Mission and Public Affairs Council

The following excerpt is from the introduction to the Mission-Shaped Church

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66 Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds., The Church between Gospel and Culture, p.x.
Mission-Shaped Church is a report from a working group of the Church of England’s Mission and Public Affairs Council and is commended by the Council for study. Membership of the working group:
Rt Revd Graham Cray (Chair), Bishop of Maidstone.
Revd Moira Astin, Team Vicar of Thatcham, Diocese of Oxford, and member of Board of Mission to 2002.
John Clark, Director, Mission and Public Affairs, Archbishops’ Council.
Revd Damian Feeney, Team Rector of Ribbleton, Diocese of Blackburn.
Canon Robert Freeman (Secretary), National Evangelism Adviser, Archbishops’ Council, Archdeacon of Halifax from September 2003.
Revd Sally Gaze, Team Rector of Tas Valley Team Ministry, Diocese of Norwich.
Revd Graham Horsley, Secretary for Evangelism and Church Planting, Methodist Church.
Revd George Lings, Director, Church Army Sheffield Centre.
Gill Poole, Church Mission Society Area Team Leader.67

11.4.56 Dale Ziemer

Dale Ziemer is ordained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, has served fourteen years in pastoral ministry, and is the Managing Director of the Center for Parish Development in Chicago, which is a centre that seeks to equip churches to be

missionally effective in their given cultural contexts.\textsuperscript{68} He holds an MA in organizational development from the Leadership Institute of Seattle/City University, and an MTh from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

\textsuperscript{68} \url{http://www.missionalchurch.org/index.html} and \url{http://www.missionalchurch.org/pages/staff.htm} (Both accessed December 7, 2008).
11.5 Appendix 5: Customised Emerging-Missional Church

Google Search Engine

These are the eighty-nine EMCM-related websites searched by the search engine located at http://gatheringinlight.com/2006/11/04/customized-emerging-church-google-search-engine/, as of December 7, 2008:

- http://www.jesuscreed.org/
- http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/
- http://markjberry.blogs.com/way_out_west/
- http://www.subversiveinfluence.com/wordpress
- http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/jonnybaker/
- http://inhiscourts.blogspot.com/
- http://www.nathancolquhoun.com
- http://submerge.typepad.com/
- http://thebolgblog.typepad.com/thebolgblog/
- http://cleave.blogs.com/pomomusings/
- http://www.backyardmissionary.com/
- http://www.opensourcetheology.net/
- http://setsnservice.wordpress.com/
- http://aboulet.blogspot.com/
- http://www.vanguardchurch.blogspot.com/
- http://www.dankimball.com/vintage_faith/
- http://www.thegreatgiveaway.blogspot.com/
- http://www.drewmoser.blogspot.com/
- http://www.emergentvillage.us/
- http://emergingwomen.blogspot.com/
- http://www.brianmclaren.net/
- http://www.emergentvoyageurs.blog.com/
- http://www.jazztheologian.typepad.com/
- http://www.jesustheradicalpastor.blogspot.com/
- http://avoicedcrying.blogspot.com/
- http://nextrereformation.com/
- http://lifeasmission.com
- http://www.leronshults.typepad.com/
- http://foolishsage.com/
- http://mcknightro.blogspot.com/
- http://www.ysmarko.com/
- http://www.meremission.org/
- http://blogs.ignite.cd/Pete/
- http://www.purplepastor.com/
- http://sivinkit.net/
- http://www.faithmaps.blogspot.com/
- http://www.stevekmccoy.com/reformissionary/
- http://www.theoblogy.blogspot.com/
http://philosophicalpastor.wordpress.com/
http://willzhead.typepad.com/willzhead/
http://www.wineskins.org/
http://www.pernellgoodyear.com/
http://ajschwanz.com/
http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz/lynne
http://smallritual.blogs.com/small_ritual/
http://prodigal.typepad.com/
http://www.signposts.org.au/
http://www.caterina.net/
http://maggidawn.typepad.com/
http://kim.blogs.the-open-door.org/
http://www.synagogue3000.org/synablog/
http://www.jenlemen.com/blog/
http://www.theooze.com/main.cfm
http://thesimpleway.org
http://dolovewalk.org/
http://www.martinkelley.org/
http://kline.blogspot.com/
http://www.alancreech.com/
http://postmodernegro.blogspot.com/
http://thecorner.typepad.com/
http://blog.the-next-wave-ezine.info/
http://www.djchuang.com/
http://pagitt.typepad.com/pagittblog/
http://www.livingroom.org.au/blog/
http://emergent-us.typepad.com/emergentus/
http://fernandogros.com/
http://sojourner.typepad.com/house_church_blog/
http://moott.uk.net/blog/moottblog.htm
http://jasonclark.emergent-uk.org/
http://a51t15.blogspot.com/
http://www.theshiverian.com/weblog/blogger.html
http://ginkworld.blogspot.com/
http://onehouse.blogs.com/onehouse/
http://www.radicalcongruency.com/
http://thecomplexchrist.typepad.com/
http://www.kevinrains.com/
http://aidanslegacy.typepad.com/lillylewin/
http://www.liquidthinking.org/
http://palmerlp.livejournal.com/
http://www.whatischurch.com/mustardseed/
http://www.urbanonramps.com/
http://twoandtwomakesfive.blogs.com/two_and_two_makes_five/
http://thebluefish.blogspot.com/
http://theashram.blogspot.com/
http://gatheringinlight.com
http://submerge.typepad.com/submergence/
http://cavepainter.typepad.com/
http://unfinished.typepad.com/i_am_unfinished/
http://sojournhuntsville.org/
http://wiki.ikon.org.uk/wiki/
http://www.jrwoodward.net/
http://www.trotank.se/blog/
http://www.kylemason.blogspot.com/
http://emergingsa.wordpress.com
http://www.futurechurch.co.za/regeneration.php
http://www.stretchychurch.com/
http://wiredchurch.net
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Wright, N. "Disavowing Constantine: Mission, Church and the Social Order in the Theologies of John Howard Joder and Jürgen Moltmann." Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Published With the Same Title by Wright, N. - Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2000), King's College London, 1994.


[Author Name] *Faith and Order Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*: Faith and Order Consultation with Younger Theologians Held at Turku, Finland, 3-11 August 1995.


[Author Name] "The Unity of the Church in the Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries." Doctor of Theology Thesis, Theological Faculty of the University of Athens, 1965.