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An Exploration of the Emerging-Missional Conversation with a Special Focus on 'Missional Leadership' and Its Challenges for Theological Education

Robert Doornenbal

Crossroads

Eburon

CROSSROADS

AN EXPLORATION OF THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON 'MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP' AND ITS CHALLENGES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Crossroads

An Exploration of the Emerging-Missional Conversation with a Special Focus on 'Missional Leadership' and Its Challenges for Theological Education

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ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor
aan de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. L.M. Bouter,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
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door

Robartus Jan Albert Doornenbal

geboren te Voorburg

promotor: prof.dr. R.R. Ganzevoort
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Jeremiah 6:16 —

Thus says the Lord: Stand at the crossroads,
and look, and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls...

God help us to change.
To change ourselves
  and to change the world.
To know the need for it.
To deal with the pain of it.
To feel the joy of it.
To undertake the journey
  without understanding the destination.
The art of gentle revolution.
Amen.

Source: Michael Leunig, *Common Prayer Collection* (North Blackburn: HarperCollins, 1993) quoted in Darren Cronshaw, "Australians Beyond the Church: Growing Fresh Expressions of Church Today" (Canberra: University House, 5-7 October 2009), 1.

    I will try
  to fasten into order enlarging grasps of disorder, widening
scope, but enjoying the freedom that
Scope eludes my grasp, that there is not finality of vision,
that I have perceived nothing completely,
    that tomorrow a new walk is a new walk.

Source: A.R. Ammons, finale of "Corsons Inlet," in *Collected Poems: 1951-1971* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 151.

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FOREWORD

In 2006, I began to read articles, blogs and books by participants within the 'Emerging Church Movement'. I immediately felt at home with their searching questions about church and church structure, leadership and leadership education, cultural developments, missiology and related issues, because these overlapped substantially with my own. Later on, I became aware of discussions about the nascent 'Missional Church Movement', which also appeared to be relevant and worthy of consideration.

A year later, an agreement between the Theology Faculty of the VU University Amsterdam and my employer, the Academy of Theology of *Christelijke Hogeschool Ede*,[1] enabled me to pursue a PhD. I conducted my research one day per week over the course of five years, the result of which is this dissertation.

The journey that I enthusiastically set out on has been challenging, even daunting at times. Without the input, fellowship and support of many companions along the way, I would have been lost in a vast and complicated territory that, in Dutch scholarship, had been largely unexplored when I started out; or I would have succumbed under the pressures of combining this pioneering research with my many other responsibilities.

Prof. Dr. Ruard Ganzevoort, my promoter, accepted the task of guiding me on this journey; his keen insight, probing questions, and predilection for clear and structured forms of argumentation helped me to get a better handle on my methodological choices, recognize distractions for what they were, and press on toward the goal. Later on, Dr. Sake Stoppels joined him in this task as my co-promoter. Together they witnessed my research develop from its (now almost unrecognizable) embryonic stages into its present form, greatly facilitating this process with their pertinent criticisms, helpful suggestions, and patience as they commented on draft chapters that appeared to be in dire need of repair. Ruard and Sake: I owe you more than I can put into words here; thank you very, *very* much!

My friend Marc Nommensen also gave detailed feedback on every draft chapter. His legally trained mind, a never ending source of witty responses, helped me uncover *non sequiturs*, avoid unnecessary jargon, and, especially, make explicit thoughts that were in my mind but had not yet found their way out. Thank you Marc, for your impressive and devoted work!

A number of other people need to be mentioned here, whom I am very grateful to for their extremely helpful feedback. Dr. Johan Hegeman read the first full draft; his frank assessment helped me to write a second one which proved to be, in many ways, much more to the point. Theologian Raymond Volgers MA spent many hours of the little spare time he had in a detailed reading of the first seven chapters, providing suggestions for improvement, as well as some encouragement, which came just when it was needed.

[1] Ede Christian University of Applied Sciences.

At different stages, I received some input, by e-mail or in conversation, on various parts of the dissertation, for which I would like to thank the following persons: from the USA, Prof. Dr. Craig Van Gelder, and Drs. Kurt Fredrickson, Kyle Small, and Dwight Zscheile (who also kindly sent me a draft copy of an important book he edited); from the UK, Drs. Jason Clark and Stuart Murray Williams; from the Netherlands, Drs. Jack Barentsen, René Erwich, and Theo Hettema; Prof. Dr. Stefan Paas, and Prof. Dr. Marcel Sarot; as well Nico-Dirk van Loo MA, and Edwin Verloop.

I also received important feedback on my paper on Missional Leadership, presented at the Meeting of the International research Consortium on Congregational Studies, held in Copenhagen between 9 and 11 April 2010, with its generous host Prof. Dr. Hans Raun Iversen. It was a privilege to be with you, and I greatly enjoyed the conversations I had with the participants! One of these participants was Prof. Dr. Michael Herbst from Greifswald, who later on was willing to read and comment on my thesis, for which I am grateful.

Since there were very few primary and secondary sources available on the Emerging-Missional Conversation (as I came to call it) in Dutch academic libraries, I was glad that the theologians Dirk-Jan Horjus MA, Haije Bergstra MA, and Dr. René Erwich let me leave their homes with piles of books. In addition, I am indebted to the following persons who were willing to e-mail me their PhD theses: these were, from Australia, Drs. Darren Cronshaw and Paul Emerson Teusner; from Hungary, Dr. Alan Weaver; from the UK, Drs. Janine Morgan and Karyn Wiseman; and from the USA, Drs. Scott Davis, Terri Elton, Kurt Fredrickson, Todd Hobart, Renee House, Gary Simpson, Bryan Sims, Kyle Small, and Claire Smith. I also want to mention here the impeccable service of the *mediatheek* of the Christelijke Hogeschool Ede, as exemplified in its manager Gert-Jan Kraaikamp, and his assistants Wilma den Hartogh and Vera Hafkamp.

The empirical part of my research, conducted in three theological faculties in the Low Countries, would not have succeeded without the assistance of many people: students who were willing to participate in focus groups; teachers who carved out time for an interview; two Deans and one Director of Education who allowed me to question them and who twice commented on the drafts; and secretaries from the institutions. Dr. Henk van den Bosch and Trudy Struijs MA of Hydepark Seminary also helped by providing valuable support in logistical matters – through them I would like to thank the more than twenty people who contributed to my being able to complete chapter 10.

As my journey led me to explore a milieu in which English is the lingua franca, I decided to 'go native' in this respect, which proved to be a challenge in and of itself. The comments of my colleague from the CHE, Dr. Marga van Gent-Petter, did much to improve my English, for which I thank her deeply. However, the definitive draft, which was quite different from previous ones, still needed to be corrected, and formatted into the 'Chicago style'; a thankless job that theology student and native speaker Samuel Bussey took upon himself to complete, with the help of his wife Maartje.

Let me put it this way: for both of us, as well as for our spouses, the Christmas holiday of 2011 proved to be an unforgettable time. The pain-staking and unrelenting effort that Sam put into formatting the present text (the remaining faults being my own) reminds me of another Sam, helping Frodo to complete his quest.

Last, but definitely not least, I want to express my great gratitude and love for my wife Margreet, who has supported me in every possible way during the past years; in more ways, that is, than can be mentioned here. Without her loyalty, love, encouragement and flexibility there would be no thesis; it's as simple as that.

My very last words are reserved for something that some readers might think to be bordering on impertinence, or testifying of a naïve pietism; be that as it may, I want to thank the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for His enduring patience with, and totally undeserved grace for what, from time to time, must surely be one of His most troubled and unruly – but still loyal – children.

CHAPTER 1. *INTRODUCTION*: 'EMERGING-MISSIONAL' CONVERSATIONS ON CHURCH, CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

1.1 The Adaptive Challenge and Dutch Protestant Churches

Between 1970 and 2005, the percentage of Dutch people connected to a Christian church declined from 75% to 45%.[2] The active membership of most protestant churches is still shrinking – and graying – each year. It is expected that during the coming decades, scores of local congregations will be unable to pay a full-time pastor, some will have to leave their current church buildings (hundreds of which will either be demolished or put to some other use[3]), and still other congregations will disappear altogether. In the meantime, it is increasingly difficult to find church members who are willing and capable to hold church office, including the full-time pastorate, while many pastors feel incompetent to deal with the increasing complexity and pressures of their ministry. These circumstances pose a formidable challenge to institutional churches and their congregational leaders, especially when seen in combination with other general cultural trends like pluralism, consumerism, and postmodernity – with its openness to doubts and questions, and its emphasis on relational networks, rather than impersonal institutions.

We submit that churches in the Netherlands face an *adaptive challenge*, comparable to that of many secular organizations in our fast-changing world. As Ronald Heifetz theorizes,[4] adaptive challenges arise when deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values and solutions that once worked well become less appropriate, and when legitimate, yet competing, perspectives emerge. An adaptive problem will not go away by ignoring it, nor by technical solutions (cf. the proverbial "rearranging the chairs on the Titanic"). The organization or congregation itself needs to *change* its vision and practices thoroughly.[5] If it does not adapt to the challenges presented by the current reality, it beco-

---

[2] Jos Becker and Joep de Hart, *Godsdienstige veranderingen in Nederland. Verschuivingen in de binding met de kerken en de christelijke traditie* [Religious changes in the Netherlands: Shifts in the ties with churches and the Christian tradition] (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2006), 29.

[3] Of the approximately 4200 church buildings in the Netherlands, it is estimated that more than 1100 will become redundant in the next ten years. Note, however, that from 2000 to 2007, 115 *new* church buildings have been constructed. Harry Bisseling, Henk de Roest en Peet Valstar, introduction to *Meer dan hout en steen. Handboek voor sluiting en herbestemming van kerkgebouwen* [More than wood and stone: Handbook for the closing and re-employment of church buildings] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2011), 14-15.

[4] Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[5] Practical theologian Richard Osmer calls this *deep change*, i.e., "leading an organization through a process in which its identity, mission, culture, and operating procedures are fundamentally altered. In a congregation this may involve changes in its worship, fellowship, outreach, and openness to new members who are different. It also involves projecting a vision of what the congregation might become and mobilizing followers who are committed to this vision." Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 177.

mes contextually obsolete and irrelevant. Thus, the congregation will lose touch with, and ultimately cease to serve, the needs of the people who live in its area.[6]

The presupposition of this thesis is that many local churches in the Netherlands face this prospect. Furthermore, the response to the adaptive challenge seems to consist of changing toward a 'mission-shaped church'.[7] Without going into detail here, becoming mission-shaped is likely to have consequences for (a) theological thought and vision; (b) worship, spirituality and (local) church culture; and (c) organizational structures. All these aspects have an impact on leadership, while also having consequences for leader education.

The following subsections indicate that Christian communities involved in two international and interdenominational movements – the 'Emerging' and 'Missional' Church Movements – seek to address the adaptive challenge mentioned above (1.1.1). Because both movements are very broad, diverse, characterized by continuous change, difficult to define, and only partly overlapping, a choice had to be made concerning the focus of this study. Subsection 1.1.2 explains that our research is concentrated on what will be called the 'Emerging-Missional Conversation'. We subsequently argue that this 'conversation' is an interesting object of study for practical theologians (1.1.3). In particular, the leadership conceptions (sketched in 1.1.4) are deemed to be an important subject for scholarly investigation (1.1.5).

After these preliminary remarks, the aims and purposes of this study are outlined (1.2), followed by the research questions (1.2.1), and issues of methodology (1.3). This introductory chapter ends by sketching the global content of the chapters that follow (1.4).

1.1.1 Two Movements: 'Emerging' and 'Missional'

In Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, cultural and religious shifts and trends can be observed similar to those taking place in the Netherlands (albeit with regional differences in each country).[8] Without downplaying the substantial differences that exist between different countries – for example, American citizens are still more likely to self-identify as a Christian than Dutch people are – it can nonetheless be argued that churches in the Western hemi-

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[6] Cf. Richard L. Hamm, *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2007), 29.

[7] This term is used in Anglican and Methodist circles in the United Kingdom. See Graham Cray, ed., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London, UK: Church House Publishing, 2004). From an American evangelical perspective, David Olson speaks about a "mission-mindset" that is needed for churches that are to go "out into the world to meet people's needs." David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis: Groundbreaking Research Based on a National Database of over 200,000 Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 163.

[8] For a general overview of international religious and cultural trends, see Steve Hollinghurst, *Mission Shaped Evangelism: The Gospel in Contemporary Culture* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2010), 9-97, and chapter 4, below.

sphere face comparable adaptive challenges. Much of the focus, language and programs of the institutional churches no longer connect with people in a culture that is increasingly characterized by post-denominationalism, a post-Christendom mindset, and a postmodern approach to life.[9] Since the 1990s, however, experiments have been carried out in various Western countries with different kinds of churches and Christian communities that are deliberately geared to a changing culture. These churches are dynamic and flexible (or 'liquid'), contextual and mission-minded, creative and focused on relations and community. Such grassroots missional-contextual, ecclesial groups[10] are called 'fresh expressions of church' or 'mission-shaped churches' (particularly in the UK); 'emerging missional churches' (in Australia and New Zealand); 'emerging churches' or 'missional churches' (in many western countries, with an emphasis on North America).[11] As an umbrella term, the name Emerging Church Movement is often used, a term for which there is no generally accepted definition.[12]

This movement[13] is very diverse, containing both 'inherited churches' which adopted a missional[14] stance, and new forms of church such as GenX church, children's church, cell church, pub church, arts-based church, post-Alpha church, Menu-church and many

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[9] Cf. Tom Sine, *The New Conspirators: Create the Future One Mustard Seed at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 19. The terms 'post-Christendom' and 'postmodern' are addressed in chapter 4.

[10] See Henk de Roest, "Ecclesiologies at the Margin," in Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 259.

[11] The word 'missional church' is sometimes used to refer to a concrete mission-shaped congregation, but it may also function as a theological concept that denotes the nature of the church, as being sent by God to the world. As a theological construct, 'missional church' is especially discussed in mainline academic circles. Cf. Knud Jørgensen, "The Emergence and Challenge of the Missional Church Concept in the West," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 92, no. 4 (2004), 551-571.

[12] A well-known American proponent, Tony Jones, defines it as follows: "The emerging church movement is a loosely aligned conversation among Christians who seek to re-imagine the priorities, values and theology expressed by the local church as it seeks to live out its faith in postmodern society. It is an attempt to replot Christian faith on a new cultural and intellectual terrain." Tony Jones, *The Church is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement* (Minneapolis, MN: The JoPa Group, 2011), 5.

[13] Tony Jones *The Church is Flat*, 11-21, helpfully outlines a number of similarities between the so-called 'New Social Movements' and the Emerging Church Movement (ECM). We mention four of these. New Social Movements: (1) "exhibit a pluralism of ideas and values, and they tend to have pragmatic orientations and search for institutional reforms that enlarge the system of members' participation in decision-making." This also pertains to the ECM. (2) tend to focus on the most intimate aspects of human life: sexuality, habits of consumption, and careers. This is paralleled by participants in the ECM valuing "authenticity" in worship, "integrity" in leadership, and intimate ecclesial communities. (3) tend to be segmented, diffuse, and decentralized, the tendency being toward considerable autonomy of local sections, where collective forms of debate and decision making often limit linkages with regional and national organizations. This so-called 'self-referential element' of New Social Movements is also characteristic of the ECM. (4) are using advanced forms of technology and mass communication as a mobilizing tool and conduit to alternative forms of media. This is also typical of the ECM. In sum, we think that Jones' conclusion that the Emerging Church Movement "qualifies as worthy of study as a 'movement'" is justified.

[14] The term 'missional' has its roots in the nineteenth century, but it became increasingly well-known in the last decades of the twentieth century in the context of North Atlantic missiological debates. It is not simply a synonym for 'missionary'. "It is meant to respond in the first place to missional needs in American and European cultures deeply influenced by postmodernism." Willem Saayman, "Missionary or Missional? A Study in Terminology," *Missionalia* 38, no. 1 (April 2010), 13.

more.[15] Participants in the Emerging Church Movement seek to engage postmodern people, especially those who are unchurched or post-church. To accomplish this, 'emerging Christians' deconstruct and reconstruct Christian beliefs, standards, and methods regarding church, mission, church leadership, theology and theological education. In sum, they take up the challenge of adaptive change. Among other things, this means that they uncover underlying issues and assumptions (often called 'paradigms') and address them in ways that have the potential to fundamentally alter churches and congregations in the twenty-first century.

1.1.1.1 The Missional Church Movement

The Missional Church Movement has a comparable breadth to the Emergent Church Movement and has its roots in the Gospel and Our Culture Network. This network emerged in North America in the late 1980s as a continuation of the Gospel and Culture discussion initiated in Great Britain during 1983 after the publication of a short monograph, by the Anglican bishop Lesslie Newbigin called *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*.[16] Newbigin, a missionary veteran, declared that Western Europe was a mission-field, requiring leaders to develop new skills for interacting with culture and to restructure the church from a maintenance model to a missional mode of operation. From the early 1990's on, the Gospel and Our Culture Network has placed the issue of North America as a missionary challenge before church leaders and seminary professors. A series of titles was sponsored, the basic message of which is that the church has to move from a marketing mentality to a missional mentality – not just for pragmatic reasons, but because of the theological conviction that the church is mission-centered by nature.[17] The Gospel and Our Culture Network "brings together people from a wide spectrum of churches – from Mennonite to Roman Catholic, from Anglican to Southern Baptist – and a range of local ministry settings."[18] The activities of the network are focused on cultural research (such as the impact of postmodernity), theological reflection, and the church renewal necessary for the recovery of the church's missionary identity. In this context, the concept of a 'missional church' was introduced,[19] and the term 'Missional Church Movement' began to be used.[20]

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[15] Michael Moynagh, *Emergingchurch.intro* (Oxford, UK: Monarch, 2004), 13.

[16] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 3 ff.

[17] This is the basic message of books published in The Gospel and Our Culture Series, but it can also be found in the more recent Allelon Missional Series, the Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series, and some titles of the TCP Leadership Series.

[18] The Gospel and Our Culture Network, "About the Network," http://www.gocn.org/network/about (last accessed January 7, 2012).

[19] "We have arrived at a shared consensus that our definitions of the church should focus on and arise out of the formation of particular communities of God's people, called and sent where they are as witnesses to the gospel." Guder, ed., *Missional Church*, 9.

[20] Cf. W. Rodman MacIlvaine III, "What is the Missional Church Movement?," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 (January-March 2010), 89–106.

The influence of the Gospel and Our Culture Network reaches to Australia, where Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch – who are influential voices within the Emerging Church Movement – wrote an influential book, *The Shaping of Things to Come,* about the missional church.[21] In their definition, the missional church is "a sent church with one of its defining values being the development of a church life and practice that is contextualized to that culture to which it believes it is sent."[22] The aim of their book is to give further missiological legitimacy and a working vocabulary to the emerging church.[23]

Clearly, then, there is a connection between the vocabulary and intentions of the Missional Church Movement on the one hand and those of the Emerging Church Movement on the other. There are also differences between the two movements. Generally speaking, many leading voices in the Missional Church Movement are academics, belonging to mainline churches[24] – indeed, many of them are ordained – and they often stand at a (critical) distance from postmodern culture, and from popular culture and religion in general. Many contributors to Emerging Church Movement conversations, on the other hand, are low church Protestants,[25] 'lay' practitioners rather than scholars, and people of action, who are quite open to the cultural changes discernable in postmodernity.[26]

These differences between the Emerging Church Movement and the Missional Church Movement notwithstanding, the two terms are sometimes freely mixed together, for example, in the concept of an 'emerging missional church'.[27] According to commentator Scot McKnight, the term 'missional' is a favorite among many in the Emerging Church

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[21] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-century Church* (Peabody, MA: 2003).

[22] Ibid., 229.

[23] Ibid., xi.

[24] Important platforms are the annual Missional Church Consultation, sponsored by Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and the Missional Church Series which is being published by Eerdmans. Two names that should be mentioned here are Darrell Guder and Craig Van Gelder.

[25] Cf. Doug Gay, "My working assumption is that 'Emerging Church' is a mutation whose origins are decisively located within low church Protestantism." Doug Gay, *Remixing the Church: Towards an Emerging Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 2011), 1n3. Note however that in the United States, the Emerging Church Movement – which is sometimes referred to as *Emergent* Church Movement – is increasingly influential in mainline churches. This has resulted in the so-called hyphenated Christians (e.g. Angli-mergent, Luther-mergent, Presby-mergent, Metho-mergent, and so on). See Phil Snider, ed., *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity Is Re-Traditioning Mainline Practices* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2011). There are also emergent Baptists, see Zach Roberts, ed., *Baptimergent: Baptist Stories from the Emergent Frontier* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2009).

[26] Cf. Tony Jones, "The ECM is, no doubt, one of the first ecclesial responses to the advent of postmodernist culture." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 35.

[27] "An emerging missional church...has abandoned the old Christendom assumptions and understands its role as an underground movement, subversive, celebratory, passionate, and communal." Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 18. In the United States, Mark Driscoll says of his own church in Seattle, Mars Hill, that it is an "emerging and missional church." Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 20. In the UK, Safe Space in Telford is described as an "emerging missional community." Blog of Safe Space, http://markjberry.blogs.com/about.html (accessed May 30, 2011).

Movement "because it goes beyond the older Christian terms like 'mission' and 'missionary,' and because it is being defined holistically. To be missional means to embrace a holistic gospel – it is for the whole person (heart, soul, mind, and strength), for the whole society (politics, economy, culture, environment), and for the whole world."[28]

The well-known writer Brian McLaren cites, among others, David Bosch and Lesslie Newbigin as thinkers who have influenced the theology of church and missions within the Emerging Church Movement.[29] These same theologians are at the roots of the Missional Church Movement as well.[30] The two movements – Emerging and Missional – can therefore be seen as having shared interests. Stated somewhat more abstractly, the movements together form an Emerging-Missional 'milieu', i.e., a metaphoric landscape, field, or space in which discourses and practices are given form around topics of common concern, but with many local differences.[31] This Emerging-Missional milieu consists of the discourses and practices of a variety of actors: church communities, Christian organizations or platforms, networks (which are often digital), and individual Christians from a wide variety of backgrounds.

The following assessment of Eddie Gibbs seems apt: "As the missional church and a significant segment of the emerging church together represent a concern to redefine the church in post-Christendom, missional terms, they should not be regarded as conflicting entities, but rather as *complementary* and *converging* approaches [emphasis added]; the former represents a more deductive approach, while the latter is more inductive. The two streams need to meet each other rather than pass like strangers in the night."[32] This thesis focuses on the crossing of these streams, especially regarding visions for leadership and leader education. To make this choice more explicit, we have coined the term 'Emerging-Missional conversation' (EMC). It stands for the various forms of discourse within the Emerging-Missional milieu that can be said to converge in terms of (theolo-

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[28] McKnight continues: "Missional avoids the constant bantering between Evangelicals and Liberals over social justice and evangelism, and it avoids the 20th Century political theorists regular diatribes against colonialism." http://www.jesuscreed.org/index.php?p=520 (accessed November 19, 2007).

[29] See Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished CHRISTIAN* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 105-114.

[30] Darrell Guder thinks that it is justified to characterize the whole missional church discussion as having been, "at its core, a response to Lesslie Newbigin's question: Can the church in the West become, again, a missionary church, given the fact that its context has become a mission field?" Darrell L. Guder, "Worthy Living: Work and Witness from the Perspective of Missional Church Theology," *Word and World* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2005), 424.

[31] On the word 'milieu', see Gordon Lynch, *The New Spirituality: An Introduction to Progressive Belief in the Twenty-first Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 10 and 12. Cf. Katharine Sarah Moody, "'I Hate Your Church; What I Want is My Kingdom': Emerging Spiritualities in the UK Emerging Church Milieu," *The Expository Times* 10, no. 121 (2010), 497.

[32] Eddie Gibbs, *Church Morph: How Megatrends are Reshaping Christian Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 41.

gical) vision – although the exact terms that are used may differ[33] and some particularities or nuances remain. A further explanation of this concept is now called for.

1.1.2 The Term 'Emerging-Missional Conversation' (EMC)

The 'Emerging-Missional' part of the expression EMC refers to the fact that sources will be consulted from authors in both the Emerging Church Movement and Missional Church Movement.[34] This is further explained below, after we clarify why we use the term 'conversation'.

The first reason that the word 'conversation' seems useful is that it helps to specify what areas of the Emerging-Missional milieu will be investigated and where we will draw the line. Negatively stated, no research will be done concerning the actual practices within existing emerging or missional churches that could be observed through ethnographic research – although we did consult existing ethnographic studies. Furthermore, this thesis does not focus on the role and function of digital networks, nor will it inquire as to what individuals are experiencing in these networks or churches. Positively stated, the focus is on conversations – or discourses[35] – such as those found in written sources, for example books, articles, and blogs. Contributions by influential writers will be consulted, particularly books or articles that form important nodes, or crystallization points, of the discourses that are conducted in this milieu.

In this category fall publications by Mark Driscoll, Craig Van Gelder, Eddie Gibbs, the late Stanley Grenz, Darrell Guder, Alan Hirsch, Tony Jones, Dan Kimball, Brian McLaren, Ian Mobsby, Alan Roxburgh, Leonard Sweet, Karen Ward, the late Robert Webber, and others. The influence of their works is not limited to a certain region. For example, Alan Hirsch is influential in Australia (where he started his ministry) but also in the United States, Europe, and South Africa. The same pertains – *mutatis mutandis* – for most of the other names that were mentioned. Thus, sources from different continents will be consulted, with an emphasis on those from Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. From our research, we gained the impression that the most

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[33] Publications on the following ecclesial topics may be considered more or less part of the EMC (the list is not exhaustive): *borderland church, coming church, church next, deep church*, *emerging church, externally focused church, fresh expressions of church, future church, house church, hyphenated church, liquid church, missional church, new paradigm church*, *neo-monastic church, organic church*, *simple church*, *total church, transformational church*.

[34] It should be noted that this does not happen often: many commentators focus on just one movement, as two recent publications may illustrate. Tony Jones states that "it is not at all clear that the 'missional church' has a particular identity of its own." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 5. On the other hand, the Emerging Church Movement is not dealt with in a thorough way in a recent overview of the Missional Church Movement. See Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

[35] Cf. James Bielo, an Emerging Church Movement researcher and anthropologist, who uses the word 'discourse' (instead of movement), in James S. Bielo, "The 'Emerging Church' in America: Notes on the Interaction of Christianities," *Religion* 39 (2009), 220.

creative thinking originated in these countries,[36] in particular regarding innovative vision for church and leadership (as well as leader education).

A second reason for adopting the term 'conversation' in this thesis is that this word seems to be appropriate from both an *emic* and an *etic* perspective. Viewed emically, the metaphor 'conversation' is familiar to participants within both the Missional Church Movement[37] and those of the Emerging Church Movement.[38] Participants within both movements are "embarking upon a journey of creating a *collaborative conversation* [emphasis added] between faith in Jesus Christ and the secular culture in which we live today."[39] More specifically, the term conversation also has a central place in how leadership is understood within the EMC.[40] Approached from an *etic* perspective – the notion of 'conversation' can be used to encompass a wide range of discourse,[41] including books and articles, but also theological courses or course designs.[42] This broad understanding will be helpful, especially in the last chapters of this book.

A final motive for using the word 'conversation' is that it may in turn stimulate conversations between 'emergers' and 'missionals', who have much in common in our opinion. It may also help to build bridges between members of Dutch institutional chur-

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[36] South Africa is also a country worth considering, especially since the formation of the South African Partnership for Missional Churches in 2004. See Cornelius J.P. Niemandt, "Five Years of Missional Church: Reflections on Missional Ecclesiology," *Missionalia* 38, no. 3 (November 2010), 397-413.

[37] See for example Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011). The expression 'missional church 'conversation' is not only used in the title of this book; it returns on many of its pages as well.

[38] As Londoner Ian Mobsby writes, the term conversation may implicitly imply "equality, participation, attention to listening, respect, inclusion and love." Ian Mobsby, comment on "Emerging Church Conversation," Ian Mobsby Be(com)ing, commented posted August 3, 2008, http://www.ianmobsby.net/mobblog/?p=9 (accessed August 30, 2010). Sociologist Lloyd Chia confirms that "The Emerging Church uses the metaphor 'conversation' to describe itself. In doing so, it seeks to de-emphasize insider/outsider boundaries, and hopes to engage everyone in an inclusive conversation." Lloyd Chia, "Emerging Faith Boundaries: Bridge-Building, Inclusion, and the Emerging Church Movement in America," (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2010), 61, cf. his discussion on 189-203.

[39] Mary Gray-Reeves and Michael Perham, *The Hospitality of God: Emerging Worship for a Missional Church* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 8. The authors continue, "In this sense, we found emergent churches prophetic to the institutional church: demonstratively inclusive of those who do not know Jesus, able to readily hear and converse with their experience, participating in the making of a new creation, a new church, born of a relationship between faith and the local context of the world in which we live." Ibid., 8.

[40] Cf. Alan Roxburgh, "leadership in the local church is less and less about creating and managing programs and then trying to get people into them and more and more about creating environments that *foster interconnections and conversations* [emphasis added] among people....Missional map-making calls for leaders who attend to the 'offstage' conversations of their people." Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 169-170.

[41] A formal type of discourse analysis such as Conversation Analysis (CA) – which focuses on the detailed organization of talk-in-interaction – is too specific for the purposes of this dissertation, although it would be interesting. The same pertains to other genres of discourse analysis such as Interaction Analysis, Speech Act Schematics, Discursive Psychology, Foucauldian Analyses, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Narrative Analyses. See for brief synopses of these discourse approaches, Gail T. Fairhurst, *Discursive Leadership: In Conversation with Leadership Psychology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 191-198.

[42] Cf. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, introduction to *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 4.

ches (particularly those in leadership positions, or involved in theological education, or both) and participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu. The goal of these conversations would be to talk about the future of the church and about aspects of leadership (and leader education). Compared to the word dialogue – which was also a candidate for use – the term 'conversation' "more fully encompasses the relational aspects of social, experiential learning as people strive to increase understanding together."[43]

In other words, this dissertation strives to encourage the forging of 'rhetorical relationships' about innovative forms of (church) leadership and leader education across different streams, denominations, and subcultures within the church worldwide. The best rhetorical relationships, like genuine friendships, "foster communication based on mutual respect for the many dimensions of the human person (reason, freedom, imagination, affections). Moreover, the genuine bonds forged by common judgments, decisions, commitments, and loves, are based on a reverence for what is shared, while also respecting and even cherishing the distinctive traits and contribution of each individual."[44] Much can be learned from respectful conversations or rhetorical relationships – and 'learning' is extremely important for the future of the church in the twenty-first century.[45]

In sum, the term 'Emerging-Missional Conversation' refers to a range of discourse about important beliefs and practices that are the common focus of interest, concern and conversation in two movements: the Emerging Church Movement and the Missional Church Movement.[46] A possible drawback of using the term 'Emerging-Missional Conversation' is that differences may be blurred. To counter this, when deemed necessary, we will specify what movement we are dealing with.

1.1.3 The EMC and Its Relevance for Practical Theology and the Church

This subsection argues that the EMC has important elements to contribute specifically to the field of practical theology, and, more generally, to local churches and church denominations.

To start with, the EMC challenges the more institutionally minded churches and theological educators to question their (perhaps unconsciously held) paradigms – their "collective absolute presuppositions," in the words of practical theologian Sharon Burch.[47]

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[43] Ann C. Baker, Patricia J. Jensen and David A. Kolb, "Conversation as Experiential Learning," *Management Learning* 36, no. 4 (2005), 414.

[44] Bradford E. Hinze, "Theology as Communication: Revelation, Faith, and the Church as Ongoing Dialogues," in David S. Cunningham, ed., *To Teach, To Delight, and To Move: Theological Education in a Post-Christian World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 105-106.

[45] We will return to this topic at the end of chapter 8.

[46] The expression Emerging-Missional *milieu* covers both movements and is more encompassing than Emerging-Missional Conversation, which is centered on public discourse such as found in articles, blogs or books. In this thesis, the term 'Emerging-Missional milieu' will be used when the practices within various organizations, churches, platforms or networks are also in view.

[47] "Collective absolute presuppositions are preconscious, culturally determined, socially transmitted, basic assumptions that are ever changing, time bound, and situation specific, devised collectively by human beings in response to existential challenges....the church has to struggle with them, because they are a part of

This questioning is important, because presuppositions – for example, those about the church, the cultural context, Christian leadership and the relationship between them – affect not only the preaching and the teaching office of the churches, "but also the seminaries that train people for the pastorate and graduate schools that prepare the next generation of theological professors."[48]

Furthermore, many contributors to the EMC consciously align themselves with the cultural context in which they find themselves, a context that they understand to be (in many respects) 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom'.[49] Since church organizations in general "tend to serve the needs of the *previous* [emphasis added] cultural context,"[50] instead of those of the present, they can probably learn from experiments with community building, worship and leadership that emerge from these communities on the margin.[51] Studying the EMC is therefore relevant for practical theologians. Until recently, there have been very few scholarly treatises on this topic in the Netherlands, which is one reason we intend to provide a treatment of it here.

An additional argument for why the subject matter of this thesis is relevant for practical theology, and more broadly, for churches and church denominations, may be introduced as follows. In his *Practical Theology*, the Dutch practical theologian Gerben Heitink states the following: "The church...has the responsibility to search for a credible way of 'being church', for new forms of Christian community, that call for a counterculture against an extreme individualism and an anonymous bureaucratic collectivity."[52] With this statement, Heitink captures much of the mood and aims within the Emerging-Missional milieu, in which such new forms of Christian community are a central topic of both theoretical discourse and practical experiment. His statement also implies the relevance of studying this milieu for the field of practical theology in – at least – the following four respects.

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the people who attend, and they shape how the Christian message is shared and how it is received." Sharon Peebles Burch, *Collective Absolute Presuppositions: Tectonic Plates for Churches* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 1.

[48] Ibid.

[49] See chapter 4 for a discussion of these terms.

[50] Hamm, *Recreating the Church*, 9.

[51] Cf. Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, "The mission that takes place at the edges is the main catalyst for learning and innovation in the church. Such learning seldom, if ever, comes from the center." Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 155. Secular scholarship affirms this line of thinking: "Newness almost always starts at the edges since that is where new situations in the environment can prompt novel organizational responses, if those working at the verge are given the space to develop new solutions and grow them." Jeffrey Goldstein, James K. Hazy, and Benyamin B. Lichtenstein, *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership: Leveraging Nonlinear Science to Create Ecologies of Innovation* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 121.

See also "De marge als vindplaats van creativiteit: 'emerging churches', 'fresh expressions'" [The margin as finding place of creativity: 'Emerging churches', 'fresh expressions'], in Gerrit Noort et al., *Als een kerk opnieuw begint. Handboek voor missionaire gemeenschapsvorming* [When a church starts anew: Handbook for missional community building] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2008), 312-325.

[52] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 256.

First, many new ways of 'being church' are developed by participants in the EMC, both in theory (e.g. reflections on missional ecclesiology) and in practice (e.g. through church planting). These reflections and experiments are important, specifically for thinking through aspects of a practical ecclesiology.[53]

Second, within the EMC, the church in a so-called post-Christendom setting is seen as a minority church. A statement like the following by Gerben Heitink is affirmed in EMC publications: "As the church relinquishes its old pretenses and accepts its de facto minority position in society, it can learn to see with new eyes, with those of other minorities around it. That could lead to a reinforcement of the *koinonia* character of the church."[54] Within the EMC there is, indeed, a strong focus on Christian community.[55]

Third, leadership within the EMC is generally conceived of as being not authoritative and top-down, but relational, facilitative, and spiritual. The role of a leader is, preferably, not that of a public performer, but that of a networker, team-builder, spiritual director, mentor, coach, or a combination of these roles.[56] These leadership roles are related to the (flexible and bottom-up) structures that are formed within the Christian communities, which makes it an essential theme for practical ecclesiology.[57] This thesis is particularly interested in this third topic. This subject matter is also relevant for leaders of existing mainline congregations, since they "face not only the external challenge of a changing social context, but also the internal challenge of helping their congregations rework their identity and mission beyond the era when they were at the center of cultural influence and power."[58]

Fourth, another important aspect of 'being church' involves the education of its leaders.[59] The Australians Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost seem to speak for many within

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[53] Cf. Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 284. See also Sake Stoppels and Erik Sengers, "Revitalisering," in Rein Brouwer et al., *Levend lichaam. Dynamiek van christelijke geloofsgemeenschappen in Nederland* [Living body: Dynamics of christian communities of faith in the Netherlands] (Kampen: Kok, 2007), especially at 191.

[54] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 281.

[55] "One of the key things we found about the emergent churches, common to them all," the Anglican bishops Gray-Reeves and Perham write, "was their ability to create communities where people with very different views could live in harmony one with another." Gray-Reeves and Perham, *The Hospitality of God,* 135.

[56] Interestingly, these views on leadership roles closely parallel those found within secular organizations today. "Instead of viewing themselves as resource controllers and power brokers, leaders must truly envision themselves as flexible resources willing to assume numerous (perhaps unaccustomed) roles – coaches, information providers, teachers, decision makers, facilitators, supporters, or listeners – depending on their employees' needs." Gregory G. Dess and Joseph C. Picken, "Changing Roles: Leadership in the 21st Century," *Organizational Dynamics* (Winter 2000), 22.

[57] Cf. Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 285.

[58] Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 195.

[59] Leader *training* may be thought of as focusing on the skills needed. Leader *development* focuses on personal traits and characteristics that assist in coping with a leadership role. The aim of leader *education* is to bring basic assumptions, assimilated values, and predominant behavioral patterns into conscious awareness, and to understand their influences on decision making and human behavior. Leader education must therefore be seen as more comprehensive and less goal-oriented than training or development. Richard A. Barker, "How Can We Train Leaders if We Do Not Know What Leadership Is?," *Human Relations* 50, no. 4 (1997), 357

the EMC when they affirm that for missional churches, an *action-learning* (discipleship-coaching) paradigm of leader development is appropriate, but that this is difficult for established seminaries to accept. "The academy is generally staffed by academics, people who get their vocational legitimacy from, and have vested interests in, the system that promotes knowledge as opposed to action as the key means of ministry formation. This highlights how innovation, and therefore real progress, can so easily be marginalized and locked down in the Christendom paradigm of church."[60] This perspective on the education of Christian leaders – a prime issue in practical theology today[61] – also receives attention (see section 1.5, below). We will now explain the focus of this dissertation and the reason for it.

1.1.4 Vision(s) on Leadership and Leader Education within the EMC

A central topic of this thesis concerns the visions for leadership within the EMC, which have been identified as an important area of future research.[62] This thesis attempts to contribute to this area, especially on the conceptual level. Concepts of leadership in the EMC, however, appear to be closely related to discourses concerning paradigms (or paradigm shifts), postmodernity and the post-Christendom West, and insights borrowed from the field of complexity theory. Moreover, in EMC publications, the topic of leadership is often – and intentionally so – talked about in metaphorical language. Because we seek a deep understanding of leadership conceptions, the aforementioned themes will also receive due attention.

Stated very briefly, within the EMC there is a preference for 'missional' forms of leadership that may help to form and also maintain Christian communities that are adaptive to postmodern and post-Christendom cultural dynamics, relevant to the local context, and that have a holistic mission as their core. This mission can, in general terms,

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ff. We chose the word 'education' for the title of this thesis, but in what follows, the concepts of education and development will be used interchangeably unless it is necessary to specify them.

[60] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 191.

[61] Cf. Daniel O. Aleshire, "Much is changing in the church, and theological schools need to listen carefully, think creatively, and act engagingly." Daniel O. Aleshire "Making Haste Slowly: Celebrating the Future of Theological Schools," *Theological Education* 44, no. 1 (2008) 3. Cf. Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 234 ff. From his German context, practical theologian Michael Herbst submits that a lot of extra effort is needed in theological education before it can be claimed that leaders are prepared to serve missional congregations that find themselves in cultural contexts that are stamped by postmodern influences. (The literal citation reads: "Unsere theologische Aus-, Fort- und Weiterbildung muss noch eine ganze Reihe von Nachhilfestunden nehmen, bis sie von sich sagen kann, dass sie geistliche Führungskräfte für die postmodern geprägten Kontexte und die in diesen Kontexten aktiven missionarischen Gemeinden bereit stellt.") See Michael Herbst, "Geistliche Führung wahrnehmen in der Kirche der Postmoderne. Geistlich führen – kompetent managen – Prozesse ermöglichen" [Spiritual leadership in the church in postmodernity: Spiritual leading – competent managing – facilitating processes] in Martin Reppenhagen and Michael Herbst, eds., *Kirche in der Postmoderne* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 246.

[62] See Jason Clark, "Via Media: The Necessity of Deeper Theological Reflection for the Genuine Renewal of Church in the Emerging Culture and Context," (DMin thesis, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, 2006), 105-109; Ian J. Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* (London: Moot Community Publishing, 2007), 95.

be described as helping to show and spread – by inspiration of the Spirit – the kingdom ('reign') of God as proclaimed and brought about by Jesus of Nazareth. In order to serve this mission, interpersonal relationships and conversations within the church should receive more emphasis than programs, and teamwork more than committee meetings. Moreover, the structures that are chosen should help increase the adaptability and flexibility of the community in regard to their missional environment, and they should stimulate and facilitate the responsibility of groups and individuals. The aim, therefore, is to share and distribute leadership. The role of leaders in a missional framework is to facilitate the processes that are involved in missional leadership, while being involved in leadership development as well.

Views on leadership within the EMC are connected with those on leadership *education*. Seminary administrators and faculty in the United States are urged, among other things, to be "agents of transformation, on the forefront of innovative pedagogies, online and 'hybrid' programs, and praxis-based education."[63] Moreover, they are to be more alert to missional theology, to seek out more conversation with leaders in the Emerging-Missional milieu and to offer these leaders a greater voice in shaping theological education in the twenty-first century.[64]

In our opinion, these are interesting and pertinent suggestions, also for protestant[65] theological educators in the Low Countries. This is why we incorporate the topic of leader[66] education in our research, as will be explained next.

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[63] See Philip Clayton, comment on "An Emergent Seminary for an Emerging Church," Patheos, comment posted October 17, 2011, http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Emergent-Seminary-for-an-Emerging-Church-Philip-Clayton-10-17-2011?offset=1&max=1 (accessed December 19, 2011).

[64] Cf. David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 147.

[65] We focus on Protestantism, because this is the tradition we are most familiar with. This is not to deny that these suggestions may be pertinent for Roman Catholics as well, because the Roman Catholic Church faces comparable challenges, as the Dutch priest Ad Verest has recently pointed out in his plea for a paradigm shift from a *volkskerk* ('people's church') to a *missionaire gemeenschap* ('missional community'). See Ad Verest, "Vele bloemen in één tuin. Randvoorwaarden en kansen voor *small Christian communities* binnen de gemeenschap van de 'nieuwe' parochie," [Many flowers in one garden: Preconditions and chances for *small Christian communities* within the community of the 'new' parish] in Kees Slijkerman en Fred van Iersel, eds., *Kleine geloofsgroepen. Wegen naar een vitale parochie* [Small faith communities: Ways toward a vital parish] (Heeswijk: Abdij van Berne, 2011), 21, cf. 34.

[66] Often the terms 'leader' and 'leadership' are used interchangeably. In this thesis, however, a distinction is made between *leader* education (or development) and *leadership* education. *Leader* education can be described as the acquisition or development of within-individual attributes such as knowledge, knowledge structures, skills, abilities, and competencies, while *leadership* education may be seen as the expansion of the organization's capacity to enact the basic leadership tasks needed for collective work: setting direction, creating alignment, and maintaining commitment. In other words, leader development refers to the enhancing of human capital; leadership development to the stimulation of social capital. See David V. Day, Michelle M. Harrison, Stanley M. Halpin, *An Integrative Approach to Leader Development: Connecting Adult Development, Identity, and Expertise* (New York: Psychology Press, 2009), 159; Cynthia D. McCauley and Ellen Van Velsor, "Our View of Leader Development," in Cynthia D. McCauley and Ellen Van Velsor, eds., *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leader Development* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 18. The reasoning behind this distinction is the insight that sending a changed person (say, a young theology graduate) back

1.2 The Problem, Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions

The central problem of this study can be described thus: There is as yet no general survey of views within the EMC on missional leadership, or assessment of how these views can best be conceptualized; furthermore, it is unknown what challenges may be formulated for protestant theological education – more specifically, the *predikantenopleidingen* (MA-programs for future pastors) in the Low Countries[67] – on the basis of analysis of the topic of missional leadership.

This problem leads to the overall purpose: *to define and clarify the concept of 'missional leadership' – based on an exploration of discourse within the EMC – and to formulate challenges for leader education that particularly (but not exclusively) pertain to institutes for protestant theological education in the Low Countries.* Three more specific objectives of the present study can now be outlined as follows.

Objective 1. This thesis seeks to describe and analyze the so-called Emerging-Missional Conversation in such a way that the following four results are achieved:

i. *Readers unfamiliar with the EMC are brought into contact with a rich array of primary and secondary sources about it.* The footnotes in this study are not only used to leave a trail of the research that has been conducted, but also to encourage the reader to make his or her own study of the EMC. Hopefully, this will motivate theological educators, church leaders, and other Christians to actively participate in the conversation.

ii. *Four particular themes are highlighted that are important within the EMC and that have a direct bearing on visions of leadership.* As we hinted above (1.1.4), leading voices within the EMC appear to be strongly conscious of matters pertaining to: (i) paradigm and worldview; (ii) cultural and religious developments in Western society; (iii) pictorial language, specifically the use of metaphor; (iv) new science, in particular complexity theory. These themes receive attention in part A of this study, which is devoted to an exploration of the EMC.

iii. *A contribution is made to ongoing (scholarly) discussions about the EMC.* No scholarly discussions have yet appeared – as far as this writer is aware – that cover the ways in which the term 'paradigm' is used within the EMC, why metaphors are deemed important and how they function in the EMC, and what insights are appropriated from the field of complexity theory. The aim of this thesis is to provide overviews concerning these themes (in chapters 3, 5 and 6, respectively).

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to an unchanged system (say, his or her own congregation) is probably an exercise in futility if he or she is expected to facilitate adaptive (or transformative) change. In order to be successful, such processes require both *leader* and *leadership* education. This is especially the case "in…environments where changes create uncertainty and unpredictability and problems are too many and too complex to be identified and sorted out by one or a few persons." Afroditi Dalakoura, "Differentiating Leader and Leadership Development: A Collective Framework for Leadership Development," *Journal of Management Development* 29, no. 5 (2010), 436.

[67] We use the expression 'Low Countries', because one of the institutes in which we conducted our empirical research (see chapter 10), the Evangelical Theological Faculty, is located in Belgium.

iv. *Discourses within the EMC, in particular those concerning leadership and leader education, are brought into contact with views and practices on these topics in theological institutes in the Low Countries.* This thesis attempts to form a bridge between discourses within two different milieus, the Emerging-Missional milieu on the one hand and *predikantenopleidingen* in the Low Countries on the other hand. It is hoped that a mutual enrichment will follow when readers reflect and act upon the insights that will be outlined in the following chapters.

Objective 2. This thesis intends to contribute to scholarly efforts to conceptualize leadership as a phenomenon, particularly within mission-shaped churches.[68] It does this by forwarding and unpacking a definition of 'missional leadership' that has its roots in the EMC, but also makes use of current academic research on leadership. In this thesis, it is assumed that the concept of 'missional leadership' – with sources in both the EMC and in current scholarship – can contribute significantly to discussions about Christian leadership. Missional leadership has the potential to be an interesting and relevant subject, especially for those leaders who feel that the Christian community they serve will have to deal with adaptive change in the near future. Furthermore, this thesis may stimulate those involved in church leadership to critically think through what they mean by the word 'leadership', and to do this in a way that is theologically informed.

Objective 3. This thesis seeks to formulate challenges for the theological education of future protestant pastors, particularly in regard to the leadership dimension. The concept of missional leadership as developed in this dissertation is meant to provide a focus for the theological education of future leaders in the church. It is assumed that (a) theological education that is designed for ministry can be called 'leader education',[69] and that (b) those aiming to develop leaders,[70] should *know* and *define* what leadership is.[71] Furthermore, the conceptualization of missional leadership will be used as a heuristic instrument that helps shed light on different perspectives of leader education, both within the EMC and in theological universities in the Low Countries. In this

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[68] This word is used here as an equivalent to emerging or missional churches. See on the designation 'mission-shaped' n7 above.

[69] Cf. Daniel Aleshire, "I believe that *theological* education for ministry is *leadership education*." Daniel O. Aleshire, *Earthen Vessels: Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 45. Cf. Jack Seymour et al., "The three of us believe...that institutions of theological education exist, in large part, to educate leaders of the church." Jack L. Seymour, Edward L. Wheeler, and William R. Myers, "From 'Talking Shop' to 'Setting an Agenda': Leader Education Toward 2005," *Theological Education* 37, no. 2 (2001), 72.

[70] Note that in the Netherlands – more than, for example, in the United States – it is not customary to designate future pastors as 'leaders', because the words leader [*leider*] and leadership [*leiderschap*] are oftentimes understood in a heavily personalized way, with an implicit assumption that leaders are born, not made. For Dutch people, moreover, both words have the connotation of a strong, usually male, charismatic personality who manipulates his devoted, if somewhat gullible, followers primarily for his own glory.

[71] Cf. Edwin A. Locke, "Foundations for a Theory of Leadership," in Susan Elaine Murphy and Ronald E. Riggio, eds., *The Future of Leadership Development* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 29; also A. Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 120.

way, the potential that the concept of missional leadership has for theological education will become clearer. This endeavor may encourage more attention to be given to current visions and practices in Christian leader education. This is a matter of some urgency, because as South African theologian Malan Nel suggests, "One of the most serious challenges in building up missional churches is to find leaders (paid and volunteer) who understand the relative and the relevant nature of leadership, administration and management (the *kubernesis*)."[72]

1.2.1 Research Question(s)

The main question that this thesis attempts to answer is as follows: *Based on an exploration of the Emerging-Missional Conversation and views therein on missional leadership and leader education, what challenges may be formulated for protestant institutes that aim to educate future leaders of the church?*

This central question leads to seven other questions:

1. What is the historical background of the EMC and what are its main (theological) characteristics? (chapter 2)
2. What is characteristic of the discourse about culture, church, and leadership within the EMC? (chapters 3-6)

This question encompasses four sub-questions:

i. How does the concept of paradigm function within the EMC? (chapter 3)
ii. What is meant within the EMC by the terms 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom' and (how) are these terms appropriate to describe developments in Western countries in general, and in the Netherlands in particular? (chapter 4)
iii. What are the motives for using metaphors in the EMC, and in what way are they used? (chapter 5)
iv. In what way does complexity theory contribute to thought on church organizations and leadership, according to opinion leaders in the EMC and current scholarship? (chapter 6)

3. What views on leadership exist in the EMC and how can these be interpreted in a larger theoretical framework? (chapter 7)
4. How may perspectives on leadership within the EMC be conceptualized within a definition of 'missional leadership' and what does this stand for? (chapter 8)
5. What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu?[73] (chapter 9)
6. What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within three theological institutes in the Low Countries? (chapter 10)

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[72] Malan Nel, "Congregational Analysis: A Theological and Ministerial Approach," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65, no. 1 (2009), 12.

[73] The term Emerging-Missional *milieu* is used here because this widely encompassing term seeks to cover not only writings and forms of discourse – as does the term Emerging-Missional Conversation – but also the practices of a variety of actors, such as theological institutions.

7. In the light of proposals for and practices of leader education as conceived of in the Emerging-Missional milieu and in recent scholarship, what challenges can be formulated for theological institutes in the Low Countries? (chapter 11)

1.3 Methodological Issues

This section explains how the answers to the research questions were obtained and what issues of methodology were involved. First, the methodological approach is addressed, with a few explanatory statements about the researcher's interpretative paradigm, or framework, i.e. the "net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises."[74] (1.3.1) Second, the research methods adopted for this thesis are outlined (1.3.2). Third, the sources used for this thesis are described, as well as the way in which they were handled (1.3.3).

In this section, a switch is made to the first pronoun ('I', 'me'), because this may help in making this writer's personal positioning more explicit.[75]

1.3.1 Methodological Approach: Hermeneutical, Critical, Theological

The methodological approach of this thesis can be summarized in three terms: hermeneutical, critical, and theological. These terms are now explained in this order.

1.3.1.1 Hermeneutical

Proponents of the hermeneutical approach[76] in the social sciences define the nature of humans as "intentional beings who create meaningful social phenomena."[77] This parallels an important aspect of my own vision of human nature. That is to say that I believe that seeking, or longing for meaning – for that which is 'real' and can be meaningfully related to (which includes other persons but is more encompassing) – profoundly characterizes human existence.[78]

Hermeneutics, moreover, is concerned with *understanding* these social phenomena in the context of the lived reality today. In our case, the goal is to improve our understanding of the EMC, with a particular focus on leadership visions within it (i.e. interpretations, perceptions, perspectives, views).

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[74] E. Guba, as quoted in J. Swinton, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 34.

[75] I agree with Don Browning's comment that "honestly and explicitly positioning the social location of the researcher is...an extremely important component of descriptive analysis in the larger practical theological task." Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 21-22.

[76] Note that I use this word in a different way than is common among theologians.

[77] David Baronov, *Conceptual Foundations of Social Research Methods* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 112.

[78] As James Smith suggests, "our identity is shaped by what we ultimately love or what we love *as* ultimate – what, at the end of the day, gives us a sense of meaning, purpose, understanding, and orientation to our being-in-the-world." James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 26-27.

In the typology of practical theologian Don Browning,[79] my concern is primarily with the *visional* level. First and foremost, in the coming chapters, I ask what meanings participants in the EMC themselves attach to issues concerning church, leadership and related subjects. It is only after listening carefully to voices in the EMC that I give my evaluations, drawing on authoritative voices outside the EMC (see 1.3.1.2 below), the goal of which is to help explain and better understand what is going in the EMC in the light of other areas of knowledge.

Second, this thesis is hermeneutical in recognizing the manifest importance of *interpretation* in the way that human beings, including myself, encounter the world. That is to say that we are all 'meaning makers'. Although I do believe that the deepest source and basis of any real meaning is related to the creative and redemptive work of God, in our perception and articulation of this meaning there are psychological, cultural, social and other factors involved. That is why, in a sense, it can be said that meaning is 'made', or constructed, by humans. Conversational relationships form a crucial role in this respect, which is one reason that I think it is essential for Christians from different theological traditions and cultural backgrounds to learn to converse with each other – to make sense together of the changing times in which we live and what this means for church leadership, and, most importantly, to ask for the illumination of God's Spirit in doing so.

Furthermore, hermeneutics as a methodology in the social sciences unfolds as a process of argumentation in which competing interpretations are advanced. It is believed that the ideal of absolute truth is unattainable, but that – at best – one might approximate truth. "The accuracy of an interpretation can be well or poorly justified and this is the best measure of its truth."[80] This comports well with my epistemological convictions. For example, there is not one universally applicable and objective way to describe what we call the 'Emerging-Missional Conversation', or – for that matter – subjects such as 'postmodernity', or '(missional) leadership'. It is not possible to formulate one definitive truth on any of these topics, simply because the realities that these concepts refer to are too complex to fully grasp in their entirety. On the other hand, some interpretations are more persuasive – they convey more truth, or are closer to it, one might say – than others. My intention in the coming chapters is to provide interpretations of my own, on these and other topics, in the "spirit of open dialogue, which genuinely seeks after truth."[81] In addition, my presupposition is that all truth is God's truth and that honest and diligent scholarship is of great help in our understanding of (social) phenomena. This brings us to the second methodological issue.

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[79] See Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 70 ff.
[80] Baranov, *Conceptual Foundations*, 134.
[81] See Swinton, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 80-81.

1.3.1.2 Critical

My methodology is *critical* in that it "approaches both the world and our interpretations of the Christian tradition with a hermeneutics of suspicion, always aware of the reality of human fallenness and the complexity of the forces which shape and structure our encounters with the world."[82] This means that I will be on the lookout for (perhaps latent) forms of ideological thinking.[83] More specifically, I try to detect when and how the validity of certain forms of 'paradigm language', metaphors, or other rhetorical tools are restricted to some dominant voices within the EMC in ways that perhaps further the interest and legitimize the position of some specific individuals or groups, but that simultaneously obstruct communication with others.[84] Furthermore, using a critical methodology entails that I use sources of knowledge outside those of the Emerging-Missional milieu to "enlighten, broaden, deepen and if necessary *challenge* [emphasis added] both ecclesial practice and theological understandings."[85] Thus, extraneous sources of knowledge (see 1.3.3 below) are used to critically address views or practices within the Emerging-Missional milieu, or those in Dutch theological faculties, or both.

A critical methodology also means that I attempt to be self-critical. That is, I try to 'bracket' my personal values and prior knowledge of the field that I am going to investigate, by identifying the position from which I speak,[86] while realizing at the same time that it is impossible to completely bracket these. As to my personal position and biases, the following needs to be said here: my interest in the EMC stems from of a sense of estrangement from the institutional church, particularly the traditional reformed-evangelical wing of it, based on experiences during more than two decades. I often find structures in the church to be cumbersome and not suited for our fast-paced culture. Moreover, in my observation, the focus of many pastors appears to be on individuals and groups inside the church, rather than on the way the congregation can serve the surrounding community.[87] Although I appreciate the sincere efforts of pastors, which bless many people, I also think that many of them are – in effect – not fulfilling their roles as leaders, at least not in the sense of being people who help to facilitate innovations and change (in a way that reckons with the particular church culture), or as people who help other leaders to develop. Moreover, many ministers do not seem to reflect on leadership

[82] Swinton, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 76.

[83] This will come to the fore especially in the chapters 2-6.

[84] Cf. Henk de Roest, *Communicative Identity: Habermas' Perspectives of Discourse as a Support for Practical Theology* (Kampen, NL: Kok, 1998), 258. "The practical theologian, using an ideology-critical perspective," De Roest explains, "acknowledges the 'creeping' influence of ideologies within a collective." Ibid., 259.

[85] Swinton, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 82.

[86] Cf. Karin Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership* (Bingley, UK: Emerald, 2008), 42.

[87] Cf. the study of Johan van Holten, who found out that most Reformed ministers in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands *and* graduate theology students preparing for the ministry were almost completely focused on matters inside the church. Johan van Holten, *Rol & Roeping. Een praktisch-theologisch onderzoek naar de rolopvatting van aanstaande, beginnende en oudere predikanten gerelateerd aan hun roepingbegrip* [Role and calling: A practical theological research on the role conceptions of senior students, beginning and older ministers in relation to their role conception] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2009), 203, 222-223.

in any sophisticated way,[88] nor – more specifically – about missional leadership. When embarking on my research, my first assumption was that the issues mentioned have something to do with the kind of theological education that ministers received at the university. Since I myself am a teacher in the department of theology at a University of Applied Sciences,[89] this question of leader education naturally has my interest. Second, I assumed that worthwhile suggestions concerning the topics of missional leadership and theological education could be obtained from an exploration of the EMC.

1.3.1.3 Theological

My methodology is *theological* in the following ways. First, I make space for theological themes that have a direct bearing on leadership visions in the EMC, in particular those pertaining to practical ecclesiology. Issues concerning, for instance, postsecular theology, radical orthodoxy, metanarrative, or deconstruction that are discussed in some parts of the EMC, but that are only indirectly relevant for views on leadership, will be left unexplored. Second, my conclusions on the topic of leadership and leader education will be theologically informed. That is, I draw on sources of the Christian faith with which I will question or assess present views or practices – both within the EMC and in theological education in the Low Countries – and to formulate challenges and guidelines for the future.

I understand normative theological treatises as especially those that may be called 'evangelical' (in a broad sense of the word, i.e. including both reformed and Anglican theological influences),[90] because I consider myself to be an evangelical Christian with reformed roots and ecumenical leanings. My epistemological stance, outlined above, implies that truth is not only to be found in scholarship conducted by conservative evangelicals. Regarding the Emerging-Missional milieu, I would describe my position to be that of an engaged critic, engaged in the sense that I have been inspired, even fascinated by much of what I observe in this milieu. At the same time, I feel it necessary to adopt a critical stance, because I sometimes encounter criticism of traditional churches that is

[88] In fact, one pastor confided in a personal conversation: "I am a *verbi Divini minister* [servant of the Word of God], not a leader." Apparently the concept of leader was something he shied away from (cf. n70 above). Moreover, according to this pastor one could not combine being a servant *and* a leader. The conclusion of Johan van Holten is in line with my own experience: "We conclude that ministers have trouble with the difference between administration and leadership....A striking result in any case is that ministers lack a clear concept of leadership." Van Holten, *Rol & Roeping*, 347.

[89] Christelijke Hogeschool Ede, see www.che.nl. I teach primarily courses regarding the interface of theology and culture.

[90] The late D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones considered himself to be an evangelical, see his *What is an Evangelical?* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992). The same applies to J.I. Packer, see his *The Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem: An Analysis* (Oxford: Latimer House, 1978); Alister McGrath, see his *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994); and John Stott, see his *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity* (Leicester: IVP, 1999). These persons represent different substreams within evangelicalism that all, in my view, have something important to say. (Note for Dutch readers: my theological preference is therefore not adequately expressed by the Dutch word *evangelisch*, which has different connotations.)

unjustified, or experiments (e.g. leaderless groups) that are ill-advised. I would rather see idealistic innovators open to learn from and – if necessary – be corrected by more conservative pastors and theologians, and vice versa. In addition, I have reservations – one might call them 'Calvinist misgivings'[91] – about some of the theological views articulated by prominent authors such as Brian McLaren and Doug Pagitt. This is not to deny that I appreciate much in their publications, especially when I do not take them too literally but read them as a kind of poetry[92] (this is to say that they *inspire* me more than that they *convince* me). I would not be surprised if their theological explorations are in due time absorbed into the liberal or post-liberal mainstream[93], the result of which will be that their distinctive voice within evangelicalism is lost.[94]

I have also detected parallels with the ecumenical movement of the late 1960's in some discourses within the EMC, such as highly idealistic, even ideologically tainted thinking, for example that articulated by the Dutch missiologist J.C. Hoekendijk.[95] I sincerely hope that today's leading voices in the EMC are willing to learn from this stormy episode, in which valid and inspiring theological insights and just causes were carried to extremes.[96] That being said, I realize that I can learn much from the sincere attempts by Brian McLaren and other so-called 'Emergents' to build relational bridges between people with different beliefs.[97]

The next step is to give a broad outline of the research strategy with which I approached this project.

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[91] Cf. Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 28, 115, 117.

[92] Reading theological prose as poetry was suggested to me by the medieval Scottish thinker Eriugena, who wrote that "Theology herself is as it were a kind of poetess." Authors in the EMC are often creative and imaginative in their writings. The quotation is taken from Peter Dronke, *Imagination in the Late Pagan and Early Christian World: The First Nine Centuries A.D.* (Florence, IT: Sismel, 2003), 21.

[93] Cf. Matthew Gallion, "If emergence Christianity is to radically enact or incarnate transformative change – as it purportedly desires to do – then it will have to face its overwhelming similarities to classical liberalism and move beyond them." Matthew Gallion, "The Postmodern Pan and the ForeverNeverland," in Phil Snider, ed., *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity Is Re-Traditioning Mainline Practices* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2011), 89.

[94] Cf. Robert Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism, 1966-2001: A Theological and Sociological Study* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 230n62. In a later book, Warner writes, "Experiments in 'Fresh Expressions' and 'Emerging Church' may become a means of exploring postmodern spirituality within the evangelical tradition for some, and for others a postmodern means of departing from evangelicalism." Rob Warner, *Secularization and Its Discontents* (London: Continuum, 2010), 147.

[95] Cf. P. van Gurp, *Kerk en zending in de theologie van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975). Een plaatsbepaling* [Church and mission in the theology of Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975): A positioning] (Haarlem, NL: AcaMedia, 1989), 287 ff. For some parallels and differences between the Emerging Church Movement and Hoekendijk, also see Theo Hettema, "De missionaire gemeente: blijvend binnenste buiten?" [The missional congregation: Continuing inside out?], in Gerrit de Kruijf en Wietske de Jong, eds., *Een lichte last. Protestantse theologen over de kerk* [A light burden: Protestant theologians about the church] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2010), 81-97.

[96] See Risto Lehtonen, *Story of a Storm: The Ecumenical Student Movement in the Turmoil of Revolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 321-339.

[97] For a highly interesting overview and discussion of this topic, see Chia, "Emerging Faith Boundaries...".

1.3.2 From Methodology to Strategy

My research strategy was to cast a wide net: to do a broad study of literature concerning the EMC – and other topics related to the research questions – and to draw conclusions from that material. Practically, this means that I used writings that are influential in the EMC as source material for making synthetic descriptions and analyses. In short, I mostly pursued a form of explorative content analysis. An additional source of data came from a series of interviews and focus group sessions that I conducted in three theological institutes. This empirical research helped me to get an impression of how the topic of leadership is dealt with in the educational trajectory of future pastors for the Netherlands. Methodological issues regarding this empirical part are explained in chapter 10.

The following questions must now be addressed. How did I gather the information that features in the following chapters? How did I process the data that I found – that is, what did I do with it and how did I decide to present it? How did I ascertain validity for my descriptions and interpretations? The method that I followed to deal with these issues can be summarized in the following seven steps.

1. I looked for 'key players' in the fields that I am studying. I found these authoritative figures by consulting academic libraries in the Netherlands (using Picarta, a search engine), reading recent scholarly articles (for example, those that I encountered through Academic Search Elite, or EBSCO), reading reviews on the internet (for example, on Amazon.com), and consulting experts whom I know personally.
2. I read those books and articles written by 'key players' that were considered to be the most important by their academic peers. While doing so, I systematically made notes on recurrent themes, insights, narratives, and intertextual references.
3. Based upon these notes, I investigated what were the most pressing issues to address in each chapter of this study. In this critical step, I selected what needed to be covered from the material that I had found. Two guiding questions were: What is so important that I cannot reasonably bypass it to answer my research questions, and: What has not received enough scholarly attention hitherto in relation to the goals of this particular chapter? The main subtopics of each chapter followed from my answers to these questions.
4. I distributed these topics among the sections that compose each chapter.
5. I outlined the contents of each of these sections, and a rationale for including it.
6. I wrote out these sections, using my notes, and constantly checking whether I was still in line with the key players. If not, I asked myself whether I had adequate reasons for not doing so.
7. I asked for feedback from a wide range of people who were willing to read parts of my research, or even the whole thesis,[98] and I reflected on their comments in making

[98] They are mentioned in the foreword to this thesis; some are also mentioned in footnotes belonging to particular chapters.

my final draft. In this way, I hope to have arrived at descriptions and interpretations that have been intersubjectively shared, or at least tested, to a sufficiently large degree. I trust that following the seven steps described here has provided enough validity.

Still, my descriptions, interpretations, and proposals may in the eyes of some readers be much improved upon. I do not see this as a problem. On the contrary, a hermeneutical methodology implies that different perspectives on the same themes are to be expected. In addition, applications of complexity theory – which in my opinion deserve to be taken seriously, albeit with caution[99] – suggest that it is by conversing about our different interpretations that important new meanings may come to the fore.[100] Complexity theorizing also alerts us to the "dynamism of our environments and the lack of certainty and assuredness of our methods. It advocates a certain level of tentativeness concerning our findings and conclusions and humility regarding our discoveries, in the knowledge that something new, something yet unknown is just around the corner, still to emerge."[101]

Moreover, I realize that my approach has a limited scope, in the sense that it is primarily focused on discourses and concepts. An in-depth analysis of how leadership and leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu actually works in practice, is not provided. It is true that in human communities, theoretical ideals often do not correspond with practices. I tried to deal with this reality by incorporating insights from several ethnographic studies on emerging or missional churches, or studies on institutes that aim to train missional leaders.

A final choice of strategic importance that I made and that should be mentioned here was not to dwell extentensively on cultural differences between, for example, the United States of America and the Netherlands. This is because this thesis does not deal with specific 'models' of church – or church leadership – that grew on American (or on Australian, British, etc.) soil and that should now be transplanted to another country. Our interest – as, indeed, that of the EMC as such – lies in discovering certain principles that are relevant for any cultural context. For example, we will see EMC authors pointing out that an important task for leaders is to take careful notice of characteristics of and changes in the specific socio-cultural context that they find themselves in. We agree that this is an important task – not just in English speaking countries, but also in the Netherlands, and elsewhere.

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[99] On this topic see chapter 6.

[100] According to Scott Page, heterogeneity, or *differences*, in backgrounds, perspectives, heuristics and mental models among members of a social system are the most likely way to generate innovative solutions to challenging problems. Scott Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[101] Irene E. Karpiak, "Chaos and Complexity: A Framework for Understanding Social Workers at Midlife," in Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., and Norma T. Metz, eds., *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2006), 106.

1.3.3 Sources

The primary sources that form the basis for this study are writings[102] that aim to contribute directly to the EMC: articles, books, and blogs.[103] Blogging is very important for many participants, particularly within the Emerging Church Movement.[104] It provides the opportunity to exchange opinions without being filtered by church structures, denominational restrictions or even doctrinal impurity. "In postmodern fashion, authority has been decentralized from the handful of experts who hold the truth, to include anyone who wants to participate in the conversation."[105] However, I use these sources with caution, because statements made on blogs are just opinions and can always be retracted or modified later. "With such a focus on immediacy, what is true today may not be true for long – tomorrow's post can always change it."[106] Other sources that are equally important, since they are of assistance in my hermeneutical endeavor, consist of writings that have been influential in the EMC. In this category fall, for example, publications by Brian McLaren, Graig Van Gelder, the late Stanley Grenz, and other persons who were previously mentioned (see 1.1.2, above).

A next category is made up of by articles, book, papers, or scholarly theses that comment from an outsider's perspective on the EMC. I call these 'secondary sources', because they deal with the EMC from a critical standpoint. Of particular importance in this respect are ethnographic studies that focus on how emerging communities function in practice. In addition, I use theological sources, especially articles, that discuss particular theological themes which are popular within the EMC, such as the social Trinity. These sources are not only helpful for understanding the movement better, but they also provided me with food for thought for my critical and theological analyses. A final category of sources consist of books and articles from authoritative scholars in different fields. They concern academic studies on the use of 'paradigm' language; history and sociology; metaphor and rhetoric; complexity theory; leadership theory; and educational theory. These sources were used to facilitate my critical endeavors. In the 'seven steps'

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[102] I will mostly refer to writings in what follows, although I also used other media to provide myself with a better understanding of the EMC, such as conferences, visits to emerging churches, videos available on the internet, DVDs, and conversations (partly through e-mail).

[103] A weblog or 'blog' is a website that is updated frequently, most often with links to other sites and commentary on the other sites' content. The content of a blog combines musings, memories, jokes, reflections on research, photographs, rants, and essays. Blogs can be devoted to only one topic, or they can reflect what the author is interested in at any given time. They can have one author ('blogger') or multiple authors. What characterizes blogs are their form and function: all posts to the blog are time-stamped with the most recent post at the top, creating a reverse chronological structure governed by spontaneity and novelty. Laura Gurak et al., "Introduction: Weblogs, Rhetoric, Community, and Culture," NTO the Blogosphere, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/introduction.html (last accessed January 7, 2012).

[104] Australian researcher Teusner even states, "The emerging church exists as a global movement *only online.*" Paul Emerson Teusner, "Emerging Church Bloggers in Australia: Prophets, Priests and Rulers in God's Virtual World," (PhD diss., RMIT University, 2010), 69.

[105] Justin A. Bailey, "Welcome to the Blogosphere," in Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), especially 181.

[106] Bailey, "Welcome to the Blogosphere," 186.

described above, I already explained how I selected those studies that are generally considered to be both authoritative and helpful. In what follows I give a general outline of the content and rationale of the subsequent chapters.

1.4 Content of Chapters

This dissertation consists of twelve chapters: an introductory chapter, ten chapters that form the main body, which is divided into three parts – A (chapters 2-6), B (chapters 7-8), and C (chapters 9-11) – and a final chapter providing an overview of our findings, concluding observations, and suggestions for further research.

Chapters 2-6 in **part A** are organized around different aspects concerning the first two research questions.[107] The focus is on an analysis of those themes that together form the background to – and partly also shape the content of – leadership discourse in the EMC as understood in a broad sense.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Emerging-Missional landscape. Practitioners and commentators, pastors and opinion leaders who are influential in the EMC are in the center of attention. In addition, a few themes related to ecclesiology receive comments.

Chapter 3 analyzes the way that the word 'paradigm' is used in the EMC. This important topic has not yet received sufficient scholarly attention. It will become clear that thinking in terms of 'paradigm' and 'paradigm shifts' has consequences for an understanding of church and leadership within the EMC.

Chapter 4 deals with the *content* of the perceived shift in paradigms. In the EMC, the cultural and religious changes in the Western hemisphere are often described as shifts toward a postmodern and post-Christendom culture. Ideas and ideals within the EMC concerning church and leadership are deeply influenced by these labels. It is therefore important to explore what concepts such as 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom' stand for, and to ask to what extent they are generally persuasive in and applicable to the Netherlands.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the use of metaphors within the EMC, and its link with missiological and epistemological convictions. Not only does this topic relate to changes in Western culture discussed previously, but it also proves to be influential in EMC conceptualizations of church and leadership.

Chapter 6 is about the role of recent scientific developments, specifically complexity theory within the EMC. The objective of this chapter is to provide a synthetic overview on this subject, which is increasingly popular within segments of the EMC, with consequences for the issue of how church and leadership are conceptualized.

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[107] These questions are (1) What is the historical background of the Emerging-Missional Conversation and what are its main theological characteristics? (2) What is characteristic for discourse about culture, church, and leadership within the EMC?

Part B focuses on leadership issues. This part answers research questions 3-4.

Chapter 7 is devoted to research question 3, i.e., What views on leadership are there in the EMC and how can these be interpreted in a larger theoretical framework? It will become clear that the EMC perspectives on various leadership aspects can be helpfully subsumed under a so-called 'organic leadership paradigm'. A formal conceptualization of EMC visions on leadership is still called for, however, and the next chapter is devoted to this task.

Chapter 8 aims to provide and explain a formal definition of leadership, which reflects – in a condensed way – the most important aspects of EMC views on leadership. Thus, research question 4 is dealt with, i.e., How may perspectives on leadership within the EMC be conceptualized within a definition of 'missional leadership' and what does this stand for? The definition that will be sketched is *normative* in that it – following EMC lines of reasoning – proposes a specific way of conceiving leadership in missional communities. However, the definition may also function in an *analytic* manner, by pointing to leadership dimensions that are operative in any Christian community.

Part C deals with issues pertaining to leader education. In this part questions 5-7 are answered.

Chapter 9 answers the fifth research question, i.e., What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu? The conceptualization of missional leadership described in chapter 8 will be used as an analytical tool to help develop a solid framework of questions. This framework is subsequently adopted to portray EMC views on leader education in a coherent way.

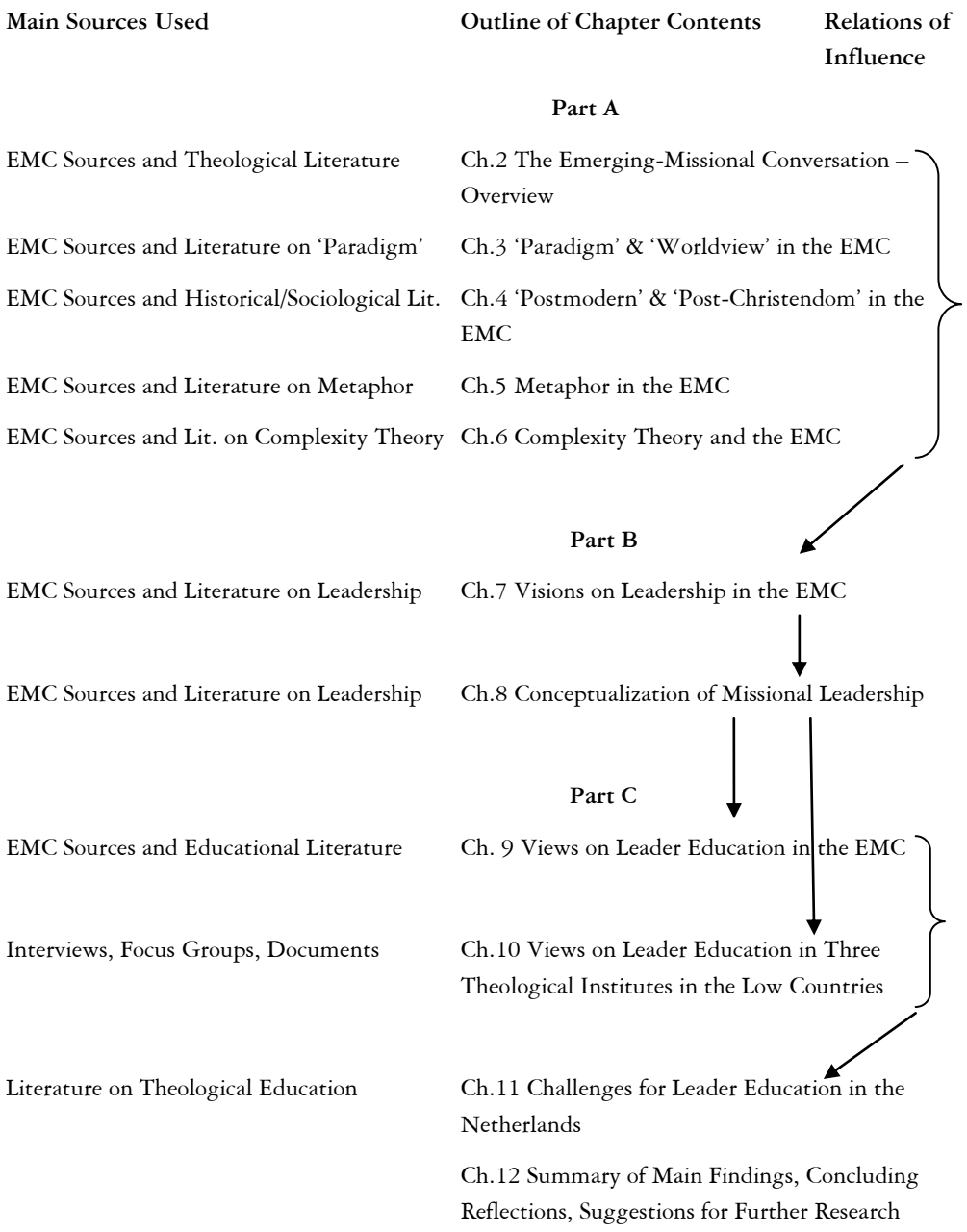
Chapter 10 concerns itself with research question 6, i.e., What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within three theological institutes in the Low Countries? With a few minor alterations, the systematic framework of questions that was proposed in the previous chapter, and that was derived from the earlier conceptualization of missional leadership is now used for the empirical inquiry of views on leader education in three theological faculties in the Low Countries.

Chapter 11 addresses the final research question, i.e., In the light of proposals for and practices of leader education as conceived of in the Emerging-Missional milieu and in recent scholarship, what challenges can be formulated for theological institutes in the Low Countries?

Chapter 12 ends this study by providing summary findings to our research questions, concluding reflections, and suggestions for further research.

The themes of the different chapters, their underlying connections, and the main sources used are delineated in the figure on the next page.

Figure 1.1 Overview of the Dissertation, Chapters 2-12



PART A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION AND ITS DISCOURSES

CHAPTER 2. *A CHOIR WITHOUT A CONDUCTOR*: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND (THEOLOGICAL) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave a short description of the Emerging Church Movement and the Missional Church Movement. It did not, however, explain that within these movements there is a variety of shifting sub-streams, which increases the difficulty of explaining exactly what the words 'emerging' and 'missional' stand for. Confusion particularly reigns concerning the Emerging Church Movement.[1] Anyone doing some initial reading on the Emerging Church Movement, beginning, for example, with a visit to Wikipedia and then using Google for further references, encounters a wide variety of disparate interpretations and definitions.[2] Moreover, there are not only differing perceptions, but also differing evaluations of the movement. During the last few years, especially in evangelical circles, the Emerging Church Movement has become increasingly controversial, even among some of its earlier supporters. Several influential voices speak about moving on or out from the 'emerging church'.[3] They hesitate to identify themselves as 'emerging' at all, and prefer instead the term 'missional'.[4] This word is, however, also interpreted in various ways,[5] nor is it without its (often conservative evangelical) critics.[6]

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[1] Cf. M. Ford, "the category [emerging church] has become so unwieldly that even publishers and authors have trouble grappling with it." Marcia Ford, "Emergent and Beyond: Books for the Broader Conversation of Faith," *Publishers Weekly* (September 1, 2008), 8.

[2] See Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, and John McBrewster, eds., *Emerging Church: Christian, Evangelicalism, Post-evangelical, Liberal Christianity, Postliberal theology, Charismatic Christianity, Neo-charismatic churches* (Mauritius: Alphascript Publishing, 2009). This unusual book consists entirely of texts that the editors selected from Wikipedia.

[3] Cf. Jason Clark, comment on "Beyond the Emerging Church," Emerging Church Info Reflection, comment posted August 2009, http://emergingchurch.info/reflection/jasonclark/index.htm (last accessed September 6, 2010). See also Stephen Shields, comment on "Ten Years Out: A Retrospective on the Emerging Church in North America," Next Wave Church & Culture, comment posted September 5, 2010, http://www.the-next-wave.info/2010/09/ten-years-emerging-church-north-america/ (last accessed Jan. 6, 2012).

[4] Mark Devine, "The Emerging Church: One Movement – Two Streams," in: William D. Henard and Adam W. Greenway, eds., *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement*. (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 10.

[5] Alan Hirsch, comment on "Defining Missional," Leadership Journal, comment posted Fall 2008, http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/17.20.html (accessed May 21, 2010). See also *Missional Christianity, Including: Emerging Church, House Church, Mission (Christianity), Park Life, Willow Creek Association, Mark Driscoll, Missional Living, Rob Bell, Missio Dei, Haqeeqat (Book), Simple Church, David Bosch, Lesslie Newbigin*, an anthology of Wikipedia articles published by Hephaestus Books (Richardson, TX, 2011), and "The Missional Church, Public Report. A Publication from the Center for Congregations," Center for Congregations, http://centerforcongregations.org/resource/missional-church-0 (accessed January 10, 2012). This report gives a description of Missional Church, and points to helpful resources.

[6] See some of the contributions in David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, eds., *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010).

Reflection on these recent developments produces the following three observations.

First, it seems likely that the term 'emerging church' will in time be used less,[7] while 'missional church' will become more popular – although the terms people use may change again in the years to come.[8]

Second, although interpretations of the terms 'emerging' or 'missional' may differ, there are convergent interests among participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu, in particular concerning the importance of having a missional mindset and way of life.[9] Third, a fuller understanding of the historical roots and general theological characteristics of the Emerging and Missional Church Movements may help the reader to appreciate the diversity within the movements and to understand some of the controversy that surrounds them.

We hope that the present chapter will provide a better understanding of this background. Its overarching goal is to answer the first research question: *What is the historical background of the Emerging-Missional Conversation and what are its main theological characteristics?* In answering this question, the emphasis will be on the Emerging Church Movement. One reason for this choice is that, as indicated above, confusion particularly reigns on the subject of this movement. Our discussion is meant to deal with some common misunderstandings. Another reason is the conviction that it is of particular importance for theologians, pastors and other leaders in the church to listen carefully to 'lay' Christians,[10] which is what many participants in the Emerging Church Movement are.[11] In the process, this chapter describes points of divergence or convergence between 'emergers' and 'missionals' when this seems useful. In this way, the Emerging-Missional

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[7] During his ethnographic research in America, anthropologist James Bielo found that the label 'Emerging Church' itself is "increasingly of little interest to adherents as a meaningful self-identifier, but the movement it was intended to capture continues to thrive." James S. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 5, cf. 204.

[8] The following advice therefore seems wise, "We encourage our readers to resist the urge to become too attached to any one descriptor (because it is likely to change), but rather to increase understanding of our changing world, and discover how the timeless message of Jesus Christ – the one who was, who is and is to come – might be proclaimed in this age." Mary Gray-Reeves and Michael Perham, *The Hospitality of God: Emerging Worship for a Missional Church* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 3.

[9] James Bielo interviewed ninety 'Emerging Evangelicals' from forty communities and eleven denominations in America. He found many differences among them in matters of theology, worship styles and methods, ecclesiological preferences, and the social contexts of their ministries. "By contrast, the desire to be missional was shared without exception." Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, 11, 23, 119, 122. In the UK, Doug Gay – after twenty years of experience in the movement – speaks of a "deep sense of missional understandding and commitment" in large segments of the Emerging Church. Doug Gay, *Remixing the Church: Towards an Emerging Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 2011), 98, cf. 97.

[10] Cf. Henk de Roest, *Communicative Identity: Habermas' Perspectives of Discourse as a Support for Practical Theology* (Kampen, NL: Kok, 1998), 359.

[11] As explained in the introductory chapter (1.1.1.1), many leading voices in the Missional Church Movement are academics, belonging to mainline churches, while ECM authors often have a low church background and are not professional theologians.

conversation, a term that refers to overlapping discourses within both movements,[12] is given more profile.

We start with an introduction about the historical roots of the Emerging Church Movement (2.2). The next section identifies three sub-streams within the movement and their theological characteristics (2.3). Following this the topic of ecclesiology receives more detailed attention, since views concerning the nature and task of the church directly influence how church leadership is understood (2.4). The chapter ends with a critical discussion of some pertinent questions (2.5).

2.2. Historical Roots of the Emerging Church Movement

The Emerging Church Movement is best viewed against the background of a growing awareness in the Western (especially English speaking) protestant world, particularly in the last few decades, concerning the complex relationship between the gospel, the church, and culture.[13] This awareness is, in turn, fueled by three contextual shifts:[14] (1) the broadly diffused influence of the ecumenical movement, and ecumenical studies on ecclesiology, mission and worship; (2) the new climate brought about by the Second Vatican Council in the Roman Catholic Church;[15] (3) the fresh wave of missiological thought, forged in the post-Second World War experience of decolonization: "The process of debriefing the Western missionary enterprise was gradually producing the therapeutic effect of a new reflexivity within Western churches about their own beliefs and practices and how they too were inculturated."[16]

Influenced by these three developments, the 1980s saw the Gospel and Our Culture Network coming into the foreground among academic theologians who mostly belonged to mainline church denominations. "It called for a *trialogue* (a three-way conversation) between gospel, church, and culture,"[17] although in practice it turned out to be a dialogue, focused mostly on the church, particularly its missionary nature.[18]

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[12] See for a nice example the comments of the well-known EMC voice Dan Kimball, comment on "Emerging + Missional = Emergissional," Out of Ur, comment posted September 6, 2007, http://www.outofur.com/archives/2007/09/emerging_missio.html (last accessed January 6, 2012).

[13] Cf. Eddie Gibbs, "Church Responses to Culture Since 1985," *Missiology: An International Review* 35, no. 2 (April 2007), 166.

[14] See Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 16.

[15] Doug Gay dubs participants in the ECM "post-Vatican II Protestants," since they have absorbed the influence of the Ecumenical Movement – not, to be sure, through participating in official ecumenical forums (or by studying its documents), but "in the form of a generalized respect for and interest in a wide range of Christian traditions." Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 73.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 51.

[18] Cf. Roxburgh, *Missional*, 54. According to Van Gelder and Zscheile, in the American missional conversation this is still the case. "Much of the missional literature today fails to adequately engage the complex interaction between the gospel and our culture(s). It tends to follow the logic of the approach of a sending God. This logic conceives of the world as something "out there" into which the church is being sent. The church's embeddedness in culture is left unexplored, and the reciprocal interactions between church and

Darrell Guder characterizes this missional church discussion as being, "at its core, a response to Lesslie Newbigin's question: Can the church in the West become, again, a missionary church, given the fact that its context has become a mission field?"[19] Guder understands himself to be continuing a work that has been under way since the 1930s, finding forerunners in theologians such as John Mackay and especially Karl Barth.[20]

While these academic conversations[21] were going on in the late 1980s and early 1990s, experiments in worship were being held on a grass roots-level in communities in both New Zealand[22] and the U.K., that were self-conscious of their cultural and geographical context.[23] Herein lie the roots of the so-called 'alternative worship movement',[24] and of what is today known as 'fresh expressions of church'[25] but also termed 'emerging church', due to American import. These groups tended to give themselves names that convey a sense of both mystery and vitality, yet at the same time deliberately question

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culture are left unexamined." Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 61.

[19] Darrell L. Guder, "Worthy Living: Work and Witness from the Perspective of Missional Church Theology," *Word and World* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2005), 424.

[20] Benjamin T. Conner, *Practicing Witness: A Missional Witness of Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 28.

[21] In particular during the 1980's and 1990's, the Missional Church Movement was somewhat elitist, which increased the difficulty of relating to popular culture in a constructive way and embarking on concrete processes of (missional) change. This may still be a risk for the movement today. Cf. Martin Reppenhagen, *Auf dem Weg zu einer missionalen Kirche: Die Diskussion um eine 'Missional Church' in den USA* [On the road to a missional church: The discussion about a 'missional church' in the USA] (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgeselsschaft, 2011), 198.

[22] In 1989, New Zealander Mark Pierson started Parallel Universe with his comrade Mike Riddell. A few years later, more emerging churches spawned among the Antipodes. Cf. Andrew Jones, comment on "Emerging Church Movement (1989 - 2009)?," Tall Skinny Kiwi, comment posted April 2010, http://tall skinny kiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/2009/12/emerging-church-movement-1989---2009.html (accessed May 21, 2010). See also Mike Riddell, Mark Pierson and Cathy Kirkpatrick, *The Prodigal Project: Journey into the Emerging Church* (London, UK: SPCK, 2000).

[23] Cf. Doug Gay, "For churches in the UK, the rapid rates of decline in membership and attendance raised urgent questions about how appropriately the gospel was being inculturated in the structures and habits of the mainline churches." The alternative worship movement formed a response to these questions. Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 84.

[24] The alternative worship movement, in turn, has its roots in the 1970's. "I recall attending 'experimental worship' in a London church in late 1975, which included contemporary music, banners, candles and balloons," the Anglican liturgy expert Bryan Spinks writes. "Where these postmodern *avant-la-lettre?*," he muses. "Or is it the case that much of what passes for postmodern worship is in fact 'retro' – worship of the 1970s, but remixed and reframed with current video, computer and music synthesizer technology?" Bryan D. Spinks, *The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture* (London, UK: SPCK, 2010), 62.

[25] Graham Cray, Archbishops' Missioner and Leader of the Fresh Expressions Team gives the following definition: "A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context." Graham Cray, "An Introduction by Graham Cray," Fresh Expressions, http://www.Fresh expressions.org.uk/about/introduction (accessed September 1, 2010).

the boundaries between religion and pop culture. "London spawned *Abundant*, *Grace* and *Vaux*, *Joy* arose in Oxford, *Be Real* in Nottingham, and *Visions* in York."[26]

A shift began to occur at the end of the 1990's in evangelical circles in the United States. "Local churches were moving either from a Church 1.0 to a Church 2.0 model or from a Church 2.0 to a Church 3.0 model."[27] Church 1.0 stood for a traditional, institutional and respected church in a modern cultural context. Church 2.0 had pastors as CEOs running businesses that market spiritual goods and services to customers. Church 3.0 was developed by pioneers of so-called 'post-seeker-sensitive' churches who realized that there was a massive change underway in how people viewed the world.[28] This model was formulated to suit this shift in worldview by being *emerging* and *missional*, and by having the following traits:

* the cultural context is assumed to be postmodern and pluralistic
* the church accepts that it is marginalized in culture
* pastors are local missionaries
* church services blend ancient forms and current local styles
* missions are 'glocal' (global and local).

The Church 3.0 model can be called 'emerging church'. In the view of Dan Kimball,[29] the term 'emerging church' describes "those who notice culture is changing and are not afraid to do deep ecclesiological thinking as we're on an adventurous mission together for the gospel of Jesus."[30] The deep-felt conviction that the transition to postmodernity requires something more than just another modernizing response is arguably "one of the missiological distinctives of the emerging conversation."[31]

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[26] Mathew Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture: A Congregational Study in Innovation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 43. The reader will have noticed that the communities mentioned are located in urban regions. Today there are also fresh expressions of church (or emerging churches) in the English countryside, see Sally Gaze, *Mission-Shaped and Rural: Growing Churches in the Countryside* (London, UK: Church House Publishing, 2007). According to the author, "every category of 'fresh expression' explored by the Mission-shaped Church report is capable of a rural version." (43) For an American example, see Melissa Rudolph, *Harvest of Joy and Renewal: The Emerging Missional Way in a Rural Church* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2011).

[27] Mark Driscoll, "A Pastoral Perspective on the Emergent Church," *Criswell Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006), 87-93.

[28] Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 59.

[29] Dan Kimball is pastor at Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California, and a well-known voice in the Emerging Church Movement. For an exploration and evaluation of Kimball's theological framework and his methodological approach as it relates to emerging generational ministry, see Blake Thomas Ring, "The Ministry of Dan Kimball: A Model for Reaching Emerging Generations," PhD diss. (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011).

[30] Dan Kimball, "The Emerging Church and Missional Theology," in Robert Webber, ed., *Listening to the Beliefs of the Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 84.

[31] Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 85.

2.2.2 Emergent Village and the Wider Emerging Church Movement

In 1970 a visionary book titled *The Emerging Church* was published in the United States,[32] and in 1995 Robert Warren offered the UK a model for thinking about the differences between 'inherited church' and 'emerging church',[33] but it is only since the turn of the century that the term has became widely known. The term 'emerging church' was used by Karen Ward, among others, then working at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) headquarters in Chicago. She created a website of her own (www.EmergingChurch.org), "aimed...at mainline folks who did not know about Gen-Xers. I added other churches, and now evangelicals use it too."[34] A few years earlier, a team of innovative Gen-X pastors and church planters had created a platform which is now known as 'Emergent',[35] along with the domain names "emergentvillage. org" and "emergentvillage.com." Emergent Village, then, is an American-based organization and network focused on theological discussion; those who affiliate themselves with it are often called 'Emergents'. The Emerging Church Movement is broader and more diverse than Emergent Village and its affiliates.

The term 'Emerging Church Movement' represents a wide variety of persons and groups that meet each other in internet chat rooms, websites and blogs, at regional, national and international gatherings, through books, articles, CDs, DVDs, videoclips and so on. The main contributors to emerging church experiments in cultural postmodernity are from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Christians in other countries in Europe,[36] such as Germany[37] and the Netherlands,[38] are showing interest as well.

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[32] Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, *The Emerging Church* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970).

[33] "The structures of the emerging church," Warren writes with keen foresight, "will be more flexible than fixed; its leadership will be more collaborative than clerical; its focus more whole-life than church-life; its form more community than organization; its pastoral goal more holy than happy; its expression more diverse than single; and its orientation more future than past." Robert Warren, *Being Human, Being Church: Spirituality and Mission in the Local Church* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), 97.

[34] Karen Ward, as quoted in Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 30.

[35] The name 'emergent' was chosen since this word has to do with the "coming to the surface" of new organic life; life that is beginning and reproducing. Dan Kimball, "Origins of the terms 'Emerging' and 'Emergent' church - Part 2," Dan Kimball: Vintage Faith, http://www.dankimball.com/ vintage_faith/2006/ 04/ origins_of_the_.html (last accessed January 6, 2012).

[36] By the middle of April 2011, researchers Darrell Jackson and Tim Herbert had identified over 1500 people in Europe who are active in missional church practice or reflection. They point out that "Contemporary church planting is probably more diverse than at any other point in its history... [including] emerging church, fresh expressions of church, café church, motorbike church, church on the way, simple church, mission-shaped church, cell curch, virtual church, pub church, mega-church, and many others." Darrell Jackson and Tim Herbert, introduction to "Interim report on Missional Church Planting in Europe (May 2011)," http://europeanmission.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/interim-report-on-missional-church-planting-in-europe.pdf (accessed January 10, 2012).

[37] See David Schäfer, ed., *Die jungen Wilden: Storys über Jugendkirchen, Emerging Churches und Gemeindegründer* [The young and wild: Stories about youth churches, emerging churches, and church planters] (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 2006). See also Tobias Faix and Thomas Weißenborn, eds., *Zeitgeist: Kultur und Evangelium in der Postmoderne* (Marburg an der Lahn: Francke, 2007), esp. 138-149; and Tobias Faix, Thomas Weißen-

Although each emerging church[39] is unique to its own local context, the framework developed by Stuart Murray might be helpful to provide something of a classification.[40] According to Murray, churches may emerge *from* an inherited church through renewal and transformation, reinventing it with a more or less radically different focus, ethos, structure or style. Other churches emerge *out* of inherited churches through church planting, community engagement or rethinking worship or mission, forming a new church that becomes more or less autonomous. A third category of churches emerges *within* a cultural context without the influence of an inherited church, making a new church that will need to build its own links with other churches.[41]

2.2.3 A Network of Grassroots Ecumenism and Innovation

This subsection adds some important features that improve our understanding of the Emerging Church Movement. Cory Labanow, who conducted an ethnographic study on an emerging community in the UK, describes the movement concisely as "a decentralized network of frequently-disillusioned yet hopeful Christians claiming to be intentio-

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born, Peter Aschoff, eds., *Zeitgeist 2: Postmoderne Heimatkunde* (Marburg a/d Lahn: Francke, 2009), esp. 152-171. Visit also Emergent Deutschland, http://emergent-deutschland.de (last accessed December 5, 2011).

[38] In the Netherlands, the interest converges not on 'emerging church' as a name, but more generally on (planting) new, contextual forms of church, see for example Gerrit Noort et al., *Als een kerk opnieuw begint. Handboek voor missionaire gemeenschapsvorming* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2008). The trip to various 'fresh expressions' of church in London, U.K., that the Christian Dutch periodical *cv.koers* – a kind of Dutch *Christianity Today* - organized in November 2007 is illustrative. We went along, together with some twenty pastors, church planters and young Christian professionals. *cv.koers* posted blogs and published articles on the trip and the phenomenon of the Emerging Church Movement. See also Emerging Netwerk, http:/ www.emergingnetwerk.nl/ (last accessed December 5, 2011). Note also that new forms of church are encouraged in a 2011 vision paper which was issued by the largest protestant church in the Netherlands, the PKN. "De hartslag van het leven {The heartbeat of life]," http://www.pkn.nl/site/uploadedDocs/AZ1126Visienota.pdf (accessed October 31, 2011).

[39] The reader might want to know how many emerging churches currently exist. Although little quantitative research has been done yet, a 2010 Methodist Church report identified 893 fresh expressions of church in the UK, with café churches, Messy Church and cell groups being among the most popular. "New report shows range of fresh expressions in Methodism," comment on Fresh Expressions, comment posted September 27, 2010, http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/news/freshexpressionsinmethodism (accessed December 7, 2010). Another report revealed more than 1000 fresh expressions in the Church of England. "It's official: at least 1,000 fresh expressions in the Church of England," comment on Fresh Expressions, comment posted January 19, 2012, http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/news/cofestats2010 (accessed January 26, 2012).

As to other countries, there are as yet no trustworthy figures, because (1) there is no generally agreed upon definition of what constitutes an emerging church and (2) because many emerging communities operate below the radar, so to speak. Michael Morrell, an Emerging Evangelical who chronicles the ECM, listed 724 congregations in 46 states as of March 2010. In reality the figure is probably higher (depending on one's definition). See Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, 26.

[40] Well-known emerging blogger Andrew Jones attempted on New Years Eve, 2009 to provide a classification as well. Andrew Jones, comment on "10 types of emerging church that will no longer upset your grandfather," Tall Skinni Kiwi, comment posted December 31, 2009, http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/2009/12/10-types-of-emerging-church-that-no-longer-upset-your-grandfather.html (accessed September 1, 2010).

[41] Stuart Murray, *Changing Mission: Learning from the Newer Churches* (London: Cromwell Press, 2006), 42-43.

nally rethinking and re-imagining Christianity in a postmodern world."[42] The grassroots (often digital) network character of the Emerging Church Movement, however, makes it difficult to ascertain where the boundaries of the movement are to be found.[43] This difficulty is increased by the fact that the old lines of demarcation between theologies, doctrines and practices are blurred so that a more integrated mission may emerge. In the Emerging Church Movement, participants in the discussion seek to overcome the distinction between academic theologians on the one hand and the 'laity' on the other. This ideal is carried out on weblogs and internet sites, and everyone is invited to make a contribution to the conversation.[44] As Doug Gay suggests, "the Emerging Church can perhaps best be understood (and defended) as an irreverent[45] new wave of *grassroots ecumenism* [emphasis added], propelled from within low church Protestantism by a mix of longing, curiosity and discontent."[46] Another term that Gay proposes is 'DIY ecumenism', which is "constructed by means of a series of unauthorized remixing and emboldened by an (evangelical) ecclesial culture of innovation and experimentation."[47]

The last element in Gay's interpretation is confirmed by two American sociologists, whose label 'Innovators' fits many participants in the Emerging Church Movement. Innovators characteristically "demonstrate a desire for embracing the 'emerging' postmodern culture, and within that context are engaging in a spiritual quest that by definition is one that must change and adapt – innovate – to meet the changing cultural currents."[48] Innovators display four basic patterns.[49]

First, their worship is primarily visual and experimental – including art-making, footwashing, or entering and exiting a tomb.

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[42] Cory E. Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church: A Congregational Study of a Vineyard Church* (Farnham, GB: Ashgate, 2009), 25.

[43] "The power of these digital networks is such," sociologists Flory and Miller note, "that they have an effect not only on those who are directly involved, but also on the many 'lurkers' who read and download the many different resources made available through the website, or purchase the books and teaching materials that are produced from churches and leaders in those networks." Richard Flory and Donald E. Miller, *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 31. To give one example, "Sixteen hundred 'loyal radicals' in the Facebook page 'Presbymergent' help each other to find congregations, understand change in the church, and feel more connected to both traditional and emergent practices of faith." Elizabeth Drescher, *Tweet If You Heart Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2011), 91.

[44] Cf. Myron Bradley Penner and Hunter Barnes, eds., *A New Kind of Conversation: Blogging Toward a Postmodern Faith* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007); Andrew Perriman, *Otherways: In Search of an Emerging Theology* (n.p., Open Source Theology, 2007). Recently however there have been no contributions made to "open source theology: collaborative theology for the emerging church," http://www.opensourcetheology.net (last accessed January 6, 2012).

[45] Doug Gay adds in a footnote (p. 93) that this term is meant institutionally and in terms of protocols, not in terms of any lack of giving glory and honor to God.

[46] Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 93. Gay continues by pointing out that "the language of ecumenism will sound unfamiliar and irrelevant to many of those active within the emerging church conversation, since they were, for the most part, not formed in contexts that used or valued it." Ibid., 94.

[47] Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 93. (Note for Dutch readers: DIY stands for Do It Yourself.)

[48] Flory and Miller, *Finding Faith*, 47.

[49] See ibid., 159-160. In what follows, we add some comments of other authors.

Second, Innovators are interested in situating themselves, both individually and in terms of their ministry, or church ministry, to serve the communities around them.

Third, their model of community is 'organic' in that it has a definite life cycle of birth, life, and perhaps, ultimately, death if the community ceases to be effective or authentic from their point of view.[50]

Fourth, Innovators work to creatively use the history, traditions, and rituals of different Christian traditions,[51] in some cases even going outside Christian traditions for a more physically and visually oriented practice. In this, we see Innovators encouraging the development of ancient spiritual disciplines.[52]

2.2.4 'Reactive' or 'Proactive'

Generally speaking, in recent years the Emerging Church Movement has followed two major paths.[53]

One is the 'reactive' path, consisting of groups and individuals who are reacting against the traditional church. A key concern of these groups is authenticity;[54] they are less focused on reaching people outside of their own groups.[55] The other is the 'proac-

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[50] Cf. Gray-Reeves and Perham, "On our journey to emergent congregations we noted a consistent lack of concern from leaders about the sustainability and longevity of this movement and of the congregations they led. If the institutional church is overly concerned with survival, it may be that the emerging church is not concerned enough." Gray-Reeves and Perham, *The Hospitality of God*, 126.

[51] See in general on this topic: Tony Jones, *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2005); Brian McLaren, *Finding Our Way Again: The Return of the Ancient Practices* (Nashville, TN: WPublishing, 2008).

[52] Some worship activities that James Bielo listed during his ethnographic fieldwork included the public reading of monastic and Catholic prayers, burning incense, replacing fluorescent lighting with candles, chanting Eastern Orthodox prayers, using icons, creating prayer labyrinths, using *lectio divina* to read the Bible, and increasing the role of silence. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, 71. Worship within emerging churches is often described as 'ancient-future', because of the mix with contemporary music and technology. Indeed, "New media and audiovisual technologies have become the new stained-glass windows of many church communities." Jason Clark, "The Renewal of Liturgy in the Emerging Church," in Scot McKnight et al., *Church in the Present Tense: A Candid Look at What's Emerging* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), 83. Karen Ward, one of the (since 2011: former) leaders of the Church of the Apostles (Seattle), writes that "Our liturgy has been described by visitors as 'new wave Byzantine' and 'digital Orthodox'....Communion is weekly. We are ancient and future. We Bach and rock. We chant and spin. We emo and alt." Karen Ward, "The New Church: Artistic, Monastic, and Commute-Free," in Jennifer Ashley, ed., *The Relevant Church: A New Vision for Communities of Faith* (Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004), 85.

[53] Cf. "Seed Share: All Things Emerging Down Under. From a conversation with Fuzz Kitto, Spirited Consulting," Mustard Seed Journey: Mustard Seed Associates http://mustardseedjourney.wordpress.com/2007/08/31/the-new-conspirators-emerging-church/, comment posted August 31, 2007 (accessed May 21, 2010); and Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby and Aaron Kennedy, ed., *New Monasticism as Fresh Expression of Church* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2010), 9.

[54] This is not to overlook that a striving after 'authentic' lives, faith, community, relationships, worship, tradition and spirituality is characteristic of the Emerging Church Movement as a whole. As James Bielo suggests, authenticity is an "organizing trope" for Emerging Evangelicals. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, 16.

[55] Some communities have become more inward focused over time. For example, the *Visions* community in York (UK), that was started in 1991, has "shifted from being a community concerned with expansion and evangelism, to one preoccupied with sustaining a sense of meaning for those already within its boundaries

tive' path. These communities are particularly interested in mission and "value the conversation, because it has helped them to think about how to reform church in ways which will increase their capacity to see churches grow as they reach out to others in a post-Christendom society."[56]

It is individuals and communities on the proactive path that converge in many ways with the Missional Church Movement, which emphasizes that the church has to move from a marketing mentality to a missional mentality. The missional church is seen as an incarnational (versus an attractional) ministry, sent to engage a postmodern, post-Christendom, globalized context. "This understanding requires every congregation to take on a missionary posture for engaging its local context, with this missionary engagement shaping everything a congregation does."[57]

2.3 The Theological Spectrum in the Emerging Church Movement

It is not possible to describe *the* theology of the Emerging Church Movement. As Dan Kimball emphasizes, there is great diversity in belief in the Emerging Church Movement: "There are Baptist emerging churches as well as Episcopalian, Reformed, nondenominational, and many others. Many emerging churches would be considered conservative and many others would be considered liberal."[58] Speaking from his UK context, Douglas Gay confirms this: "my experience over two decades of involvement in alt worship and emerging church networks, blogs and conferences is that there is very significant theological diversity within the emerging church conversation."[59]

It is difficult to do justice to the theological differences within the Emerging Church Movement. Moreover, it is a sensitive matter, as theological labeling – especially in terms of 'left' and 'right', 'conservative' or 'liberal' – is something that many participants in the movement seek to avoid, considering it to be a leftover approach to theology inherited from modernity. However, we may roughly categorize the theological spectrum to help better understand the Emerging Church Movement and the controversies surrounding it, and to identify overlap with the Missional Church Movement. This section discusses three 'ideal types'[60] – relevants, reconstructionists, and revisionists – using the typologies devised by two American commentators who are both widely cited and

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and creating a particular kind of atmosphere in public meetings, characterized by mystery and creativity." Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 142.

[56] Cray et al., *New Monasticism as Fresh Expression of Church*, 9.

[57] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 4.

[58] Dan Kimball, "The Emerging Church and Missional Theology," in Webber, ed., *Listening to the Beliefs of the Emerging Churches*, 83.

[59] Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 104.

[60] The reference here is to the Weberian notion of *Idealtypus*, which means that they are meant to provide a provisional classification, allowing for some preliminary understanding; it is presumed that constants and variables, as well as deviations from these types can be found.

respected – Scot McKnight[61] and Ed Stetzer,[62] while we also mention some insights of Doug Gay from the UK.

2.3.1 'Relevants'

'Relevants' minister *to* postmoderns;[63] they purposefully try to reach postmoderns with the gospel.[64] Relevants are not so concerned about "talking them out of their postmodernity,"[65] but seek to correct its possible relativistic extremes. They are, furthermore, interested in changing things such as forms of worship, preaching styles, and church leadership structures, not to satisfy personal tastes, "but for the purpose of better communicating to the culture around them those beliefs and values which make up who they are."[66] Their goal is to be more relevant, i.e., understandable, interesting, appealing, making people want to get involved, addressing the needs and issues of today, natural, assimilated, or real.[67] The words 'cool' and 'hip' may be mentioned here as well,[68] although not all emerging church participants would identify with them.[69]

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[61] Scot McKnight is the Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies at North Park University in Chicago. The source used is Scot McKnight, "What is the Emerging Church?" (paper presented at the Fall Contemporary Issues Conference Westminster Theological Seminary, Glenside, Pennsylvania, October 26-27, 2006).

[62] Ed Stetzer is director of LifeWay Research and missiologist in residence at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tennessee. The source used is "The Emergent/Emerging Church: A Missiological Perspective," in William D. Henard and Adam W. Greenway, *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 47-90.

[63] The word 'postmoderns' is used here as an *emic* term as used within publications of the Emerging Church Movement. It denotes people who, primarily because of a deep socio-cultural shift (often phrased as "from modernity to postmodernity"), find themselves estranged from current expressions of church and Christianity.

[64] Cf. Mark Driscoll, "The emerging church is a growing, loosely connected movement of primarily young pastors who are glad to see the end of modernity and are seeking to function as missionaries who bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to emerging and postmodern cultures." Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 22.

[65] Cf. Mark Driscoll, "postmodern culture is not something we should ignore, oppose, or embrace; rather, it is simply another culture that we should seek to redeem and transform by the power of the gospel." Mark Driscoll, *The Radical Reformission: Reaching Out without Selling Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 161.

[66] Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church*, 87.

[67] Ibid., 70.

[68] See Brett McCracken, *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), in particular chapter 7. McCracken conceives cool as "an attractive attribute that embodies the existential strains to be independent, enviable, one-of-a-kind, and trailblazing." Ibid., 28. 'Hip' strongly resembles cool. According to the Urban Dictionary it is "Cooler than cool...the state of being in-the-know, including, but not limited to, being stylish or fashionable." As quoted in ibid., 22. It is said of Rob Bell that he "put the *hip* in *discipleship*," but this pertains to Mark Driscoll, Dan Kimball, and many other leaders of the Emerging Church Movement as well. See Andy Crouch, "Emergent Mystique," *Christianity Today* (November 2004), 38.

[69] When asked "How do you respond to those who say you are holy hipsters?," Isaac Everett from Transmissions, New York City, gave this answer, "Being a Christian should be decidedly uncool; it's not cool to go without a lot of money...to value compassion over power...to hold back snarky gossip, but those are all the things that Christ taught us to do." Isaac Everett, as quoted in Becky Garrison, *Rising from the Ashes: Rethinking Church* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 70.

As Mark Driscoll acknowledges, "The common critique of Relevants is that they are doing little more than cool church for hip young Christians."[70] Likewise, 'relevant' should not be interpreted as following the latest doctrinal fad or ministry model, but in the sense of Jennifer Ashley's definition: "1. a distinctive community of faith that is passionate for Christ as well as culture. 2. a community of believers who has bearing on and significance in present day culture."[71] Consequently, they often begin alternative worship services that are more connected with the local context and general cultural trends.[72] Relevants also plant new churches to reach people in their own cultural contexts, and make many personal sacrifices to do so.[73] Members of the Imago Dei community (Portland, Oregon), for example, put their church values into practice by sharing their lives with homeless people, drug pushers, and prostitutes.[74]

The relevant camp has its own spectrum of theological viewpoints. On the conservative end, we see a growing group of Emerging Reformers[75] or Reformed relevants: "confessional, contextual, cool Calvinists,"[76] such as the New Zealander Michael Beck[77] or the American Mark Driscoll. Driscoll pleads for a *relevant orthodoxy*, what he describes as

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[70] Mark Driscoll, *Religion Saves: And Nine Other Misconceptions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2009), 215.

[71] Jennifer Ashley, ed., *The Relevant Church*, vi. Note the theological interpretation of 'relevant' by Scott Bader-Saye, who uses the etymological connection of 'relevant' with the word 'elevate': "The church's witness in the world could be construed as a reiteration of the moment when the priest elevates the host during the traditional Eucharistic liturgy. Seen in this way, relevance (re-elevation) is about lifting up Christ so that he may be seen by the world." Scott Bader-Saye, "Improvising Church: An Introduction to the Emerging Church Conversation," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 1 (March 2006), 20.

[72] Such kinds of worship should perhaps not be called relevant but 'pertinent'. As missional liturgist Clayton Schmit notes, "Pertinent worship involves people in culturally and contextually fitting ways." Clayton J. Schmit, *Sent and Gathered: A Worship Manual for the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 35.

[73] Interviews with leaders of emerging churches in urban deprived areas in the UK leave "an overwhelming expression of deeply committed people taking incarnation very seriously, often moving into urban areas, in a very counter-cultural way, immersing themselves in the local context, and committing themselves to stay for considerable periods of time." Eleanor Williams, *Fresh Expressions in the Urban Context* (n.p.: YTC Press, 2007), 74.

[74] See Dave Livermore, "Emerge or Submerge," http://assets.cornerstone.edu/pages/1310/File/EmergeSubmerge.pdf (accessed September 1, 2010).

[75] Emerging Reformers, Driscoll writes, "have a commitment to the Reformed theological tradition as shaped by such historical figures as Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Puritans, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, along with such broadly recognized evangelical leaders as Billy Graham, J.I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, and John Stott. Emerging Reformers look to contemporary men such as John Piper, D. A. Carson, and Wayne Grudem for theology, along with Tim Keller and Ed Stetzer for missiology." Mark Driscoll, "Navigating the Emerging Church Highway," Christian Research Institute, http://www.Equip.org/articles/navigating-the-emerging-church-highway (last accessed January 6, 2012). In another publication, Driscoll names this group "Missional Reformed Evangelicals". See Driscoll, *Religion Saves*, 216.

[76] This phrase is from Mark Driscoll. See Tammi Reed Letbetter, comment on "Conference Examines the Emerging Church," Baptist Press, comment posted on September 25, 2007, http://www.baptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?id=26495 (accessed February 11, 2008).

[77] After his conversion to Christianity from a life of nightclubbing, drug taking and drug dealing, Michael Beck now serves as the pastor of Gracenet Community Church. See Michael Beck, "Calvinism in the Emerging Church in NZ," http://www.rbc.org.nz/library/Calvinism-in-the-Emerging-Church-in-NZ.pdf (accessed September 1, 2010).

"*relevantism*, by which doctrinal principles remain in a closed hand and cultural methods remain in an open hand,"[78] since we "live now in a day of pluralism, diversity, and multi-culture."[79] On the more progressive end of the spectrum, we encounter John Burke,[80] for example, who agrees with at least one statement of postmodern thought, that "No human has a lock on all truth."[81] Other well-known relevant leaders and writers from the United States are Darrin Patrick,[82] Matt Chandler,[83] and Rick McKinley.[84]

2.3.2 'Reconstructionists'

'Reconstructionists' minister *with* postmoderns. They do not occupy themselves much with basic postmodern tenets as they relate to epistemology and a critique of modernity. Reconstructionists, however, do share with postmoderns – to a significant extent – an "emphasis on the expansion of knowledge beyond rational, propositional language; an eclectic approach to symbols and their arrangement in novel combinations; a celebration of fragmentation, playfulness or irony; and an incredulity towards over-arching metanarratives or frameworks of knowledge."[85] In addition, reconstructionists believe, in the words of Dan Kimball, that "we must rethink leadership, church structure, the role of a pastor, spiritual formation, how community is lived out, how evangelism is done, how we express our worship, etc. It's not just about what we do in the worship service, but about everything."[86] In the reconstructionist stream, often informal, missional-incarnational, and organic church forms,[87] such as house churches, are proposed.[88]

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[78] Mark Driscoll, "The Church and the Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World," in John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds., *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 143. "Practically," he adds, "this means churches must continually ask questions about their use of technology...musical style, dress, verbiage, building aesthetics, programming, and the like: Are they being as creative, hospitable, relevant, and effective as possible to welcome as many people as possible to connect to Jesus and his church?" Ibid.

[79] "Conversations with the Contributors," in John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds*., The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 153.

[80] John Burke is the founder of Gateway Community Church in Austin, Texas, which is "not church *for* a post-Christian culture...but a church molded *out of* a post-Christian people – an indigenous church, rising up out of the surrounding culture to form the Body of Christ!" John Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come as You Are Culture in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 19.

[81] John Burke, "The Emerging Church and Incarnational Theology," in Webber, *Listening to the Beliefs*, 60.

[82] Patrick is lead pastor of The Journey in Saint Louis, Missouri, which he founded in 2002. See also Darren Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010).

[83] Matt Chandler is lead pastor of The Village Church in Highland Village, Texas.

[84] Rick McKinley is pastor of Imago Dei Community, located in Portland, Oregon.

[85] Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture*, 165.

[86] Dan Kimball, "The Emerging Church and Missional Theology," in Webber, *Listening to the Beliefs*, 86.

[87] See for example Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010). Church 3.0 stands for an organic, missional church.

[88] Mark Driscoll calls this group House Church Evangelicals – one of his four "lanes on the Emerging Church highway". The other groups he discerns in the "incredibly complicated emerging church milieu" are Emerging Evangelicals, Emerging Reformers, and Emergent Liberals. The last category covers what we call revisionists. Driscoll, "Navigating the Emerging Church Highway."

Influenced as they are by pre-modern (e.g. Celtic), or mainline Christian traditions, or both, some of the so-called 'new monastic communities'[89] arguably belong to the reconstructionist stream as well, while others have more traits of the third, revisionist category.[90]

The plea for 'reconstruction' often brings along a distinctive – more open and questioning – approach to theology. Reconstructionists cannot, however, be said to deliberately discard 'orthodoxy',[91] although they are sometimes accused of this by their critics. In reconstructionist circles there is a great interest in narrative approaches to Bible-reading, and in the Jewish roots of Jesus and the Gospels. They are influenced by theologians of an earlier generation such as Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch, and by contemporary theologians such as N.T. Wright, Miroslav Volf, and Dallas Willard, and sometimes by the Anabaptist tradition as well (e.g. John Howard Yoder and the UK-based Baptist writer Stuart Murray Williams). Traces of the Reformed and Calvinist tradition (e.g. Karl Barth, David Fergusson and Bruce McCormack) can be also be found among the reconstructionists, two well-known examples being the Australians Michael Frost[92] and Alan Hirsch.[93]

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[89] 'New monastics' settle not in a monastery, but in abandoned sections of society. They are committing to community, sharing incomes, serving the poor, and practicing spiritual disciplines. See Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism: What It Has to Say to Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008). See also The New Monasticism Network, "a network of ecclesial communities arising out of contextual mission," http://new-monasticism-network.ning.com/ (accessed September 1, 2010); and Graham Cray, Aaron Kennedy, and Ian Mobsby, eds., *New Monasticism as Fresh Expressions of Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010).

[90] An American example is St. Hildegard's Community in Austin, Texas, which is described as "a transformative feminist liberation community, a place to live into baptism with accountability and encouragement." See Becky Garrison, *Ancient-Future Disciples: Meeting Jesus in Mission-Shaped Ministries* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 23-39 and www.hildegard-austin.org (accessed November 28, 2011).

[91] Cf. Mike Baughman, "Like many postmoderns, my willingness to question and challenge items at the core of my faith is not an expression of distrust or disobedience to God or the scriptures. On the contrary, it is an act of faith and trust in the belief that God is big enough to handle my questions and doubts." Mike Baughman, "Emerging from the Jersey Shore: Secular, Generational, and Theological Frontiers," in Phil Snider, ed., *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity Is Re-Traditioning Mainline Practices* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2011), 150.

[92] Michael Frost is the Vice Principal of Morling College and the founding Director of the Tinsley Institute, a mission study centre located at Morling College in Sydney, Australia. In 1998 Frost was one of the founders of the Forge Mission Training Network, based in Melbourne, and in 2001 he founded the alternative Christian community, smallboatbigsea, based in Manly on Sydney's north shore.

[93] Alan Hirsch is the founding Director of Forge Mission Training Network and adjunct professor at Fuller Seminary, California. He is the co-founder of shapevine.com, an international forum for engaging with world transforming ideas. He also leads Future Travelers, a learning journey applying missional-incarnational approaches to established churches and is an active participant in The Tribe of LA, a Jesus community among artists and creatives in Los Angeles. Hirsch is increasingly familiar with the Netherlands: he recently (March 20, 2012) delivered three well attended lectures at the Theological University in Kampen (TUK), and he has embarked upon a PhD research at the University of Nijmegen.

2.3.3 'Revisionists'

'Revisionists' minister *as* postmoderns. They emphasize a "strongly experiential, socially activist, inclusive, pluralist, pilgrims-on-the-way, this-world affirming community,"[94] going further in their revision and criticism of conservative (evangelical) theology than most reconstructionists. Revisionist authors are said to "push hard for reevaluation, revision, and when necessary abandonment of historic doctrinal commitments."[95] As Doug Gay notes,[96] some have embraced a radically deconstructive route, aligning themselves with the theological and a/theological positions of thinkers such as John Caputo or Mark C. Taylor. Others have been greatly influenced by the 'deep ecumenism' of John Hick or Matthew Fox. Still others identify more explicitly with parts of the program of Radical Orthodoxy and figures such as John Milbank, Graham Ward and Catherine Pickstock.

In America, revisionists are particularly found within Emergent Village-circles. They typically view themselves "as the productive union of postliberalism on the left (e.g. Hans Frei and George Lindbeck) and postconservatism on the right (e.g. John Franke and Roger Olson),"[97] while Jürgen Moltmann, Walter Brueggemann, and (the late) Stanley Grenz[98] are often referred to as well.[99] According to Tony Jones, "The hope of emergents, their ministry, their message is, more than anything, a call for a reinvigoration of Christian theology – not in the ivy towers, not even in pulpits and pews, but on the street....Emergents believe that theology is local, conversational, and temporary."[100] *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope*, edited by revisionists Tony Jones and Doug Pagitt, illustrates this well. There is not much 'propositional' theology to be found in this book. It is a "choir with no conductor"[101] – twenty-five voices each singing their own song.

Well-known authors that can also be called 'revisionists' are, for example, the British theologian Spencer Burke, whose *A Heretic's Guide to Eternity* unmistakably aims at revi-

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[94] John Bolt, "An Emerging Critique of the Postmodern, Evangelical Church: A Review Essay," *Calvin Theological Journal* 41 (2006), 218.

[95] Mark Liederbach and Alvin L. Reid, *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2009), 101.

[96] The following lines are based on Gay, *Remixing the Church*, 103-104.

[97] Michael Wittmer, "Don't Stop Believing: A Theological Critique of the Emergent Church," *Reformed Review: A Theological Journal of Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan* 61, no. 3 (Fall 2008), 119.

[98] Stanley Grenz (1950–2005) became an influential proponent of a 'postmodern' evangelicalism. Toward the end of his life, he was involved in the beginnings of the Emerging Church Movement. http://www.theopedia.com/Stanley_Grenz (accessed December 3, 2011).

[99] Recently, process theologians such as John Cobb and Philip Clayton have caught peoples' attention. Emergent Village, "2012 Emergent Village Conversation," http://www.emergentvillage.com/events/theological-conversation (accessed December 7, 2011).

[100] Tony Jones, *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emerging Frontier* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 104, 111.

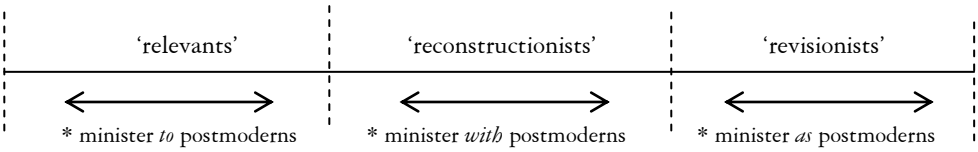
[101] This is the metaphor of Tony Jones. Tony Jones, "Introduction: Friendship, Faith, and Going Somewhere Together," in Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds., *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 14. Jones ends his introduction with another interpretation: "What is Emergent Village? A mess. A beautiful, *good* mess." Ibid., 15.

sing theology;[102] the Irish theologian Peter Rollins,[103] who distances himself from what he calls 'conceptual idolatry' in our speaking of God[104] and pleads as a postmodern Bonhoeffer for a 'post-religious church';[105] Rob Bell, the well-known (since 2011: former) pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville (Michigan),[106] whose revisionist interpretation of the doctrine of hell made it to the cover of *Time* (April 14, 2011); and prolific writer Brian McLaren, who redefined the Christian faith into a Kingdom story of peace, non-violence and an economy of love.[107]

2.3.4 A Spectrum of Views

The following figure summarizes what has been said above:

Figure 1. Three Streams of the Spectrum within the Emerging Church Movement



This figure shows that there is a spectrum to be seen within the Emerging Church Movement, from relevants on the one hand to revisionists on the other hand. The use of inverted commas (' ') is meant to emphasize that these are just labels used for the sake of convenience. The figure also suggests that boundaries between the three groups are porous and vague – they are not always easy to detect. Donald Miller, for example, the author of *Blue Like Jazz*, ends his book on a typical relevant note: "I want you to know

[102] Spencer Burke and Barry Taylor, *A Heretic's Guide to Eternity* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006). Cf. this statement in the introduction: "At this point in our history, I believe God is to be questioned as much as obeyed, created again and not simply worshipped. Our views must be continually revised, reconsidered, and debated." Ibid., xxii.

[103] Until he moved to Greenwich, CT, Peter Rollins was involved in the IKON 'cyndicate', see "Seeds of Doubt: Ikon's Peter Rollins," *Christian Century,* June 02, 2009, http://www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=7087 (accessed September 1, 2010). See also Stephen Hunt, "The Emerging Church: Characteristics and Typology – The Case of Ikon," http://escholarship.usyd.edu.au/journals/index.php/AASR/article/view/2345/2767 (accessed September 1, 2010).

[104] Peter Rollins, *How (Not) To Speak of God* (London: SPCK, 2006), 12.

[105] See Peter Rollins, *Insurrection: To Believe Is Human. To Doubt, Divine* (New York: Howard Books, 2011).

[106] Not to be confused with Mars Hill Church pastored by Mark Driscoll, in Seattle, Washington. The *Chicago Sun-Times* has heralded Bell as "the new Billy Graham." Debra Bendis, "Bell's Appeal: Ministry to Young Adults," *Christian Century*, March 24, 2009, http://www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=6545 (accessed September 1, 2010).

[107] Brian D. McLaren, *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007). See for a thoughtful critique on this theologial approach, Kim Hawtrey and John Lunn, "The Emergent Church, Socio-Economics and Christian Mission," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 27, no. 2 (2010), 65-74.

Jesus too."[108] But Miller also strikes a typical reconstructionist chord, by emphasizing that "all the wonder of God happens right above our arithmetic and formula."[109] And sometimes he sounds like a revisionist, claiming, for example, "You cannot be a Christian without being a mystic," or by asking rhetorically, "Who knows anything anyway?"[110]

In addition we must emphasize that each stream should – as the metaphor suggests – be thought of as dynamic and diverse, i.e. consisting of different sub-currents. The arrows are added to indicate that it is quite possible that individuals may move along the line over time. Some may increasingly lean toward strong revisionist views, while others may perhaps find themselves becoming more cautious and 'relevant' in their outlook.

The purpose of this discussion and figure is not, of course, to put people in boxes, nor to pass judgment on individuals and their personal faith or integrity.[111] It should also be acknowledged that perhaps our description of the three groups should be widened, or nuanced. One thing that stands out, however, is that reconstructionists are somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, while both cautious, or conservative, relevants and revolutionary revisionists are on the outer ends. Moreover, in the last few years relevants and revisionists are becoming increasingly polarized. Some Emergents (read: revisionists) are intolerant of those who openly admit to viewing Scripture as the absolute authority for doctrine and practice.[112] On the other hand, 'Reformed relevant' pastor Mark Driscoll finds himself "greatly concerned by some of the aberrant theological concepts gaining popularity with some fellow emerging-type younger pastors."[113] He dissociates himself in particular from the Emergent-stream, which in his view is "the latest version of liberalism."[114]

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[108] Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 239. His book is very popular in the Anglo-Saxon world, it sold 800,000 copies. A Dutch translation appeared under the title *Puur. Verlangen naar echt geloof* (Amsterdam: Ark Boeken, 2008).

[109] Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*, 203.

[110] Ibid., 202 and 103.

[111] It should be noted that the Emerging Church Movement as a whole, and Emergent Village in particular, receives vehement criticisms from (very) conservative evangelical Christians. Some critics speak about a "sinfully ecumenical neo-liberal cult operating within the Emergent Church aka the Emerging Church." Ken Silva, comment on "Richard Foster's Renovare Promoting Emerging Heretic Tony Jones," Apprising Ministries, comment posted December 29, 2011, http://apprising.org/category/emergent-church/ (accessed January 7, 2012). Leaders of the Emerging Church Movement are portrayed as New Agers, pan-en-theists, mystics, liberals and friends of 'Rome'. As such, they may be part of the end-time deception, so suggests for example Roger Oakland, in his *Faith Undone: The Emerging Church...A New Reformation or an End-time Deception* (Silverton, OR: Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 2007).

[112] Cf. Stephen Hunt, "The Emerging Church and its Discontents," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 29, no. 3 (December 2008), 291.

[113] Mark Driscoll, "The Emerging Church and Biblicist Theology," in Robert Webber, ed., *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 21.

[114] Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.*, 21. He continues: "The only difference is that the old liberalism accommodated modernity and the new liberalism accommodates postmodernity." Ibid.

Clearly the revisionist stream is the most controversial substream of the Emerging Church Movement,[115] especially among American evangelicals who are averse to what they perceive to be liberalism.[116] Because of suspicion or dislike, or both, of liberal influences, relevants and some reconstructionists have started new digital networks, such as Origins,[117] that have nothing to do with the Emergent Village. Thus, some former Emergents now take more of a distance.[118] The Center for Emerging Church Leadership (CECL), for example, has changed its name to Catalyst for Missional Leadership (C4ML).[119]

2.3.5 Convergence with the Missional Church Movement

The example, given above, of a name change from emerging to missional might give the impression that missional discourse is especially found among relevants. Interestingly, however, the conviction that (a) God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world and (b) that this 'sentness' has all kinds of practical implications for church life, can be found throughout the spectrum of the Emerging Church Movement.[120] For example, Tim Keel, lead pastor (until July 2009) for Jacob's Well, couches his interpretation of church in missional terms: "In post-Christendom, the church is that community of people who look to discover what God is actively doing in the world around

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[115] Cf. the discussions concerning the Emerging Church Movement on YouTube. Although the revisionist wing is the most vocal, its adherents likely constitute only a (minority) part of the Emerging Church Movement as a whole.

[116] For a perceptive description of the different and deeply ingrained 'moral worldviews' of evangelicalism and liberalism in the United States, see James K. Wellman, Jr., *Evangelical vs. Liberal: The Clash of Christian Cultures in the Pacific Northwest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Wellman speaks of "vital religious subcultures, distinct forms of Protestant Christianity." In the same sentence however, he adds that they are "not ultimately foreign to each other." Ibid., 284. We submit that this last statement is especially pertinent in regard to the Emerging-Missional milieu (which Wellman does not mention). For example, in this milieu we encounter 'evangelicals' concerned with issues of justice and who are at home with uncertainty, change, new information, and metaphorical language; according to Wellman these are liberal characteristics. We also meet 'liberals' who want to be missional and evangelistic, which is supposed to be a typical evangelical trait. Cf. Garrison, *Ancient-Future Disciples*, 117, and Kevin LaPoint, "Liberal and Devout: The Sources of Enthusiasm and Organizational Commitment within the Liberal Religious Niche" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2009).

[117] "This network is a community of followers of Jesus who are passionate about seeing people know God and experience life as He intended. As we are guided by the Scriptures we will inspire one another to embrace innovation and creativity as a means to fulfill this mission." Origins, http://originsproject.org/about-origins/ (last accessed December 7, 2011).

[118] Cf. the introduction above (2.1).

[119] See Ed Stetzer, "The Emergent/Emerging Church: A Missiological Perspective," *The Journal of Baptist Theology and Ministry* 5, no. 2 (2008), 78.

[120] Cf. Gray-Reeves and Perham, "Most emergent churches make much of their missional thrust...It seemed that the Eucharistic communities were more naturally focused on mission and outreach beyond the gathering for liturgy and worship....The emergent leaders we met understand themselves as cultural missionaries, so to speak, in constant dialogue with the local community of which they are a part and the Church they love." *The Hospitality of God*, 89-90, 122.

them and then join themselves to that work."[121] According to Patrick Keifert, who is himself a prominent voice within the Missional Church Movement, people such as Tim Keel, Brian McLaren, and Karen Ward "are providing truly innovative models of missional church."[122] The church leaders mentioned here arguably belong to the revisionist stream.[123]

Turning to the other side of the spectrum, in 2010 a Missional Manifesto was published by opinion leaders such as Tim Keller, Dan Kimball, Ed Stetzer, and Alan Hirsch. Its preamble states that "God is a sending God, a missionary God, who has called His people, the church, to be missionary agents of His love and glory. The concept missional epitomizes this idea. This manifesto seeks to serve the church by clarifying its calling and helping it theologically understand and practically live out God's mission in the world today. Although it is frequently stated 'God's church has a mission,' according to missional theology, a more accurate expression is 'God's mission has a church' (Ephesians 3:7-13)."[124]

This view fits well with the views of participants within the missional church conversation. Clearly then, "even though the emerging church and missional church movements are somewhat distinct, some emerging church leaders also attend to identity/nature as the formative clue for understanding the church and its ministry."[125] These emerging church voices, moreover, can be heard in the relevant, reconstructionist, *and* revisionist streams. The heartbeat of the Emerging Church Movement is to be found by reflecting on and experimenting[126] with incarnational, missional communities.

2.4 The Nature and Task of the Church

One theological theme which has the most direct repercussions for church leadership is the theme of ecclesiology, which is why we devote a whole section to it. First, we give a broad outline of the nature of the church in the discourse of the Emerging Church Mo-

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[121] Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 155.

[122] Patrick Keifert, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era* (Eagle, ID: Allelon, 2006), 142.

[123] Keifert mentions Andrew Menzies and Steve Taylor as well, who can be said to belong to the reconstructionist stream.

[124] Missional Manifesto, "Preamble," http://www.missionalmanifesto.net/index.html (last accessed June 27, 2011).

[125] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 8. Cf. Martin Reppenhagen, *Auf dem Weg zu einer missionalen Kirche: Die Diskussion um eine 'Missional Church' in den USA* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgeselsschaft, 2011), 328.

[126] Referring to Fresh Expressions in the UK, John Drane frames the 'experimenting' aspect as follows: "instead of offering a ready-made product (a certain form of church), it is creating space for the invitation to follow Jesus to be heard in new ways and empowering converts to identify the resources that will sustain discipleship in the emerging culture." John Drane, "Resisting McDonaldization: Will Fresh Expressions of Church Inevitably Go Stale?," in Viggo Mortensen and Andreas Osterlund Nielsen, eds., *Walk Humbly with the Lord: Church and Mission Engaging Plurality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 160.

vement (2.4.1.) Next we discuss the vocation of the church (2.4.2). This is followed by a comparison of theological emphases within the Missional Church Movement (2.4.3).

2.4.1 The Nature of the Church

In the Emerging Church Movement we find comparable emphases regarding the nature of the church. Negatively, the church is *not* to be equated with a building, an institution, a denomination, or religious activities.[127] Positively speaking, "the church is [a] *people*,"[128] as the website of Vintage Faith Church states. Dan Kimball, its mission and teaching pastor, describes the church more specifically as "the people of God"[129] and Rick McKinley, further developing this, writes that these "kingdom people", because of their faith in Jesus Christ, form a community.[130] The implication of the word 'community' is that *relationships* – concrete connections and regular interactions with other believers, or rather, 'family members'[131] – are central. Ben Edson from the UK writes that the church can be equated with "the assembly of those who are finding their relationships, their lives transfigured by the presence of Jesus."[132] Ian Mobsby uses a trinitarian framework to make the same point. Relationships are indeed central to the church, both "relationships to each other and relationship with the trinity, which is itself, an expression of perfect relationship."[133]

Within the discourse of the Emerging Church Movement, the weight is generally on an ecclesiology 'from below' rather than one 'from above.'[134] Consequently, there is not much interest in normative biblical and historical models, nor on 'holy' and hierarchical institution(s).[135] The movement's interpretations of church do not focus primarily on the

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[127] Cf. Gibbs and Bolger: "They abhor the idea of church as a meeting, a place, a routine." *Emerging Churches*, 115. Cf. 90, 99, and 236: "Church is a way of life, a rhythm, a community, a movement."

[128] Vintage Faith Church, "Core Beliefs," http://www.vintagechurch.org/about/theology/core-beliefs/beliefs#church (accessed January 26, 2009).

[129] Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 91.

[130] "The church is a community of kingdom people who have come to believe in Jesus, are trusting in Jesus to be their life, are united to Jesus by the Spirit, and have been given very particular gifts, so the community can be who we are called to be for Jesus, each other, and the world." Rick McKinley, *A Kingdom Called Desire: Confronted by the Love of a Risen King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 135.

[131] See on the 'family-thinking' within the Emerging Church Movement the paragraph "A Family, Not an Institution," in Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 97-99.

[132] Edson uses a citation here. Ben Edson, "An Exploration into the Missiology of the Emerging Church in the UK Through the Narrative of *Sanctus1*," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 1 (March 2006), 30.

[133] Ian Mobsby, comment on "Emerging church for an emerging culture," Emerging Church Info, comment posted March 2010, http://emergingchurch.info/reflection/ianmobsby/index.htm (accessed January 6, 2012). See also his *The Becoming of G-d: What the Trinitarian Nature of God Has To Do With Church and a Deep Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century* (UK: Lulu Enterprises, Ltd., May 2008).

[134] These terms were borrowed from Roger Haight, *Historical Ecclesiology*, vol. 1 of *Christian Community in History* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 18 ff.

[135] According to Haight, "an ecclesiology from above tends to view its structure of ministries as corresponding to the will of God." Ibid., 25. Such strong, normative claims clearly are *not* typical for the Emerging Church Movement. Cf. Michael Moynagh: "Emerging church...is church from below. It starts not with a

vertical dimension, for example, the church as "God's privileged dwelling place,"[136] but on the horizontal and more directly experiential dimensions: people, relationships, community.[137] In other words, we may say that the Emerging Church Movement uses a *relational ecclesiology*[138] in which the church is understood as a network of relationships.

Among academic theologians who are popular, particularly in the reconstructionist but also in revisionist streams of the Emerging Church Movement – notably Stanley Grenz, Jürgen Moltmann, Miroslav Volf, and Pete Ward – one encounters similar emphases to those just described. However, these theologians also explicitly attempt to connect the 'horizontal' understanding of the church as a community of believers not only to the *work* of God (the church as constituted by the Spirit) but also to the *person* or, rather, *persons* of God. More specifically, their descriptions of the church, in terms of relationships and community, with fluid structures, are connected to a perichoretic understanding of the Trinity.[139]

According to Stanley Grenz, "The church is essentially a community characterized by love, a people who reflect in relation to one another and to all creation the character of the Creator....The community we share is our shared participation, or participation together, in the perichoretic community of trinitarian persons."[140] The community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as Jürgen Moltmann says, finds its earthly reflection "not in the autocracy of a single ruler but in the democratic community of free people, not in the lordship of man over the woman but in their mutuality, not in an ecclesiastical hierarchy but in a fellowship church."[141] Miroslav Volf believes that the "structure of trinitarian relations" is not in any way to be conceived of as a hierarchy but that it is charac-

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preconceived notion of church, but with the desire to express church in the culture of the group involved." Michael Moynagh, *Emergingchurch.intro* (Oxford, UK: Monarch 2004), 11.

[136] Cf. the proposal of George VanderVelde, "The Challenge of Evangelical Ecclesiology," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 27, no. 1 (2003), 11.

[137] Cf. James Bielo: "As my consultants continually reminded me, their objections to mainstream Evangelicalism always come back to matters of 'community', and ecclesiology is the structural expression of how community is understood." Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, 14.

[138] Tony Jones suggests that "Many congregations in the emerging church movement are instinctively using the very relational ecclesiology that Moltmann proposes." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 150.

[139] One of the rediscoverers of a Trinitarian ecclesiology in the 20th century was Lesslie Newbigin. "At the deepest level," Clevinger concludes, "Newbigin's work penetrates the very mystery of the 'perichoretic' communal nature of God's Trinitarian being and abstracts from it a theology of community that comes to bear on soteriology, ecclesiology, and anthropology." J. Edward Clevinger, "The Implications of the Trinitarian 'Perichoresis' for a Missional Ecclesiology: Lesslie Newbigin's Call for Renewing the Church's Missional Vocation in a Postmodern World," (MA thesis, Emmanuel School of Religion, 2003), 57.

[140] Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KT: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 228. Cf. this conclusion of Grenz: "In the end, participation in the perichoretic dance of the triune God as those who by the Spirit are in Christ is what constitutes community the highest sense and hence marks the true church." Stanley J. Grenz, "Ecclesiology," in Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 268.

[141] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, trans. M. Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1991), 32.

terized by a "polycentric and symmetrical reciprocity of the many."[142] This symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the Trinity "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 the Lord and through the power of the Father. Like the divine person, they all stand in a relation of mutual giving and receiving."[143] "If God is seen as a flow of relationships among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," Pete Ward writes, "then we find here a significant boost to a more fluid kind of church."[144]

These views on the nature of church – varying from website quotes to more sophisticated theological treatises – have clear ecclesiological implications for both church structure and leadership. They advocate fluid, non-hierarchical[145] and highly participatory[146] church structures and push for shared forms of leadership,[147] with active roles for women in every area of ministry.[148]

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[142] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 217.

[143] Ibid., 219.

[144] Pete Ward, *Liquid Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 54.

[145] *The Shack*, a popular novel in Emerging Church Movement circles, should be mentioned here. The author, William Young, dispenses with all (church) institutes and forms of hierarchy on the basis of his – rather idiosyncratic – conception of the Trinity. See William P. Young, *The Shack* (Newbury Park, CA: Windblown Media, 2007). Dutch ed.: *De uitnodiging* (Kampen: Kok, 2008).

[146] "Cappadocian teaching on the social Trinity," Peter Holmes writes in regard to Christ Church Deal (Kent, UK), "suggests that our actions are more in the image of God if they are done together, even where this takes more time and is less efficient....In CCD, in seeking to mirror social Trinity, we have therefore experimented with the idea of doing things together...or for making a job a relational event." Peter R. Holmes, *Trinity in Human Community: Exploring Congregational Life in the Image of the Social Trinity* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006), 41.

[147] George Cladis, who is often cited in the Emerging Church Movement, claims that "The perichoretic model of God calls into question the traditional hierarchies of power, control, and domination that have formed the basis for church leadership in the past....The perichoretic model of the Trinity is more helpful to the church living in a postmodern world." George Cladis, *Leading the Team-based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 5. Cf. missional theologian Dwight Zscheile, "cultivating a community in the image of the divine community – a community of reconciliation, interdependence, mutuality, difference, and openness – becomes central to leadership in a trinitarian perspective. This includes both the community of leaders and the community led by the leaders." Dwight J. Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2007), 57.

[148] According to Lauran Kerr, "Since its inception, the emergent church has offered a greater space for women than the evangelical church because of its stated goals of equality, inclusiveness, new ways of looking at the Bible, and leadership with less hierarchy." Lauran A. Kerr, "Women in the Emerging Church," *Reformation & Revival: A Quarterly for Church Renewal* 14, no. 3 (2005), 158. Kerr also notes that "[T]here is no consensus on the roles, place, and future of women in the emerging church. Within the emergent church, complementarians and egalitarians and everything in between can be found." Ibid., 156. A serious attempt at female inclusion was the national *Christianity 21* conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in October 2009. Organized by revisionists Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, it featured 21 persons speaking for 21 minutes each on the future of Christianity. Notably, all the 21 speakers were women.

2.4.2 The Vocation of the Church

Our sketch of the ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement is not yet complete, because there is also a close connection between the nature of the church and her main task, purpose or vocation. Indeed, for many within the movement these two (nature and vocation) are more or less identical. That is to say, "the church does not 'have' a mission, it *is* mission [emphasis added], by its very existence in the world."[149] Vintage Faith Church, USA, not only believes that "the church is comprised of any person, anywhere in the world who puts faith in Jesus," but also that as a people, they are "empowered by God's Spirit to be part of the mission of God here on earth."[150] Similarly, Sanctus1 (UK) states on its website: "We believe that God is already active in our world, and we aim to join with God in God's ongoing mission. This means we are engaged in the changes happening in Manchester and the wider world."[151] The Emerging Church Movement's interpretation of church has a double focus and more citations from websites or publications do not appear to add anything substantially different or new. The church is a community with Jesus at the center of its faith and life and, as such, she is called to actively participate in God's mission.[152] Moreover, the relationships that exist between Christians and their wider circle of friends[153] should be natural and maintain a low threshold, eliminating barriers of exclusion and alienation.[154] The distinctive life of the community should be the means by which the gospel is communicated to those who, as of yet, are non-Christians.

There are, of course, variations on this theme which should not be overlooked. For example, Mars Hill Church (Seattle, USA) unambiguously emphasizes the importance of "the verbally inspired word of God."[155] Reserving a central role for the text of the Bible

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[149] Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 113.

[150] Vintage Faith Church, "Core Beliefs," http://www.vintagechurch.org/about/theology/core-beliefs/ beliefs #church (accessed January 26, 2009). "By missional," explains Kimball, "I mean that these churches don't just have an evangelism program but see their church as mission." Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 21.

[151] Sanctus1, "What is Sanctus1?," http://www.sanctus1.co.uk/p/what-is-sanctus1.html (last accessed January 6, 2012).

[152] Cf. the conclusion of Brian McLaughlin: "Above any other attribute or doctrinal distinctive...Emerging Church Movement views church as God's intended vehicle for accomplishing his mission in the world." Brian McLaughlin, "An Emerging Ecclesiology: The Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement," (MA thesis, Calvin Theological Seminary , 2007), 73.

[153] This word is again chosen to call for attention to the importance of relations. While not referring to the Emerging Church Movement, Steve Summers captures its ecclesiology well: "A *relationally based ecclesiology* in which the Church understands itself as a group who are called to be friends of Christ, and thus friends with each other, is already participating in the *Missio Dei*." Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring Its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 194.

[154] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 107.

[155] Mars Hill Church, "What We Believe," http://marshill.com/about/what-we-believe (accessed January 6, 2012).

is more typical of the 'relevant' stream.[156] Revisionists, who are on the other end of the spectrum, also hold the Bible in high esteem, but read it as a historical narrative which is full of tensions and contradictions, myth and history, and emphasize the need for it to be read in community.[157] In this vein, the Church of the Apostles (also located in Seattle), affirms "the ambiguity of experience and the value of learning to tolerate and embrace complexity and ambiguity in many aspects of human life and in the spiritual journey."[158]

In general it may be concluded that the church is called to be a *missional* church, according to most participants within the Emerging Church Movement, differences within the three streams and among individual churches notwithstanding.[159] A working definition of missional church, according to Alan Hirsch, is "a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world."[160] Such a missional-incarnational church is entirely open to innovation, experimentation, and creativity. "As an incarnational community it is concerned about reflecting local flavors, spices, and textures and developing an ambience and a communal spirit that is sensitive and hospitable to local culture."[161] In other words, the missional church should be contextual, that is, it must be culturally relevant within a specific setting. Contextualization is defined as the "dynamic process whereby the constant message of the gospel interacts with specific, human situations. It involves an examination of the gospel in the light of the respondent's worldview and then adapting the message, encoding it in such a way that it can become meaningful to the respondent."[162]

This understanding of the church as missional and incarnational, converges with that of well-known opinion leaders within the Missional Church Movement. It is agreed, moreover, that the consequences of this missional ecclesiology are far reaching. It means that there can be no 'model' congregation, nor a standardized policy, on the basis of two arguments. First, "related to the understanding of God's purpose preceding human initiative is the thought that the essence of a church ought to precede its form."[163] Second,

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[156] This is illustrated by the fact that of the 181 footnotes in Mark Driscoll's *On Church Leadership*, 175 refer to Bible verses or passages.

[157] See Tim Conder and Daniel Rhodes, *Free for All: Rediscovering the Bible in Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009).

[158] Church of the Apostles, "Spirituality," http://www.apostleschurch.org/about/spirituality/ (accessed January 6, 2012).

[159] Ronald Neal Brown goes so far as to equate the two: "The emerging church is so defined by its mission that the term 'missional church' could serve as its synonym." Ronald Neal Brown "Discipleship in a Postmodern Culture: Implementing a Biblical and Contextual Strategy for Discipling Emerging Leaders Based on Paul's Epistle to the Colossians," (DMin thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 29.

[160] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 82.

[161] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come,* 80-81.

[162] Ibid., 83.

[163] David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 42.

"the church is responsible to translate the good news of the gospel *along with its organizational reality* [emphasis added] into every cultural context that it encounters."[164]

Furthermore, leaders of missional churches "will need skills in spiritual formation and missional encounter as well as organizational development and management of complex systems."[165] In short, the 'missional' vocation and identity of the church has clear implications for church structure and leadership, and – as a logical extension – leader education.[166]

2.4.3 Convergence with the Missional Church Movement

The previous subsection argued that discourse of the Emerging Church Movement describes the church as missional, an idea that finds convergence in the material we have highlighted in publications of the Missional Church Movement. Appearances can, however, be misleading, as prominent missional church authors such as Alan Roxburgh and Craig Van Gelder realize. In their works, they raise four *caveats* concerning the term 'missional' as it is currently used in the Emerging-Missional milieu.

First, in many cases missional is used merely as a trendy word, part of a new language that covers up practices which are better described as 'postmodern attractional'.[167] In an attractional church model, it is enough for people to attend and to give of their finances. A missional church, however, is not attractional (though it may, of course, be *attractive*) because "they have a high threshold of expectation in terms of what members will do."[168]

Second, the team of authors who wrote the influential book *Missional Church* in the 1990s, introduced the term 'missional' as an invitation for readers to "stop, check our assumptions, and ask if there might be a different way of being the church."[169] It was not, however, meant to provide a new model or strategy of 'being church' that could be copied by others. Moreover, the aim of the missional church conversation is not to deve-

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[164] Craig van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 61, 66-67.

[165] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 209.

[166] Cf. the comment of J.R. Rozko: "as the missio Dei and its implications for the Gospel and the Church come back into focus in Post-Christendom, we submit that our systems of theological education must be re-imagined for the purposes of training missionary leaders." J.R. Rozko, comment on "Ministers are Mobilizers, not Managers," Patheos, comment posted December 2, 2011, http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional – Resources/Ministers–Are–Mobilizers–not – Managers – J-R–Rozko–12–02–2011.html (accessed December 15, 2011). Cf. J.R. Rozko, "The Missiological Future of Theological Education: A Whitepaper," http://thefutureoftheologicaleducation.com/a-whitepaper (accessed February 24, 2012).

[167] Alan J. Roxborgh and M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church: What it is, Why it Matters, How to Become One* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 34. According to Roxburgh and Boren, "Many emergent churches seem to be new forms of attractional churches that have little sense of their neighborhoods or the missional nature of the church." Ibid., 54. It is unclear however on what basis they make this claim.

[168] Colin Greene and Martin Robinson, *Metavista: Bible, Church and Mission in an Age of Imagination* (Milton Keynes, UK: Authentic, 2008), 195.

[169] Roxborgh and Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church*, 30.

lop the correct definition of missional church or the list of characteristics that best describes it, which subsequently may be translated into vision, values statements, strategies and programs.[170] Rather, the missional church conversation aims to develop theological imagination concerning God's mission in the neighborhood and its larger cultural context. The work of leadership in developing this imagination is not to come up with vision statements, but "to cultivate listening conversations and dialogues around people's 'offstage' narratives and bring them into conversation with the biblical narratives."[171]

Third, in their overview of the missional conversation, particularly in the United States, up to 2011, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile note that many publications focus on the mission of the church. Often this is accompanied by an emphasis on tasks and action. "The issue has everything to do with agency: who is the acting subject in one's understanding of missional church? The key premise...is that what the church is must deeply inform what the church does. Human agency is fully implicated in the doing, but such doing is always deeply informed and empowered by the agency of God working through the Spirit. Getting the sequence right is crucial for allowing God's person and power to become fully operative within the life and ministry of the church."[172] If being comes before doing, the Anglican bishop Alan Smith adds, it might be stated that mission arises out of worship. "Anything else tilts the focus of the Christian life and the Church in an unbalanced way towards activity....The essential point is not mission, but God himself."[173]

Fourth, Van Gelder and Zscheile detect that in some writings (including those from emerging church quarters) a fully Trinitarian understanding of Christ is lacking. "Christ lies at the heart of the missional church, but Christology cannot be understood apart from Christ's relationship with the Father/Creator or his being anointed, empowered, and led by the Spirit....The church's identity must be shaped not only by Christ but also by attentiveness to the Father and the Spirit."[174] They point out that focusing primarily on Christology tends to lead the church "toward a *backward*-oriented vision, one that emphasizes imitating what Christ has done in the past. We can lose our sense of what God is doing in the present and will do in the future."[175] In sum, the authors plead for a working out of a robust missional pneumatology that integrates views of the social Trinity with an understanding of the sending Trinity, and that "opens up key theological foundations for participating creatively and imaginatively in the Spirit's work of innovation and renewal."[176]

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[170] Roxburgh, *Missional*, 95.
[171] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 178.
[172] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 54.
[173] Alan Smith, *God-Shaped Mission: Theological and Practical Perspectives from the Rural Church* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2008), 52.
[174] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 111.
[175] Ibid., 118-119.
[176] Ibid., 120.

To conclude, the path of the Emerging Church Movement diverges with that of the Missional Church movement, in so far as, in the former, the word missional is just a repackaging of insights that can be found in church growth or church effectiveness literature. However, emerging church authors converge with prominent missional church opinion leaders to the extent that they reflect first and foremost on God's presence in the world and in the midst of the church. In other words, we find therein a focal point of the Emerging-Missional Conversation.

2.5 Critical Discussion

To round off the chapter, this section critically interrogates three recurrent themes of Emerging Church Movement discourse. The first theme concerns the negative rhetoric that one encounters in the movement as it pertains to traditional churches and institutes, and the positive rhetoric about being 'missional'. The second topic is about the legitimacy and accuracy of the interpretations of the (social) Trinity advocated within both the emerging and missional movements. Last, we ask what exactly the concept of 'community' stands for. This subject is arguably of crucial importance for churches today, particularly if they want to reach or retain the younger generations.[177] How is this term used in Emerging Church Movement discourse and how may this be evaluated?

2.5.1 Negative Rhetoric

In English emerging churches, Robin Gamble says that the traditional church is often depicted as "some sort of tired, worn out and irrelevant medieval institution."[178] "In Manchester diocese," he continues, "we have 375 parishes. Every one is different, special and in fact unique. It is a mistake to lump this amazing variety of churches under the single title of inherited mode."[179]

This seems a legitimate warning. Just as there is much diversity among emerging churches, there is also a great variety of traditional churches. It is neither fair nor appropriate to lump them all together, passing them off as being somehow ineffective, outdated or unhealthy. Emerging forms of church are not intrinsically superior to the emerged (i.e., the inherited) church; infancy is not better than maturity or old age.[180] Also, some emerging churches – in the United Kingdom: fresh expressions of church – are

[177] "Community is vital to the emerging generations. For them, life is meant to be experienced together, and they sense a need to be involved in genuine relationships with others." Ed Stetzer, with Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes, *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 67.

[178] Robin Gamble, "Mixed Economy: Nice Slogan or Working Reality?," in Louise Neltrop and Martyn Percy, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church* (London, UK: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2008), 17.

[179] Ibid., 18.

[180] Cf. Martin Percy, "'Old Tricks for New Dogs'? A Critique of Fresh Expressions," in Neltrop and Percy, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions*, 36.

themselves dependent on traditional churches, financially and in other respects as well. A 'mixed economy', consisting of a close collaboration between existing and emerging churches may, in many contexts, be the best way forward.[181] Negative rhetoric is not helpful in such an endeavor, nor does it fit with the postmodern ethos of (many) Emerging Church Movement participants.[182] Moreover, presently, many Christian churches and other institutions – including seminaries – are in fact insecure and in decline. The current challenge for leadership today therefore may be to help build up ailing institutions rather than tear them down in prophetic fire. "The truly effective religious leader," Senior and Weber argue, "is one who enables a community to mobilize its energies for the hard work of transformation and adaptation to social change."[183]

In Emerging Church Movement discourse, furthermore, the word 'institute' tends to be interpreted and explained in a negative way. Statements are popular such as those uttered by house church proponent Frank Viola, who thinks we should "return to organic church life," which is totally different from institutional forms of church.[184] Similarly, institutionalization is something to be avoided – even to be actively *resisted* – for example, by avoiding routines, encouraging dialogue by all participants, and limiting the role of professionals.[185]

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[181] Cf. one conclusion offered in the 2010 Church of England Report "A Mixed Economy for Mission – the Journey so Far. Mission-Shaped Church: Follow Up," p. 40: "A contrast is often perceived between fluid and solid Church, or between the inherited structures of the tradition and emerging fresh expressions. It is not helpful to set up false dichotomies but to understand how fluid and solid Church interact." http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1237677/gs%201761%20web%20version.pdf (last accessed January 7, 2011). In addition, during the 2010 Synod, Philip Giddings proposed that "The mixed economy of traditional churches and fresh expressions of church, working in partnership, as the most promising mission strategy in a fast-changing culture." Philip Giddings, "Report of Proceedings 2010: General Synod February Group of Sessions Volume 41, No. 1," 137. http://www.churchofengland.org/media/ 40958/feb 2010. pdf (accessed December 7, 2011). See also the journal called *Mixed Economy* (Autumn/Winter 2008/ 2009): Fresh Expressions, http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/sites/default/files/mixedeconomy-issue 1.pdf (last accessed January 6, 2012).

[182] Louise Nelstrop pointedly claims that a mixed economy fits the postmodern culture, since "postmodernism demands a respect for otherness." Louise Nelstrop, "Mixed Economy or Ecclesial Reciprocity: Which Does the Church of England Really Want to Promote?," in Neltrop and Percy, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions*, 203.

[183] Donald Senior and Timothy Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum, Formation, and Cultivation of Ministerial Leadership in the Good Theological School?," *Theological Education* 30, no. 2 (1994), 30.

[184] Frank Viola, *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2008), 276-277. Interestingly, Viola's main criticism of the Emerging Church Movement is this: "When it comes to the practical expression of the church, many emergents have only slightly tweaked it." That is to say, "even among those who carry on the loudest about deconstructing the face of the church," one finds sacral buildings, sermon-based church services, the modern office of the pastor, etc. Ibid., 265. Viola's comment indicates that there may be, in some instances, a discrepancy between the rhetoric of the Emerging Church Movement and reality.

[185] See Josh Packard, "Organizational Structure, Religious Belief, and Resistance: The Emerging Church" (PhD thesis, Vanderbilt University, 2008).

It might, however, be helpful to view an institution more dispassionately as "a pattern of collective behavior."[186] A theological seminary, for example, is an institution. It is possible that a particular seminary is highly institutional*ized*, that is, being heavily made up of established routines and procedures that are immune to change or criticism and in which there is little room for individual expression. But not every school can be thus characterized – some are highly dynamic.

Moreover, institutionalization is not a sociological necessity to be deplored, or resisted, but is, in fact, a natural (in the terms of the Emerging Church Movement: 'organic') development in all kinds of human communities. It helps them to maintain identity, regulate processes of change, and reproduce themselves. Institutions can be seen as "a product of practical intelligence, to meet the particular recurrent needs of a human community."[187] A *modest degree* of institutionalization, then, can be a good thing, as it promotes the common good of the community by allowing the community to focus its energies on its goals and not on its internal needs. Emerging churches may learn in this respect from the experiences of organizations that are – sociologically speaking – close to them, such as the evanescent arts community Burning Man.[188] Its leaders establish the necessary conditions under which the close to 50,000 attendees of this weeklong festival may 'surf the edge of creative chaos' in the Nevada desert. They do this by affirming both so-called *collectivist* practices that allow for flexibility, responsiveness and meaning, and *bureaucratic* practices that afford fairness, efficiency, and stability.[189]

Again, this is not to deny that churches can become, and often are, deformed in many ways, for example by being highly institutionalized or clericalized.[190] Indeed, many churches in the West "have become institutionalized to the point that the preservation of the tradition, or institutional identity, competes in influence with the needs and opportunities presented by the mission context."[191] The solution is not, however, to propose what may amount to a veritable *ideology* of denouncing, discarding, or even undermining christian institutions, but to acknowledge their purpose and, if necessary, attempt to sharpen the vision which called them into being and to reshape their structures and internal culture. Experiments with 'mixed economy' forms of church may help to achieve this.

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[186] That is the definition which was accepted by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in 1963. See Joseph F. McCann, *Church and Organization: A Sociological and Theological Enquiry* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993), 28-29.

[187] Neil Ormerod, "The Structure of a Systematic Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 2 (2002), 27.

[188] See www.burningman.com (last accessed June 13, 2011). See on Burning Man also 2.5.3 and 4.2.4, below.

[189] Katherine K. Chen, *Enabling Creative Chaos: The Organization Behind the Burning Man Event* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[190] Clericalization may be defined as the process by which the power and status of a religious hierarchy is increased and the gap between leaders and the led is widened. Cf. Harold Hill, *Leadership in the Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 5.

[191] Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 18.

2.5.1.1 Positive Rhetoric

A second question concerns the *positive* rhetoric within the Emerging Church Movement. Despite the movement's rhetoric, claiming to be new, fresh, alternative, missional, engaged, organic, participatory, inclusive, etc., what is the *specific evidence* that churches within this movement are not merely colluding with present egalitarian, post-institutional, individualistic, expressivist, therapeutic, pluralistic, innovative, consumerist 'multi-choice spirituality' trends?[192]

For one thing, sympathizers within the Emerging Church Movement may be prone to begin by focusing on what individuals and congregations want and need and then articulate a theology that responds to and fulfills those wants and needs. "In this way," Jeff Keuss comments, "the correlation model drawn from Tillich attempts to find a better way of making Christian community meaningful and relevant both to the congregation and the culture at large."[193] If this is true, what role is left for a biblically based and practically lived counter-cultural normativity? "If church is oriented not primarily towards the world but towards the kingdom of God," Graham Tomlin asserts, "then a crucial task will be [to] ask first of all the question of how it can exhibit the patterns of behavior, values, expectations and practices of the culture of that kingdom rather than the culture of twenty-first secular middle-class urban life, or leather-clad bikers or Bangladeshi immigrants."[194]

These questions and comments imply that a possible trap for participants of the Emerging Church Movement – despite their missional rhetoric – is to reflect the values and behavior of their environment, and to respond to *felt* needs, instead of *deeper* needs (e.g., existential needs such as meaning, purpose, identity, or spiritual needs such as mercy and redemption). Much more empirical research is needed to ascertain if this is indeed the case. We can at least say that literature in the EMC acknowledges that the drawbacks of the consumer culture are to be resisted,[195] that Christians in Western cul-

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[192] Cf. Martyn Percy's critical questions on these topics. Martyn Percy, "'Old Tricks for New Dogs'?," esp. 29, 31, 35, and 37.

[193] Jeff Keuss, "The Emergent Church and Neo-Correlational Theology After Tillich, Schleiermacher and Browning," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61, no. 4 (2008), 457.

[194] Graham Tomlin, "Can We Develop Churches that Can Transform the Culture?," in: Steven Croft, ed., *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 69.

[195] A recent example is Brandon Hatmaker, *Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011). Another book that is applauded (on its flap text) by several EMC opinion leaders is Syke Jethani, *The Divine Commodity: Discovering Faith Beyond Consumer Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009). This is interesting, because Jethani writes, "Even the new crop of emerging churches, alternative churches, and house churches may be the product of consumerism. They can brand themselves as the un-megachurch in the same way that 7-Up is the un-cola, but they are still trying to appeal to market desires – albeit a different market." Ibid. 89-90. We get the impression that EMC writers agree with Jethani that consumerism is, indeed, a trap for emerging churches. The topic receives also attention in EMC literature on youth ministry. Cf. Brian Kirk and Jacob Thorne, "we want to give you permission to *leave behind the consumer models* [emphasis added] of ministry and move toward an approach that's centered in the radical and life-giving way of Christ." Brian Kirk and Jacob Thorne, *Missional Youth Ministry: Moving From Gathering Teenagers to Scattering Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/YS, 2011), 15.

ture are called to be "modern-day exiles,"[196] and that work is to be done on the issue of "how to incarnate the gospel in culturally relevant ways while simultaneously working to incarnate the church in ways that will challenge the context in which the new church is emerging."[197]

The appreciative conclusions of Robert Pope seem fitting to round off this subsection: "In as much as emerging churches seek to worship God and to nurture discipleship, in as much as they enable people to encounter God in a life-changing (and thus redemptive) way and in as much as they deliberately seek to manifest in the world the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, then they cannot be aberrations, they are indeed branches of that one church of Jesus Christ."[198]

2.5.2 What Kind of Trinity?

In emerging and missional church literature, the Trinity is used as a model to argue for fluid church structures and shared leadership (see 2.4.1). Undoubtedly this sounds attractive to postmodern ears.[199] But how strong is its foundation?

First of all, do 'social' Trinitarians, and their followers in the EMC, do justice to church history? For example, is it true that significant differences exist between early 'Western' approaches to trinitarian theology (which supposedly emphasize divine unity) and early 'Eastern' approaches (which supposedly emphasize a trinity of divine persons)?[200] More specifically, are the often heard criticisms of Augustine correct, or should we instead conclude that "also in Augustine the Godhead is fundamentally relational"?[201] And is it justified to speak of *the* Trinitarian theology of *the* Cappadocians, as mostly happens?[202] Most importantly, are the Cappadocians properly interpreted or is it

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[196] Michael Frost, *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 49.

[197] Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 138.

[198] Robert Pope, "Emerging Church: Congregation or Aberration?," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7, no. 2 (2008), 40. Cf. Martyn Atkins, "At best they [fresh expressions/emerging churches] are expressions of a missionary God raising up a people who can effect God's highest intentions and deepest desires for this time and place." Martyn Atkins, "What is the Essence of the Church?," in Steven Croft, ed., *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 23-24.

[199] Ted Peters, for one, suspects that "the ideal of a non-hierarchical community wherein relationships come prior to persons is the product of our modern and emerging postmodern Western mind." Ted Peters, *God as Trinity* (Louisville, KT: Westminster Press, 1993), 185.

[200] Keith Johnson, for one, thinks that this is a "problematic assumption". Keith E. Johnson, "Trinitarian Agency and the Eternal Subordination of the Son: An Augustinian Perspective," *Themelios* 36, no. 1 (2011), 8n7.

[201] Brad Green, "The Protomodern Augustine? Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (July 2008), 341.

[202] Najeeb G. Awad, "Between Subordination and Koinonia: Toward a New Reading of the Cappadocian Theology," *Modern Theology* 23, no. 2 (April 2007), 199.

more appropriate to say that they "were walking a very different path toward very different goals" than the popular 'social' Trinitarians of today?[203]

Secondly, there are some doctrinal questions to be asked. For example, is the conception of the 'social' Trinity not an 'overtrinitizing' of the doctrine of God, at the expense of monotheism?[204] And does an ontological trinitarianism as an immanent principle of reality – for example, the church as an 'extension' of the triune God – not lead to some form of pantheism, or pan-en-theism (and if yes, how is this to be evaluated)?[205] Furthermore, does the notion of *perichoresis*, which is popular in the EMC, refer to a 'community event' that can be mirrored in the church, or is it better understood "as a mysterious *communion* [emphasis added] of essence between the *hypostaseis* of the Godhead?[206] More basically, is it legitimate to construct an extensive theology on what is the most profound *mystery* one could think of?[207] And when we do try to capture this mystery in human language, is it biblically legitimate to claim that the Persons of the Trinity are indeed ontologically in a full egalitarian relationship to each other – as they obviously are *not* in the economy of salvation?[208] In addition, can we know enough of intra-trinitarian relations to say something worthwhile concerning the ordering of church life,[209] or is this mere speculation – or worse, a circular argument that risks the possibility of ideo-

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[203] Charles D. Raith II, "*Ressourcing* the Fathers? A Critical Analysis of Catherine Mowry LaCugna's Appropriation of the Trinitarian Theology of the Cappadocian Fathers," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 3 (July 2008), 284. Cf. Metzler, "Their [i.e., the Cappadocians'] distinctions among the *hypostases* do not seem to correlate with contemporary efforts to explain the trinitarian persons as bound up on a communion of individual self-conscious agents." Norman Metzler, "The Trinity in Contemporary Theology: Questioning the Social Trinity," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 67, nos. 3-4 (July/October 2003), 285.

[204] Cf. Nico den Bok, *Communicating the Most High: A Systematic Study of Person and Trinity in the Theology of Richard of St. Victor († 1173),* (Utrecht, NL: University of Utrecht, 1996), 49-52.

[205] Cf. John Cooper on Moltmann: "Jürgen Moltmann offers the most fully articulated, explicitly panentheistic Christian theology in history. It is panentheistic because the perichoretic mutuality of God and world is ontologically constitutive for both." John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers - From Plato to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 257. See on panentheism also Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 164 ff.

[206] Uche Anizor, "A Spirited Humanity: The Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Colin Gunton," *Themelios* 36, no. 1 (2011), 38.

[207] Karen Kilby, for one, cautions that "Theologians should not...use the doctrine as a pretext for claiming such an insight into the inner nature of God that they can use it to promote social, political or ecclesiastical regimes." Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity," *New Blackfriars* 81 (October 2000), 445.

[208] See, for example, Robert Letham, "Reply to Kevin Giles," *Evangelical Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (2008), 239-245. Cf. Stephen Holmes, "The claim that social trinitarianism is biblical is by no means obvious; rather, it depends on a very particular hermeneutic that privileges the New Testament, and particular the Gospels, in ways that at least demand explanation and defense." Stephen R. Holmes, "Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3 (2009), 87.

[209] Note that in the second century AD, Ignatius also claimed that social structure in the church reflects ontological structure. His application, however, was anything but egalitarian: "*Be subject to the bishop* [emphasis added] and each other, as Jesus Christ to the Father according to the flesh, and the apostles to Jesus Christ, and to the Father and the Spirit, in order that there may be a unity of flesh and Spirit." See Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity Before the Age of Cyprian* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 298-99.

logical distortion?[210] Miroslav Volf, for one, acknowledges the limits and also dangers of such a theology-by-analogy approach: "Although trinitarian ideas can undeniably be converted into ecclesiological ideas...it is undeniable that this process of conversion must have its limits, unless one reduces theology to anthropology, or, in a reverse fashion, elevates anthropology to theology."[211]

This line of questioning need not be pressed further. It is sufficient to note that some legitimate theological questions can be raised about the EMC concerning the increasingly popular 'social' or 'perichoretic' understandings of the Trinity and, by extension, its (practical) ecclesiological implications. In the EMC publications that were consulted for this dissertation, however, social trinitarian thinking is attractively presented, while these difficulties seem to be overlooked.

2.5.3 What Kind of Community?

This chapter has emphasized that the concept of community is crucial in the EMC. Rarely, however, does anyone spell out exactly what is *meant* by 'community'.[212] Community is both a buzzword and an ideal not only in the EMC, but also, for example, in contemporary neo-paganism.[213] This raises the question of how emerging churches are different from other postmodern or neo-Romantic communities today.[214] The challenge for the EMC is therefore to articulate and embody a fully theological understanding of

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[210] Anne Hunt warns that to "take the social interpersonal model of the Trinity to justify particular ecclesial structures in what we might call a downward application of the analogy (from the divine to the human reality) is to construct a circular argument. The circularity of the argument is problematic in that it risks the possibility of ideological distortion, albeit perhaps unwittingly." Anne Hunt, "The Trinity and the Church: Explorations in Ecclesiology from a Trinitarian Perspective," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005), 233.

[211] Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 198.

[212] This is not unusual. In 1986, Frank Kirkpatrick designated community as "perhaps the most overused word and least consistently employed concept in the disciplines of theology, sociology, and social philosophy today." The word risks collapsing into a meaningless term "evoked more for rhetorical or emotional reasons than for illumination or explanation." Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Community: A Trinity of Models* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1986), 1-2.

[213] See Jon P. Bloch, "Individualism and Community in Alternative Spiritual 'Magic'," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 2 (1998), 286-302; Sarah M. Pike, *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); Tom Hope and Ieuan Jones, "Locating Contemporary British Paganism as Late Modern Culture," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 21, no. 3 (October 2006), 341-354.

[214] Cf. the findings of James Gilmore regarding "patterns of engagement" between the Burning Man festival and the Emerging Church. He concludes that the core ideas of what makes for the ideal society for both Burners and emerging Christians are essentially the same. Think here of values like radical inclusion, gifting, decommodification, radical self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, participation, and immediacy. Gilmore's concern is that the typical postmodern value of 'nonjudgmentalism' that characterizes Burning Man (and other kinds of neopagan ventures) translates into the Emerging Church Movement as licentiousness and lack of accountability to the moral standards of Scripture. James G. Gilmore, "Divine Appointments: Patterns of Engagement Between Burning Man and Emerging Churches," (MA thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006), 66, 83, 85.

koinonia.[215] There are several dangers ahead if this task in neglected. Two scenarios may be mentioned here.

First, the group may become an end in itself, particularly if being a community is (perhaps by default) primarily understood only in the social sense of the word – e.g., as "the experience of belonging."[216] To reproduce this experience, like-minded people may be tempted to huddle together.[217] However, as practical theologian Ulrich Kuhnke reminds us, *koinonia* in the New Testament is *not* to be equated with a community of the likeminded [*Sympathiegemeinschaft von Gleichgesinnten*], because its collective identity is constituted by another reality.[218]

Secondly, emerging churches may become semi-detached and sacred meaning-making enclaves within consumerist culture; niche groups, that is, in which all members have much in common.[219] Alan Hirsch, for one, notes the danger that middle-class culture poses for "authentic gospel values," with its preoccupation with safety, security, consumerism, comfort and convenience.[220] This threat is the reason he names his chapter on the topic of community "*communitas,* not community."[221] We will now elaborate upon this.

2.5.3.1 Communitas

Hirsch borrows the word *communitas* from the anthropologist Victor Turner.[222] It connotes a so-called 'anti-structure', that is, a lack of formal roles and relationships. In *com-*

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[215] Note that at least one attempt has been made: Peter R. Holmes, *Trinity in Human Community: Exploring Congregational Life in the Image of the Social Trinity* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006).

[216] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), xii.

[217] Mark Scandrette who lives in an 'intentional community' in San Francisco (www.reimagine.org) is aware of this. He suggests that community is less about 'best-friendship' and more about intentional engagement with the people in our lives. How we behave, determines our experience of community. Mark Scandrette, *Soul Graffiti: Making a Life in the Way of Jesus* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2007), 50.

[218] Ulrich Kuhnke, *Koinonia: Zur theologischen Rekonstruktion der Identität christlicher Gemeinde* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1990), 103. Cf. Jan Hendriks, "Community in the sociological sense does not lead to Koinonia; it is the other way around." ["Gemeenschap in de sociologische zin leidt niet tot Koinonia, andersom wel."] Jan Hendriks, *Verlangen en vertrouwen. Het hart van gemeenteopbouw* [Longing and trusting: The heart of congregational renewal] (Kampen: Kok, 2008), 57.

[219] Cf. Martyn Percy, "Old Tricks for New Dogs? A Critique of Fresh Expressions," 35. "Demand-led groups," Percy warns, "may just service people's desires for more meaning and fulfillment, while vesting this in the language of purpose, connection and even sacrifice." Ibid., 31.

[220] See Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 219. Pertinent is also the comment of Tony Jones, drawing on the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Jones suggests that the internalized *habitus* of members of the Emerging Church Movement (abbreviated as ECM) might compel them to a lifestyle of consumerism built on predetermined tastes. He warns for the possibility that "while the participants in the movement often pride themselves on their countercultural challenge to the conventional church, they are already *predisposed to the consumeristic tendencies* [emphasis added] that are well-known attributes of upper-middle class America. These characteristics of the social class from which the ECM sprang may indeed preclude them making some of the ecclesial reforms that they are attempting." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 162.

[221] See also Michael Frost on this theme, e.g. the paragraph "Not Community, Communitas." Frost, *Exiles*, 108 ff.

[222] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

munitas there is no rigid social structure and no hierarchy. Participants are all equals.[223] Most importantly, as Hirsch explains, "*Communitas*...*happens* in situations where individuals are driven to find each other through a common experience of ordeal, humbling, transition, and marginalization....*Communitas* is therefore always linked with the experience of liminality. It involves adventure and movement and it describes that unique experience of *togetherness* that only really happens among a group of people inspired by the vision of a better world who actually attempt to do something about it."[224] Hirsch mentions many examples of liminality and *communitas* in the Bible (Abram, Samuel, David, Jesus, the book of Acts, etc.) and in popular culture (e.g., adventure camps, Burning Man, movies like *The Matrix* or *The Fellowship of the Ring*). The challenge, then, for safe, middle-class, consumerist Christians, is to rediscover themselves as part of a missional *communitas*.[225] If this call is heeded, it brings with it many practical implications for leaders – and for leader education.[226]

It is helpful to see that Victor Turner differentiates (in a way that Alan Hirsch does not) between three types of communitas: existential or spontaneous (e.g. the early Franciscan movement), ideological, and normative. Many of the communities in the Emerging-Missional milieu that emerged from grassroots movements, and in contexts of liminality, arguably fall into the first, existential and spontaneous category.[227] The *communitas* that Hirsch advocates is, in effect, a form of 'ideological' *communitas*: a kind of utopian model or blueprint believed to exemplify or provide the optimal conditions for existential communities. According to Turner, however, existential-spontaneous forms of *communitas* are short-lived. Because forms of spontaneous *communitas* do not "provide for all the requirements of ongoing social life,"[228] they need to transform, over time, into 'normative' *communitas*. Normative *communitas* arises out of a situation in which the members of a group need to mobilize and organize resources, and in which a form of social control is needed in order to pursue certain goals. Under these influences, the existential community is organized into a lasting social system. Likewise, participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu may find that they need to introduce a dialogue between

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[223] Cf. James Gilmore: "Communitas can be understood in terms of fluid or nonexistent hierarchies; minimization of distinctions along the lines of sex, ethnicity, wealth, or social rank; transition rather than state. As opposed to structure, communitas is 'of the now'." Gilmore, "Divine Appointments," 16.

[224] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 221.

[225] Cf. ibid., 222.

[226] "Efforts towards communitas need to be documented, researched, and reviewed to analyze what is being learned and develop new instructional resources for this leadership method." Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling?! Leaders lost in Transition* (Eagle, ID: ACI Publishing, 2005), 185.

[227] Interestingly, according to Victor Turner, "Liminality is the mother of invention!" Victor Turner, as quoted in Carl F. Starkloff, S.J., "Church as Structure and Communitas: Victor Turner and Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997), 659. Generally speaking emerging churches are – indeed – highly innovative (liminal) communities, as is Burning Man.

[228] Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 170. Hiebert mentions the following example: "When Peter suggested on the Mount of Transfiguration they build houses, he had already begun the transformation from an ethereal experience to ordinary life (Matt. 17:4; Mark 9:5)." Ibid.

communitas and structure to build community, rather than simply rely on spontaneous or ideological *communitas* alone.[229]

In sum, the type of ideological *communitas* that Hirsch pleads for, may be compelling in terms of its vision, but unlikely to be feasible in the long term. According to anthropologist Paul Hiebert, "One cannot live in it for long without beginning to transform it into community."[230]

2.5.3.2 A Theological View on Community

The vision of the emerging-missional church as *communitas* is relevant, but still not a fully articulated theological vision of what a Christian community is. Stanley Grenz attempts to contribute something to this end. In doing so, he assumes that "perhaps the central ecclesiological question in the postmodern context," is this: In what sense – if any – is the church a community?[231]

In answering this question, Grenz first asks what the definitive characteristics of functioning communities are according to contemporary sociologists. Since this may be helpful in discussions within the EMC about what community actually is, we will follow his outline, which consists of three points.[232]

First, a community consists of a group of people who are conscious that they share a similar frame of reference. Second, operative in all communities is a group focus that evokes a shared sense of group identity among the members. This group identity is fostered in part by the belief that the participants are engaged in a common task and have a shared interest. Third, a community has a 'person focus' that balances its group orientation. Insofar as its members draw their personal identity from the community, the group is a crucial factor in molding its participants.

This third aspect leads – for the purposes of church and ecclesiology – to the central function of community: its role in *identity formation*. Here we touch on a crucial point, because what we notice in contemporary expressions of (postmodern) community, varying from Burning Man or neo-pagan circles to consumption communities, is that the seeking individual is in fact still more central than the community itself – they are 'communities lite'.[233] For example, the ethos and general character of contemporary British Paganism encompasses "an attitude of epistemological and reflexive individualism within a context of loose 'togetherness' and informal organization."[234]

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[229] Note that this is the advice that James Gilmore, in "Divine Appointments," 52, gives to Burning Man – and it is appropriate for the EMC well. See also Starkloff, "Church as Structure and Communitas...".
[230] Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 170.
[231] Grenz, "Ecclesiology," 257.
[232] Ibid., 253-254.
[233] 'Communities lite' are dynamic and flexible but also temporary, superficial and based on individual choice. See on this term, figuring in a rich discussion of *koinonia*, community, and parallels with the concept of social capital, Rein Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenschap. Het verhaal van een protestantse geloofsgemeenschap* [Believing in community: The story of a protestant faith community] (Kampen: Kok, 2009), 90-91.
[234] Hope & Jones, "Locating Contemporary British Paganism as Late Modern Culture," 352.

The church, however, is called to be a *community of memory* shaped by the normative biblical narrative that, in turn, shapes individuals within it. Christian communities are not meant to be contexts in which people just hang out, so to speak. They should be intentional and convictional, "communities of character" or "distinct societies" as Stanley Hauerwas puts it, in which people actually *learn* "patterns of behavior that create community and reflect the nature of God."[235] Belonging to a Christian community, then, places demands on individuals, including those of duty and service. This is part of what being a Christian is all about – and this goes against the grain of both individualism and consumerism (cf. Hirsch's *communitas*).

In sum, the church is not just a community because it reflects certain traits set forth by sociology, but because it has a special role in the divine program.[236] In part B of this thesis a discussion of the role of leadership in such communities awaits us. But before arriving there, we will discuss the characteristics of the EMC on culture, church, and leadership, starting with the use of paradigm language.

[235] Tomlin, "Can We Develop Churches That Can Transform the Culture?," 70.
[236] Cf. Grenz, "Ecclesiology," 258.

CHAPTER 3. *LOOKING UNDER THE SURFACE*: 'PARADIGM' IN THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION

3.1 Introduction

In 1992, Leith Anderson, then pastor of Wooddale Church, Minneapolis,[1] claimed that a "paradigm shift" was needed for the church in the 21st century.[2] "The only way to cope and be effective during this period of structural change in society is to change some of the ways we view our world and the church. It is what some call a paradigm shift – a new way of looking at something. Such a shift will allow us to view our changing world with new perspective. It is like a map. Old maps from 1950 may have sufficed before the construction of interstate highways and the expansion of major cities, but new maps are needed now. Likewise, we need a paradigm shift for the future."[3] In evangelical circles within the United States, Anderson was something of a trailblazer.[4] Roughly a decade later, the idea of the need for a shift in paradigm, or worldview,[5] has become an integral element of the EMC – not just in America, but also worldwide. For example, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, from their Australian context suggest that we should "rethink and re-imagine what leadership and theological formation would be like in a *new paradigm* [emphasis added]."[6]

This chapter analyzes the concept of paradigm and evaluates how it is used in EMC publications.[7] In scholarly interpretations of the EMC, this topic has not yet been covered, as far as we are aware. It is, however, crucial to understand the EMC better, which fits in well with the hermeneutical goal of this study. Moreover, the concept of paradigm (and paradigm shift) is regularly used in much of the current discussion pertaining

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[1] At that time, Doug Pagitt, now an influential voice within the EMC, worked in the same church as a youth worker.

[2] Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1992), 17.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Note that one year earlier, the South African mainline missiologist David Bosch criticized the "spell" and the "shadow" of the worldview of the Enlightenment, while pleading for changes in approaches to mission in light of the "emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm." David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis, 1991), 344 and 368 ff. This book was influential in shaping paradigm thinking within the Gospel and Our Culture Network.

[5] To mention one example: "If the word *paradigm* is a little hackneyed to you," Ken Howard writes, "just substitute *world view, conceptual model* or some other equivalent term." Ken Howard, *Paradoxy: Creating Community Between Us and Them* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010), 3.

[6] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 154. We discuss the topic of leadership extensively in part B of this thesis (chapters 7-8) and the topic of theological formation in part C (chapters 9-11).

[7] Questions concerning the *content* of the claims – for example, is it helpful to speak in terms of a shift from a 'modern' to a 'postmodern' paradigm or worldview in Western society – are addressed in the next chapter.

to models and practices of leadership and leader education, in both secular[8] and Christian quarters.[9] We therefore need a solid understanding of the meaning, as well as the possibilities and limitations of this kind of terminology.

The central question of this chapter is this: *How does the concept of paradigm function within the EMC?* In order to answer this question, we provide a short analysis concerning the use of the term paradigm within the EMC (3.2), followed by a critical discussion (3.3). The chapter ends with some concluding reflections, paying special attention to the rhetorical tone of much EMC writing about paradigms (and paradigm shifts) (3.4).

3.2 The Use of Paradigm in the EMC

Many of the authors who are influential within the EMC do not explain exactly what they mean by the word 'paradigm'. Robert Webber, for example, asks the reader to pay special attention to what he describes as a "key element of postmodern thought,"[10] viz., paradigm thinking, but the reader is left to guess what a paradigm actually is. In Webber's writing, the closest equivalent seems to be worldview. Among other authors, the term stands for any package of ideas on a certain topic of major (theological) concern, e.g., models of ministry,[11] thinking about church (life),[12] incarnational mission,[13] leader-

[8] The terminology of 'leadership paradigms' returns in chapter 8, with an emphasis on the so-called 'Organic paradigm'. The closely related concept of a 'network paradigm' in regard to leadership is also popular today. Cf. Kate Crawford et al., "From Traditional Knowledge Management in Hierarchical Organizations to a Network Centric Paradigm for a Changing World," *E:CO Issue* 11, no. 1 (2009), 1-18.

[9] For example, John Burke believes that "the old paradigm for training church pastors is broken." John Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come as You Are Culture in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 307. Likewise, Darrell Guder et al. think that the "paradigms of leadership preparation" of theological seminaries need to be altered fundamentally. Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 216.

[10] Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 16. In an endnote to chapter 1, called "Paradigm Thinking," Webber has only this to say: "Paradigm thinking was introduced by Thomas Kuhn." Ibid., 205n2. In fact, the notion of 'paradigm' was already used in philosophical circles in the 1930's. Possibly it was first introduced by the German scientist Georg Lichtenberg (1742–1799). On paradigms before Kuhn's *Structure*, see K. Brad Wray, *Kuhn's Evolutionary Social Epistemology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 50-55.

[11] See Ed Stetzer, with Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes, *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 83-84. Under the rubric "A Paradigm Shift," they plead for moving toward a belong/believe/become model, in which an unchurched individual is immediately welcomed into the community.

[12] Cf. Alan J. Roxborgh and M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church: What it is, Why it Matters, How to become One* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 184.

[13] "An incarnational paradigm is not a sidewalk-safe church paradigm, but a blistery off-the-beaten-path missional paradigm." Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2009), 152.

ship,[14] leader education[15] – or even how the basic message of the Bible is to be laid out.[16]

Generally speaking, it appears that in the EMC the term 'paradigm' mostly refers to phenomena that are equivalent to "underlying assumptions,"[17] "worldviews,"[18] and "frameworks."[19] A few contributors to the conversation, such as Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, are more specific by referring to Thomas Kuhn's[20] *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* as "a tremendous resource in our attempts to reframe the mission of the church."[21] They describe a paradigm in Kuhn's sense as "a self-contained and self-referential mode of thinking in relation to scientific and cosmological problems" and as "a way of trying to both understand our world and also to solve the problems of understanding by relying on a set of assumptions that give rise to the solutions in relation to the problems."[22]

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[14] "In the postmodern paradigm, leadership looks more like a design team working together to form and construct the building together." Rusty George and Jeff Krajewski, *Herding Cats: Teaching and Leading in a Postmodern World* (Joplin, MI: College Press, 2001), 107.

[15] Ed Stetzer and David Putman speak about the "paradigm of leaving one's local church and spending three years to prepare for ministry." Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 177.

[16] For example, Brian McLaren proposes a "three-dimensional biblical paradigm (creation, liberation, peacemaking kingdom)." Brian D. Mclaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010), 171.

[17] Cf. Linda Bergquist and Allan Kerr, *Church Inside Out: A Guide for Designers, Refiners, and Re-Aligners* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 8. See also 55-60, 99 and 110 on paradigms and worldviews.

[18] For example, the influential church consultant William (Bill) Easum states that "most theories about congregational life are flawed from the start, because they are based on an institutional and mechanical *worldview* [emphasis added]." William M. Easum, *Unfreezing Moves: Following Jesus into the Mission Field* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 17. Concerning missional church literature, Rod MacIlvaine remarks that it is "highly worldview conscious." Rod MacIlvaine, "Selected Case Studies in How Senior Leaders Cultivate Missional Change in Contemporary Churches," (DMin thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2009), 48.

[19] Alan Roxburgh, for example, uses the word 'frameworks' to refer to "powerful conceptual maps – or lenses – that we have developed inside our relational networks and through our training that determine how we see the world and thus shape our decisions about how to act and respond to what is happening around us." Alan Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling?! Leaders lost in Transition* (Eagle, ID: ACI Publishing, 2005), 45.

[20] Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) was an historian and philosopher of science. His *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 1962) became one of the most cited books of the twentieth century, especially because of its concept of paradigm. "It is safe to say that there is not an academic discipline not influenced by Kuhn's paradigm," one scholar asserts. James A. Marcum, *Thomas Kuhn's Revolution: An Historical Philosophy of Science* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 134. The Lutheran missional theologian Terri Elton, for one, suggests that Kuhn "might be a prophetic voice for the church today." Terri Martinson Elton, "Corps of Discovery: A Twenty-First Century Contextual Missiology for the Denominational Church in the United States," in Craig Van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 151.

[21] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 7 and 190.

[22] References to Thomas Kuhn can be found in many other EMC publications. See, for example, Dave Tomlinson, *The Post-Evangelical* (Revised North American edition, El Cajon, CA: Zondervan/YS, 2003), 91-92; Dwight J. Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church Can Learn from Facebook, the Internet, and Other Networks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 24; Linda Bergquist and Allan Kerr, *Church Inside Out: A Guide for Designers, Refiners, and Re-Aligners* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 59.

3.2.1 Three Levels of Paradigm

The term 'paradigm' is used, often implicitly, in the EMC on three distinguishable levels: a general 'macro level', an intermediate 'meso level' and an even more specific 'micro level'.[23]

On the macro level, the concept of paradigm virtually overlaps with that of worldview.[24] In the words of Brian McLaren, the term worldview can be understood as the lens through which we view the world: "a lens of assumptions, beliefs, images, metaphors, values, and ideas that we inherit and construct from our family, our teachers, our peers, our community, and our culture."[25] It is paradigm in the sense of a 'meta-paradigm' or general (metaphysical) *Weltanschauung* that most readers take away from Kuhn's book.[26] We recognize this close connection between the concepts of paradigm and worldview in the EMC. For example, Tony Jones discerns a "paradigm shift toward cultural postmodernism" in Western society,[27] Robert Webber mentions "the shift from a modern to a postmodern *worldview* [emphasis added]" as the most formidable challenge currently facing evangelicals,[28] and Brian McLaren lets his 'new kind of Christian' Neo speak about worldview in the following terms: "a working model of reality – a *paradigm* [emphasis added], a mental map".[29] Both paradigm and worldview, then, are important concepts in the EMC, and sometimes the words are used interchangeably.[30]

On a meso level, in the EMC, the term 'paradigm' refers to certain beliefs, values and commitments regarding subjects such as church, leadership, and mission. Some negative

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[23] These three levels have also been detected in Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* See Douglas Lee Eckberg and Lester Hill, Jr., "The Paradigm Concept and Sociology: A Critical Review," in Gary Gutting, ed., *Paradigms & Revolutions: Applications and Appraisals of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1980), 118 ff.

[24] Cf. Terri Elton, "Paradigms are worldviews, the mega-structures that hold together a greater community's shared assumptions." Terri Martinson Elton, "Leading in the Midst of Change: A Theologically Grounded, Theoretically Informed Hermeneutic of Change," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 36.

[25] Brian D. McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change Everything* (Nashville, TN: WPublishing, 2006), 51.

[26] Mark Blaug, "Kuhn versus Lakatos, or Paradigms versus Research Programmes in the History of Economics," in Gutting, ed., *Paradigms & Revolutions*, 140. In Kuhn's *Structure* it is especially chapter X, "Revolutions as Changes of World View," which suggests the idea that paradigm and worldview denote more or less the same phenomenon.

[27] Tony Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Creating Holistic Connections, Cultivating Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Youth Specialties/Zondervan, 2001), 52.

[28] Webber*, Ancient-Future Faith*, 12. Later on this book, Webber dwells particularly on the importance of paradigm thinking.

[29] Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 32. This quote is from chapter 4, called "What a Difference a Worldview Makes".

[30] When reading EMC literature, one sometimes encounters still other equivalents to the term 'paradigm', such as 'assumptive framework', 'cognitive map', 'framing story', 'meaning perspective', 'metanarrative(s)', 'mind-set', the 'Constantinian story', 'social imaginary', or 'systems story'. Our discussion in this chapter focuses on a discussion of 'paradigm language', which is the most widespread. The observations that follow pertain – *mutatis mutandis* – to these other terms as well.

uses of the term include a "Sunday-centric church"-paradigm,[31] a "clerical" paradigm,[32] a "congregation-centric" paradigm,[33] or a "mechanistic paradigm" that unwittingly dominates our approach to leadership and church.[34] More favorable uses include, for example, a "new missional leadership paradigm,"[35] a "networked paradigm,"[36] a "kingdom of God paradigm,"[37] a "Verge church paradigm,"[38] a "new paradigm for youth ministry,"[39] or a paradigm shift "involved in a missional model of theological education."[40]

Paradigms at the micro level are the most restrictive in scope. They are concerned with concrete guidelines for action on specified subjects, such as adopting "'transformissional coaching' as a new paradigm,"[41] shifting "from *extending* hospitality to *receiving* hospitality,"[42] or embracing the cross "as a paradigm for discipleship."[43] Micro paradigm shifts are, however, not always explicitly mentioned in EMC literature, but merely implied. The main focus of the EMC is not on micro level paradigms, but on the meso and macro level ones.

3.2.2 Paradigm Shift(s): Favoring Change

Moreover, one may detect both a *descriptive* and a *prescriptive* use of the word paradigm in EMC literature – often in this order. The descriptive use consists of the claim that a major paradigm shift is under way or has already been effected, for example, a shift from Christendom to post-Christendom, or a shift from modernity to postmodernity.

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[31] Literally: '[We must lead] a paradigm shift away from Sunday-centric church." Mike Brantly, "The Fragrance: The Missional Church in c:21," *Stimulus* 13, no. 2 (May 2005), 30-31.

[32] Guder, ed., *Missional Church*, 193.

[33] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 150.

[34] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 251.

[35] Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 190.

[36] See Dwight Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected*, 26 and 169; on page 20 he speaks of a "relationally connective paradigm of God's networked kingdom."

[37] Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 96.

[38] "Adopting a *Verge church paradigm* [emphasis added] requires learning what it means to become a more fluid, adaptive, reproducible, viral people-movement." Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, *On the Verge: A Journey Into the Apostolic Future of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 32. Note that the authors not only use paradigm language, but also many metaphors. See chapter 5 on this topic.

[39] Tim Sudworth, with Graham Cray and Chris Russell, *Mission-Shaped Youth: Rethinking Young People and Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2007), 10.

[40] Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 250.

[41] Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl, *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008), 7.

[42] David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 41.

[43] Michael Frost, *The Road to Missional: Journey to the Center of the Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 94.

Next, the author(s) *prescribe* a paradigm shift for Christians in the western world. Thus, according to Robert Webber, "younger evangelicals know that they *must minister in a new paradigm of thought*."[44] Brian McLaren favours a "new paradigm for doing theology."[45] Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger plead in their book for "a huge paradigm shift," from a church focus to a kingdom focus.[46] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch suggest that a "paradigm-buster imagination" is needed for the emergence of the missional church of the twenty-first century in the West.[47] Others advocate a shift from a "Christendom mode" of church to a "missional church."[48]

It is important to note that in this kind of discourse *change* in the church and its paradigms (including leadership paradigms) is deemed imperative.[49] In many EMC publications, page after page cries for "major change, qualitative change, revolution, rebirth, reinvention."[50] Simultaneously, the traditional church is criticized for having become "the last bastion of protection against change; the reminder of what the world looked like before it changed; the preserver of tradition and ritual, rather than the catalyst and advancer of the kingdom of God."[51] In EMC literature, change, innovation and novelty are seen as positive, whereas custom and tradition carry negative associations. This core message of the EMC is the same as that in all kinds of disciplines – varying from anthropology to sociology – that refer to Kuhn's book with its conceptual framework. EMC authors are far from unique in combining the term 'paradigm' with words like 'shift', 'new', 'change', 'revolutionary', or 'emerging'. Nor are they original in stating that paradigms change or should be changed. Phrases such as "time for a paradigm shift," "changing the paradigm," "supporting the paradigm shift," and so on can be

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[44] Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 48. The 'younger evangelicals' Webber wrote about can be seen as constituting a significant demographic of the Emerging-Missional milieu.

[45] Brian McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 67.

[46] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 62.

[47] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 7.

[48] See, for example, Guder, *Missional Church*, or Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*. Cf. Reggie McNeal, "The entire book has been about *shifting paradigms* [emphasis added] from a church culture to a missional movement." Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 159.

[49] A typical example provides William Easum, who starts his book on church leadership with the following questions: "What does leadership mean when:
* we live in a time when the old rules are disappearing and new ones have not yet emerged?
* time, place, and form no longer matter?
* everything is deconstructing and decentralizing?
* the way people receive and process knowledge is changing?
* everything about the world into which we were born is giving way to a totally new order?"
Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side,* 13-14.

[50] McLaren, *Church on the Other Side*, 19.

[51] Erwin Raphael McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church GOD had in Mind* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001), 81. Later on in his book, McManus cautions: "we must be careful. The truth is that not all innovation is good, and being relevant to culture loses its meaning if you have nothing to relate." Ibid., 188.

found in a wide range of literature.[52] Generally speaking, in the EMC and elsewhere, change is linked to novelty, and that message resonates well with postmodern society and the current *Zeitgeist*.[53]

Pleas for change receive additional pathos when EMC authors recount how they have been personally touched on an existential level. Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, for instance, have felt the radical impact of a paradigm shift in their own lives to – as they put it – "the embracing, and the subsequent living out, of a missionary identity."[54] This shift entailed a total reorientation, which may be likened to a 'conversion':[55] "It changed everything, absolutely everything – the way we perceived church, how we do ministry, why we even exist. It even included a thorough reconceptualization of the way we connected with God and perceived his workings in the world, and how we could find him in the stranger places, places normal good ministers never ventured. Being missionaries to Australia has meant that we saw the whole function of ministry differently."[56] Another example is provided by Alan Roxburgh in his book about church leadership, where he confides that he was "*being taken* [emphasis added] from a billiard-ball, linear, manage-and-control world and *placed* [emphasis added] on an entirely different path where I no longer understood leadership as a pool table but as a network of dynamic, noncontrollable interrelationships among ordinary people in local contexts where the wondrously creative Spirit was at work."[57]

3.2.3 Paradigms: Incommensurable, and Heavily Defended

EMC literature often contains sharp juxtapositions of "old" and "new" macro level paradigms or worldviews, such as modern versus postmodern, or Christendom versus post-Christendom. Another dichotomy that is frequently adopted is that between a Newtonian/mechanistic versus an Einsteinian-organic worldview. According to Kester Brewin, for example, "There is an irresistible force of movement encompassing science, industry, architecture and education, which is shifting everything from a modernist, mechanistic, deterministic, Newtonian, Laplacian world view towards this complex, networked, Ein-

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[52] Sabine Maasen and Peter Weingart, *Metaphors and the Dynamics of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2000), 84.

[53] Maasen and Weingart, *Metaphors and the Dynamics of Knowledge*, 68.

[54] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 148.

[55] Interestingly, Kuhn likens a paradigm shift to a "Gestalt switch" or "religious conversion". The way the scientist sees the world is said to be transformed to the point where Kuhn describes the experience as seeing a "different world". Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 111-114.

[56] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 148.

[57] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 71. This different way of describing and understanding leadership is advocated in the rest of his book. "Linear planning and alignment of the system with a predicted future are contrary to the realities of an emergent, discontinuous context such as ours, which is characterized by uncertainty." Ibid., 178.

steinian, evolving one."[58] McLaren's Neo conceives of the contrast as follows: "[But] in a post-Newtonian scientific worldview – you know, a world of relativity and indeterminacy – we're already outside of the old mechanistic view of the universe. Now the universe is so much more vibrant and alive and dynamic and interesting. It's about information and emergence and possibility and novelty."[59]

We also read about old versus new paradigms on a meso level, for example a Spiritualized Gospel versus an Embodied Gospel; a Dualistic Gospel versus a Holistic Gospel; a Privatized Faith versus a Public Faith;[60] or about a movement from Propositionalism to Narrative, from Rationalism to Embodiment, from Power to Servanthood, from Legalism to Freedom, from Program to Narrative, etc.[61] This suggests that the characteristics of the old paradigms are totally different from those of the new. The church "On the Other Side" (McLaren) has almost nothing in common with the traditional church. Missional and nonmissional expressions of Christianity are "practically unrecognizable to each other."[62] Theological seminaries are irrelevant "dinosaurs" because they are "a product of modernity,"[63] and so on.

In this trend echoes can be heard of the 'incommensurability thesis' of the early Kuhn.[64] He suggested that when paradigms change – for example the Newtonian or Einsteinian theories of science – *everything* changes: "the proponents of competing paradigms practice their trades in different worlds."[65] Thus, different paradigms are incommensurable.[66] Rational debate between them is difficult, if not impossible, for each paradigm contains its own standards at all levels. Apart from the concept of 'paradigm', the thesis of the incommensurability of different paradigms has probably been Kuhn's

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[58] Kester Brewin, *The Complex Christ: Signs of Emergence in the Urban Church (*London: SPCK, 2004), 61.

[59] Brian D. McLaren, *The Story We Find Ourselves in: Further Adventures of a New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 160. Cf. Kurt Fredrickson, "The modernistic, machine paradigm is giving way to a postmodern, organic paradigm." Kurt Norman Fredrickson, "An Ecclesial Ecology for Denominational Futures Nurturing Organic Structures for Missional Engagement," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2009), 143.

[60] These phrases are used in some of the section headings in Bolger and Gibbs, *Emerging Churches*.

[61] These phrases are used in some of the chapter headings in Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals.*

[62] McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, xiv.

[63] This quote features in Richard J. Mouw, foreword to Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 7.

[64] A few years after publishing his famous book, Kuhn softened his position to propose 'partial incommensurability', but this is not referred to in EMC literature. See Kuhn's essay "Reflections on My Critics," in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 231-278.

[65] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 150.

[66] Much has been written about this term. See for an overview, Stefano Gattei, *Thomas Kuhn's 'Linguistic Turn' and the Legacy of Logical Empiricism: Incommensurability, Rationality and the Search for Truth* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 74-136. Simply put, incommensurability means sharing no common factor, base, or essential characteristic. If a paradigm is incommensurable with another paradigm, then the language – terms, concepts, categories, notions – used to describe the one would not adequately capture the essence of the other. For example, the term 'run' in cricket means something different from what it means in football.

most enduring and most controversial concept.[67] Not only is this thesis deemed relativist,[68] subjectivist and irrational,[69] inherently circular and self-refuting,[70] but also historically inadequate.[71]

Turning to the EMC, the following statement by William Easum well illustrates this tacitly assumed incommensurability thesis within the EMC: "We are going through a fundamental change in the rules of the game of life – a time of *radical discontinuity* [emphasis added] – passing through a wormhole to the Other Side of somewhere."[72] McLaren's Neo also hints at 'paradigm-incommensurability' when he says, "there's a problem: new paradigms in science can never be justified based on the criteria of the old paradigm, and I imagine that the same is true in theology. So I don't expect folks who are happy with their current version of the faith, whether carried in a system or a story, to be very interested in what I'm saying."[73]

Clearly, McLaren is not optimistic about churches operating in the 'old paradigm'. Modernistic churches, he suggests, are arrogant, coercive, controlling, defensive, legalistic, Pharisaical, rigid, and uptight.[74] They want to keep things safe doctrinally and avoid heresy. In other words, the 'paradigm community' of the modern church is not open for new insights or change, but is instead controlling and suppressive. Modern Christians will defend the paradigms that are precious to them. Again a parallel can be noted with Kuhn's thinking. The main function of a paradigm, according to Kuhn, is to achieve conformity within a community. Once a 'scientific revolution'[75] has been achie-

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[67] Erich von Dietze, *Paradigms Explained: Rethinking Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 69 ff. Cf. Paul Hoyningen-Huene, *Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions: Thomas S. Kuhn's Philosophy of Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 207.

[68] Cf. the critical comments of Dudley Shapere, which amount to the following: If the incommensurable paradigms differ in all respects – including the facts and the problem itself – how then can they disagree? Why do scientists accept one of them as better than the other? There seems to be no extratheoretical basis left for comparing and judging theories and paradigms. The result is historical relativism. See Dudley Shapere, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," in Gary Gutting, ed., *Paradigms & Revolutions*, 35-36.

[69] E.g. philosopher Frederick Suppe complains that under Kuhn's framework science becomes irrational and subjective, leaving it with no objective or independent basis of resolving disputes – an "anti-empirical idealism". F. Suppe, *The Structure of Scientific Theories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 151.

[70] The incommensurability thesis is said to be self-refuting as follows: if we know enough about the terms of one paradigm to say that they are incommensurable with the terms of another paradigm, then we know enough about the terms to render their incommensurability false. See Bill McKelvey, "Postmodernism versus Truth in Management Theory," in Edwin A. Locke, ed., *Postmodernism and Management: Pros, Cons and the Alternative* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2003), 121-122.

[71] Kuhn-commentator Erich von Dietze, among others, argues thus: "The difficulty with Kuhn's examples (such as the move from Newtonian to Einsteinian theory or Ptolemaic to Copernican astronomy) is that they are *not* incommensurable with their successors, at least not in any strong or methodological sense." Von Dietze, *Paradigms Explained,* 101-102.

[72] Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side*, 46.

[73] McLaren, *The Story We Find Ourselves in*, 164.

[74] See especially Brian D. McLaren, *More Ready than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 25 ff.

[75] According to historian of science Stanley Jaki, the word 'revolution' played as important a role in Kuhn's theory as did 'paradigm'. Kuhn believed that there was a striking similarity of paradigm changes to poli-

ved and a paradigm is accepted, the community actively opposes criticisms, contradictions, or new ideas. Indeed it seeks to suppress competing views.

Accordingly, Frost and Hirsch interpret *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* as "a warning to us as to how easily vital new perspectives can be stifled by a predominant paradigm, something that has sadly been so much a part of the historical Christendom project." They continue on this topic: "It is interesting that people are willing to prosecute dissenters based on their assumptions about the world." This is probably because such people have invested so much of their sense of selfhood in the current paradigm and so receive their legitimacy from it. This is also "why denominations seldom permit a questioning of their core organizations beliefs – commonly called sacred cows."[76]

3.3 Critical Discussion

A point of criticism that can be raised concerning at least some of the literature found in the EMC, is the often ill-defined, inconsistent, undifferentiated (on diverse levels, varying from macro to micro) or ambiguous use of the term paradigm. However, this does not seem to be a major shortcoming, because whatever the definition, some vagueness remains inherent in such abstract concepts as paradigm (or worldview). Inexact as it may be, the term paradigm does, however point to an empirical reality, the reality that a "controlling patterned seeing" characterizes the history of science and religion alike.[77] It is undeniable that "at least some of the scholarly disagreements may be traced in part to different paradigms or competing worldviews superintending the theorizing process and swaying its conclusions."[78] Participants in the EMC are therefore to be credited for looking beneath the surface at axioms, presuppositions, theories, or interpretative lenses[79] that all of us – mostly unreflectively – hold on to and through which we view the world, read the Bible, conceive of church leadership, etc.[80] They also justly point out that church leaders should be aware of their own paradigms,[81] and that one of their

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tical crisis solved by revolution. "Such is Kuhn's 'resolution' of scientific revolutions," Jaki writes, "about which he emphatically stated that 'it is the selection by conflict within the scientific community of the fittest way to produce future science.'" Stanley L. Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 237-238.

[76] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 191. All references in this paragraph are to ibid., 190-191.

[77] Holmes Rolston III, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey* (New York: Random House, 1987), 8.

[78] David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 207.

[79] Some other terms that can be seen as more or less equivalents of macro paradigm or worldview, are sacred canopy (P. Berger), habitus (P. Bourdieu), episteme (M. Foucault), frame of reference (E. Fromm), lifeworld (J. Habermas), lifeview (S. Kierkegaard), subsidiary awareness (M. Polanyi), noetic interpretations (E. Voegelin), or world picture (L. Wittgenstein). See on this Naugle, *Worldview*. Cf. also n30, above.

[80] Cf. Sharon Peebles Burch, *Collective Absolute Presuppositions: Tectonic Plates for Churches* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

[81] See for example McNeal, *Missional Renaissance,* 158-160.

tasks is to help uncover operating assumptions or mental maps, about leadership for example, within the community that they serve.[82]

Thus, it is not the use of the words paradigm or worldview as such that is problematic, but the concomitant thesis of incommensurability that often – perhaps unwittingly – seems to accompany it. We find this, for example, in the historical reconstructions that are adopted by EMC writers such as Kester Brewin and Brian McLaren (see 3.2.3). Their claim is that since the start of the Enlightenment we have been enslaved and our universe despiritualized by Newton's science and its attendant philosophy and mechanistic worldview, which Einstein has fortunately replaced by a holistic one that is totally different.[83] This story, however, is too simplistic and evaluative – concentrating as it does on villains and heroes.[84]

Thinking in terms of incommensurability is not limited to imposing radical discontinuity on the historical record, however. Reggie McNeal, for one, gives another application when he writes that the "differences are so huge as to make missional and nonmissional expressions of Christianity practically unrecognizable to each other."[85] While he does not directly say that missional and nonmissional are incommensurable paradigms, the implication is there. Such a master-narrative can easily over-sensitize readers and cause them to look for bits of evidence in order to categorize people, groups, or institutions as missional or nonmissional. Moreover, it does not do justice to the reality that is more complex and ambiguous – although it must be acknowledged that for many readers dichotomies such as missional or nonmissional (or Newtonian versus post-Newtonian, and so on) may appear persuasive, at least on first sight.[86]

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[82] Cf. the sharp observation of David Gortner, "The ecclesial system's dedication to unexamined assumptions about leadership undermines its potential." David T. Gortner, "Retraining Ourselves in Thought and Action: A Thematic Exploration of Leadership Literature," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 207.

[83] Note that the ideas of McLaren and Brewin (and other EMC voices) are direct echoes of New Age-guru Fritjof Capra, who has adopted Kuhn's paradigm-shift method and has become himself very influential in the seventies and eighties with his book *The Tao of Physics*. "Capra used the history of science to support his evaluations of the so-called Newtonian mechanistic paradigm, which he denigrates, and the holistic paradigm of modern physics, which he champions." John Brooke and Geoffrey Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83.

[84] Brooke and Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature*, 80. Cf. Wouter Hanegraaff's comment on several New Age sources that discuss the rise of 'Cartesian/Newtonian' or 'mechanistic' thought: "we encounter a striking lack of precise historical interest....What we do find is a series of very general 'right-wrong' oppositions, with obvious polemical intentions." Wouter Hanegraafff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 323.

[85] McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, xiv.

[86] It has been said of Thomas Kuhn that he drew the portrait of science in the manner of the Impressionists. "At a distance, where most viewers stand, the portrait appears illuminating, persuasive, and inspiring; close in, where historians and philosophers stare, it looks sketchy, puzzling, and richly challenging." This apt characterization of Kuhn's approach to science historiography may also be helpful to understand EMC 'portraits' – on historical epochs or other grand themes. See Thomas Nickles, ed., introduction to *Thomas Kuhn: Contemporary Philosophy in Focus* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11.

The first *caveat* that should be given about the use of 'paradigm language' within the EMC is the implicit suggestion of incommensurability. The second *caveat* is closely related. If different paradigms are really incommensurable, then *communication* between the diverse adherents of them can be difficult, according to Kuhn (and postmodern writers thinking along this line emphasize 'language games' that are incommensurable). This communication crisis will not be overcome, unless the adherents of the old paradigm are persuaded, primarily by way of rhetoric, to adopt the new one. This, however, is not a very likely occurrence, since they cling to their old ways – as we all tend to do. Our paradigms are precious to us, we tend to defend and protect them when they are challenged. "This is especially true," as the missionary anthropologist Charles Kraft explains, "if we suspect that by changing a certain paradigm, we may run afoul of the opinions of our group. The potential of a loss of prestige is usually sufficient to keep us in line, especially if we are feeling socially insecure."[87] If this is true – and it does sound persuasive – then there is a danger not only for those who cling to the old ('modern', 'Christendom', and so on) macro-paradigm but *also* for those who have been converted to the new ('postmodern', 'post-Christendom') one. The danger is twofold.

3.3.1 Communication Breakdown

The first danger is that one puts less effort into trying to communicate meaningfully with the adherents of the other paradigm, believing that this is useless anyway. In the likely event of a communication breakdown, it is easy to point to the other party, saying: "I told you so; this is because you refuse to give up your paradigm." In the introduction to his provocative *Mission Mover* – a book endorsed by Brian McLaren and Leonard Sweet[88] – church consultant (and 'paradigm thinker') Thomas Bandy tells us of a presentation he gave to a small group, during which three 'traditional' pastors became so angry that they left the building.[89] Was this because they refused to face the truth? Of course, this *could* be the case, as Bandy implies. It is also possible, however, that Bandy did not try hard enough to reach them in his communication. Could it not be, among other things, that Bandy's rhetoric – more specifically, his overstatements and his free use of metaphors[90] – risks a breakdown in communication with those who prefer clear and precise arguments?

If we overstate how our thinking is formed and influenced by different paradigms or traditions, it can lead us to overestimate the difficulties of having productive conversations and having shared projects with people from other (Christian) traditions. It blinds us to the similarities we might have and obscures the ways that *shared experiences* may

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[87] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989), 70.

[88] Sweet wrote the afterword and McLaren the foreword to Thomas Bandy, *Mission Mover: Beyond Education for Church Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004).

[89] Thomas Bandy, *Mission Mover*, 15.

[90] See more on this in chapter 5.

shape our thoughts, despite coming from vastly different contexts.[91] As a result, we may be more likely to give up altogether the idea of having a reasonable worthwhile conversation, a conversation characterized by respect for the other party and a readiness to listen, in which opinions are carefully stated and good reasons are given for them. It has been held against Kuhn's heavy emphasis on the scientific community – as *the* locus of authority of what may be counted as truth – that it allows for and even invites "the parochial policies of making outsiders of those who criticize the insiders too sharply, and of rejecting alternative theories as meaningless instead of critically engaging with them."[92] This is, *mutatis mutandis*, also a danger within the EMC, particularly within emergent circles.[93]

3.3.2 From Macro-paradigm to Ideology

The second danger is that a macro-paradigm or worldview turns into an ideology – a set of ideas (for example, that a 'paradigm revolution' is needed in the church) that so controls one's thinking and logic as to be oblivious of empirical and experiential input. This input, then, neither supports nor constitutes these ideas any more, nor has any potential to influence them any longer.[94] Again, this is a trap for adherents of both old *and* new paradigms. It is not only the modern, Christendom-minded Christian who risks holding on to an ideology[95] that closes his mind to new insights and truths.[96]

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[91] Cf. the insights of practical theologian Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 179. Cf. 70, 183, 203 and 215.

[92] See Gattei, *Thomas Kuhn's 'Linguistic Turn' and the Legacy of Logical Empiricism*, 48, 204-205.

[93] Cf. the comment of David Kowalski: "After much experience I have found that the 'safe place' of emergent conversation can be frustrating for conservative Evangelicals whom emergents seem to see as their only real enemies....Also, emergents' apparent disregard for conventional principles of logic and language frequently makes communication with them perplexing for 'moderns' who try to reason with them." Apologetics Index, "Surrender is Not an Option: An Evaluation of Emergent Epistemology," http://www.Apologeticsindex.org/612-emergent-epistemology (accessed October 29, 2007). Note however that in 2010, two Anglican bishops found "great openness among emergent leaders to be in conversation with the inherited church. There was no resistance that we experienced, and in fact we were warmly welcomed, embraced and received as bishops." Mary Gray-Reeves and Michael Perham, *The Hospitality of God: Emerging Worship for a Missional Church* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 129. It seems that the sharp edges within EMC discourse have been worn down during recent years.

[94] This definition of ideology was borrowed (and slightly adapted) from Rolston III, *Science and Religion,* 12. The Norwegian scholar S. Skirbekk mentions the following five characteristics of ideologies: (1) *system-connection*, i.e., an interconnected set of shared beliefs and meanings over a period of time; (2) *dependence on interests*: not just any set of ideas constitutes an ideology; there need to be discernable interests; (3) *distortion of reality*: this is the reason why ideologies have to be detected and disclosed; (4) *harmful effect*, i.e., somebody will be harmed if an ideology over a period of time is playing a dominating role; (5) *the self-immunization strategy*: e.g., refer to authorities and interpretations that leave opponents in a suspicious role. Skirbekk, as referred to in Josein Säther, "The Concept of Ideology in Analysis of Fundamental Questions in Science Education," *Science & Education* 12 (2003), 240. The points 3-5 are especially pertinent for this thesis.

[95] Note – again – that the word 'ideology' is used *not* in a more neutral way, as does for example Michael Freeden: "Ideologies...map the political and social worlds for us." Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2. In this thesis, an ideology is regarded as a macro-paradigm that functions – in Freeden's words – as "an unfortunate smokescreen that covers up reality" and as "closed and superimposed systems of ideas and practices." Ibid., 32, 35.

The risk is also there for the adherent of postmodern, or missional forms of church. None of us can think without paradigms, as it is justly pointed out within the EMC. However, criticism of the so-called 'modernist' paradigm, or ideology, can easily turn into an ideology itself.[97] Nuances are often lost when Christians and churches are labeled modern and chided in EMC literature. For one thing, the label 'modern' is very abstract, which is typical of ideological thinking.[98] For another, modernism is primarily seen as negative, that is to say, the abuses are taken for the essence. Again, as we can see, through the centuries this is what ideologies have done.[99] If, additionally, the suggestion is that *either* you are part of the emergent movement – including adopting emergent leaders, emergent friendship, emergent worship, even emergent kissing[100] – *or* you do not belong in it, then there is a possibility that the 'emergent paradigm' has become a new ideology that demands conformity from its adherents.[101]

Some of the rhetoric among the most progressive or radical voices within the EMC reminds us of the ideological overtones in Christian circles in the 1960's.[102] The radicals in those turbulent times were – just as some idealists within the EMC today – out to challenge 'structures' and especially 'authority structures', 'hierarchies', 'elites', and anything 'top-down', or with any hint of the 'closed', the 'exclusivist', or the 'triumphalist'. They were seeking for a 'declergification' of the church and attached great importance to ideas of community. For example, within the discussions and documents of the

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[96] Some EMC critics prove themselves to be authoritarian, aggressive, and condescending to any rival perspective. They "have set up what is essentially an expert system in which they alone are able to determine what is or isn't 'rational' and thus true, and which in the process devalues other perspectives as being somehow illogical, irrational, or otherwise inferior belief systems." Richard Flory and Donald E. Miller, *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 117-118.

[97] Cf. David Hawkes, *Ideology* (London: Routledge, 2003), 82.

[98] According to the London School of Economics Professor Kenneth Minogue, "Things hang together in ideology in a way they don't for historians." Kenneth Minogue, *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 91-92. Elsewhere he writes that "Ideological criticism...resembles such artistic *genres* as caricature, satire and above all melodrama, in that it is human life construed in terms of abstractions which automatically elicit a range of simple emotions." Ibid., 64.

[99] Cf. Minogue, *Alien Powers*, 48.

[100] See the title of the contribution of Karen E. Sloan: "Emergent Kissing: Authenticity and Integrity in Sexuality," in Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds., *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 259-267. The example of 'emergent' is used here, but in the UK, where the phrase 'mission-shaped' is *en vogue*, "it is has been joked that it will not be long before we will have mission-shaped funerals, mission-shaped Redundant Churches Uses' Committees and mission-shaped Glebe Committees." Alan Smith, *God-Shaped Mission: Theological and Practical Perspectives from the Rural Church* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2008), xi.

[101] Cf. the criticism of the jargon of a few emergent/revisionist authors by D.A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 155.

[102] See Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, paperback ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 151-157.

World Student Christian Federation a new terminology was adopted.[103] This is typical of ideological movements, which tend to "turn the world into language."[104] This new vocabulary, moreover, was antithetic to rational argument and analytic style – just as we see among certain postmodern writers within the EMC.[105] Furthermore, "it was inherently disdainful of institutions and arrogantly assumed a clear-cut and simple judgment of who was for good and who was for evil."[106] Looking back on these times, we notice that the radical Christians had run out of steam by the 1970's.[107] The same prospect may loom for participants within the EMC if they refuse to learn from history.[108]

This topic of ideology can be approached from still another angle. It is the willingness to set the truth above a macroparadigm, no matter how compelling – whether 'modern', 'postmodern', or whatever – that prevents the latter from becoming an ideology. Only a devotion to the truth[109] can enable our paradigms, self-serving as they are, to be self-correcting. An uncritical adoption of postmodern thinking, however, can jeopardize such devotion.[110] And such an uncritical openness to – sometimes quite explicit – forms of postmodern epistemology can indeed be found in progressive parts of the EMC, as R. Scott Smith has pointed out.[111] This is cause for some concern, since postmodern thin-

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[103] "'In' words, which separated the sheep from the goats included 'conscientization', 'new lifestyles', 'education of the masses', 'anti-imperialist struggle', 'system of repression' and the like. Those who did not master the use of this in-language were quickly written off by the supporters of the emerging radical left-wing of the Federation." Risto Lehtonen, *Story of a Storm: The Ecumenical Student Movement in the Turmoil of Revolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 119.

[104] See Frank Ellis, "Political Correctness and the Ideological Struggle: From Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault," *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 27, no. 4 (Winter 2002), 430.

[105] One of the characteristics of literature that is produced in the EMC (especially by revisionist authors) is its depreciation of what is traditionally known as linear, reasonable discourse, which is deemed to be 'modern'. Some authors even deliberately organize their books in fragments, thereby not only illustrating but also advocating the shift to a postmodern paradigm of discourse. For example, Leonard Sweet, Brain McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer wrote a book that follows the letters of the alphabet. "You will go through this text at your own pace, starting where you need to, ending where you want to. We hope you will read it any way except from A to Z." Leonard Sweet, Brian D. McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer, *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 29.

[106] Lehtonen, *Story of a Storm*, 119.

[107] McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, 208.

[108] Most EMC participants were not yet born in the 1960's. Interestingly, according to Thomas Kuhn, the individuals who invent a new paradigm almost always "have been either very young or very new to the field whose paradigm they change." Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 90.

[109] Note that such a 'devotion' to truth is hard to reconcile with paradigm thinking à la Kuhn, because of his opinion that scientific change is best understood as a process that does not move toward any goal at all. "Rather, Kuhn insists that, like the process of evolution by natural selection, scientific change is a process that is best conceptualized as driven from behind." Wray, *Kuhn's Evolutionary Social Epistemology*, 112.

[110] Cf. Gattei, "If truth is nothing more than solidarity, then all of our questions are political questions – and the only question that matters is: which side are you on?" Gattei, *Thomas Kuhn's 'Linguistic Turn'*, 203. See also Steve Fuller, who delineates the "essence of Kuhn's *Realpolitik* of science" as follows: scientific revolutions succeed not because the same people are persuaded of a new way of seeing things, but because different people's views start to count. Steve Fuller, *Kuhn vs Popper: The Struggle for the Soul of Science* (Cambridge, UK: Icon Books, 2003), 37.

[111] See R. Scott Smith, *Truth and the New Kind of Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005). More on the topic of epistemology within the EMC follows in 5.2.1.

kers tend to deny the usefulness of the concept of 'ideology' because they do not believe that something like truth, and its opposite, falsehood, really exist. If truth is, as postmodernist *avant-la-lettre* Friedrich Nietzsche claimed, merely a rhetorical device by which the powerful maintain their dominance, then how are we to distinguish between true and false modes of thought?[112] In strong postmodernist thinking, this is indeed impossible. However, those who downplay the reality of truth, or the possibility of attaining it, run the risk of absolutizing relativism. This can ironically be called the "veritable apotheosis of ideology."[113]

The fact that truth claims are downplayed in parts of the EMC, then, does not automatically prevent ideological forms of thinking from creeping in. On the contrary, it can even stimulate this development, for example when "challenges are routinely dismissed as an attempt to go back to modernity or even pre-modernity, leaving us with a fine irony: an ideology which declares that all ideologies are power-plays, yet which sustains its own position by ruling out all challenges a priori."[114] This routine dismissal of challenges may be a danger for EMC authors, especially those who use paradigm language, because it emphasizes dichotomies and tends to simplistically delegitimize opposing views as outdated. Paradigm discourse, in other words, often has political overtones as it functions to "advance a cause rather than impartial search for truth."[115]

It is our conviction, then, that a willingness to give up one's preconceptions for the sake of the truth is as necessary for postmodern (or post-Christendom) Christians as it is for modern (or Christendom) ones. "The reforming spirit in theology is just this insistence that a person must not get in the way of the truth, must not bias it, but hear it sensitively and entirely."[116] Or to use terms that are pertinent for those who educate future Christian leaders, "If one is not forever captive of one's own theory, system, script, framework, or ideology, one needs to develop an even more complex way of knowing that permits one to *look at*, rather than choicelessly *through*, one's own framework."[117]

3.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shown that explicitly or implicitly, literally or by way of an equivalent, influential voices in the EMC regularly refer to the concept of 'paradigm'. The funda-

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[112] Hawkes, *Ideology*, 7. Nietzsche even criticized the "will to truth" that he saw as the cause of hierarchy and oppression; he raised the revolutionary possibility that truth may not, finally, even be a good thing. Ibid., 152.

[113] Cf. Hawkes, *Ideology*, 8 and 10.

[114] N.T. Wright, *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 98.

[115] Ross D. London, "Paradigms Lost: Repairing the Harm of Paradigm Discourse in Restorative Justice," *Criminal Justice Studies* 19, no. 4 (December 2006), 398.

[116] Rolston III, *Science and Religion,* 17.

[117] Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 53.

mental claim typical of the EMC is that a massive shift in paradigm or worldview is under way[118] in the Western world – with epistemological, ontological, economic, social, political, and communicational, aspects and consequences, among others. Christians and churches therefore need to adapt. This claim itself has become a paradigm of sorts within the EMC, one might say. Just as EMC authors portray Thomas Kuhn as the one who brought about a revolution in the traditional understanding of the nature of science, they also aim for a similar revolution among Christians in their traditional understanding of what church, church leadership and being a Christian is all about.

Many EMC writers do not shy away from using strong language to make their case; one often encounters a 'rhetoric of crisis', which lacks nuance. In addition, the vagueness of the Kuhnian concept of paradigm (and paradigm shift) serves their rhetorical purposes well.[119] The main purpose of their rhetoric is to function as a wake up call, with this message: "*We are entering a new, postmodern and post-Christendom age!*" A friendly interpreter might call this 'prophetic', as does Scot McKnight.[120] It is possible, indeed, to see an exaggerated rhetoric as necessary to capture the attention of a religiously complacent audience, as Stephen Webb suggests.[121] "Exuberant and extravagant discourse... will always upset the conventions and customs of the status quo...it could be said that Protestantism is born out of the command, 'Just exaggerate!'"[122] EMC rhetoric, then, may move the complacent, while also inspiring the idealistic. Furthermore, the use of paradigm language as part of this rhetoric can help make sense of the cultural changes we experience, and of the sometimes vast differences in how people evaluate these changes. Peoples' perceptions of reality can be so different that it may seem that they live in different worlds.[123] David Bosch argues that "this explains why defenders of the old order and champions of the new frequently argue at cross purposes."[124]

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[118] Depending on which publications you read, the worldview shift is said to be under way – or it has already occurred.

[119] As Kuhn himself readily observed: "Part of the reason of [the book's] success is...that it can be too nearly all things to all people." Thomas Kuhn, as quoted in Zdravko Radman, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear with Metaphors," in Zdravko Radman, ed., *From a Metaphorical Point of View: A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Cognitive Content of Metaphor* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 236, 15n.

[120] Scot McKnight, "Five Streams of the Emerging Church: Key Elements of the Most Controversial and Misunderstood Movement in the Church Today," *Christianity Today*, February 2007, 35-39.

[121] Stephen H. Webb, "Reviving the Rhetorical Heritage of Protestant Theology," in Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted, eds., *Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (London: Blackwell, 2006), 411. Cf. Patrick Keifert, "hyperbolic language is warranted because we are in a time of change, perhaps epochal change in the relationships of church, gospel and culture." Patrick Keifert, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era* (Eagle, ID: Allelon, 2006), 24.

[122] Webb, "Reviving the Rhetorical Heritage of Protestant Theology," 421. According to Webb, "Protestantism and rhetoric go hand in hand" and "the Protestant Reformation was an event within the history of rhetoric as it was a development in theology." Ibid., 411-12.

[123] An example is the discussion between John Piper, a well-known evangelical pastor, and 'emergents' Tony Jones and Doug Pagitt. Piper sighed in conclusion, "I just don't understand how these guys think....We seem to differ so much in our worldview and our ways of knowing that I'm not sure how profitable the conversation was or if we could ever get anywhere. I came away from our meeting frustrated and wishing it

More importantly, speaking in terms of paradigms can lead us – provided our defenses are lowered – to *question our own systemic assumptions*, among others those about the church,[125] leadership,[126] and theological education.[127] In turn, this may encourage constructive conversations and creative thinking about how to shake free from riged patterns and create a climate conducive to innovation and mission. In so far as paradigm language helps to achieve all this, it is – to our mind – helpful.

As we discussed above, however, in discourse that tends to overemphasize contrasts, stirring up a sense of immediate need, ideological overtones easily gain entry. Terms like 'revolution', 'crisis', and – indeed – 'paradigm' are often used by ideologists[128], as well as a general "rhetoric of change."[129] This kind of language may hamper the kind of open, non-judgemental conversation that many EMC participants claim to support. It tends to favour entrepreneurial visionaries of the 'new' paradigm over conventional adherents of the 'old' one. Moreover, paradigm discourse is not conducive to finding ways to integrate the best features of the old paradigm (e.g. that of Christendom) with those of the new paradigm (e.g. that of post-Christendom), because the latest one is already assumed to be the best. In other words, because the term 'paradigm shift' tends to be used as an 'all or nothing proposition', "it has the unfortunate tendency to reject both the truly useful and important features of the disfavoured paradigm together with its objectionable features: it throws the baby out with the bathwater."[130] In this way genuine reform may actually be hindered instead of facilitated.

The message of the EMC, voiced in language that sometimes sounds (or actually is) ideological,[131] is clear: a fundamental, all-encompassing *change* in our thinking and prac-

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were different but not knowing how to make it different." John Piper, as quoted in Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 11.

[124] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 185.

[125] Cf. "Missional Church – ein Paradigmenwechsel" [Missional Church – a paradigm switch], in Martin Reppenhagen, *Auf dem Weg zu einer missionalen Kirche: Die Diskussion um eine 'Missional Church' in den USA* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgeselsschaft, 2011), 155-283.

[126] "What needs to happen," communication scholar G.L. Forward suggests, "is a fundamental *reformulation of assumptions* [emphasis added] concerning pastor-congregation expectations that transcends hierarchy, paternalism, and individualism." He continues saying that a *new paradigm* [emphasis added] is necessary, one "that views the pastor as companion, enabler, and spiritual friend who sometimes leads and is sometimes led but is always engaged in a mutual recursive relationship." G.L. Forward, "Servant or CEO? A Metaphor Analysis of Leadership in a Nonprofit Context," *The New Jersey Journal of Communication* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2001), 164. Chapter 7 will show that Forward's leadership vision overlaps with EMC views.

[127] The Austrian theological educator Bernhard Ott, for example, pleads for a 'paradigm shift' towards a more inductive model of learning. He fears however that "Many traditionally trained theologians and college teachers do not even have the imagination to view the contours of such a paradigm shift." Bernhard Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education. A Critical Assessment of Some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2001), 267.

[128] Cf. Sally E. Thorne, Sheryl Reimer Kirkham, and Angela Henderson, "Ideological Implications of Paradigm Discourse," *Nursing Inquiry* 6 (1999), 129.

[129] Minogue, *Alien Powers*, 84.

[130] London, "Paradigms Lost: Repairing the Harm of Paradigm Discourse in Restorative Justice," 402.

[131] Cf. the critique of D.A. Carson: "the rhetoric of these discussions is almost always over the top: the church must adapt to the postmodern world or it will die....unless we get on board...we are probably out-

tice (among other things our approach to church leadership) is imperative. The church "faces a time where change is both necessary and inevitable," affirms Tim Conder.[132] "Churches that continue to do what has always been done die a slow death caused by ageing, atrophy, and irrelevance," agrees Tim Keel.[133] This change is necessary because of major upheavals that are going on in the Western world, the most important of which are the shift from a 'modern' to a 'postmodern' paradigm and that from a 'Christendom' to a 'post-Christendom' paradigm. In the following chapter, we will analyze these terms.

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of-date modernists and absolutists to boot – all set forth in absolutist terms." Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church*, 84.

[132] Tim Conder, *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 13.

[133] Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 90.

CHAPTER 4. *DISCERNING THE TIMES*: THE 'POSTMODERN', 'POST-CHRISTENDOM' CONTEXT IN THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION

4.1 Introduction

The EMC is both a product of and a response to fundamental changes that are occurring in Western society in the last couple of decades. In the EMC, the most important of these changes are related to two shifts: from modern to postmodern, and from Christendom to post-Christendom. The 'diagnosis' of the Western cultural context is not just a matter of (academic) debate for many participants in the EMC – it goes further and deeper than that.

As mentioned in chapter 2, alternative, consciously postmodern expressions of Christian worship are being attempted from North America and the UK, to Australia and New Zealand.[1] In addition, influential contributors to the EMC draw from their understanding of postmodernism in their way of communicating (e.g. deliberately using metaphors, see chapter 5) and in their use of insights from the so-called new sciences (see chapter 6). Furthermore, they adopt collegial, conciliatory and inclusive models of leadership that fit the "postmodern reality."[2] Thus, conceptions of church leadership in the EMC (to be discussed in the chapters 7 and 8) are deeply influenced by interprettations of cultural changes as well.[3] Suggestions for new approaches to theological education are likewise connected to perceived socio-cultural shifts (see chapter 9).[4]

In the light of this, it is important to understand what EMC writers mean when they use the terms 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom', as well as to evaluate their use of these words. The reason is this: if the perceptions, interpretations and terminology of the EMC generally appear to be convincing and applicable, they become increasingly relevant – also for the Netherlands. If, however, the terms used in the EMC to describe Western culture are grossly distorted, then they deserve a less serious hearing.

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[1] Bryan D. Spinks, "Consciously Postmodern: Alt., Emerging and Liquid worship," *The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture* (London, UK: SPCK, 2010), 31-62.

[2] Mary Gray-Reeves and Michael Perham, *The Hospitality of God: Emerging Worship for a Missional Church* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 26. This chapter (chap. 3) bears the interesting title "Authority is a conversation."

[3] Cf. Eddie Gibbs, "In our post-Christendom, postmodern culture we need a new kind of leader. The present missional context necessitates a critical reappraisal of the Western church and its leadership." Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 175.

[4] See the discussions on the website "The Future of Theological Education," http:// the future of theological education.com/ (accessed December 19, 2011). The intro to this website reads, "As we navigate our culture's shift from Christendom to Post-Christendom, one of the most pressing issues we must wrestle with is the nature, purpose, and aim of theological education. What does it mean to train men and women for Kingdom-oriented service and leadership – not in reaction to cultural shifts, but in faithfulness to what God is saying and doing in the midst of them? This site is meant to provide a platform for discussion and collaboration as we answer that question together."

The central problem of this chapter concerns an assessment of the use of the terms 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom' within the EMC. The main question is: *What is meant within the EMC by the terms 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom' and (how) are these terms appropriate to describe developments in Western countries in general, and in the Netherlands in particular?*

The chapter is organized as follows. In the first part, we describe and evaluate the concept 'postmodern' as it functions within the EMC (4.2-4.3). It will become clear that two lines of thinking can be detected in the writings of the EMC: one emphasizing postmodernism, the other postmodernity.

The first line of thought calls for attention to academic claims and discussions, such as the historical claim that the Enlightenment glorified instrumental reason.[5] It is especially within writings of revisionists – those who minister *as* postmoderns – that this first line comes to the fore.

The second line of thought deals with socio-cultural shifts within modern societies that cumulatively inaugurate a condition of what may be called postmodernity. The term refers not primarily to *academe* but to the 'street' or popular level: pop music, shopping malls, television, the workplace, a consumerist mentality,[6] and so on. This emphasis is found especially in publications of reconstructionist authors – those who minister *with* postmoderns.

The second part of this chapter highlights the concept of post-Christendom (4.4-4.5). An important source for these sections is the book *The Shaping of Things to Come*, written by Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost. Their publication contains elements that can be found in both emerging and missional circles. Relatively speaking, within the Emerging Church Movement, more attention is given to the term 'postmodern' than to 'post-Christendom', while the opposite can be said of the Missional Church Movement. Hirsch and Frost, however, discuss both terms: 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom'.[7]

The chapter ends with a summary and concluding reflections (4.6).

4.2 Postmodernism and Postmodernity in the EMC

Below, we describe how the influential revisionist authors Stanley Grenz and John Franke write about postmodernism and postmodernity – what we will call the 'postmodern turn' (4.2.1).[8] After that, we outline Brian McLaren's criticisms of modernity (4.2.2). As

[5] Daniel Gordon, introduction to *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment: New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century French Intellectual History*, by Daniel Gordon, ed. (Routledge: New York, 2001), 1.

[6] Cf. the sociologist David Lyon, "If postmodernity means anything, it means the consumer society." David Lyon, *Postmodernity*, second ed. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 88.

[7] Publications written by relevants – those who minister *to* postmoderns – and insights from the Missional Church Movement are referred to when this adds something substantial to the description or contributes to our understanding.

[8] There is not one generally accepted definition of this term. Brian McLaren, for one, interprets the expression 'postmodern turn' as the perceived shift, or transition, from "the modern paradigm with its absolute

a counterpoint to these authors, we will hear from relevant spokesman Mark Driscoll (4.2.3), followed by the reconstructionists Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost (4.2.4). Along the way, we listen to some other voices in addition to those mentioned above.

4.2.1 Stanley Grenz and John Franke on the Postmodern Turn

Stanley Grenz and John Franke[9] explain that on a broad level, "the term postmodern implies the rejection of certain central features of the modern project, such as its quest for certain, objective, and universal knowledge, along with its dualism and its assumption of the inherent goodness of knowledge. It is this critical agenda, rather than any proposed constructive paradigm to replace the modern vision, that unites postmodern thinkers."[10] In short, the heart of postmodernism is seen to lie in the epistemological arena.[11] In Grenz' view, postmodernism adopts a so-called "chastened rationality" that marks a move from realism to the social construction of reality, and from metanarrative to local stories.[12]

In addition, Franke and Grenz make two historical claims. The first is about what they call "the Enlightenment project" which is said to have "assumed a realist metaphysic and evidenced a strong preference for the correspondence theory of truth, that is, the epistemological outlook that focuses on the truth value of individual propositions and declares a proposition to be 'true' if and only if – or to the extent that – it corresponds with some fact."[13]

The second concerns the history of evangelicalism. Franke and Grenz portray orthodox evangelicalism as having been much influenced by Enlightenment rationalism. They mention the nineteenth century Princeton theologian Charles Hodge as an example, but also the contemporary "rationalist" or "propositionalist"[14] theologians Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest, among others. In their book, Grenz and Franke attempt to

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scientific laws, consumerist individualism and rational certainty" to a "postmodern paradigm of pluralism, relativism, globalism and uncertainty – or at least a different kind of certainty, at its best more akin to humble confidence." Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that Are Transforming the Faith* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010), 11. This description seems useful, although it is not clear why he reckons consumerist individualism to be typical for the modern paradigm and not for the postmodern paradigm. As sociologist David Lyon points out, "If there are dislocations between modernity and postmodernity, there are also constants and continuities, and first among them is the fact that both modernity and postmodernity are consumer cultures." Lyon, *Postmodernity*, xiv.

[9] John Franke is Professor of Missional Theology at Biblical Seminary in Philadelphia and serves on the Coordinating Group of Emergent Village. Stanley Grenz was already introduced in 2.3.3.

[10] John R. Franke and Stanley Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21-22.

[11] The topic of epistemology within the EMC is discussed in the next chapter, specifically in 5.2.1.

[12] Cf. D.A. Carson, "Domesticating the Gospel: A Review of Grenz's *Renewing the Center*," in Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjoss Helseth, Justin Taylor, eds., *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 35.

[13] Franke and Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 32.

[14] Ibid., 37.

chart a course forward that clearly steers away from modernist and Enlightenment influences – which they see as shortcomings.

4.2.2 Brian McLaren's Criticisms of Modernity

Brian McLaren makes some important additions to the revisionist portrayal of the postmodern turn. His criticisms of modernity, which are broadly echoed in the EMC, are of particular interest.[15]

First, McLaren says, modernity (dated roughly from the mid-1500s to the mid-to-late 1900s) has been characterized by a desire to conquer and dominate, by means of imperialism, colonization, and especially through the use of science and technology. This desire has also affected the church, for example, when she has tried to exert control by getting a particular political agenda passed into law. Evangelistic crusades also imply the idea of a military conquest.

Second, the modern era is marked by a quest for certainty and absolute knowledge. This 'Cartesian foundationalism' has led Christians to assume they must have utter certainty in their beliefs. Moreover, Christians feel they have to prove wrong anyone who disagrees with them. This results in a defense apologetic. In that process, McLaren suggests, their faith tends to be treated as a rigid belief system instead of a unique and joyful way of living, loving, and serving.

Third, McLaren depicts modernity as the 'age of the machine', with mechanistic views of the universe, human beings, and more. Christians have accepted this view by treating the Christian life and their relationship with God as simple steps to perform. This treats the Christian like a program of proper inputs which yield appropriate outputs.

Fourth, modernity has greatly overemphasized the autonomous individual, who legislates his own morals and thinks he has no need of God or others. Likewise, the church has perpetuated this individualism to the detriment of the body of Christ. This mind-set carries over in a rampant consumerism.

Fifth, modernity has influenced society to value analysis as the highest form of thought. Science provides the tools to master all of reality. Similarly, Christians have developed systematic theologies to categorize and understand all doctrine. But this tends to reduce God to something we can master.

In contrast, McLaren observes several changes in the emerging postmodern culture. He suggests for instance that 'postmoderns' are quick to detect inauthenticity in people, and that they are looking for genuine friendships, particularly in community. Moreover,

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[15] The paragraphs that follow are based on a useful summary of McLaren's main criticisms of modernity written by R. Scott Smith, "Reflections on McLaren and the Emerging Church," in Paul Copand and William Lane Craig, eds., *Passionate Conviction: Contemporary Discourses on Christian Apologetics* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 227 ff. See also R. Scott Smith, "Emergents, Evangelicals, and the Importance of Truth: Some Philosophical and Spiritual Lessons," in William D. Henard and Adam W. Greenway, eds., *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 134 ff.

postmodern people are not looking for a God reduced to suit modern tastes; they are looking for a God who transcends us, who is worthy of our worship, and yet is also immanent.

In sum, revisionists tend to treat postmodernism as a hegemonic cultural force (in terms of chapter 3: a new paradigm). As Neo, McLaren's postmodern protagonist suggests, Christians are "immigrating to a new land, a postmodern world."[16] Revisionists, moreover, not only emphasize the importance of the postmodern turn, but they also appear to be quite enamoured with it.[17] They make no noticeable effort to identify positive aspects of 'modernism', nor the potentially negative implications or dangers of 'postmodernism'.[18] The emphasis is heavily on the positive potential of the postmodern turn, which is portrayed as a critical reaction to modernism.[19]

Furthermore, the revisionist wing tends to emphasize philosophical postmodernism (in particular epistemological issues) more than postmodernity as a sociological phenomenon. We notice this in academic tomes such as *Beyond Foundationalism*, but also in more popularly written publications.[20] Brian McLaren, however, has an eye both for ideas and for the influence of the institutional carriers of these ideas in the economic, political and cultural spheres.

4.2.3 Mark Driscoll and the Postmodern Turn

On the other side of the spectrum are the relevants – those who minister *to* postmoderns. Just like revisionists, they have an intense interest in culture and cultural shifts, and their implications for Christians and churches.[21] Generally their descriptions of the

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[16] Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 13. Cf. Spencer Burke, founder of TheOoze.com, "Whether we realize it or not, we are living in a postmodern world." Spencer Burke, *Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations About God, Community, and Culture* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan/Emergent, 2003), 16.

[17] Cf. what we argued in 3.4: proponents of the new paradigm tend to discard the old. This is typical for the 'all or nothing' tendency of paradigm thinking.

[18] This can also be noticed with a revisionist like Tony Jones. His *Postmodern Youth Ministry* contrasts modern and postmodern values thus: rational vs. experiential, scientific vs. spiritual, unanimity vs. pluralistic, exclusive vs. relative, egocentric vs. altruistic, individualistic vs. communal, functional vs. creative, industrial vs. environmental, local vs. global, compartmentalized vs. holistic, relevant vs. authentic. Under the rubric "modern," we encounter concepts with a neutral, ambivalent or outright negative connotation, while "postmodern" receives primarily feel-good words. Tony Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Creating Holistic Connections, Cultivating Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/ YS, 2001), 67-69.

[19] Cf. Neo, again, "In the postmodern world, we become postconquest, postmechanistic, postanalytical, post-secular, postobjective, post-critical, postorganizational, postindividualistic, post-Protestant, and post-consumerist." McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian*, 19.

[20] For a Dutch example, see Johan ter Beek, *Emergingchurches.NL. Nieuwe visie voor theologie en kerk in een postmoderne cultuur* [Emergingchurches.NL.: New visions for theology and church in a postmodern culture] (www.lulu.com, n.p./n.d. [2008]).

[21] Mark Driscoll, for one, is passionate about America being a mission field filled with people who "need a gospel and a church that are faithful both to the biblical text and to the cultural contexts of America." He insists that churches must understand and engage culture. Mark Driscoll, *The Radical Reformission: Reaching Out without Selling Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 18-19.

contemporary cultural terrain overlap considerably with those of revisionists.[22] In this subsection the writings of Mark Driscoll are used as the primary source. For Driscoll, postmodernism (or postmodernity – he uses the terms interchangeably) is primarily a critique, "a deconstruction of a project that had laid its foundation with Constantine and became a high rise with Descartes."[23] However, Driscoll portrays the postmodern turn from more of a distance than revisionists are prone to do. He sees postmodernist thinking as a fluid and trendy, even faddish, phenomenon and he is much more critical than revisionists as to its potential effects. Driscoll warns of the effects that postmodern thinking may have on Christians – varying from their reading of the Bible as just "a series of suggestions,"[24] to "simply encouraging people to be who they are in the name of authenticity," which can easily be taken as a license to sin without repentance.[25] He distances himself from "the postmodern fascination with the present," which leads to cultural worldliness and "innovative" but not biblically supported doctrines.[26]

Driscoll views participants in the revisionist wing as "pretty much genuflecting before the ostensibly irresistible proclivities and antipathies embedded within the postmodern psyche as they define it."[27] A relevant like Driscoll is much more willing to confront and offend cultural norms – modern, postmodern, or *whatever* – where the truth of Scripture, as he sees it, is at stake.

In short, relevants critique what they interpret as the reflexive accommodation of ministry and message to culture in the revisionist wing.[28] Driscoll's main focus, however, is not how to analyze, discuss or somehow incorporate postmodernism, but how to reach postmodern people. In other words, "postmodern culture is not something we should ignore, oppose, or embrace." Rather, "it is simply another culture that we should seek to redeem and transform by the power of the gospel."[29]

4.2.4 Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost and the Postmodern Turn

Reconstructionists can be said to stand somewhere in between the two positions we have sketched. Descriptions of reconstructionists accentuate 'street level' postmodernity more than academic discussions on postmodernism. In this, they differ from revisionists.

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[22] Both streams welcome insights from Leonard Sweet, Alan Hirsch, Lesslie Newbigin, and Stanley Grenz. See Mark Devine, "The Emerging Church: One Movement – Two Streams," in William D. Henard and Adam W. Greenway, eds., *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 20.

[23] Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 164.

[24] "Conversations with the Contributors," in John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds*., The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 176.

[25] Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.*, 167.

[26] Driscoll, "The Church and the Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World," 139.

[27] This apt expression is borrowed from Devine, "The Emerging Church: One Movement – Two Streams," 16-17.

[28] Cf. ibid., 21.

[29] Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.*, 161.

On the other hand, reconstructionists are likely to be somewhat more open to certain postmodern cultural characteristics than the typically more cautious relevants.

Rather than analyzing what postmodernism is, Hirsch and Frost speak about a "post-modern sensibility," associating it primarily with the "hallowing of the everyday and the pursuit of sensuality."[30] This postmodern sensibility is well illustrated by the Burning Man festival in the Nevada desert,[31] which is described in the opening of their book. The authors call this temporary community of people committed to generosity, environmentalism, celebration, spirituality, and above all, art as "perhaps the ultimate post-modern festival."[32] It is typical for reconstructionists to argue that when a Christian goes to Burning Man, he will find Jesus there, waiting to be joined "in his work on the extreme cultural margins."[33]

In Alan Hirsch's *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*, published in 2009, the "dramatic changes in worldview that have been taking place in general culture in the last fifty years" are captured in diverse terms, such as the "shift from the modern to the postmodern, or from solid modernity to liquid modernity."[34] Hirsch's main point is not to conceptually pinpoint the phenomenon of worldview change, but to draw attention to its occurrence and its complexity. "The truth is that the twenty-first century is turning out to be a highly complex phenomenon where terrorism, technological innovation, an unsustainable environment, rampant consumerism, and discontinuous change confront us at every point." Furthermore, the implications for the church, especially as regards its "hardware" (e.g., organizational structures), are sketched as constituting "a very significant adaptive challenge."[35] For reconstructionists the implications of postmodernity do not alter the gospel message, but they do have consequences for church and mission. Reconstructionists such as Frost and Hirsch seek to thoroughly contextualize the church, making it indigenous to its culture, while rediscovering its nature as a missionary movement. They affirm the classic task of the cross-cultural missionary as follows: "To engage the culture without compromising the gospel."[36]

The manner in which Alan Hirsch (and Michael Frost) write about the postmodern turn, resembles that of Alan Roxburgh, who is particularly well-known as a contributor to the missional church conversation. "The language of postmodernism," according to

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[30] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 134.

[31] See on Burning Man also 2.5.1.

[32] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 3.

[33] Kerry D. McRoberts, *Following Jesus to Burning Man: Recovering the Church's Vocation* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2011), 10.

[34] Alan Hirsch with Darryn Altclass, *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 26.

[35] Ibid., 26-27.

[36] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 16. This vision is not new, of course. Youth for Christ, for example, has had "anchored to the Rock, geared to the times" as its motto for decades. YfC is not a church, however. The ideal within the EMC is that churches (and even denominations) 'turn missional'. See on this last topic Craig Van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

Roxburgh, "helps some make sense of their experience of in-between, uncertainty, the venture into the unknown."[37] He continues by saying that "Postmodernity is not so much a concrete marker sticking up in the white waters of change as a language that expresses our confusion and need to transcend the polarities and destructiveness the modern period has produced....It is a comment on the fact that few of us believe any longer that we in the West are the most 'progressive' and 'developed' people in history and that we have a privileged method that gives us access to truth unlike any others."[38] Roxburgh, to be sure, does not advocate "some new, so-called postmodern idealism."[39] Instead, he suggests what many emerging and missional writers underline, "we need new habits, attitudes, and actions around our relationship and engagement with the gospel and our cultures."[40]

4.3 Critical Discussion

The first thing to be noted is that discourse within the EMC regarding postmodernism differs markedly from that which takes place within conservative evangelicalism. Conservative evangelical readings of postmodernism "are intrinsically colored by modern epistemological tenants such as 'objective reason' and 'absolute truth', both of which are scientific measures of knowledge that have been used by evangelicals to validate biblical truth and build Christian doctrine."[41] This explains why many orthodox evangelical writers denounce postmodernism as "immoral and cowardly,"[42] or as "poisonous and untrue."[43] The rhetoric of conservative evangelicals on the topic of postmodernism very often contains metaphors of conflict such as war, fighting, defeating, and defending.[44]

Generally, however, within the EMC the postmodern turn is described in a more dispassionate way, and with more appreciation, especially among revisionist authors. It comes, therefore, as no surprise that conservative evangelicals severely criticize emergent revisionist writers.[45] In this subsection we critically review some revisionist per-

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[37] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 29.
[38] Ibid., 102.
[39] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 11.
[40] Ibid., 55.
[41] Jessica D. Ptomey, "A Rhetorical History of Postmodernism: A Condensation Symbol Constructed by the American Evangelical Tradition" (PhD diss., Regent University, 2010), 10.
[42] J.P. Moreland, "Truth, Contemporary Philosophy, and the Postmodern Turn," in Andreas Köstenberger ed., *Whatever Happened to Truth?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 76.
[43] Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 24.
[44] One example is John MacArthur, *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2007).
[45] John MacArthur delineates them as "saboteurs and truth vandals," while the Emerging Church Movement stands for "an unprecedented flood of vulgarity and worldliness" and "excrement." MacArthur, *The Truth War*, 97, 139, 181.

spectives, but the focus is different. Our point of contention is that revisionists appropriate aspects of postmodern discourse, much more than relevants or reconstructionists. By using postmodern discourse, revisionists generate interpretations of the Enlightenment and modernism that are not always satisfactory.[46] This is now further explained.

4.3.1 'Enlightenment' as Stereotype

The publications of Stanley Grenz, Brian McLaren and other revisionists criticize the oppressive 'hierarchical' tendencies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These authors fail, however, to take into account the egalitarian tendencies that can be detected in the same period.[47] This negative bias, moreover, leads them to neglect the fact that there have also been influential scholars – some of German Jewish origin – for whom the Enlightenment symbolized the alternative to racism and totalitarianism. Ernst Cassirer and Peter Gay, among others, presented eighteenth-century thought as a redeeming path into the future.[48] Although their optimism was not shared by all scholars,[49] it does suggest that the Enlightenment needs a differentiated treatment. It would already be a step forward to differentiate between French, German, English and American versions of the Enlightenment.[50] Nuances of description and evaluation of modernity and the Enlightenment are hard to find in revisionist discourse. Revisionists criticize the Enlightenment faith in inevitable progress, but do not recognize the reservations and even outright pessimism of many of the Enlightenment's most influential thinkers.[51] Furthermore, ideas that might be seen as extensions of an Enlightenment tradition – such as the right of an individual to choose his or her own cultural or religious affiliations regardless of ancestry – are quite acceptable to revisionist in the EMC who would be suspicious of these same ideas if they were presented as Enlightenment ideas.[52]

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[46] Cf. Philip Sampson, "The Rise of Postmodernity," in Philip Sampson, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, eds., *Faith and Modernity* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1997), 30.

[47] Cf. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1966), 25; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. The Science of Freedom* (London: Wildwood House, 1973), 119-120, 550.

[48] Gordon, introduction to *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment*, 2; and Johnson Kent Wright, "'A Bright Clear Mirror': Cassirer's *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*," in Keith Michael Baker and Peter Hans Reill, eds., *What's Left of the Enlightenment? A Postmodern Question* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 71-101.

[49] Paul Hazard describes the years between 1680-1715 in Europe as a *time of crisis* when the "champions of Reason and the champions of Religion were...fighting desperately for the possession of men's souls," and Reason gradually gained the ascendency in the contest. Paul Hazard, *The European Mind: The Critical Years (1680-1715)*, trans. J.L. May (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), xvi-xvii. This book is a translation of Hazard's classic *La Crise de la Conscience Européenne, 1680-1715* (Paris: Boivin, 1935). See on the eighteenth century his equally impressive *La Pensée Européenne au XVIIIe siècle: de Montesquieu à Lessing* (Paris: Boivin, 1946).

[50] Cf. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French and American Enlightenments* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

[51] Cf. Gay, *The Science of Freedom*, 98-125, 169-172.

[52] Cf. David A. Hollinger, "The Enlightenment and the Genealogy of Cultural Conflict in the United States," in Baker and Reill, eds., *What's Left of the Enlightenment?*, 9-10.

4.3.2 'Enlightenment' as Grand Narrative

A second, related feature to that of stereotyping the Enlightenment is that some portrayals of it in the EMC can be compared to a 'grand narrative', with totalizing and perhaps even oppressing features at that. Part of the grand narrative within revisionist writings is the claim that the Enlightenment imposed a homogeneous, totalizing discourse of universalism and rationality on the rest of the world, and that postmodernism finally broke this hegemony. There is a double irony here.

First, this kind of reasoning is comparable to that which can be detected in the modern era (although, as indicated above, there were also countercurrents): "ONCE we were into grand stories, but NOW we have realized their emptiness and we proceed to the next stage."[53] The irony is that this typical postmodern claim continues an essentially modern story of progress.

Second, revisionist writers treat the Enlightenment without a keen eye for themes like difference, plurality, or internal tensions. "The *philosophes* themselves are not treated as objects of local, particular, and concrete historical investigation. They function on a high level of abstraction seen as the disembodied, protomythic founders of modernity."[54] An example here is Diderot. Postmodernists claim that the Enlightenment took all language to be propositional language, and this interpretation is echoed within revisionist circles in the EMC. However, one historian asserts, "If a fascination with simulacra is the hallmark of the postmodern, than the postmodern begins with Diderot."[55] The same goes for modernism and modernity. Differences between intellectual and cultural developments in, e.g., early modern, high modern, and late modern phases are not given the prominence they deserve. This is ironic, because respect for differences and so on are typical *postmodern* sensibilities.

That said, however, it remains fair to acknowledge that the period between, say, 1650 and 1800 constituted a time of unprecedented and, for some, intoxicating, intellectual and spiritual upheaval.[56] "A vast turbulence in every sphere of knowledge and belief shook European civilization to its foundations. After 1650, everything, no matter how fundamental or deeply rooted, was questioned in the light of philosophical reason and frequently challenged or replaced by startlingly different concepts generated by the

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[53] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 717.

[54] Malick W. Ghachem, "Montesquieu in the Caribbean: The Colonial Enlightenment between *Code Noir* and *Code Civil*," in Daniel Gordon, ed., *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment: New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century French Intellectual History* (Routledge: New York, 2001), 9-10.

[55] Arthur Goldhammer, "Man in the Mirror: Language, the Enlightenment, and the Postmodern," in Gordon, ed., *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment*, 43.

[56] Cf. Louis Dupré, "Cultural changes, such as the one that gave birth to the modern age, have a definitive and irreversible impact that transforms the very essence of reality. Not merely our thinking about the real changes: reality itself changes as we think about it differently." Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 6.

New Philosophy and what may still usefully be termed the Scientific Revolution."[57] The topics of modernism and the Enlightenment therefore do remain important for study and discussion. Revisionist writers, furthermore, are right in stating that Western evangelicalism has been deeply influenced by the Enlightenment. Indeed, historian David Bebbington goes so far as to say that "the evangelical version of Protestantism was created by the Enlightenment."[58]

4.3.3 'Modernity' within Revisionist Discourse

There are other residues of modern thinking that are relevant to our discussion, which revisionists may not be sufficiently aware of. In revisionist circles, doctrinal sermons are depicted negatively, because they are interpreted as the product of Enlightenment influences. However, as H.O. Old shows in his series on the reading and preaching of the Scriptures, "The history of preaching is filled with examples of great doctrinal preachers who drew enthusiastic, thoughtful, and indeed, large congregations." This is not only true of modern times, but also of pre-modern times, as early as the fifth century A.D., and earlier.[59] It was through the influence of Enlightenment thinking that a moralistic and a-doctrinal Christianity was promoted (and, in addition, one that was timeless and without tradition).[60] In other words, the thought that Christianity is a life, not a doctrine, which is promoted within the more progressive parts of the EMC, is itself a product of modernity.[61]

It is also rather puzzling that where Christianity has conformed itself to modern culture, this is seen as negative,[62] yet where Christianity is creatively adapting to current cir-

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[57] Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-4.

[58] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 74.

[59] Hugh Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, Vol. 2, The Patristic Age (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 119. Cf. Kate Cooper, with a focus on the third century, "early Christian communities were able to put forward a *claim of definite knowledge* [emphasis added], an idea which would have exerted a powerful attraction on the late Roman imagination, with its emphasis on pluralism, fragmentation, and the provisional quality of human identity." Kate Cooper, "Epilogue: Approaching Christendom," in Alan Kreider, ed., *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 361.

[60] Cf. James K. Smith, who observes a "lingering affirmation of autonomy in the emerging church," that is, "a lingering disincarnate rejection of time, history, and tradition." This is a product of modernism. James K.A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 130.

[61] Cf. Martin Downes, "Entrapment: The Emerging Church Conversation and the Cultural Captivity of the Gospel," in Gary L.W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason, *Reforming or Conforming? Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 229-232. See also Paul Kjoss Helseth, "Are Postconservative Evangelicals Fundamentalists? Postconservative Evangelicalism, Old Princeton, and the Rise of Neo-Fundamentalism," in Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjoss Helseth, Justin Taylor, eds., *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 246 ff.

[62] Cf. David Fitch, "…the main thesis of this book is that evangelicalism by virtue of its marriage to modernity has not only failed to engage the current cultural shifts of postmodernity, it has indeed structured our

cumstances, this is interpreted as bold, courageous, innovative, and cutting edge. "Why is it acceptable to seek relevance to contemporary postmodern culture, but not to the vestigial cultures of modernity and pre-modernity?" sociologist Duncan MacLaren justly asks. "Why is Christendom 'bad', but culturally-relevant emerging church 'good'?"[63] An infatuation with the latest thing, moreover, can itself be seen as a product of modernity (cf. 4.3.2, above). In the words of Peter Gay, "To repeatedly juxtapose existing/emerging, old/new, modern/postmodern and so on reveals a modern sensibility that focuses on the new in ways that mark a decidedly Enlightenment cast of mind.... 'Make it new!' sums up the aspirations of the modernists well."[64]

To conclude, the historical reconstructions of revisionist writers may seem scholarly and sophisticated on the surface but are actually oversimplified and lack sufficient self-criticism.

4.3.4 Postmodernity

In the EMC, postmodernity is variously described as a consciousness, condition, environment, ethos, mindset, mood, sensibility, or *Zeitgeist*. Its influence is seen manifested in a number of different ways, such as decentralization and fluid networks, pick-and-mix lifestyles, and eclectic approaches to spirituality. Postmodernity, in other words, refers to a *range of basic attitudes and behaviours* of contemporary people, such as a dislike of hierarchies, an emphasis on living in the present (a present that thrives on surfaces, images, and experiences), and an openness to a variety of ways of knowing: through rational, emotional, and intuitive intelligence.[65] Other aspects of postmodernity are a heightened awareness of one's "situatedness";[66] a suspicion of authorities' claims to be telling the truth;[67] a search for authenticity;[68] consumerism;[69] and a predilection for personal

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churches out of meaningful existence." David E. Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church from Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism, and Other Modern Maladies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 17.

[63] Duncan MacLaren, *Mission Implausible: Restoring Credibility to the Church* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 166.

[64] Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond* (New York: Norton & Co., 2008), 4.

[65] Cf. R. Scott Smith, *Truth and the New Kind of Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 15-16; Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*, 20; David Wells, *Above All Earthly Pow'rs: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 64.

[66] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Pilgrim's Digress: Christian Thinking on and about the Post/Modern Way," in Myron B. Penner, ed., *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 71-103. "To be postmodern is to have a heightened awareness of one's situatedness: in a body, in culture, in tradition, in language." Ibid., 73. "Postmodernity is the condition of being so exposed to plurality and otherness that one becomes conscious of the contingency of one's own language, culture, and way of life." Ibid., 77.

[67] Cf. the comment of sociologists Flory and Miller, "there seem to no longer be any universal truths, that what is true for one person may not be true for another, and it is all based on one's own experiences, whether through religion, lifestyle, ethnicity, or 'whatever'." Richard Flory and Donald E. Miller, *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 10.

spirituality,[70] without the necessity of organized religion.[71] Postmodernity, then, functions as an umbrella term that covers a variegated number of contemporary and sometimes paradoxical[72] cultural and social processes. Seen from an analytic viewpoint, this is not very satisfying, because it is difficult to see where postmodernity grinds to a halt – so to speak – and where influences of something else take over (e.g. modernity, pre-modernity, or perhaps 'counter-postmodernity' or 'post-postmodernity'[73]). This does not, however, mean that we suggest it would be better dropped.[74] It may be used, but in a careful way, for example, in the way that the sociologist David Lyon shows in his book *Jesus in Disneyland*.

"The condition of postmodernity," Lyon suggests, "is best thought of as a social-cultural configuration, whose contours became increasingly clear from the 1980s, and whose effects are felt in many parts of the world....Above all, the postmodern relates to the development and diffusion of communication and information technologies, and to the growth of consumerism."[75] Other aspects of postmodernity that Lyon mentions in his

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[68] "One thing on which all researchers are agreed," says practical theologian John Drane, "is that creative-class people [to which ECM-sympathizers are thought to belong, RD] will run a mile from anything that smacks of inauthenticity." John Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 136. Note however that different researchers have emphasized that "finding authenticity extremely attractive is a very *modern* [emphasis added] disposition." James S. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 18.

[69] Of course, consumerism was already a mark of 'modernity'. However, in postmodernity consumerism has gained a prominent position on the terrains of – for example – personal well-being (e.g. therapy), spirituality, and sexuality. In this respect, at least, postmodernity is not so much a break with modernity, but rather an intensification and acceleration of 'modern' societal characteristics and developments.

[70] Cf. historian W. Johnston: "The word 'spirituality' has never before been as fashionable as it is today in the developed world, while Christians in the Third World remain largely oblivious to it. The term has become a marker of the postmodern era in the West." William M. Johnston, "The Spirituality Revolution and the Process of Reconfessionalisation in the West Today," in John Stenhouse en Brett Knowles, eds., *Christianity in the Post Secular West* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2007), 152.

[71] Indeed, as David Boshart found out during his empirical research, many people today appear to exhibit a "low sense of commitment to organized religion...that makes participation less than top priority." David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 80.

[72] An example of a paradox within contemporary (American) culture that Boshart encountered in a Mennonite church plant was that of "postmodern individuals seeking an experience of *community* [emphasis added] that validates their *individuality* [emphasis added]." See Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 79.

[73] Cf. Paul Hiebert on what he calls the "Post-Postmodern or Glocal Worldview." Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 241-264.

[74] In France, Paul Klawitter notes, the term 'postmodernity' is not *en vogue* among sociologists, "because it communicates the message that modernity is passé (a politically incorrect message in a country that incarnates Enlightenment values), and because vestiges of modernism live on in postmodernity." After an extended discussion, his conclusion nevertheless is straightforward: "Evangelicals need to take postmodernity seriously; it is real and it is here." See Paul Klawitter, "Youth and Church: Shall the Twain Connect? A Comparative Analysis of the Emergent French Youth Culture and Contemporary Church Planting Approaches" (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2005), 93 and 440.

[75] David Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 37.

study are the changing experiences of time and space, new social movements, a focus on the body and on identity, a sense of fragmentation and of multi-directional development, a much more radically doubted authority, and "individuals seeking their own meaning-routes." In short, "this is the global information age, expressed as postmodernity."[76]

Lyon does discern some connections between postmodernism and postmodernity, "particularly insofar as CITs {i.e. Communication and Information Technologies} and consumerism encourage a relativism of belief systems."[77] But the social currents of postmodernity pose a greater challenge than the intellectual stream of postmodern thought. "Postmodernity is a kind of interim situation where some characteristics of modernity have been inflated to such an extent that modernity becomes scarcely recognizable as such, but exactly what the new situation is – or even whether any new situation can become 'settled' – is unclear." Phrases like "the end of modernity," then, "can be very misleading" according to Lyon.[78] He does not follow those philosophers (or theologians) who talk about postmodernism as the central feature of Western society, particularly not if this word is meant to somehow suggest that modernist thinking or epistemology is somehow over. Lyon uses, instead, the term 'postmodernity' to refer to an *uncertain state of affairs* that has come about by deep *social* changes in modernity. Again, however, this is not to suggest that modernity has somehow ended, but that it has changed. Moreover, he suggests that the exact term is not so important.

When his suggestion is taken seriously, this leaves room for other sociologists and social theorists who do not use the word postmodern (or postmodernity), but who instead speak of an advanced modern, ultramodern, hypermodern, late modern, most modern, or reflexive modern society – or, for that matter, of a post-industrial, or a network society. There are, in fact, many sociologists, social theorists, and other social commentators such as organizational, management and leadership experts,[79] who come to more or

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[76] Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland*, 41.

[77] Ibid., xi. When writing his book at the end of the twentieth century – a world without Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube – Lyon already a keen eye for the strategic importance that ICT has on cultural change. For an update on how new digital social media deeply impact ways of communicating, relating, creating community, and leading today, see Elizabeth Drescher, *Tweet if You Heart Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2011).

[78] Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland*, 7.

[79] See, for example, David M. Boje, Robert P. Gephart, Jr., and Tojo Joseph Thatchenkery, eds., *Postmodern Management and Organization Theory* (London: Sage, 1996); Daryl D. Green, "Leading a Postmodern Workforce," *Academy of Strategic Management Journal* 6 (2007), 15-26; Daryl D. Green, "Knowledge Management for a Postmodern Workforce: Rethinking Leadership Styles in the Public Sector," *Journal of Strategic Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2008), 16-24. Perhaps the most influential thinker in this regard is management theorist Peter F. Drucker. This quote from him appears in many places, including the EMC: "Every few hundred years in Western history, there occurs a sharp transformation....Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself – its worldview; its basic values; its social and political structure; its arts; its key institutions. Fifty years later, there is a new world and the people born then cannot even imagine the world in which their grandparents lived and into which their own parents were born....We are currently living through just such a transformation." Peter Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York: Harper's Business, 1993), 1.

less the same conclusions as Lyon. To be sure, they have their own emphases and vocabulary when it comes to describing the most important features of this period of modernity. They focus, for example, on consumerism and on the necessity of *choice* in an age of uncertainty, especially concerning identity (Zygmunt Bauman); reflexivity (Anthony Giddens); a new self-consciousness (Kenneth Gergen); or on an ever-expanding "[super] nova" of moral and spiritual options (Charles Taylor). Others emphasize processes of differentiation, dedifferentiation, and detraditionalization (Paul Heelas), or post-industrialism (Grace Davie). Whatever their differences, these scholars all agree that Western society is changing thoroughly and at high speed, with many consequences – not in the least for religious organizations and churches.[80]

4.3.5 The Postmodern Turn: Conclusions

As shown above, in the EMC the postmodern turn stands in the center of attention, but it is approached from different angles. Revisionists focus particularly on intellectual aspects, i.e., *postmodernism*, and are willing to be influenced by it in their approach to theology. In that respect they differ from relevants, who keep a critical distance from postmodernism. This might be just as well, because the postmodernism debate is something like a "labyrinth with a bewildering network of twists, turns, and cul-de-sacs."[81] To be sure, there is a phenomenon called postmodernism, understood as an influential intellectual current – indeed, the revisionist stream itself is unthinkable without it. Postmodernism thus understood, should not be denied, defied, or deified, but should continue to be discussed and thereby engaged.[82]

Moreover, there is also a condition that may be called *postmodernity,* that can be interpreted as a social-cultural configuration in advanced modern societies in which, among other aspects, consumerism, information technology and digital social media, fast paced change, and the consciousness of one's situatedness play an important role. We have argued that contemporary sociological research and theorizing – while using a variety of terminology – does affirm that the implications of postmodernity deserve to be taken seriously, as participants in the EMC attempt to do.[83]

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[80] Cf. Grace Davie, "It seems increasingly clear that it is society as a whole which is changing rather than simply the religious sector within this. The economic and technological evolutions of society have, however, immense and immediate *consequences* for religion in all its manifestations." Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113.

[81] Michael W. Nicholson, *A Theological Analysis and Critique of the Postmodernism Debate: Mapping the Labyrinth* (Lewiston NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 310.

[82] Cf. Vanhoozer, "Pilgrim's Digress...," 72-73. The website The Church and Postmodern Culture provides an example of the continuing discussion. "The Church and Postmodern Culture," http://churchandpomo.typepad.com/conversation/ (accessed February 8, 2010). Still, we think that mission – broadly conceived – is more important than academic reflection. As Paul Hiebert reminds us, "In much of the world, people continue to struggle for the basic necessities of life with little thought to the philosophical clashes taking place largely within the academy." Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 239.

[83] For example, the constitution of Solace, an emerging church in Melbourne, Australia, puts their mission and organizational systems in the context of meeting the needs of their era: "Solace assumes that all the

Three *caveats* are in order, however. First, the term 'postmodernity' covers many different phenomena, which weakens its analytical capacity.[84] Care should be taken that it is not unwittingly used in an ideological sense, implying, for example, that "We have moved to a new postmodern paradigm" (cf. chapter 3). It seems better to use postmodernity "as a term defining a state of transition, rather than describing a set of boundaries marking an historical era."[85]

We must also take into account that "the strength of...postmodern cultural transformation is much greater in Europe than in the United States, greater in cities than in smaller towns and rural areas, greater in the Northeast and West Coast of America than in the flyover states, and greater among younger than among older demographics."[86] Arguably this kind of differentiation is also applicable to other Western countries, including the Netherlands. For example, in rural areas, especially within the Bible Belt, the influences of postmodernity are very likely less palpable than in urban regions. Still, we may conclude that voices in the EMC are essentially right in stating that the dynamics of postmodernity pose challenging questions for Western churches[87] and denominations[88] in our time.

Finally, the fact that churches and Christians are challenged by postmodernity does not automatically mean that they themselves should 'become' postmodern, as revisionist voices are especially prone to suggest. One lesson to be drawn from the highly idealistic nineteen sixties and seventies is that Christians tend to sacralize "the sociological forces of history that are dominant at any particular time, regarding them as inexorable works of providence and even of redemption."[89] As we know in hindsight, when Christians uncritically embrace socio-cultural analyses or trends – such as "secularization" in the nineteen sixties[90] – they can end up equating the *missio Dei* with present historical developments. In such circumstances, idealism is likely to turn into disillusionment.[91]

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talk about 'post modernity' and a new era in the cities of the West is true. We are trying to shape our community to thrive in this new unfolding era. This means re-shaping the face of new realities that are increasingly familiar. Sometimes we embrace these changes and sometimes we offer alternatives." Darren John Cronshaw, "The Shaping of Things Now: Mission and Innovation in Four Emerging Churches in Melbourne" (DTh. thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2008), 136. See also Solace, "Solace Emerging Christian Church," http://www.solacechurch.org.au/ (accessed July 23, 2011).

[84] Of course, this pertains also to other terms such as 'late modernity' or 'advanced modernity'.

[85] Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring Its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 28.

[86] Devine, "The Emerging Church: One Movement – Two Streams," 19.

[87] Cf. from a Roman-Catholic perspective, Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 3-40.

[88] Cf. David A. Roozen, "National Denominational Structures' Engagement with Postmodernity: An Integrative Summary from an Organizational Perspective," in David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman, eds., *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 588-624.

[89] S.C. Knapp, as quoted in David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis, 1991), 429.

[90] There was already a lively debate developing about the secularization thesis within the sociology of religion "at precisely the time the church commentators and popular theologians were embracing it most

4.4 'Post-Christendom' and the Emerging-Missional Conversation

The socio-cultural transition from modernity to postmodernity poses challenging questions for Western Christians and churches. Writers in the EMC are essentially justified in pointing this out, especially when accompanied by a nuanced explanation. The second claim that one encounters within the EMC is about the transition from 'Christendom' to 'post-Christendom', with all the changes and challenges that it brings.

This subsection addresses the following questions: How are the terms 'Christendom' and 'post-Christendom' used in the ECM, what do they signify (4.4.1)?[92] What is the origin of these concepts? And does the label matter – why does one not just speak of 'post-Christian' (4.4.2)?

4.4.1 '(Post-)Christendom' in the EMC

According to Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom in the West started in the 1950's. This means that "the church as an institution has lost its privileged position and increasingly occupies a place on the margins of society alongside other recreational and non-profit organizations."[93] Two observations can be made about this statement.

First, it is descriptive. It refers to an historical era called Christendom in which the institutional church had a premier position in Western society, and to one labeled post-Christendom, in which this is increasingly less so. Moreover, by mentioning "alongside other recreational and non-profit organizations," a change is implied that may be summarized as a shift from a *culture of obligation,* or duty, to a *culture of consumption*, or choice: "I go to church because I want to, and as long as it fills my needs."[94]

Second, the claim is wide-ranging. The shift from Christendom to post-Christendom is not limited to urban regions of some specific European countries, but is said to occur in the Western world in general.

Later on in their book, Gibbs and Bolger assert that "emerging churches destroy the *Christendom idea* [emphasis added] that church is a place, a meeting, or a time."[95] Here the term 'Christendom' refers to certain underlying assumptions – or, in terms of chap-

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wholeheartedly." John Williams, "Twenty-First Century Shapes of the Church?," *Theology* 114, no. 2 (2011), 112.

[91] This is illustrated in the life of the Dutch theologian J.C. Hoekendijk. See P. van Gurp, *Kerk en zending in de theologie van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975). Een plaatsbepaling* [Church and mission in the theology of Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975): A positioning] (Haarlem, NL: AcaMedia, 1989).

[92] Etymologically, 'Christendom' can mean 'Christians collectively', or 'the Christian world', or 'Christianity'. As we will see, however, the ECM interprets the word in a more specific sense.

[93] Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2005), 17.

[94] Cf. Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 40-41.

[95] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 236.

ter 3, a paradigm. In addition, participants within the EMC clearly do not share the Christendom understanding of church.

In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost take basically the same approach. According to them, Christendom first of all denotes the period of Western history during which the church held sway as the moral and spiritual centerpiece of civilization. The sources of Christendom – conceived of as a "sacral culture" – go back to the time of Constantine in the fourth century, while this culture became dominant in European society from around the eleventh century on. "Taken as a sociopolitical reality," according to the authors, "Christendom has been in decline for the last 250 years, so much so that Western culture has been called by many historians (secular and Christian) as the post-Christendom culture."[96]

The term 'Christendom', however, does not only stand for a certain sociopolitical reality, but also for a specific mindset. The authors call this mindset a metanarrative, a paradigm, or a complex of assumptions.[97] This mindset concerns the association between the realm of politics, geography, church, spirituality, and mission. Before the advent of Christendom (i.e., in apostolic and post-apostolic, or 'pre-Christendom' days), the church was a grassroots, decentralized, community-building, spiritual missionary movement on the margins of society. When Christianity gained favorable status with the imperial courts this altered the fundamental mode of the church's self perception. The resulting Christendom paradigm, Frost and Hirsch assert, "still remains the primary definer of the church's self-understanding in almost every Western nation."[98] It conceives of 'church' primarily as the *place* where Christians gather for worship. The word church is associated with a building, instead of a people or a movement. In addition, the distinctly institutional thinking that is characteristic of Christendom demands an institutionally recognized, professional clergy acting primarily in a pastor-teacher type mode.[99]

Moreover, viewed from a missiological perspective, the Christendom paradigm assumes a certain centrality of the church in relation to its surrounding culture. Its mode of engagement, therefore, is attractional ("come to us") as opposed to missional/ sending ("we come to you"). Since the surrounding culture has changed, however, this lack of a clear missional identity is problematic, according to Frost and Hirsch. The standard Christendom model will simply not engage the Burning Man subculture. "To reach them and all other postmodern subcultures, the church should abandon its role as a static institution and embrace its initial calling to be a missionary movement."[100]

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[96] Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 9.

[97] Cf. Van Gelder and Zscheile, who speak of a "worldview of Christendom" and "a Christendom worldview." Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 19.

[98] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 8.

[99] Ibid., 226.

[100] Ibid., 16. This entails that the church builds organic structures, organizes itself as a centered set, and develops a missional leadership training system. Ibid., 201. These topics will be taken up in part B of this study.

Thus far, we conclude that the concept of Christendom as used in the EMC refers to (1) a historical and social reality in Western societies in which the church has a central and privileged position, in combination with (2) an ecclesiocentric mindset that results from this reality. Post-Christendom signifies a profound change: it denotes a situation in which the church is only marginally influential, both in society and in people's consciousness. According to many EMC participants,[101] many Christians, as of yet, do not fully discern and accept the shift from Christendom to post-Christendom. Churches, denominations and seminaries still tend to operate on the basis of Christendom assumptions, which are deemed unsuitable for a post-Christendom society. The call today is for post-Christendom paradigms of church, mission and leadership. This is recognized by an increasing number of Christians who are already "embracing post-Christendom as a new opportunity for the church to recover its pre-Christendom identity of solidarity with the marginalized and an opportunity for new levels of creative initiative in mission."[102]

Two questions are yet to be addressed. First, where do writers within the EMC derive the term 'post-Christendom' from? Second, how does it relate to other concepts, like 'post-Constantinian' or 'post-Christian'?

4.4.2 On the Label 'Post-Christendom'

According to Ian Randall,[103] the term 'post-Christendom' goes back to 1965, but only gained a wider currency in the 1990's. In 1991 Stanley Hauerwas explored how the church was to behave "after Christendom," and in doing so proposed that a Christian nation was a bad idea.[104] From 1992 to 1997 a study project entitled the Missiology of Western Culture Project drew leading scholars together to discuss the interplay of Christian churches and their message within the culture of the contemporary West. The History Group within this project, under the leadership of the Mennonite scholar Alan Kreider, suggested that Christendom might be a useful lens through which to gain a missiological perspective on Christianity in the West.[105] A colloquium around this theme was held in Paris in April 1997. Christendom was defined as a civilization in

[101] The authors that were consulted are typical of the reconstructionist stream, but their approach also largely covers what is written in relevant circles.
[102] Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 16.
[103] Ian M. Randall, "Mission in Post-Christendom: Anabaptist and Free Church Perspectives," *Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2007), 227-240.
[104] Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom?* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991).
[105] Alan Kreider himself wrote three books from this perspective: *Worship and Evangelism in Pre-Christendom* (Cambridge: Grove Books Ltd, 1995); *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999); and (together with Eleanor Kreider) *Worship and Mission After Christendom* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009).

which Christianity is dominant, with this dominance being backed by social or legal compulsions.[106]

Since the turn of the century the literature advocating different kinds of church and mission "after Christendom" or in the "post-Christendom" context has expanded considerably.[107] Perhaps the most well-known use of the term 'post-Christendom' in Emerging Church circles – at least in the Netherlands[108] – is its use in the After Christendom series, written by members of the Anabaptist Network (which has existed since 2004). Stuart Murray, one of the foremost members of this network, suggests that in some parts of the Emerging-Missional milieu there is an increased interest in Anabaptism, particularly when participants "perceive points of contact between this earlier emerging church movement and emerging churches today."[109] Murray is probably right in this perception.[110] The following quote from the influential book *Missional Church* well illustrates this: "[the] contemporary voices of the Radical Reformation have an important contribution to make to the formation of a missional ecclesiology in a post-Christendom context. They have grappled for centuries with the tensions that result from their theological decision not to support automatically the dominant culture with its principalities and powers. That witness should instruct the church today as it recognizes its own cultural captivity in functional Christendom."[111]

4.4.3 'Post-Christendom' and Alternative Labels

Alternative terms to 'post-Christendom' used in Anabaptist writings, as well as in EMC publications, are 'post-Constantinian, and 'post-Christian'. Does the label matter? Stuart Murray has written an insightful article on this question.[112] Three of his points are particularly pertinent, and these are paraphrased here with some additional comments.

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[106] See Alan Kreider, introduction to Alan Kreider, ed., *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), viii.

[107] See, for example, Charles H. Bayer, *A Resurrected Church: Christianity after the Death of Christendom* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2001); David Smith, *Mission after Christendom* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003); Alan Kreider, "Beyond Bosch: The Early Church and the Christendom Shift," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29, no. 2 (April 2005), 59-68; Wilbert R. Shenk, "New Wineskins for New Wine: Toward a Post-Christendom Ecclesiology," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29, no. 2 (April 2005), 73-79; Craig A. Carter, *Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006); Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007).

[108] See "Post Christendom", http://www.postchristendom.com/, and "Emerging Netwerk," http://www.Emergingnetwerk.nl/voor-dummies/postchristendom (accessed February 22, 2010).

[109] Stuart Murray, *Changing Mission: Learning From the Newer Churches* (London: Cromwell Press, 2006), 12.

[110] Cf. Jack Niewold, "One must recognize that much missional church energy comes from the direction of a renewed Anabaptist movement, which explains the prevailing countercultural ethos of the discussion." Jack W. Niewold, "Set Theory and Leadership: Reflections on Missional Communities in the Light of Ephesians 4:11-12," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2008), 50.

[111] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 124.

[112] Stuart Murray, "Post-Christendom, Post-Constantinian, Post-Christian…Does the Label Matter?," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 9, no. 3 (August 2009), 195-208.

First, Murray thinks the term 'Constantinian' should perhaps be reserved for designating situations where the political authorities favor Christianity, but refrain from imposing it. 'Theodosian' or Justininian', he suggests, might serve as terms for the emerging Christendom system.

Second, it is problematic to use the label Christendom to cover the diverse cultures and political arrangements in Europe between the fourth and twentieth centuries and then to extend this to other Western and non-Western contexts. The reality is that there are different *kinds* of Christendom.[113] Also, the word Christendom should not be used as a shorthand for summarizing all that ought to be repudiated in Christian history. Thus, distinctions and clarifications are important. Still, Murray sees the term as meaningful and heuristic. This is particularly the case if Christendom refers to fundamental assumptions, attitudes, theological and ecclesial commitments, and missional priorities and expectations, that *underlie* the diverse institutional forms of Christendom.[114]

Third, the term 'post-Christian' also has its problems. The most obvious disadvantage is that it assumes that in so-called Christian times most Europeans were church-going, God-fearing, and steeped in Christianity.[115] The reality is, however, more complex. One might ask if Europe (or any particular European country) was ever really Christian, and what this would have meant in practice. Furthermore, the term 'post-Christian' may undervalue the persistence and quality of Christian faith in contemporary culture. "Western culture may be post-Christendom, but it is not entirely devoid of Christians."[116] And most importantly – particularly from a missiological perspective – the term 'post-Christian' may allow unchallenged or even unrecognized assumptions to

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[113] Cf. Alan Kreider, "In the time of Charlemagne, things were of course very different from the way they were in the times of Calvin or the young Karol Woytila: there have been many varieties of Christendom." Kreider, *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom*, 91. See also Douglas J. Schuurman, "Vocation, Christendom, and Public Life: A Reformed Assessment of Yoder's Anabaptist Critique of Christendom," in *Journal of Reformed Theology* 1 (2007), 247-271, who differentiates between state-enforced Christendom, voluntary cultural Christendom, and Christendom conceived of as "Christian culture within the church as minority culture of obedient witness."

[114] Historian Mary Anne Perkins agrees that, indeed, 'Christendom' may be conceived of as not only a historical term, designating a realm of Christian unity, but also as "clusters and compounds of ideas and beliefs, principles and theories, assumptions, prejudices, received opinions and cultural conditioning." Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity: The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 4.

[115] By pursuing this line of thought Murray is less convincing, because it is a fact that – for example – regular church-going was until at least the nineteenth century both norm and practice for most people in Western Europe. In this sense, at least, people were indeed 'steeped in Christianity'. Perhaps many were not 'real' Christians according to Anabaptist criteria, but that is a theological assessment. How is this to be empirically confirmed?

[116] Stuart Murray, "Post-Christendom, Post-Constantinian, Post-Christian...," 206. Cf. Hugh McLeod, "definitions of the contemporary world as 'secular' or 'post-Christian' tend to homogenize societies and to gloss over the variations in the extent to which religious or secular forces have influenced different sections of society or areas of life." Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, paperback ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 263.

undermine our attempts to re-image mission, church and discipleship in contemporary culture. In other words, when speaking of post-Christian instead of post-Christendom, one may overlook in what respects Christians still think in ways that are more suited for Christendom times. Darrell Guder and his coauthors refer to this state of affairs as 'functional Christendom'. All in all, Murray and others suggests that the label post-Christendom is a significant lens through which to view the emerging cultural landscape in the West. Is this claim supportable, and is it useable to describe developments in the Netherlands?

4.5 Insights from Historical and Sociological Scholarship

What is the status of the terms 'Christendom' and 'post-Christendom' when viewed from the disciplines of history and sociology, and seen in relation to concepts like 'secularization'? And how applicable are these terms to the Netherlands? Above we explained that the concept of Christendom as used in the EMC stands for two phenomena that are closely related but that still can be distinguished. It is seen as a *socio-political* reality and as a *mindset*. For reasons of clarity, these two are distinguished in the discussion below.

4.5.1 The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe

The most relevant historical work for our purposes is the volume edited by Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000*. In this book, the decline of Christendom as a socio-political reality is paramount. "Christendom," McLeod writes in the introduction, "meant that the church was subjected to state interference, that it was to admit into membership those who were not true Christians, and that it was under pressure to condone contemporary customs and values which were unchristian."[117] When understood in this way, Christianity and Christendom can be separated. There was Christianity for three centuries before Christendom. Moreover, there are parts of the world, for instance China, where there has never been a Christendom, but where there are many millions of Christians.[118] "Christendom is no more than a phase in the history of Christianity, and it represents only one out of many possible relationships between church and society. Yet in western Europe this phase has lasted for more than a thousand years, and we are still living in its shadow."[119] Overall, however, "the trend has been a gradual movement away from 'Christendom' towards a

[117] Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.
[118] Cf. Philip Jenkins, "The centers of the church's universality are no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa, Manila." Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, revised and expanded edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.
[119] McLeod and Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe*, 2.

society whose institutions and laws reflect a pluralism in which a wide variety of religious groups, as well as other people with a more secular orientation, each have their place."[120] Other trends, the editors add, have been for the state to take over functions formerly performed by the church, and for trained professionals to take over roles that once belonged to priests, nuns, or others impelled by a sense of religious vocation.

In sum, these remarks refer to the decline of Christendom in the sense of a socio-political reality.[121] That is to say, between 1750 and 2000 AD, state-church relations were irrevocably altered, and the societal influence of the church was much lessened. The editors add, however, that "Christianity has been gradually losing its status as lingua franca, and has tended to become a local language used by those who are professsing Christians, but not understood by others."[122] This observation may be said to refer to the decline of Christendom as a *mindset*. Thus, when the majority of inhabitants of a certain country do not understand Christian concepts anymore, and when this majority refers to Western societies as "pluralist," "post-Christian," or even "secular,"[123] this is indicative of a post-Christendom mindset: church and Christianity are only marginally important to them.

The contributors to the volume "all agree that Christendom is at an end, but they disagree as to what is taking its place."[124] This seems to confirm the claim made by EMC authors that the Western world is moving into a post-Christendom situation – a reality that, as of yet, may be insufficiently acknowledged and dealt with by many churches in Western countries.[125]

In addition, the authors acknowledge that there are many and varied theories as to *why* Christendom – which they interpret primarily as a socio-political reality – has declined in Western Europe. The most popular of these is the secularization thesis, according to which the decline of Christendom is just one example of a general decline in religious belief, and of a marginalization of religious institutions in societies that are confronted with modernity. The complex discussion surrounding the secularization thesis cannot be spelled out in this thesis, but the term 'secularization' does need some unpacking.

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[120] McLeod and Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe*, 9.

[121] One might also call it a social order. Cf. Hugh McLeod, "Christendom was a social order in which, regardless of individual belief, Christian language, rites, moral teachings, and personnel were part of the taken-for-granted environment." McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, 263.

[122] McLeod and Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe*, 11. Cf. McLeod, "The Christendoms which until recently held sway in so many parts of Europe have nearly all vanished....For the time being, at least, pluralism rules, and all West-European societies contain a mixture of religious believers of various kinds, unbelievers of various kinds, and a large third group of those whose position is less sharply defined." Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe, 1789-1989,* new edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 154.

[123] McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, 263.

[124] McLeod and Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe*, 20.

[125] Cf. Rob Warner, "The re-imagining of the Christian church, and more broadly of organized religion in the West, is yet to take sufficient account of post-Christendom as well as the emergent indicators of a possible post-secularity." Rob Warner, *Secularization and Its Discontents* (London: Continuum, 2010), 149.

4.5.2 'Secularization' and the Transformation of Religion

According to sociologists Loek Halman and Ole Riis, secularization may refer to processes on three levels: macro, meso, and micro.[126]

On a macro level, it designates a differentiation between institutional spheres – in terms of José Casanova, "the ubiquitous and undeniable long-term historical shrinkage of the size, power and functions of ecclesiastical institutions vis-à-vis other secular institutions."[127] At a meso level, secularization refers to an "internal secularization" of religious organizations (schools, hospitals, etc.) that adapt to the conditions and the mentality of modern society and thereby lose their distinctive Christian identities. These two levels of analysis are useful for clarifying in what respects a society can be said to be 'post-Christendom' in the sense of socio-political configurations. At a micro level, secularization stands for a lessening degree of personal religious commitment, resulting in a decline in: church membership or church allegiance, the acceptance of prescribed beliefs, the participation in rituals, or the acceptance of the ethical standards prescribed by religious authorities. This micro level of analysis may be said to refer to post-Christendom as a mindset: when secularization is substantial on a micro-level, church and Christianity only are of marginal importance for many people.

When surveying recent sociological analyses, the progressive – though highly uneven – secularization of Europe on all three levels seems to be an undeniable social reality.[128] "In many Western settings," the editors of *Predicting Religion* write, "there are constant trends: total church attendance in nearly every part of Europe declines year in and year out." At the same time however, "spirituality grows in its appeal, again year in and year out, both in Europe and in North America."[129] Thus, while the influence of churches and the historic Christian faith diminishes, the openness to alternative, personal and experiential non-churchly forms belief and spiritual practice increases. Although, as of yet, it would be an exaggeration to speak of a spiritual revolution,[130] one may perhaps call it

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[126] Loek Halman and Ole Riis, "Contemporary European Discourses on Religion and Morality," in Loek Halman and Ole Riis, eds., *Religion in Secularizing Society: The European's Religion at the End of the 20th Century* (Tilburg, NL: Tilburg University Press, 1999), 2. Cf. Karel Dobbelaere, *Secularization: An Analysis at Three Levels*. Gods, Humans & Religion, Vol. 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

[127] José Casanova, "Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms: towards a Global Perspective," in Grace Davie, Paul Heelas, Linda Woodhead, eds., *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Aldershot, GB: Ashgate, 2003), 18.

[128] José Casanova, "Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms," 19. Cf. José Casanova, "Religion, European Secular Identities and European Integration," in Krzystof Michalski, ed., *Religion in the New Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 23; David Martin, "Integration and Fragmentation: Patterns of Religion in Europe," in Michalski, ed., *Religion in the New Europe*, 79; Gert Pickel, "Secularization as a European Fate? Results from the Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe Project 2006," in Gert Pickel and Olaf Müller, eds., *Church and Religion in Contemporary Europe: Results from Empirical and Comparative Research* (Wiesbaden: Verein für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 116.

[129] Grace Davie et al. eds., introduction to *Predicting Religion*, 2.

[130] Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 149, and Gordon Lynch, *The New Spirituality: An Introduction to Progressive Belief in the Twenty-First Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 3-4.

a "spiritual turn."[131] When this development is taken into account, secularization on the micro-level does not imply the disappearance of personal belief, but its *transformation* toward more subjective[132] and diverse forms.[133] In the meantime, "the historic churches – despite their continuing presence – are systematically losing their capacity to discipline the religious thinking of large sections of the population, especially among the young."[134] Indeed, around the year 2000, the institutional churches of Europe were the least influential they had been in many centuries.[135] "The churches are no longer able to command the active allegiance of anything but a small minority of European people (though passive allegiance remains high); nor are they able to direct the decision-making process of European populations."[136] In conclusion, sociological analyses confirm the prevalent view within the EMC that there is a shift from a Christendom to a post-Christendom mindset, particularly among the younger generations in Europe. In addition, we see a progressive, though uneven, secularization of Europe on an institutional level.

4.5.3 Religious Transformation in the Netherlands

The general trends described above pertaining to Europe,[137] are also applicable to the Netherlands. In this country, in fact, various *kinds* of Christendom have succeeded each other – including the phase of the so-called 'pillarization' [*verzuiling*].[138] The so-called 'long 1960s' (lasting from 1958 to 1974), however, brought about a profound rupture in Christian institutions. In short, the Netherlands may be said to offer a premier example of "the inexorable decline of Christendom, defined as a tight conglomerate of civilization, territory and ideology."[139]

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[131] Cf. Dick Houtman and Stef Aupers, "The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition: The Spread of Post-Christian Spirituality in 14 Western Countries, 1981-2000," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 46, no. 3 (2007), 305-320.

[132] This process is also to be noted within Dutch evangelicalism. See Johan H. Roeland, *Selfation: Dutch Evangelical Youth Between Subjectivization and Subjection* (Amsterdam: Pallas Publications, 2009).

[133] Cf. the interesting essays in Stef Aupers and Dick Houtman, eds., *Religions of Modernity: Relocating the Sacred to the Self and the Digital* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[134] Grace Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case: Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002), 147. In another book Davie also states that religious illiteracy is widespread in modern Europe amongst younger generations. "With this in mind, it seems entirely possible that the religious memory of Europe – at least in its traditional form of a basic understanding of Christian teaching – might simply cease to exist, except as a branch of specialist knowledge." Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, 37.

[135] Cf. Gerben Heitink, who speaks about "perhaps the most serious crisis in the history of the church in Western Europe since its origin." Gerben Heitink, *Een kerk met karakter. Tijd voor heroriëntatie* [A church with character: Time for reorientation] (Kampen: Kok, 2007), 21.

[136] Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, 38.

[137] The short discussion remained on a general level. Differences between, e.g., Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox regions, let alone those among the 27 countries in the European Union (that still excludes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, and Ukraine) are left out.

[138] Peter van Rooden, "Long-Term Religious Developments in the Netherlands, c. 1750-2000," in McLeod and Ustorf, eds., *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe*, 118.

[139] Van Rooden, "Long-Term Religious Developments in the Netherlands," 113.

"In little more than a generation," sociologist Grace Davie affirms, "Dutch society has shifted from being one of the most Christian societies in Western Europe to the least so."[140] The Dutch sociologist Erik Sengers agrees that "the Netherlands is indeed one of the most secularized countries in Europe."[141] The mainstream churches are declining in membership, traditional belief finds less support and the position of the churches has grown weak in Dutch society. Regional differences remain, however: levels of church participation are very low in Amsterdam and other major cities of the Western Netherlands, but remain relatively high in the Dutch 'Bible Belt', running through the middle of the country.

The Dutch researchers Hans Schmeets and Saskia te Riele provide some detailed figures concerning the country as a whole.[142] In 1899 in the Netherlands, approximately two percent of people didn't belong to any church [*onkerkelijken*]. In 1930, this percentage increased to fourteen, in 1960 to eighteen. In 2008, the percentage had grown to forty-two percent. The expectation is that this figure will have increased to around seventy-two percent in the year 2020.[143] In addition, the people who still go to church, do so much less regularly. Researcher Ronald van der Bie concludes it is unique that secularization led to so much formal churchlessness [*onkerkelijkheid*]. "Nowhere in the world was this development so strong."[144] Clearly, the relevance of the church has been much reduced, not only for Dutch society as a whole but also for individuals, both non-members and members of churches.[145] Only thirty percent of the Dutch people put their trust in the church (i.e., look to the church for spiritual guidance), one of the lowest figures in all of Europe.[146] In effect then, the church has been pushed into a marginal position.[147]

On the other hand, there is still a lot of religious activity going on in the Netherlands.[148] This is partly related to the fact that 19 percent of the Dutch population consists of first or second generation migrants, including migrants from Western countries.

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[140] Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, 18.

[141] Erik Sengers, "The Dutch, Their Gods and the Study of Religion in the Post-War Period," in Erik Sengers, ed., *The Dutch and Their Gods: Secularization and Transformation of Religion in the Netherlands Since 1950* (Hilversum, NL: Verloren, 2005), 11.

[142] See Hans Schmeets and Saskia te Riele, "Religie in het perspectief van sociale samenhang," [Religion in the perspective of social cohesion] in: *Religie aan het begin van de 21ste eeuw* [Religion at the beginning of the 21st century] (Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2009), 7-11.

[143] Jos Becker and Joep de Hart, *Godsdienstige veranderingen in Nederland. Verschuivingen in de binding met de kerken en de christelijke traditie* [Religious changes in the Netherlands: Shifts in the connection with the churches and the Christian tradition] (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2006), 52 ff.

[144] Ronald van der Bie, "Kerkelijkheid en kerkelijke diversiteit, 1889-2008," in *Religie aan het begin van de 21ste eeuw*, 23.

[145] Gerard Dekker, *Heeft de kerk zichzelf overleefd? Beschouwingen over de rol van de kerk in de moderne samenleving* [Did the church survive itself? Reflections about the role of the church in modern society] (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2010), 128.

[146] Dekker, *Heeft de kerk zichzelf overleefd?*, 163.

[147] Ibid., 141.

[148] Sengers, "The Dutch, Their Gods and the Study of Religion...," 14.

Many of these migrants are muslims, but there are also several hundreds of thousands of Christian migrants. "It is estimated that there are now about 1000 newly emerged migrant churches in the Netherlands and, in addition ot these, 200 churches were another language than Dutch is used (mainly Roman Catholic parishes."[149]

Religious activity in the Netherlands is also connected to a shift towards freer, vaguer, more personal, seeking, postmodern forms of believing.[150] Approximately 26 percent of the Dutch population falls into the "unbound spiritual" category, which can be typified as a transcendent, spiritual, emancipator and empathic orientation that does not conform itself to doctrines, but instead leans on personal intuition.[151]

All in all, religion in the Netherlands has drastically changed since the Second World War: from a church religion [*kerkreligie*] with the church as a powerful factor firmly embedded in an authoritarian societal order, to a plurality of mostly personalized, subjective forms of religiosity without obligations.[152] Without implying that there are no alternatives,[153] we propose that there are good grounds for conceiving of this "sudden and almost total dechristianisation"[154] in terms of a shift from Christendom to post-Christendom.

4.6 Summary and Concluding Reflections

This chapter has endeavored to (1) analyze the terms 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom' as used in the EMC and to (2) evaluate in what respects these concepts and their accruing interpretations are appropriate to describe developments in Western countries in general, and in the Netherlands in particular. A short summary follows, along with some concluding comments.

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[149] Gerrit Noort, "Emerging Migrant Churches in the Netherlands: Missiological Challenges and Mission Frontiers," *International Review of Mission* 100, no. 1 (April 2011), 7.

[150] Erik Sengers, "Kwantitatief onderzoek naar religie," [Quantitative research in religion] in Meerten ter Borg et al., eds., *Handboek religie in Nederland: Perspectief-overzicht-debat* [Handbook of religion in the Netherlands: Perspective-overview-debate] (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2008), 73-75. On the so-called postmodern spirituality in the Netherlands, see G. Dekker, J. de Hart en T. Bernts, *God in Nederland, 1996-2006* (Kampen: Ten Have, 2007), 118-192.

[151] Gerrit Kronjee en Martijn Lampert, "Leefstijlen en zingeving," [Lifestyles and meaning making] in W. B.H.J. van de Donk et al., eds., *Geloven in het publieke domein. Verkenningen van een dubbele transformatie* [Believing in the public sphere: Explorations of a double transformation] (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 184 ff.

[152] Meerten B. ter Borg, "Religie na 1945: Een cultuur-sociologische schets van de achtergronden," [Religion after 1945: A cultural-sociological sketch of the backgrounds] in Ter Borg et al., eds., *Handboek religie in Nederland*, 64-65.

[153] Cf. the interesting article of Stefan Paas, "Post-Christian, Post-Christendom, and Post-Modern Europe: Towards the Interaction of Missiology and the Social Sciences," *Mission Studies* 28 (2011), 3-25.

[154] Peter van Rooden, "The Strange Death of Dutch Christendom," in: Callum G. Brown and Michael Snape, eds., *Secularisation in the Christian World: Essays in honour of Hugh McLeod* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 175.

Although EMC authors seldom distinguish between postmodernism and postmodernity in a consistent way, it appears helpful to do so. 'Postmodernism' proves to be a slippery term, "ambiguous, elusive, and controversial,"[155] having ideological overtones. The intellectual convictions that postmodernism represents, repudiate the rationalist and objectivist strain in Enlightenment, or modernist, approaches, while, in fact, continuing its emphasis of human autonomy and rejection of transcendence. In this sense Gerben Heitink's estimation that postmodern thinking is a "radicalization of modern thinking"[156] seems correct. This insight of latent modernist assumptions continuing within postmodernism is not adequately acknowledged nor critically dealt with within the revisionist stream. In addition, we discover that the historical reconstructions of revisionist authors are not as scholarly robust as they claim, or seem to be. Although postmodernism is an intellectual current to be reckoned with, its influence and importance tends to be overrated in the more revisionist parts of the EMC. The term 'postmodernism' therefore might not be suitable for describing and interpreting socio-cultural trends in the Netherlands.

4.6.1 Postmodernity

The term 'postmodernity', on the other hand, proves to be of more use. It refers to developments that are empirically more accessible than the ideologically laden concept of postmodernism. Postmodernity can be understood as a dynamic socio-cultural configuration in highly modern societies in which, among other aspects, consumerism, informaton technology, fast paced change, and some form of relativist or pluralist thinking (prompted by the consciousness of one's situatedness)[157] have deep repercussions. Although the precise terms are not agreed upon, most social theorists claim that the Western world – the Netherlands included – is in the midst of a major social transition that is driven by myriad cultural, demographic, social and technical changes. This transition also has its impact on the nature of human association, and on the way organizations and leaders function. It is this general socio-cultural shift that many EMC publications

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[155] Ronald T. Michener, *Engaging Deconstructive Theology* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 3.

[156] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 257.

[157] This consciousness is amplified by what may be called 'globalization', conceived of as a world that has become increasingly characterized by (1) extensive connectivity, or interrelatedness; and (2) extensive global consciousness, a consciousness which continues to become more and more reflexive. See Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman, eds., *Religion, Globalization and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). In the EMC, there are thus far little treatments of this concept. It may be prove important in the years to come. Cf. A. Stuvland, who sees the ECM as becoming "a dynamic player in the larger network of the global civil society." Aaron Stuvland, "The Emerging Church and Global Civil Society: Postmodern Christianity as a Source for Global Values," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 2 (2010), 228. See also Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*, 91-93, and Leonard Sweet's rubric of 'post-scale', in which globalization, environmental issues, and the so-called GRIN-revolution are captured together (GRIN stands for Genetics, Robotics, Informatics, and Nanotechnology). Leonard Sweet, "Outstorming Christianity's Perfect Storm," in Leonard Sweet, ed., *The Church of the Perfect Storm* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 1-36.

refer to,[158] emphasizing that it poses a significant adaptive challenge for churches. Although regional differences should be taken into account, this assessment seems to be generally applicable to Europe,[159] including the Netherlands. The Dutch religious sociologist, Gerard Dekker, confirms that that the current institutional form of the church is in danger of becoming completely inadequate, because of continuing developments in Dutch society in the direction of what he calls *post-modernisme*.[160] Similarly, the well-known practical theologian Gerben Heitink takes the "postmodern sensibility" seriously.[161] After discussing several other trends and changes, his conclusion is that the church needs to be transformed (i.e., go through a process of radical change).[162] New communities of faith, Heitink predicts in a more recent essay, will be as vastly different from traditional ones as a butterfly is from a caterpillar.[163]

4.6.2 Post-Christendom

The term 'post-Christendom' focuses more specifically on religious developments. Within the EMC, the shift from Christendom to post-Christendom has two descriptive senses.[164] It refers to both a socio-political reality and an accompanying mindset. We have found different scholars who affirm that generally in Western Europe, the tight conglomerate of civilization, territory and ideology called Christendom is, indeed, crumbling.[165] The language of Christianity has gradually lost its status as the lingua franca, particularly among the younger generations. In Europe the churches presently holds the loyalty of only a small minority of the inhabitants.

As for the Netherlands, sociological research points out that the church no longer plays a leading role in the establishment of institutions and the formulation of laws, as in the days of Christendom. A plurality of religious and secular groups has taken in the church's place. In addition, church and Christianity are of only marginal importance for most Dutch citizens. The Netherlands can be said to be moving toward a post-Chris-

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[158] Cf. Nadia Bolz-Weber, "*Emerging churches are Christian communities that (ironically) emerge out of a very particular cultural context in which the traditional church is largely irrelevant. That context is more often than not urban, young, and postmodern.*" Nadia Bolz-Weber, "Innovating with Integrity: Exploring the Core and Innovative Edges of Postmodern Ministry," in: Phil Snider, ed., *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity Is Re-Traditioning Mainline Practices* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2011), 3.

[159] Cf. the foreword in Martin Reppenhagen and Michael Herbst, eds., *Kirche in der Postmoderne* (Neukirchen -Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008).

[160] Dekker, *Heeft de kerk zichzelf overleefd?*, 157.

[161] Heitink, *Een kerk met karakter*, 61-63.

[162] Ibid., 331.

[163] Heitink uses the term *metamorfose*. Gerben Heitink, *Golfslag van de tijd. Europa's niet te stillen verlangen naar God* [Billow of the times: Europe's insatiable longing for God] (Kampen: Kok, 2011), 223.

[164] A note of caution is in order here. The next chapter will argue that terms such as 'Christendom' or even 'Christianity' are also used as so-called *paradigmatic metaphors* in some EMC publications. In such cases, these concepts no longer have a descriptive intention, nor an intersubjectively accorded content.

[165] Cf. Rob Warner, "there is clear evidence that the British, in common with many Western Europeans, if not in their entirety then certainly for a growing proportion, now inhabit a culture that is certainly post-Christendom." Warner, *Secularization and Its Discontents*, 104.

tendom condition. More pointedly than the concept of secularization, the term 'post-Christendom' focuses on the growing irrelevance of the institutional churches in the Dutch society, without thereby implying that Dutch people are becoming less religious or 'spiritual'.[166]

The term 'post-Christendom' is particularly valuable because of its heuristic sense. On the one hand, as Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen explain, missional expressions of church must "take account of where expectations are still based on residual forms and meanings from Christendom."[167] The authors mention several examples of creative mission initiatives – such as the Thomas Mass in Helsinki, Finland – that rightly use "the remaining Christendom opportunity to engage beyond the fringe to the closed de-churched."[168] On the other hand, speaking of post-Christendom (rather than post-Christian) may help us ask ourselves in what ways we are still thinking in 'Christendom' terms, which may hinder us from considering other, biblically inspired and culturally more appropriate paradigms of church, mission and leadership.[169] We may, for example, become aware of the fact that in Christendom societies, the Christian faith is often uncritically identified with current forms of the church.[170]

Moreover, in Christendom thought, mission in the local context often receives little emphasis, because the churches concentrate upon the pastoral care of their own people and the maintenance of their structures. The basic choice that Gerben Heitink puts forward resembles that which is voiced in the EMC, i.e., between a church which is focused on caring for its own members, and a missionary community that has an outward focus.[171] The EMC challenges us to answer the next, strategic question (see part B of this thesis) that Heitink does not elaborate upon: When the church is seen as essentially missional, what are the consequences for its structures and its leadership?[172]

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[166] Cf. Joep de Hart, *Zwevende gelovigen. Oude religie en nieuwe spiritualiteit* [Floating believers: Old religion and new spirituality] (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2011).

[167] Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen, *Clusters: Creative Mid-Sized Missional Communities* (Sheffield, UK: 3dministries, 2007), 134.

[168] Hopkins and Breen, *Clusters*, 136.

[169] Alan Roxburgh observes that "It is one thing to agree that some kind of change is needed in churches and denominations, but if we don't also see the complex forces that have propelled us into a new place of uncertainty, we will try to navigate our way forward on the basis of our existing maps." Among these complex forces the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom may be reckoned. Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 83.

[170] Cf. John Drane, "Whenever we define the Church from without our inherited ecclesiologies, we will always get a Christendom-shaped church....When the emerging church prioritizes Christology over against ecclesiology, it is being far more subversive of the status quo than most church leaders would like to admit." Drane, *After McDonaldization*, 51.

[171] Heitink, *Een kerk met karakter*, 287. Heitink adds that the urgency for a thorough change is, as yet, not shared by many pastors (cf. 350).

[172] Cf. J. Roxborogh, "the relationship of a church to its context is not only a matter of credibility of doctrine, relevance of ritual...; but is also related to the *cultural relevance of the roles and structures of its leadership* [emphasis added]." John Roxborogh, "Persistent Presbyterianism? Lay Leadership and the Future of the Re-

Furthermore, in what respects, it might be asked, do Christendom preconceptions infuse our approach to discipleship and theological education? We return to this topic in part C of the present work. For now, we conclude that participants within the EMC rightly point to the massive consequences of the combined impact – the "double whammy"[173] – of the shifts toward postmodernity and post-Christendom for (institutional) churches in Western countries, including the Netherlands. The playful expression 'double whammy' introduces the theme of the next chapter: an analysis of the intentional and remarkably frequent use of pictorial language and especially metaphors within the EMC.

formed Tradition," in John Stenhouse and Brett Knowles, eds., *Christianity in the Post Secular West* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2007), 243.

[173] According to Leonard Sweet, "the church is now encountering the double whammy of postmodernity and post-Christendom." Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2009), 20. Sweet, Professor of Evangelism at Drew University, is an influential voice in the EMC.

CHAPTER 5. *DANCING DINOSAURS*: METAPHORS WITHIN THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION

5.1 Introduction

"Metaphor has the power to help us identify ourselves in new, boundary-breaking ways – ways that facilitate conversation and help us to relate to each other."[1] "What principles and points were to moderns, metaphors and images are to people in the emerging culture."[2] "The best tool religious leaders can give people to think and live differently is a metaphor or image."[3]

These three statements by some early voices in the EMC illustrate that they recognize that metaphor is a "supreme communication device."[4] Although EMC authors are far from unique in recognizing that, in the words of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, "...metaphoric language opens up to us, both creatively and exploratively, the reality of which we speak,"[5] it is nonetheless striking how much pictorial language is used and reflected upon in the Emerging-Missional milieu.[6] The language of metaphor is emerging "out of the dust of modernism" and rides a "wave of emotion," according to Thomas Hohstadt.[7] He expects that that this new language will "revolutionize our senses"; we "will know through our feelings."[8] "Visual language (metaphor evangelism, metaphor preaching, etc.)" is said to be "no longer an option," as "metaphors are the medium through which biblical spirituality will be fashioned for this new world."[9] Metaphorical language, as found in the Eucharist ritual, for example, is described as "a vital means to communi-

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[1] Spencer Burke (with Colleen Pepper), *Making Sense of the Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations About God, Community, and Culture* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan/YS, 2003), 164.

[2] Leonard Sweet, Brian D. McLaren, and Jerry Haselmayer, *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 152-153.

[3] Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 89.

[4] The qualification is from I.A. Richards, as quoted in Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 70.

[5] J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith: The Construction of Theories in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 137-138.

[6] Illustrative of this is that a well-known (secular) book on metaphor – i.e., G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By* – features on a short list that is solely concerned with missional church literature and websites. "Missional Church Bibliography," http://www.shenango.org/PDF/PMC/Missional%20Church%20bibliography%20_2_.pdf (accessed October 18, 2011).

[7] Thomas Hohstadt, *Dying to Live: The 21st Century Church* (Odessa, TX: Damah Media, 1999), as quoted in Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 68.

[8] Ibid. See also Hohstadts short articles, "Doing Metaphor," "Metaphor: What It's Not," "Metaphor: What It is," and "Spirituality and the Language of the Future", all posted 2010, http://www.futurechurch.net/ArticelsPage.htm (last accessed April 13, 2012).

[9] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, 91-92.

cate the truths of a transcendent God."[10] Metaphors, in addition, may be of great help in the "reimaging of ancient leadership possibilities,"[11] and they are recognized as "pivotal for leadership practice."[12] Denouncements and warnings are likely to be couched in metaphors as well. For instance, we should be wary of "spiritual McCarthyism"[13] and "spiritual Darwinism."[14]

In scholarly publications about the Emerging and Missional movements, it seems as if the use of metaphor has, hitherto, not received critical analysis. As was suggested above, however, metaphors do occupy a central place within the EMC. A discussion of this topic may therefore enhance our understanding of this conversation. This chapter argues that the use of metaphors – especially by the more radical or idealistic reconstructionists and revisionists – runs the risk of functioning in an ideological way. We will also point out, however, that a deliberate[15] and often remarkably *creative* use of metaphor abounds in the literature of the EMC as a whole, not in the least where the topics of church and leadership are concerned. Authors in both the emerging and the missional movement acknowledge that "Missional church is more about learning to live inside images, metaphors and stories than getting dictionary definitions,"[16] and that metaphors "are powerful images, creating options and limits."[17] They agree, moreover, that "both metaphor and imagination are associated with 'semantic innovation' and therefore 'language makes possible what we see'."[18]

Our leading question is the following: *What are the motives for using metaphors in the EMC, and in what way are they used?* Section 5.2 focuses on various motives, while 5.3

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[10] Janine Morgan, "Emerging Eucharist: Formative Ritualizing in British Emerging Churches," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008), 13.

[11] Gary V. Nelson, *Borderland Churches: A Congregation's Introduction to Missional Living* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2008), 84.

[12] Robert D. Dale, *Seeds for the Future: Growing Organic Leaders for Living Churches* (St. Louis, MS: Lake Hickory Resources, 2005), 27.

[13] Spencer Burke, "From the Third Floor to the Garage," in Mike Yaconelli, ed., *Stories of Emergence: Moving from Absolute to Authentic* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan/YS, 2003), 29.

[14] Ibid., 34.

[15] This word is deliberately chosen, as it refers to Gerard Steen's explanation: "I propose that a metaphor is used deliberately when it is *expressly meant to change the addressee's perspective* [emphasis added] on the referent or topic that is the target of the metaphor, by making the addressee look at it from a different conceptual domain or space, which functions as a conceptual source....Deliberate metaphor is a relatively conscious strategy that aims to elicit particular rhetorical effects." Gerard Steen, "The Paradox of Metaphor: Why We Need a Three-Dimensional Model of Metaphor," *Metaphor and Symbol* 23 (2008), 222-223.

[16] Allelon International, 2007, "Understanding Missional Church – An Introductory Workshop. Participant's Guide," http://ncdnet.blogs.com/files/participants_guide.pdf, (accessed October 18, 2011). Cf. R. Shepley III, who states that "missional living is more about a *journey of metaphors* [emphasis added] than a map with specific directions." Raymond Shepley III, "The Great Banquet of Luke 14:15-24 as an Equipping Metaphor for Missional Engagement: A Study of the First Baptist Church of Tucker, Georgia," (DMin thesis, McAfee School of Theology, 2011), xi.

[17] Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004), 32.

[18] Jannie Swart, "Christian Leadership as Communion Imagination in the Public Networking of Organizational Companionship," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 114.

and 5.4 are concerned with the use of various metaphors. The chapter ends with a short summary and a critical discussion (5.5).

Before proceeding with this chapter, it may be helpful to point out that according to rhetoric-expert Wayne Booth, "there is not any one definition of metaphor that we all could possibly agree on."[19] That being said, many commentators do agree on the notion that a metaphor is something like a calculated category mistake, or a "constructive falsehood."[20] The metaphorical "is" at once signifies both "is not" and "is like."[21] Thus, a metaphor contradicts, when interpreted literally, some essential characteristic of the object of which the metaphorical predicate is asserted.[22] In this chapter, metaphor will be understood in the broad etymological sense of transference (Gr. *metaforein* = transfer). In this expansive interpretation, metaphor can be defined as a linguistic[23] process of transference, by means of which a relationship between two entities, qualities, states or processes is established on the basis of an association of given attributes of the one with attributes of the other.[24]

5.2 Metaphorical Language in Relation to Mission and Epistemology

This section seeks to answer this question: With what motives do many authors in the EMC use metaphors, quite often in an abundant way?

To start with, let us consider the following passage from Brian McLaren's influential *The Church on the Other Side* (some pertinent metaphorical language is underlined): "So here we are, in a transition zone of high tectonic activity, on the threshold of a new world, in a time when many old churches are being shaken half to death, barely surviving, too rarely thriving. And where they are thriving, it's for one of two reasons: Either they are creating time warps where the past will be preserved so reactionary folk can flock there for a safe – temporary – old familiar haven; or they are among the learners

[19] Wayne C. Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation," in: Sheldon Sacks, ed., *On Metaphor* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 49.
[20] Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization*, updated edition (London: Sage, 2006), 4.
[21] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 7.
[22] Peter Bosch, "Context Dependence and Metaphor," in: Wolf Paprotté and René Dirven, eds., *The Ubiquity of Metaphor: Metaphor in Language and Thought* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1985), 168.
[23] Metaphors may also occur in non-linguistic modes, e.g., in sculpted artefacts or pictures. Charles Forceville, "Non-Verbal and Multimodal Metaphor in a Cognitivist Framework: Agendas for Research," in Gitte Kristiansen et al., eds., *Cognitive Linguistics: Current Applications and Future Perspectives* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), 379-402; Loizos Heracleous and Claus Jacobs, "Understanding Organizations Through Embodied Metaphors," *Organization Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008), 45-77. In particular, anthropological research inherently extends beyond the study of language proper, to metaphors in e.g. artifacts, landscapes, houses, emblems, and action. Michael Kimmel, "Metaphor Variation in Cultural Context: Perspectives from Anthropology," *European Journal of English Studies* 8, no. 3 (2004), 275. The discussion in this chapter is limited to linguistic metaphors, which is already complicated enough.
[24] René Dirven, "Metaphor as a Basic Means for Extending the Lexicon," in Paprotté and Dirven, eds., *The Ubiquity of Metaphor*, 96.

at the top who are surfing change into the new world and transitioning old churches of yesterday into the new churches of the other side."[25]

It is clear that the different metaphors in this passage are – to add one more – practically falling over each other. McLaren's language is highly suggestive but not very precise. This probably has to do with the fact that he majored in English and is a lover of literature. The same can be said of more influential voices in the Emerging-Missional milieu. Often, they are artistic and creative types, well versed in many kinds of cultural pursuits. This 'romantic' bent makes them open to using allusive and poetic expressions.[26] In many ways, it seems justified to characterize large segments of the Emerging-Missional milieu as an expression of neo-Romanticism,[27] with a strong appeal to aesthetics,[28] natural or organic thinking,[29] and mystery.[30] Metaphorical linguistic devices suit a postmodern, neo-Romantic mindset better than they fit Enlightenment rationalism. EMC writings, in particular those of so-called 'post-evangelicals', are often colored by emotionally charged metaphors.[31] These convey, on the one hand, a mood of longing for new ways of being church, and on the other hand, pain or conflict with the "barely surviving" traditional churches and their "reactionary folk" (in the words of McLaren).

In addition, authors in the EMC are keen to keep connected with postmodern people by avoiding the kind of language that could put them off; instead, seeking to use forms of communication that resonate well. The authors of *Missional Spirituality*, for instance, observe that "Our postmodern culture is image based, with visual language through story, symbols, logos, conversation, metaphors and pictures shaping our lives." They therefore invite the reader to "discover ways to lodge truth in the imagination," by

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[25] Brian McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 15.

[26] Cf. the central thesis of Charles Scott Kinder-Pyle, which is that "Purely academic and abstract discussions about the so-called Missional Church will no longer suffice. What pastors and other church leaders now require are theo-poetic forums, in which we might explore the words, images and metaphors that influence the way we do ministry in the postmodern world." Charles Scott Kinder-Pyle, introduction to "Pastor as Struggling Poet: Exploring an Alternative Mode of Missional Leadership," (DMin thesis, Columbia Theological Seminary, 2008).

[27] Cf. Scott Bader-Saye, "Improvising Church: An Introduction to the Emerging Church Conversation," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 1 (March 2006), 17-21.

[28] Cf. Tony Jones, "The emerging churches I visited noticeably and consistently vaunted and encouraged the creation of art as a holy practice." Tony Jones, *The Church is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement* (Minneapolis, MN: The JoPa Group, 2011), 117.

[29] Organic metaphors in particular are popular in the EMC, which suits 'Romantic' thinking. Cf. G.S. Rousseau, ed., *Organic Form: The Life of an Idea* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) and Charles I. Armstrong, *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), especially chapter 1.

[30] Roxburgh and Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church*, 41ff. Cf. their earlier remark: "The kingdom of heaven is explained in metaphors, similes, images, and pictures....the meaning of *missional* is more like the kingdom of God than any dictionary definition." Ibid., 38-39.

[31] Philip Harrold, "Deconversion in the Emerging Church," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 1 (March 2006), 83-84. Harrold mentions as examples expressions such as 'outgrow', 'wrestling with', 'disentangling from' and 'being wrenched' out of traditional church contexts.

using metaphors and painting word pictures, just as Paul and Jesus himself – "a metaphorical theologian" – did.[32] Metaphors are well suited for "life in the wormhole,"[33] since they never actually claim to describe reality as it really is, as William Easum explains. They help us to see things three dimensionally instead of one dimensionally. "The point of metaphor is to evoke more than one way of perceiving a reality, to see the both/and instead of the either/or that so plagues the modern world."[34]

Leonard Sweet is even more emphatic: "The modern world was word-based. Its theologians tried to create an intellectual faith, placing reason and order at the heart of religion. Mystery and metaphor were banished as too fuzzy, too mystical, too illogical."[35] In the twenty-first century, however, the church enters a world where story and metaphor are at the heart of spirituality.[36] "Propositions are lost on postmodern ears, but metaphor they will hear, images they will see and understand."[37] Sweet continues, "The church's failure of imagination is directly attributable to its failure to take up the poet's tools: image and imagination, metaphor and story, and metaphor stories known as parables."[38]

5.2.1 Metaphors and Epistemology

Aside from these essentially missiological concerns – 'how can we reach postmoderns?'[39] – participants in the EMC are also aware of deeper epistemological issues. An important source on this topic is *Beyond Foundationalism*, an influential volume by the late Stanley Grenz, written together with John Franke.[40] In this book, Grenz explains how he sees foundationalism as rooted in Cartesian (and Spinozan) deductivism, which attempted to deduce absolute truth from self-evident principles. Grenz is clear about his fundamental agreement with the postmodern rejection of the modern mind and its underlying En-

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[32] Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), 149.

[33] This pictorial expression denotes the shift from modernity to postmodernity.

[34] William M. Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side: No Rules, Just Clues* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 62.

[35] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, 86.

[36] Cf. Tony Jones: "propositional truth is out and mysticism is in." Tony Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Creating Holistic Connections, Cultivating Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/YS, 2001), 63.

[37] Sweet, *Post-modern Pilgrims*, 86.

[38] Leonard Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2007), 113. Cf. Alan Hirsch, "Change the metaphor and you change the imagination." Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, *On the Verge: A Journey Into the Apostolic Future of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 105.

[39] Erwin McManus puts it this way: "we as spiritual leaders need to engage our environments as cultural architects." Erwin Raphael McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church GOD had in Mind* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001), 113. He urges Christian leaders to make careful but deliberate use of metaphors, since our cultural environment "rejects the meta-narrative" and "embraces the metaphor." (Ibid.)

[40] Cf. 4.2.1, above.

lightenment epistemology.[41] His portrayal of the death of foundationalism is widely shared among EMC writers[42] – also on a more popular level, as is shown next.

"In the new church," Brian McLaren asserts, "we can do a little better job if we remember that our words are not the things they represent....Words are merely sounds and symbols that stimulate some kind of remarkably predictable and similar neurological activity in the brains of our peers, our words are not the Word."[43] McLaren does not directly deny the infallibility and truth of the Word of God, but he does reject the idea that our interpretation of that Word deserves the same status. The characters in McLaren's *New Kind of Christian*-trilogy well illustrate this. In postmodern fashion, they are organized as narratives, indicating a propensity for constructivist thought, sometimes of a rather strong kind. For example, they say that we are stuck in language,[44] and even that we live in different "universes," depending on the kind of God we believe in and our understanding of the "master story" of which we are a part.[45]

Elsewhere, McLaren says that our viewpoints are necessarily limited, contingent, changing, and not privileged,[46] and that our beliefs should not be understood as being founded on "bombproof' foundations. Rather, they are related to each other as a mosaic or a spider's web.[47] This is one reason that "our words will seek to be servants of mystery, not removers of it as they were in the old world."[48] All this has to do with postmodernism, "the intellectual boundary between the old world and the other side."[49] Why is the shift to postmodernism so important? "Because when your view of truth is changed, when your confidence in the human ability to know truth in any objective way is revolutionized, then everything changes."[50]

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[41] Cf. Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 165.

[42] Note that Grenz' interpretations have been quite severely criticized as well. This is not reflected in EMC literature, however, including the most recent contributions. See for critical analyses, Steven Denis Knowles, "Postmodernism and Evangelical Theological Methodology with Particular Reference to Stanley J. Grenz," (PhD diss., University of Liverpool, 2007) and James David Hoke, "Examining the Concept of Truth in Stanley Grenz's Theology: Assessing its Influence on Emerging Evangelicals," (PhD diss., Trinity Theological Seminary, 2008), especially 93-96.

[43] McLaren, *Church on the Other Side*, 66.

[44] Brian D. McLaren, *The Story We Find Ourselves In: Further Adventures of a New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 28. Cf. Tony Jones: "[The] content of a belief system is inseparable from and dependent upon its language." Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry*, 151.

[45] Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 161.

[46] Brian D. McLaren, *More Ready than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 76, cf. 77.

[47] Ibid., 129. The reference here is to the concept of the 'web of belief' by philosopher W.V.O. Quine. According to Tony Jones, the web does not have absolute objective foundations, but it connects different opinions and corrects itself in a dynamic way. "If one truth-doctrine gets adjusted or overthrown by a new discovery, the web repairs itself by adjusting or tweaking other doctrines. Reevaluating of some statements entails reevaluation of others, because of their logical interconnections." Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry*, 138.

[48] McLaren, *Church on the Other Side*, 89.

[49] Ibid., 70.

[50] Ibid.

When taken literally and in isolation, statements like these seem to imply that McLaren is going a long way in the direction of the relativist position of many postmodern thinkers. At the very least, McLaren concurs with the anti-foundationalists' critique of foundationalism. In other words: he underscores the fashionable postmodern deconstruction of modernity. At the same time, however, he claims not to espouse the absolute relativism, which is characteristic of some postmodern thinkers, but "rather honest, limited relativism."[51] According to McLaren, postmoderns are often misunderstood in their intentions and convictions: "What postmodern people tend to reject is not absolute truth, but absolute knowledge."[52]

Leonard Sweet also touches on epistemological issues. He surmises that being "image-driven is not distinctive to postmodern culture but to the human mind itself. The human mind is made up of metaphors. In defining realities, metaphors create realities. Metaphors are constitutive of both thought and action."[53] For Sweet, metaphor is not simply an adornment to critical insight, but is itself a method of perception. "Metaphors are not life's seasoning; they're the very meat of life."[54] Sweet sees metaphors as far more than merely a matter of linguistics, they are "the most fundamental tools of thought."[55] To sculpt a metaphor is to create the world and transform the world.[56] This reasoning accounts for the fact that among his many books there is rarely one title that lacks a metaphor.[57]

We conclude that McLaren, Sweet, Jones and other authors break with the modern, foundationalist picture theory of language with its claim that an appropriate use of theological language mirrors reality factually, precisely and truly.[58] Instead, they favor a metaphorical, suggestive, multi-interpretable use of language, with its concomitant more modest epistemological claims.[59] More generally, the discourse of many EMC participants claims and represents a "language ideology that emphasizes the limits of communication."[60] In other words, in the EMC we find a laid back sort of reasonableness,

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[51] McLaren, *Church on the Other Side*, 174.
[52] Ibid., 166.
[53] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, 93.
[54] Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks*, 114.
[55] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, 93. Sweet's remarks here closely resemble that of theologian Sallie TeSelle, who considers metaphor to be *the* way of human knowing. Sallie Te Selle, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1975).
[56] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, 89.
[57] E.g., *Faithquakes*; *Quantum Spirituality*; *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*; *AquaChurch*; *SoulSalsa*, etc.
[58] Cf. Nancey Murphy, "Lecture 1: Beyond Modern Liberalism and Fundamentalism," *The Nordenhaug Lectures 2003: Theology in a Postmodern Age* (Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 14-19.
[59] Cf. Dave Tomlinson, "Post-evangelicals have moved away from the certainty that characterizes evangelicalism to a more provisional and symbolic understanding of truth....The best we can do when we describe matters outside of language is *use metaphors* [emphasis added] and models." Dave Tomlinson, *The Post-Evangelical*, revised North American edition (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan/YS, 2003), 92-3, 96.
[60] James S. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 62.

i.e. apart from occasional overstatements, it is not so much relativistic[61] as it is tolerant of diversity and ambiguity, modest about its own powers, community-bound and ultimately connected with pragmatics.[62] Metaphor as a form of non-propositional, 'deviant' language fits this kind of "epistemic humility"[63] hand in glove.

5.5.2 Metaphors and Change

Another reason why metaphorical thinking connects well with authors in the EMC and their epistemological predilections has to do with the dynamic nature of metaphors. Metaphors do not reveal static insights into the nature of reality, but provide an alternative for thinking in categorical terms. As transport vehicles (Gr. *metaphorikos* = transportation), metaphors accentuate action, movement and relationships rather than entities and their attributes.[64] Metaphors are about shifting styles of thinking from *being* (i.e. thinking in terms of 'states', 'entities', 'events', 'attributes') to *becoming* (i.e. thinking in terms of the primacy of 'movement', 'unfolding', 'emergence', 'flux' and 'transformation').[65]

As we argued in chapter three, the general positive association with the concept of 'paradigm' within the EMC is *change*. Paradigm shifting does not merely entail exchanging one paradigm for another that is more suitable.[66] It also means giving priority to the activity of *moving* from one paradigm to another.[67] Similarly, metaphorical thinking has an inherent characteristic of movement, which makes it attractive to participants in

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[61] Cf. Kevin Corcoran, "what seems to lie at the heart of emerging sensibility is epistemic humility, and not relativistic, creative antirealism." Kevin Corcoran, "Introduction: The Emerging Church," in Kevin Corcoran et al., *Church in the Present Tense: A Candid Look at What's Emerging* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), xvii. See also the comment of David Mills, "The emergent emphasis on community, context, and language...seems to be informed by the postmodern view of humanity as situated, and is thus interpreted by some as an indication of relativism. But, if it is the case that the language we speak is a crucial part of the process by means of which we interpret (assign meaning to) our experiences, then the Christian community and its shared language will become a crucial part of the process of orienting us properly to God's reality." David M. Mills, "Mountain or Molehill? The Question of Truth and the Emerging Church," *Criswell Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006), 64.

[62] Cf. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 89. This author's description of Nancey Murphy's postfoundationalism – which was borrowed and somewhat adapted here – is apt to describe the epistemology of many EMC participants, in particular that of revisionists. See also Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 30-34 and 86.

[63] This expression is used by Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 155-156.

[64] According to philosophers in the pragmatist tradition, this characteristic of metaphors goes back to features of the human mind itself. They conceive of mind as "a semeiotic, metaphorical, creative, constructive process, never detached, never static." Jerold J. Abrams, "Philosophy *After* the Mirror of Nature: Rorty, Dewey, and Peirce on Pragmatism and Metaphor," *Metaphor and Symbol* 17, no. 3 (2002), 235.

[65] Robert Chia, "Metaphors and Metaphorization in Organizational Analysis: Thinking Beyond the Thinkable," in D. Grant and C. Oswick, eds., *Metaphor and Organizations* (London: Sage, 1996), 143.

[66] Cf. Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim: "By changing our metaphors, *or paradigms* [emphasis added] of church, we can change the game." Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), xxxv.

[67] Chia, "Metaphors and Metaphorization in Organizational Analysis," 142.

the Emerging-Missional milieu. The language of 'chaos'[68] in particular has a dynamic quality to it, since "in a chaos paradigm (worldview) all theory is, in the first instance change theory."[69] Other metaphors in the EMC, however, also denote movement and change. Olivia Moffat, for example, devised a dynamic metaphor to capture the culture of change and innovation that characterizes Solace, a community in Melbourne of which she is one of the main leaders. The metaphor was that of *snowboarding*: according to Moffat, it is not just a new sport, but "a paradigm shift in viewing the world."[70] Instead of skiing around rough places, snowboarders look for the rough places and jump off them. In such an environment, "change is the only constant, chaos is everywhere,"[71] and life is not like the smooth slopes but like the rough areas that are used for snowboarding.

When authors in the EMC make up metaphors that are derived from Internet-jargon – and this happens regularly – the emphasis on dynamism and movement is especially strong.[72] This is because many Internet terms are themselves metaphors (e.g., surfing, browsing, data stream, and so on) that relate to journey, mobility, and movement.[73]

5.3 Heuristic Metaphors in the EMC

Above we discussed why metaphors are deemed important in the EMC. The next question to be addressed is *how* they are used. This section will argue that an important use of metaphor in the EMC is that of a heuristic instrument.[74] That is to say, by helping us to see *A* as *B*, metaphors can help us discover new or different aspects of reality.[75] New

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[68] This topic is returned to below (5.4.1).

[69] T.R. Young, "A Metaphysics for the Post-Modern," *The Social Dynamicist* 2, no. 2 (1991), 5, as quoted in Uri Merry, *Coping with Uncertainty: Insights from the New Sciences of Chaos, Self-Organization, and Complexity* (London: Praeger, 1995), 13. Interestingly, Young calls chaos theory the "theory of the postmodern society per excellence," because of its message, which – in his interpretation – is that there are no stable systems or truths. Ibid.

[70] Olivia Moffat, "What Kind of Church?," (paper presented at the E.F.A.C. Conference, Sydney, 2001) http://old.efac.org.au/whatchurch.htm (accessed July 28, 2011).

[71] Ibid.

[72] Dwight Friesen, for example, presents "a relationally connective paradigm of God's networked kingdom," which will help the people of God in their incarnating the mission of God. Dwight J. Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church Can Learn from Facebook, the Internet, and Other Networks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 20. This mission is, with a nod to *Star Trek*, "to boldly link where no one has linked before." Ibid., 135.

[73] Denis L. Jamet, "What Do Internet Metaphors Reveal About the Perception of the Internet?," *Metaphorik.de* 18 (2010), 17-32.

[74] Note that metaphors can be used for many purposes. They are used to describe, designate, divert, evoke, exhort, exonerate, inflame, inform, instruct, persuade, shame, and – Peter Machamer adds – "sometimes to tell the truth." Peter Machamer, "The Nature of Metaphor and Scientific Description," in Fernand Hallyn, ed., *Metaphor and Analogy in the Sciences* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2000), 36. The term 'evoke' comes closest to what we mean by metaphor being used as a heuristic instrument.

[75] Donald Schön, "Generative Metaphor: A Perspective on Problem-Setting in Social Policy," in Andrew Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought*, second ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 141.

metaphors may, for example, change how we think about the church, which in the EMC is considered to be an important task today[76] – one which has repercussions for leadership.

As Robert Dale writes, "We can try to stretch our faithful imaginations by using metaphors to introduce new images into visioning processes." He suggests that his readers ask themselves, "How is our church like a...," and then mentions the options of a rescue squad, family reunion, pit crew, garden, maternity ward, yard sale, 24-hour restaurant, construction project, retreat center, beehive, and coastline.[77] Likewise, Steve Taylor[78] invites the reader to think of the church as fulfilling various roles, such as that of a midwife, a DJ, or a tour guide.[79] Danielle Shroyer opts for the metaphor of "sail boat"[80] instead of that of a cruise ship or a battleship, while Michael Goheen lets us reflect on images or metaphors of the church "that may reflect the legacies of Christendom, the Enlightenment, and consumerism."[81] Among these are the church as a mall or a food court, a community center, a corporation, a theater, a motivational seminar, and a social-service office.[82]

To mention two other applications, the verb *curating* – borrowed from the world of art – is intended to stimulate imaginative and inventive thinking about the ways in which to lead a service or praise event.[83] And in regard to theological education, *conversation* is proposed as a foundational metaphor, as students converse not only with Biblical and theological sources, but also – in a literal sense – with class members and with "conversation partners beyond the classroom," e.g., with people of other or no faith, or with those who are weaker and marginalized.[84]

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[76] Cf. Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, "The hard work of identifying current metaphors and reimagining new ones is critical for creating a new systems story for the church." Hirsch and Ferguson, *On the Verge*, 105.

[77] Dale, *Seeds for the Future*, 106. Comparably – but more contextually focused – Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk suggest that leaders in a church ask themselves, "What are the primary metaphors that currently shape the imagination and language of the congregation?" Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 199.

[78] Steve Taylor is the founding pastor of Graceway Baptist Church, Ellerslie, New Zealand, and is a leading EMC voice in this country. He completed this case study on the Emerging Church Movement: "A New Way of Being Church: A Case Study Approach to Cityside Baptist Church as Christian Faith 'Making Do' in a Postmodern World," (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2004).

[79] Steve Taylor, *The Out of Bounds Church? Learning to Create a Community of Faith in a Culture of Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/YS, 2005).

[80] Danielle Shroyer, *The Boundary-Breaking God: An Unfolding Story of Hope and Promise* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 123.

[81] Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 15.

[82] Ibid., 15-16.

[83] Jonny Baker, *Curating Worship* (London, UK: SPCK, 2010). On p. 157 the nominalization 'curation' is used. The notion of curation in worship imagines a kind of leadership that is backstage rather than front stage, cf. 7.3, below.

[84] Darren Cronshaw, "Reenvisioning Theological Education, Mission and the Local Church," *Mission Studies* 28 (2011), 98-99.

Of the many metaphors used in the EMC, our discussion in this subsection focuses on those that directly concern leadership, as a prelude to the central theme of part B of this thesis.

5.3.1 Leaders and the Wizard of Oz

A few interesting leadership metaphors are offered by Jason Clark,[85] in his Doctor of Ministry thesis *Via Media* (2006).[86] Postmodern leaders, Clark suggests, have four main commonalities that can be expressed in metaphors. First, they are "ethical stewards." That is, they are characterized by honesty, openness, vulnerability, accountability and integrity combined with stewardship. Second, they are "information alchemists." They sift data, question, articulate, re-articulate, give voice through multiple media, and bring meaning which enables them and others to grow and be transformed. Third, they are "systems thinkers" by looking at the bigger, interconnected picture and using organic instead of mechanistic thinking (e.g. the 'church as a body'). The fourth thing they have in common is that they are "tribal story tellers." This means they are communicators who connect their listeners to binding values and meaning, and this in a credible, even intimate way.

Other leadership metaphors that Clark deems useful in the emerging church context are those of Brian McLaren in his article "Dorothy on Leadership."[87] This short essay on the changing nature of leadership in the postmodern transition is quite influential in the EMC. The ten leadership metaphors that McLaren distinguishes are the following.[88]

1. The *spiritual sage* who replaces the 'Bible analyst' obsessed with the cognitive.
2. The *listener* who leads through listening and develops communal learning and growth.
3. The *friend* who leads through relationship and conversation rather than through organizational goals and technical means.
4. The *dancer* who invites others to hear the music and move with its rhythm, rather than march to an organizational drum.
5. The *amateur* who rejects clerical professionalism.

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[85] In 1997 Jason and Bev Clark and twelve others planted Vineyard Church Sutton. Within a decade, the community grew to about 300 adults and 120 kids. The majority of these had been previously unchurched. The couple still plays a main role in the vision and spiritual direction for this emerging church, although the leadership is the work of a team. Since 2009, Jason Clark is director of a new Doctor of Ministry Program, called Global Missional Leadership, at George Fox University.

[86] Jason Clark, "Via Media: The Necessity of Deeper Theological Reflection for the Genuine Renewal of Church in the Emerging Culture and Context," (DMin thesis, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, 2006), chapter 5: "The Role of Leadership in the Emerging Church," 100-129. The quotes are all taken from this source and no more detailed references will be given.

[87] Brian D. McLaren, "Dorothy on Leadership," http://www.brianmclaren.net/archives/imported/dorothy-on-leadership.html (accessed February 23, 2009). This article was originally published in *Rev. Magazine*, November/December 2000. (Note for Dutch readers: Dorothy is the main character in *The Wizard of Oz*.)

[88] See also Brian D. McLaren and Tony Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 141-148.

6. The *quest creator* who seeks new challenges, asks questions and invites people into adventure and discovery.
7. The *apologizer*, or alternatively the *learner*, is a leader who points out how inadequate the leader's ideas are and is open to learning and direction from others.
8. The *includer* who involves others in the leaders' journey and in the team.
9. The *seeker* who, instead of acting as a know-it-all, recognizes his or her limitations and need of others on life's journey.
10. The *team builder* who empowers and enables. Jason Clark: "To lead is to need team, to be team, to live and participate as team."

Many other examples of heuristic (i.e. generative) leadership metaphors in the EMC can be given in addition to those of McLaren and Clark, such as that of an air traffic controller,[89] a symphony conductor,[90] or a narrator.[91] It is relevant to note that, with the amount of attention given to leadership metaphors, authors in the EMC are perfectly in tune with recent studies on organizational research,[92] leadership,[93] and leader educa-

[89] "An ATC," Len Hjalmarson explains, "doesn't fly the airplane, he only establishes safe paths for flight and coordinates their interaction once airborne. The ATC is almost an invisible part of the process, but his or her role is essential in enabling the flight." Len Hjalmarson, "Kingdom Leadership in the Postmodern Era", Next Reformation, http://nextreformation.com/wp-admin/resources/Leadership.pdf, last updated in August, 2009 (accessed September 6, 2010).

[90] According to Hjalmarson, "A good conductor does not merely tell everyone what to do; rather he helps everyone to hear what is so. For this he is not primarily a telling but a listening individual: even while the orchestra is performing loudly he is listening inwardly to silent music. He is not so much commanding as he is obedient....The conductor conducts by being conducted. He first hears, feels, loses himself in the silent music; then when he knows what it is he finds a way to help others hear it too. He knows that music is not made people playing instruments, but rather by music playing people." Hjalmarson, "Kingdom Leadership in the Postmodern Era."

[91] "Postmodern people are not looking for a CEO, CFO, COO, CIO, or any other 3-letter combinations you can think of that start with the big 'C'. Today, we are looking for the poet, the prophet, and the storyteller – the narrator. We don't 'lead' people as much as listen to the needs of people and guide them along the path of faith. (The community direction is not based on the desires of one person, but grows from the leader's understanding of the collective vision.)" Ibid.

[92] See, for example, Joep P. Cornelissen et al., "Metaphor in Organizational Research: Context, Modalities and Implications for Research – Introduction," *Organization Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008), 7-22, and Steve Fleetwood, "Ontology in Organization and Management Studies: A Critical Realist Perspective," *Organization* 12, no. 2 (2005), 197-222.

[93] See, for example, Mats Alvesson and André Spicer, *Metaphors We Lead By: Understanding Leadership in the Real World* (London, UK: Routledge, 2010); Ken W. Parry, "The Thing about Metaphors and Leadership," *International Leadership Journal* (Fall 2008), 6-23. According to Parry, "If the essence of leadership is sense-making and if the essential role of metaphors is sense-making, then metaphors must play a strong role within the manifestation and operationalization of leadership." Ibid., 11.

Since the term 'sense-making' will return regularly in this thesis, it might be useful to explain what it stands for. One of the foremost theorists on sense-making in organizations, Karl Weick, writes that it is about "such things as placement of items into frameworks, comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding, and patterning." Karl E. Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995), 6. According to Weick, sense-making is a process that is (i) grounded in identity construction; (ii) retrospective; (iii) enactive of sensible environments; (iv) social; (v) ongoing; (vi) focused on and extracted by cues; (vii) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. Ibid., 17. These characteristics do, indeed, fit the use of metaphors. See more extensively on this topic, Vaughan

tion.[94] In leadership scholarship, it is acknowledged that metaphors may influence the way people think about the nature and purpose of leadership, actions associated with leadership activity, traits associated with effective leadership,[95] or about their own leadership roles, among other things.[96]

One final example may illustrate this. It concerns the metaphor of a catalyst-leader, drawn from *The Starfish and the Spider*, which is also a popular book in the EMC.[97] The metaphor is approvingly cited in a thesis on church planting in New York City.[98] A catalyst-leader, it is explained, interacts with people as a peer; he comes across as your friend. Catalysts depend on trust, inspiration, collaboration, and emotional intelligence; their job is to create personal relationships. They are mission-oriented, but avoid drawing attention to themselves. Furthermore, catalysts thrive on ambiguity and apparent chaos. According to Jared Looney, "the term catalyst becomes one of the controlling metaphors"[99] because leadership in organic church planting is primarily relational and not positional. "Organic church planters in New York have shifted away from their previous experiences of expecting leaders to lead because they were given a position. Rather, through the process of organic church planting, they have learned to identify leaders by identifying individuals who are naturally leading."[100] The metaphor of catalyst appears to be important for understanding and describing leadership in organic church planting. It may also deepen our appreciation of leadership in the Emerging-Missional milieu as a whole, since many of its participants see church planting as "a vital part of their identity, ethos, and institution making."[101]

5.4 Metaphors and (Macro)Paradigms

Our discussion of the use of metaphor within the EMC has not yet fathomed the deepest depths, or, to use a more appropriate metaphor, soared to the highest heights. This section attempts to stretch our minds further still. As an introduction, it is relevant to

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S. Roberts, "Sensemaking, Metaphor and Mission in an Anglican Context," (PhD diss., University of Bath, 1999).

[94] Kathryn Singh, "Metaphor as a Tool in Educational Leadership Classrooms," *Management in Education* 24, no. 3 (2010), 127-131; Tom D. Taber, "Using Metaphors to Teach Organization Theory," *Journal of Management Education* 31, no. 4 (August 2007), 541-554.

[95] Singh, "Metaphor as a Tool in Educational Leadership Classrooms," 128.

[96] G.L. Forward, "Clergy Stress and Role Metaphors: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Communication & Religion* 23, no. 2 (2000), 158-184.

[97] Ori Brafmand and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York: Portfolio, 2006).

[98] Jared James Looney, "City Harvest: A Study of Organic Church Planting in a Global City," (DMiss. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2010). In the introduction, Looney describes himself as a "missional catalyst."

[99] Looney, "City Harvest: A Study of Organic Church Planting in a Global City," 130.

[100] Ibid., 123.

[101] Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, 159.

note that analogous to the three levels of paradigm discussed in chapter three, the use of metaphors in the literature of the EMC can also be seen to function on three levels. The lowest or 'micro' level is that of concrete phenomena and actions, practicality and implementation. On this level, one often encounters loose metaphors that are not much more than buzzwords, catchy phrases or humorous analogies. The intermediate or 'meso' level concerns metaphors that give a particular meaning and impetus to interpretations and discussions about the church, leadership, and the like.

As with the discussion of paradigm, however, the highest or 'macro' level is, in certain ways, perhaps the most interesting (as well as controversial). This is due to the fact that, at this macro level, metaphors are able to change the paradigmatic basis of a discourse; they can function as "the basic element of a new pervasive world view."[102] Metaphors, in other words, give us specific frames for viewing the world.[103] They "have a tendency to form 'regimes of truth' to create a model of reality – 'thinking makes it so'."[104] By *changing* our metaphors, we can learn to see and understand in different ways and gain different kinds of knowledge.[105] This may have practical consequences, since favored metaphors tend to trap us in specific modes of action. "All metaphors end up having their own prescriptive tone."[106]

When Leonard Sweet informs us that we have moved "from the solid ground of *terra firma* to the tossing seas of *terra aqua*";[107] when Doug Pagitt claims that we are now "in the thick of the Inventive Age,"[108] after the passing of the Information Age; or when Brian McLaren suggests that we find ourselves on "the threshold of a new world,"[109] they are hinting at this highest layer. The metaphors on this highest plane are called paradigmatic metaphors, meta-metaphors (J. Derrida), macro-metaphors, narrative metaphors or mother-metaphors.[110] Other terms that delineate the highest stratum are

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[102] Sabine Maasen, "Metaphors in the Social Sciences: Making Use and Making Sense of Them," in Fernand Hallyn, *Metaphor and Analogy in the Sciences* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2000), 213 and 227.

[103] "Metaphor is not simply an ornamental aspect of language, but a fundamental scheme by which people conceptualize the world and their own activities." Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., "Metaphor and Thought: The State of the Art," in Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

[104] Andrew Goatly, *Washing the Brain: Metaphor and Hidden Ideology* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007), 402.

[105] Gareth Morgan, "An Afterword: Is There Anything More to be Said About Metaphor?," in David Grant and Cliff Oswick, eds., *Metaphor and Organizations* (London: Sage, 1996), 228-229.

[106] Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 340.

[107] Leonard Sweet, *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 17.

[108] "The Inventive Age," Pagitt explains, "is one in which inclusion, participation, collaboration, and beauty are essential values." Doug Pagitt, *Community in the Inventive Age* (Minneapolis, MN: Sparkhouse Press, 2011), 6.

[109] See the full quotation in 5.2, above.

[110] Heidi S.C.A. Muijen, *Metafoor tussen magie en methode. Narratief leren in organisaties en therapie* [Metaphor between magic and method: Narrative learning in organizations and therapy] (Kampen: Agora, 2001), 135-136.

'deep' metaphors, 'root' metaphors and 'abstractions'.[111] Because it connects metaphors and (macro-)paradigms, the term 'paradigmatic metaphors' is preferred in this chapter. Two influential examples of metaphoric language on this highest level will now be discussed: chaos and holism.

5.4.1 'Chaos' and Metaphorical Linking & Thinking

Due to a multitude of popularizing commentaries directed at the public, virtually everybody 'knows' about *chaos* being discernable in evolution, popular culture, life-style, science and religion – up to the leadership style of the apostle Paul.[112] The literature of the EMC that touches on questions of leadership and organization appears to have been duly influenced by popular notions of chaos theorizing. For example, Tim Keel advises his readers to let go of control, since, "while we look at chaos and see only unpredictability, randomness, and erratic noise, actually patterns and a sort of order exists that, while not obvious, are nevertheless present."[113] Likewise, one lesson that Howard Snyder draws out of complexity theory,[114] is that "out of seeming chaos, order emerges."[115] Lisa R. Withrow does not stress order as much as she emphasizes *change*, arguing that "process theory combined with chaos theory most adequately delineates that nature of change, particularly at the organizational level."[116]

The most outspoken yet is the Australian church planter (currently living in the USA) and missiologist Alan Hirsch. His *The Forgotten Ways* even contains an addendum and glossary, entitled "a crash course in chaos."[117] Especially pertinent for him is the "new paradigm of organic leadership and living systems"[118] as set forth in *Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business*, a book that Hirsch highly recommends.[119] Most churches, he contends, are too institutional, and therefore too clumsy in their inherited form, to be able to adapt and respond adequately to the missional envi-

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[111] David Grant and Cliff Oswick, "Introduction: Getting the Measure of Metaphors," in D. Grant and C. Oswick, eds., *Metaphor and Organizations* (London: Sage, 1996), 6-7.

[112] Richard S. Ascough, "Chaos Theory and Paul's Organizational Leadership Style," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 21-43.

[113] Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 237.

[114] The next chapter will explain what 'complexity theory' stands for.

[115] Howard A. Snyder, with Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 39.

[116] Lisa R. Withrow, "Change: Exploring Its Implications for Religious Leadership – A Pedagogical Inquiry," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 55. Kevin Ford aims to "change our ideas about change" as well, warning that true change is not predictive but nonlinear, and occurring "near the edge of chaos, and in unexpected ways." Kevin G. Ford, *Transforming Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008), 211-212.

[117] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 247-271.

[118] Ibid., 265.

[119] Ibid., 254. The reference is to R.T. Pascale, M. Millemann and L. Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000).

ronment. These churches should face the choice, in terms of living systems, to adapt or to die. The same process is happening in the corporate world, Hirsch adds. "The smaller, more responsive organizations are the ones that will thrive in the new millennium."[120] This kind of 'living systems'-theory and 'complexity theory' reasoning (in which the insights from chaos theory find an application) can also be found, more or less explicitly, in other EMC literature. Clearly, many opinion leaders within the EMC are fascinated by these recent scientific interdisciplinary approaches, as will be discussed further in the next chapter. For now, two other points are relevant.

First, chaos theory – as part of the more encompassing complexity science – searches for likenesses and similarities, and thereby "invites metaphorical thinking and linking."[121] The quotes above may have served as an illustration of this relevant connection. Other sources could be cited, for example, Tim Keel, who in the subtitle of his book mentions a 'paradigm' in which chaos and metaphor (and narrative) are connected.[122]

Second, since quite a few leaders in the EMC are prone to uncritically embrace the newest scientific, or scientific sounding, ideas, especially those that criticize reductionism and modernity, they are vulnerable to being misled by what is actually a form of ideologically tainted thinking.[123] In turn, they may mislead their audiences as well. For example, in much of the popular literature that is read in the EMC, chaos is represented as a proven theory, or even as an eternal natural law, and not just as an illustrative analogy or suggestive metaphor. One hopes that this does not encourage leaders of the EMC to introduce bizarre policies in missional communities "on the grounds that a flap of their wings will create an organizational thunderstorm to change the face of the future"![124] Moreover, treatises on chaos theory often juxtapose the 'old', 'failed' and probably harmful *reductionist* tradition in science with the 'young', 'creative', and most likely redeeming *holist* approach[125] – a strategy that authors in the EMC tend to uncritically appropriate. This will be discussed next.

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[120] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 267-268. The reference is to Tom Peters, *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution* (London: Pan, 1987), 355.

[121] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pelgrims*, 94.

[122] Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

[123] Sabine Maasen warns concerning the irresponsible use of 'chaos' metaphors: "The scholarly representatives are on the verge to become the supplier of 'ideology' (!) after the end of all ideologies." Sabine Maasen, "Metaphors in the Social Sciences: Making Use and Making Sense of Them," in Fernand Hallyn, ed., *Metaphor and Analogy in the Sciences* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2000), 228.

[124] Peter Galbraith, "Organisational Leadership and Chaos Theory: Let's Be Careful," *Journal of Educational Administration* 42, no. 1 (2004), 28.

[125] Sabine Maasen and Peter Weingart, *Metaphors and the Dynamics of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2000), 125.

5.4.2 Holistic Metaphors, Rhetoric, and Power

The terms 'holism' and 'holistic' are habitually used or hinted at by many authors in the EMC. Often, the term 'holistic' is not much more than a short way of referring to what one *rejects*. More specifically, it may function as a way of denoting and discarding the old 'dualistic' world of modernity and Christendom. This critical use of the term holism is found especially among revisionist authors. There are parallels here with the New Age movement. When Wouter Hanegraaff defines New Age in the following way, as a specimen of *culture criticism*, one is tempted to replace the words 'New Age religion' with 'Emerging Church Movement': "All New Age religion is characterized by a *criticism of dualistic and reductionistic tendencies* [emphasis added] in (modern) Western culture, as exemplified by (what is emically perceived as) *dogmatic* [emphasis added] Christianity, on the one hand, and rationalistic/scientific ideologies, on the other."[126] This kind of criticism confirms for Hanegraaff that the New Age movement is an heir to the 'counterculture' of the 1960s.

It does not seem too farfetched to claim the same for at least some parts of the Emerging-Missional milieu, in particular the segment that contains so-called post-evangelicals. Not only do some of the older leaders (e.g. Brian McLaren) have their roots in the Jesus Movement, but all post-evangelicals also typically display a critical stance toward (a) modernity, with its characteristics of dualism and reductionism, and (b) 'conventional' ways of being church and culturally conservative forms of evangelicalism.[127] Positive uses of the term holism (or variations of it) can also be found in the EMC. For example, emergent leader Doug Pagitt states that "holism is the goal of God for the world."[128] And Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch suggest that "the new global culture holds to a worldview that is holistic in its outlook. It sees a need for a great integration between spirit and matter."[129] They contend that the so-called Hebraic worldview was holistic, while the Hellenistic worldview was dualistic.[130]

These authors rightly intuit that constructing a dualism of holistic versus mechanistic thinking can be highly attractive. Anne Harrington's research on 'holism' in Germany in the early twentieth century discovered that language and ideas can exert strong influ-

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[126] Wouter Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 517.

[127] Cf. Leonard Sweet who dropped out of church when he was 17 years old: "What ignited my deconversion was the church's funereal spirit, its fussy buttoned-upness. Christians' stay-at-home-and-pickle-in-their-own-juices personalities...drained me emotionally, incapacitated me intellectually, and shut me down spiritually." Leonard Sweet, *SoulSalsa: 17 Surprising Steps for Godly Living in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 185. He and other EMC voices opt for a 'counter-church', so to speak.

[128] Doug Pagitt, "The Emerging Church and Embodied Theology," in Robert Webber, ed., *Listening to the Beliefs of the Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 135.

[129] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 134.

[130] This is a theme that one encounters often in the EMC. See for example Doug Pagitt, *A Christianity Worth Believing: Hope-Filled, Open-Armed, Alive-and-well Faith for the Left Out, Left Behind, and Let Down in Us All* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 38-50.

ence, and that metaphoric language is particularly powerful.[131] Some metaphors, such as holistic metaphors, do much more than just lend old lexical meanings to new objects. They are "literally ways whereby societies 'build' webs of collective meaning."[132] A metaphoric argument may create a "cultural cosmology"[133] in which moral and political actions appear to be sanctified by nature, and the claims of nature appear invested with moral and social meanings. Harrington's studies, in short, show that there is a connection between the use of paradigmatic 'holistic' metaphors and worldview. Metaphors can function in support of an ideology, holistic metaphors included.[134] Holistic metaphors may be particularly prone to functioning in an ideological way, since "ideology concerns itself with all-inclusive entities – wholes, totalities, systems, epochs and so on."[135]

To the extent that authors in the EMC use holistic metaphors not to enlighten the reader but to serve their own agenda, the conversation that the EMC wants to foster is hindered, because an ideology does not leave ample room for other views and for correction. Whoever is not in agreement is likely to be denounced as thinking in an outmoded 'dualistic', 'mechanical', or 'modern' way. To conclude this section, it is not surprising that authors in the EMC purposefully use metaphors and other forms of pictorial language.[136] Leonard Sweet, for one, realizes that metaphors have to do with *power*: "The ultimate power is...to have the ability to order and ordain metaphors. In a postmodern culture, images operate as a language of power."[137] There is a connection here with what was discussed in chapter three. As was suggested there, the claim about a shift in worldview (or macro-paradigm) from modern to postmodern has itself become a kind of paradigm. It is the lens through which participants in the EMC are likely to view reality. As Leonard Sweet surmises, "A paradigm shift is an act of faith which creates new facts and new realities."[138] The present chapter makes us aware that there is a

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[131] Especially influential was the holistic psychology of *Gestalt*. The concept of *Gestalt*, understood in the Goethean sense as the primal set of forms underlying all creation, became available in the Nazi era as a politicized metaphor of German authenticity and return to roots. After 1918, the Nationalist Socialists' worldview considered itself holistic and 'organic'. Within this framework, everything that did not conform to fascist values was automatically regarded as mechanistic or atomistic. The Jewish mind was described as fundamentally analytic, dissolutive, and materialistic. Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 178.

[132] Harrington, "Metaphoric Connections," 359-360.

[133] Ibid., 378.

[134] According to Harrington, "holism offered 'a fund of metaphors' that proved highly malleable to the needs of totalitarian, antidemocratic thinking." Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*, 188.

[135] Kenneth Minogue, *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 80-81.

[136] Cf. Dwight Friesen, "The book makes use of some new language, and on occasion I take common words and change their function. As you know, language is very important; in many ways we co-create our realities by our use of words." Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected*, 29.

[137] Sweet, *Post-modern Pilgrims*, 93. Earlier (p. 89), he approvingly quotes Nietzsche as saying: "We do not think good metaphors are anything very important, but I think a good metaphor is something even the police should keep an eye on."

[138] Ibid., 149.

category of so-called paradigmatic metaphors that are used by writers of the EMC to not just *illustrate* the shift in worldview, but also, to *help effect* it. That is to say, their use of paradigmatic metaphors like chaos and holism is rhetorical: readers should come to view reality in the same way as the opinion leader of the EMC. In combination with what was concluded in chapter three, this insight warrants us to qualify at least some of the literature that is produced in the Emerging-Missional milieu as rhetorical. This may have important implications. Some of the key concepts that are often used within the EMC are perhaps, in certain instances, not so much descriptive as they are rhetorical tools.[139] It is possible that terms such as 'modern' or 'Christendom' function primarily like paradigmatic metaphors in the writings of the EMC, at least in the writings of some authors. In such cases, these concepts no longer have a clear intersubjectively accorded content, but are *meant to persuade* the reader that a paradigm shift is necessary, or that it has already occurred.

5.5 Summary and Critical Discussion

This chapter argues that opinion leaders in the EMC make abundant use of metaphoric language because in their view, metaphors and other forms of pictorial language are the best means of communicating with 'postmoderns'. We note, in addition, that speaking in (often emotionally charged) metaphors comes quite naturally to participants in the EMC, especially for those who are – in many respects – postmodern and neo-Romantic themselves.[140] Influential voices in the Emerging-Missional milieu, moreover, realize that metaphors are not just linguistic comparisons for clarifying something, let alone a second-class rate of language, but that they help constitute our view of reality by their symbolic power. Some deeper epistemological concerns appear to be involved as well. EMC spokesmen, especially revisionists, are seeking to take into account the notion that people have no direct access to reality, but that this is always mediated by language – a typically postmodern notion. Metaphors illustrate our limited potential to foundational truth, which is in line with postmodern thinking regarding epistemology. Metaphors are attractive, furthermore, because of their associations with dynamics, movement, and change.

5.5.1 Critical Discussion

It goes beyond the purposes of this chapter to provide a full-fledged evaluation of the use of metaphors within representative EMC literature. We do think it is useful, how-

[139] Cf. the comment of DeYoung and Kluck: "The supposed radical difference between modern spirituality and postmodern spirituality is often nothing more than semantics....Their exaggerated use of language makes it nearly impossible to see anything good in the modern church." DeYoung and Kluck, *Why We're Not Emergent*, 153.

[140] Note that missional authors, especially academics, generally cannot be characterized as such. Most publications in the Emerging-Missional milieu are not written by professional scholars, however.

ever, to shed light on some of the issues that would be involved in such an endeavor, because this will enable us to formulate the necessary appreciative comments and a few *caveats* that we find important. This is what the reader can expect in this and the next subsection.

First, the way in which one evaluates metaphors, depends on one's interpretation of what a metaphor should try to accomplish. This deceptively simple question may lead us into deep theoretical waters that we don't need to explore here. We highlight just one feature of this discussion: the issue if a metaphor should always make a claim to verifiable validity. For example, in the literature that is produced or appreciated by authors in the EMC, the metaphor of 'DNA' is often used in discussions concerning ecclesiology.[141] Roland Riem, for one, takes issue with this metaphor, arguing that "DNA is not a cluster of abstract attributes which can be pressed into any form or other, but a coordinated structure and sequence of matter."[142]

Underlying Riem's critique seems to lie the unarticulated assumption that using DNA as a source domain is not appropriate because of the specific features that DNA has (in Riem's rendering). It may also be asserted, however, that a metaphor – or certain categories of metaphors – should not be judged by a correspondence to empirical reality, but by the construed image that it evokes.[143] And DNA effectively conjures up 'organic' connotations (the DNA of the church presupposes an analogy with the church as the Body of Christ),[144] which are very popular within the Emerging-Missional milieu[145] – and which are habitually used in the Bible as well. Thus, the English theologian George Lings thinks that this is not a bad choice. For one thing, DNA "is central to the biochemical mechanism that enables living things to reproduce and evolve."[146] More importantly, DNA "is a particularly apt use of language" in today's climate of ecclesial experimentation,[147] especially from a missiological point of view. "To talk of DNA invites an

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[141] See for example Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002).

[142] See Riem's critique of the use of the DNA metaphor in the English report *Mission-Shaped Church*, in Roland Riem, "Mission-Shaped Church: An Emerging Critique," *Ecclesiology* 3, no. 1 (2006), 129.

[143] Joep P. Cornelissen, Mario Kafouros and Andrew R. Lock, "Metaphorical Images of Organization: How Organizational Researchers Develop and Select Organizational Metaphors," *Human Relations* 58, no. 12 (2005), 1562-63. Richard Trim also warns that metaphors should not be taken too literally, or their value will be lost. Richard Trim, *Metaphor Networks: The Comparative Evolution of Figurative Language* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

[144] Sven-Erik Brodd, "Ecclesiological Research and Natural and Human Sciences: Some Observations of an Unconventional Phenomenon," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 9, no. 4 (November 2009), 320-321.

[145] As Robert Dale rhetorically asks, "Do you see the [Scriptural] organic images of congregational leaders? Tenders of flocks. Keepers of vineyards. Heads of families....Teachers of disciples. Guides for pilgrims. They aren't mechanical notions, are they?" Dale, *Seeds for the Future*, 27.

[146] George Lings, "Unravelling the DNA of Church: How Can We Know That What is Emerging is 'Church'?," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 1 (2006), 107.

[147] Ibid.

exploration of the genuinely creative process by which emerging church can be shaped."[148] We are inclined to go along with Ling's interpretation here.

It may still be asked whether there are any truth conditions for the use of metaphors in our speaking about the church, or – closer to the heart of theology – our speaking about God.[149] In our reading of sources in the EMC, we did not find it explained how we may distinguish true metaphors from false ones, and on the basis on what criteria. A reason for this may be that the use of metaphor seems to fit the postmodern ethos of some writers in the EMC themselves. Its multiple interpretations remind us that there are no absolute truths and that there is no comforting single way of viewing reality.[150] In particular, authors such as Leonard Sweet and Brian McLaren come close to leaning towards Nietzsche's dictum that "all language is metaphorical."[151] In that case, metaphors are seen as exemplars of postmodern, 'nomadic' knowledge: they are always applied locally and context-dependent, and are hence malleable units of knowledge.[152] Moreover, some authors, especially revisionist ones, are prone to interpreting scriptural metaphors by imaginatively applying their own associations, and not by careful exegesis.[153] Practical theologian Edmund Clowney justly warns that such approaches can lead to misunderstandings, since the "'commonplace' associations of our culture may be quite different from those that existed in the original context of the Scriptures."[154]

Second, whether EMC metaphors irritate or irrigate our minds also depends on other preconceptions – in the terminology of chapter three: our paradigms, including their affective components. There is undoubtedly an audience for whom, for example, the metaphor of the traditional church as a dinosaur is apt, as it confirms their already ambivalent or even negative feelings. This metaphor conjures up a picture of the church as a curious relic of the past; huge, inflexible and dumb.[155] This is not all, however. The tacit assumption behind this metaphor is that the church, interpreted as an human institu-

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[148] Lings, "Unravelling the DNA of Church," 107.

[149] On this topic, see J. Muis, "The Truth of Metaphorical God-Talk," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63, no. 2 (2010), 146–162.

[150] Cf. Dawn E. Inns and Philip J. Jones, "Metaphor in Organization Theory: Following in the Footsteps of the Poet?," in D. Grant and C. Oswick, eds., *Metaphor and Organizations* (London: Sage, 1996), 118-119.

[151] According to Nietzsche, "there is no 'real' expression and no real knowing apart from metaphor." Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle between Art and Knowledge," as quoted in Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, transl. Duncan Large (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), 57. Cf. citations of Nietzsche on 58 and 154n2: "Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force."

[152] Maasen and Weingart, *Metaphors and the Dynamics of Knowledge*, 3.

[153] Cf. Paul Doerksen, "'The Air is Not Quite Fresh': Emerging Church Ecclesiology," *Direction* 39, no. 1 (2010), 16.

[154] Edmund P. Clowney, "Interpreting the Biblical Models of the Church: A Hermeneutical Deepening of Ecclesiology," in D.A. Carson, ed., *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 85.

[155] Cf. Musolff, "What seems to qualify the respective targets for their (dis-)qualification as *dinosaurs* are inordinate size, slowness, old age or outdated and atavistic attitudes." Andreas Musolff, "Popular Science Concepts and Their Use in Creative Metaphors in Media Discourse," *Metaphorik.de* 13 (2007), 77.

tion, can be viewed as a dinosaur *that has a choice* between extinction and survival, depending on its capability to change.[156] The metaphor of dinosaur might stimulate certain readers to reflect on what changes are necessary to avoid the church's impending demise. For others, however, this metaphor, and others like it, may not be appealing or convincing – or even understandable. This is because metaphors are culturally-loaded expressions, whose meaning has to be inferred through reference to shared cultural knowledge.[157]

Psychological factors may also influence the way in which metaphors are evaluated. Some people are naturally more attracted to allusive, fuzzy language than others. Seeming almost unable *not* to use metaphorical language, Leonard Sweet explains his opinion on this matter as follows: "The fuzziness is what makes metaphors so user-friendly and accessible. Without sharp edges that cut and pierce, metaphors invite people to pick them up. But that very fuzziness can become a Rorschach inkblot that obscures even more than it illuminates."[158]

5.5.2 Metaphor, Rhetoric and Ethics

In general, when referring to inherited churches or to so-called modern forms of Christianity, writers in the EMC often use disparaging metaphors that are likely meant to be humorous[159] – for example when people in a traditional church are called "pew-sitting toads."[160] It is likely, however, that to many readers, especially if they belong to a traditional church, such metaphors are not so much funny as they are banal, or even offensive. And when Thomas Bandy calls Christianity a "drug", and compares the "dead eyes" of the worshippers in a traditional church to the vacant stares of opium addicts,[161] this metaphor does not help to "build a proper *ethos* for the speaker, building or sustaining his character as someone to be trusted"[162] either! In this example, it is especially worth noting that the concept of 'Christianity' is no longer used in a descriptive-empirical manner, but in an abstract and metaphorical sense with a clear derogative connotation. That is, the term 'Christianity' has become an idiosyncratic, Bandyesque metaphor here – a Rorschach inkblot, in Sweet's terms – for everything that stands in the way of

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[156] Cf. Musolff, "Popular Science Concepts and Their Use in Creative Metaphors in Media Discourse," 72.
[157] Jeannette Littlemore, "The Effect of Cultural Background on Metaphor Interpretation," *Metaphor and Symbol* 18, no. 4 (2003), 273.
[158] Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, 90.
[159] Cf. Jeffery Scott Mio and Arthur C. Graesser, "Humor, Language, and Metaphor," *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 6, no. 2 (1991), 96.
[160] Sweet, *SoulSalsa*, 88.
[161] "Christianity acts like a drug on the faithful Christian. Gradually it supplants true spiritual health in the depth of Christ with a façade or imitation of health that is a mere sentiment, or a mere dogma, or a mere institution....Have you ever read about the opium dens, and the vacant, staring residents living amid the smoke? Have you ever visited a church, and seen the 'dead eyes' of the worshipers mouthing hymns amid the incense? Same thing." Bandy, *Mission Mover*, 62.
[162] Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation," 55.

being an authentic Christian. This explains why Bandy can advise his readers to avoid Christianity as they should drugs.

That being said, we think that in the EMC it is correctly perceived that a new metaphor can change our way of looking at things and that it can even affect our worldview.[163] Furthermore, when participants in the EMC try to delineate a vision for church and leadership in shifting cultural contexts, they can be seen to creatively and imaginatively draw on 'unexpected' source domains.[164] This often results in truly generative, heuristic metaphors – including so-called extended metaphors[165] – that can elicit unexpected, 'emerging' meanings,[166] and that "help to give meaning to our *acting* [emphasis added] in the world,"[167] and thus may not only be relevant within the Emerging-Milieu but also in other Christian quarters. In the literature of the EMC it is rightly emphasized, moreover, that metaphors are an important communicative device in leadership processes.[168] In our opinion, authors in the EMC also are right to draw attention to metaphors as a crucial conduit for communicating with 'postmoderns'. At the very least, the literature of the EMC draws attention to the fact that, in certain cultures, metaphors and other forms of visual and narrative language are, indeed, the best way to talk about the gospel.[169] Metaphors of every variety should, however, be used in an ethically

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[163] Cf. Paul Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," in Sheldon Sacks, ed., *On Metaphor* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 150.

[164] For example, 'the church as DJ' draws on the source domain of professional music samplers, and broader, that of creatively mixing genres. Steve Taylor (*The Out of Bounds Church*, 139-153) dwells eloquently on this source domain, helping us to improve our understanding of, among other things, the Emerging Church Movement ("The emerging church is sampling from the two poles of gospel life and cultural resources to offer a creative and distinctively transformed way of being a Christian, being a missionary, being the church..."), or Bible passages such as the household code in 1 Peter ("Peter is DJ-ing...He mixed an alternative social ethic in contrast to the beat of society"). The church as DJ, Taylor suggests, even bears on theological education ("I dream of seminaries as DJ schools, culturally engaged centers of remixing. Their role is to teach DJ's to DJ, and to teach DJ's to teach others to do the same.")

[165] An extended metaphor extends itself beyond a single point of comparison and runs through an entire passage of text. Typical examples can be found in the books of Leonard Sweet. The most pertinent in regard to leadership is his *AquaChurch 2.0: Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2008).

[166] Cf. Marie-Dominique Gineste, Bipin Indurkhya, and Véronique Scart, "Emergence of Features in Metaphor Comprehension," *Metaphor and Symbol* 15 (2000), 117-135.

[167] Ben Vedder, "On the Meaning of Metaphor in Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Research in Phenomenology* 32 (2002), 199.

[168] One interesting aspect is highlighted by Ian Lennie, "Ordinary experience tends to be chaotic and fragmentary....Metaphor forms chaotic and disconnected experiences into new wholes. A metaphoric talent is also, then, a talent for *organization*." Ian Lennie, "Managing Metaphorically," *Culture and Organization* 5 (1999), 51-52.

[169] Cf. Tom Steffen, a missionary among the Ifugao (Philippines), who ruefully concedes that "The Ifugao wanted stories, I gave them systematic theology. They wanted relationships, I gave them reasons. They wanted a cast of characters, I gave them categories of convenience. They wanted events, I gave them explanations." Tom Steffen, "Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol," *Missiology: An International Review* XXXVIII, no. 2 (April 2010), 148. Admittedly Steffen does not mention metaphors as a separate category of Ifugao preference, but their stories are full of them. Interestingly, the insight that forms of pictorial language can be a *conditio sine qua non* to communicate the gospel to certain cultural groups, has yet to be dealt with by an influential 'metaphorical' theologian such as Eberhard Jüngel. Cf. Jil-

responsible way. Having a continual critical self-awareness and being open to reflection, discussion and correction are crucial in this respect.[170] Metaphorical language can best be acknowledged as being undetermined and intersubjective; as a topic of imagination, dialogical communication and negotiation in a social community. "If we forget that metaphors... are only metaphors," Andrew Goatly warns, "we become guilty of a dangerous reductionism with fatal ideological implications."[171] It is important, then, that writers in the EMC are open to questions concerning the criteria of the proper use of metaphors. In particular, paradigmatic metaphors, such as those that refer to chaos theory or holistic thinking, have powerful rhetorical effects. Such meta-metaphors can not only affect our views, but they may even shape our future actions. If there is no room for (self-)critical reflections on this score, then in effect "everything is possible and everything permissible,"[172] which may lead to "a Christianity void of content and rightly denounced as ideology."[173] As argued above, certain radical segments of the Emerging-Missional milieu are susceptible to forms of ideological thinking. Participants might want to ask themselves, or their critics, to what extent their conversation remains open and inclusive,[174] not narrow, excluding or irrational.[175]

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les de Klerk, *Onderbrekingen. Het begrip 'metaforische waarheid' in de theologie van Eberhard Jüngel* [Interruptions: The concept 'metaphorical truth' in the theology of Eberhard Jüngel] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Academic, 2010), 140-141.

[170] Muijen, *Metafoor tussen magie en methode*, 160; Goatly, *Washing the Brain*, 401. A fine example of the responsible use of metaphors provides the article (based on her PhD diss.) by the Lutheran missional researcher and church consultant Pat Taylor Ellison, "Doing Faith-Based Conversation: Metaphors for Congregations and Their Leaders," in Patrick Keifert, ed., *Testing the Spirits: How Theology Informs the Study of Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 159-179.

[171] Goatly, *Washing the Brain*, 402.

[172] Herwi Rikhof, *The Concept of Church: A Methodological Inquiry into the Use of Metaphors in Ecclesiology* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1981), 124 ff.

[173] Rikhof, *The Concept of Church*, 141.

[174] The celebrated inclusiveness and tolerance for diversity within the Emerging Church Movement is sometimes quite limited in practice. For example, whoever uses language concerning Jesus that smacks of being 'propositional', risks a reprimand, according to DeYoung and Kluck, *Why We're Not Emergent*, 138.

This criticism, however, seems pertinent only to (some) radical 'revisionist' writers, not for the movement as a whole, as two examples may illustrate. Steve Taylor recounts how Kelli found faith through Graceway, an emerging church in New Zealand: "She told me she experienced Graceway as a listening church; a personal church; a relational church; a deep-thinking church; a multimedia church; a living, breathing church; an *inclusive, accepting* [emphasis added] church; an honest, real church." Taylor, *The Out of Bounds Church?*, 85. And Cory Labanow, during his ethnographic research in a UK-based emerging congregation "sensed a different worldview at work, a *tolerance for ideological diversity* [emphasis added]." Cory E. Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church: A Congregational Study of a Vineyard Church* (Farnham, GB: Ashgate, 2009), 91.

[175] Cf. the comment of DeYoung and Kluck, "What is frustrating...is when emerging authors claim the postmodern moral high ground that supposedly eschews reasons, logic, and certain truth claims." Ibid., 42. See also their example on 93-94.

CHAPTER 6. *"OBSERVE THE ANTS..."*: COMPLEXITY THEORY AND THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL CONVERSATION

6.1 Introduction

The philosophy of leadership as found within the EMC (i.e., an overarching approach to interpreting leadership, including certain underlying assumptions) can generally be typified as 'organic' rather than 'mechanistic'. This means that the church, including her leadership, should not be interpreted in a 'Newtonian', mechanical way, as institutions often are. She is to be seen as a living system, open to an ever-changing environment, and adapting herself accordingly.[1]

Andrew Jones of Boaz, UK, articulates this philosophy of leadership as follows: "I think the type of leadership found in alternative worship is similar to how leadership is exercised in other disciplines: art projects, collaborating on group projects, creating new organizations, leading in a chaotic environment. Emergent theory in computer systems and biological organisms is showing us why Solomon told us to observe the ant (Prov. 6:6) and its ability to build community without a single big leader calling the shots on every decision. The business world is now quoting Scripture to help itself give leadership to its projects. Maybe it's time for the church to put down the management books and pick up the Bible to see what the fuss is about."[2]

Jones' suggestion is that the study of nature yields important clues for church leadership, which is in line with assumptions of the so-called new science. The present chapter is devoted to this topic, more particularly to complexity theory and the EMC. This subject is theologically interesting from the perspective of practical theology, because practical theology addresses, among other things, the environmental-social and ecological constraints in which social actors find themselves.[3] On these points the 'hard' empirical sciences may have something important to tell us.[4] There are, however, two additional reasons for discussing this topic.

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[1] Kurt Fredrickson, for example, writes that "A missional imagination envisions the church acting like a living organism growing, adapting, and changing in its environment." Kurt Norman Fredrickson, "An Ecclesial Ecology for Denominational Futures Nurturing Organic Structures for Missional Engagement," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2009), 239. Some implications are that *relational networks* are important, as well as "a less hierarchical, more team oriented, decentralized leadership." Ibid.

[2] Andrew Jones, as quoted in Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 210.

[3] See Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991).

[4] Also, as practical theologian Ted Peters points out, it is simply the case that "science is an unavoidable factor in describing persuasively to virtually all modern people just how our world works." He makes a good additional point that "no one can live with a sense of truthfulness in a world-view that is irreconcilable with the picture of nature drawn by physicists, chemists, biologists, and ecologists." Ted Peters, "Practical

First, in literature about the EMC, the role of complexity theory has not yet received an adequate scholarly treatment.[5] A goal of this chapter is to do so and thereby to contribute to a fuller understanding of the conversation, especially as it concerns the implications of complexity theory for church structures and leadership. Second, since the early 1990s, dozens of books and hundreds of articles have been published on various aspects of the new science or complexity theory, as it relates to business, organizations, management and leadership.[6] In recent years, the lens of complexity has been utilized to offer new perspective on the theory and practice of learning and education,[7] and, more specifically, that of management and leadership education.[8] In view of these developments, complexity theory might prove to be relevant for understanding leadership in emerging Christian communities, and consequently for theological education as well.

This chapter aims to answer the following question: *In what way does complexity theory contribute to thought on church organizations and leadership, according to opinion leaders in the EMC and current scholarship?* As a first step in answering this question, section 6.2 introduces the most important basic concepts that are used in complexity theory. The next section gives an overview of how aspects of complexity theory are popularly referred to within the EMC (6.3). The chapter ends with a critical discussion and evaluation of manner in which authors in the EMC use concepts and insights from complexity theory (6.4). In this way, the contribution of complexity theory to thought on church and leadership will become clear, as well as its limits and the potential pitfalls of popularized versions of this approach.

6.2 Concepts in Complexity Theory

As became clear in the previous chapters, many participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu go along with the cultural flow, subscribing to the newest ideas, methods and

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Theology and Ethics," in Philip Clayton, ed., and Zachary Simpson, ass. ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 375-376.

[5] The following article is an attempt to introduce the topic for Dutch readers: R.J.A. Doornenbal, "Organisch leiderschap, complexiteitstheorie en de Emerging Church," *Soteria* 4 (2008), 36-47.

[6] Some journals devoted entire issues to complexity theory (including chaos theory), see for example *Organization Science* 10, no. 3 (1999); *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 13, no. 6 (2000) and 15, no. 4 (2002); *The Learning Organization* 10, no. 6 (2003) and 11, no. 6 (2004); *Theory, Culture & Society* 22, no. 5 (2005); *Management Decision* 44, no. 7 (2006); *The Leadership Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (2007); *Public Policy and Administration* 32, no. 3 (2008); *Public Management Review* 10, no. 3 (2008); *International Journal of Learning and Change* 3, no. 3 (2009); *On the Horizon* 18, no. 1 (2010). In 2010, a new journal was launched: the *International Journal of Complexity in Leadership and Management (IJCLM)*, with four issues each year.

[7] See for some recent contributions the open access, international and peer reviewed journal *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education* (2004-).

[8] Stephen R. Axley and Timothy R. McMahon, "Complexity: A Frontier for Management Education," *Journal of Management Education* 30, no. 2 (April 2006), 295-315; Richard E. Boyatzis, "Leadership Development from a Complexity Perspective," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 60, no. 4 (2008), 298-313; Matthew R. Fairholm, "A New Sciences Outline for Leadership Development," *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 24, no. 4 (2004), 369-383.

fashions. Among these cutting edge ideas and methods are the study of chaos, complexity, emergence, fractals, non-linear systems, the implications of quantum physics, and self-organization. Together, these fields of inquiry are known under the umbrella terms of 'new science' (or: sciences),[9] 'complexity theory', or 'complexity science'.[10] Although there is no consensus on how to define, measure, describe, or interpret 'complexity' as of yet,[11] many authors feel that the development of complexity theory signals the timely arrival of a new scientific paradigm,[12] or worldview.[13] As two scholars explain, the new field of complexity is "generated by the failure of the attempt of the Newtonian paradigm to understand the world,"[14] because this is seen to lack a "holistic perspective."[15] The booming of complexity science should be seen in connection to some dominant features of late modern Western society, such as growing interconnectedness,[16] interdependencies, and unprecedented rates of change.[17] According to sociologist T.R. Young,

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[9] See, e.g., "Foreword: Chaos and Social Science," in Raymond A. Eve, Sara Horsfall and Mary E. Lee, eds., *Chaos, Complexity and Sociology: Myths, Models, and Theories* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), xi. Cf. Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006), a book that is readily referred to in the EMC.

[10] The major fields that together constitute complexity science, are systems thinking, theoretical biology, nonlinear dynamical systems theory, graph theory, phase transitions, Turing's morphogenetic model, synergetics, far-from-equilibrium thermodynamics, and complex adaptive systems theory. Jeffrey Goldstein, "Conceptual Foundations of Complexity Science: Developments and Main Constructs," in Mary Uhl-Bien and Russ Marion, eds., *Complexity Leadership, Part I: Conceptual Foundations* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008), 19-20. We mostly use the term 'complexity theory'.

[11] For quite a number of researchers, defining complexity is "one of the most problematic aspects of the field." Melanie Mitchell, *Complexity: A Guided Tour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 299. Some even avoid using the word altogether.

[12] Uri Merry for instance talks about "new scientific paradigm." Uri Merry, *Coping with Uncertainty: Insights from the New Sciences of Chaos, Self-Organization, and Complexity* (London: Praeger, 1995), 24.

[13] Cf. Paul Davies, "complexity theory is more than a research paradigm: It is also an incentive for an emergentist worldview that impinges on the question of the meaning of the universe." Paul Davies, "Introduction: Toward an Emergentist Worldview," in Niels Henrik Gregersen, ed., *From Complexity to Life: On the Emergence of Life and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13. See also Eric B. Dent, "Complexity Science: a Worldview Shift," *Emergence* 1, no. 4 (1999), 5-19.

[14] Cristoforo Sergio Bertuglia and Franco Vaio, *Nonlinearity, Chaos, and Complexity: The Dynamics of Natural and Social Systems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 281.

[15] Ibid. See also Jin Wulun, "Understanding Complexity, Challenging Traditional Ways of Thinking," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 24 (2007), 393-402.

[16] Otto Scharmer and his co-authors declare that "Connectedness is the defining feature of the new worldview. Connectedness as an organizing principle of the universe, connectedness between the 'outer world' of manifest phenomena and the 'inner world' of our lived experience, and, ultimately, connectedness among people and between humans and the larger world." C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, Betty Sue Flowers, *Presence: Exploring Profound Change in People, Organizations and Society* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2005), 188.

[17] Some scholars adopt a neologism, 'raplexity', to ask attention for the fact that we currently live in times of both *ra*pid changes and high com*plexity* in society and culture. See, for example, Thow Yick Liang, "Innovative Sustainability and Highly Intelligent Human Organizations (iCAS): The New Management and Leadership Perspective," *International Journal of Complexity in Leadership and Management* 1, no. 1 (2010), 83.

"Chaos/complexity theory creates and defines a *postmodern science* [emphasis added] in which disorder has equal standing to order as a feature of natural and social systems."[18]

During the last two decades, complexity theory has become "an important tool for describing formal social organizations such as businesses and government agencies."[19] It is claimed that from new science a new set of managerial tools can be derived, as well as models, principles, or even entire philosophies[20] that are not reductionistic and that, if applied, will result in organizational flourishing in a cultural context of fast-paced change and uncertainty. Translated into organizational terms, principles from complexity theory commonly involve the flattening of hierarchies; decentralization of power, authority, and decision making; a focus on relationships, rich communication and diversity; the embracing of uncertainty; and an abundant use of organic and ecological metaphors. Moreover, leadership is not necessarily seen as being vested in particular individuals, although people might assume leadership roles for a particular purpose. In terms of complexity theory, leadership is described as an *emergent property* of a group or network of interacting individuals.

Concepts taken from complexity theory[21] belong, so to speak, to the 'ABC' of discourse within the EMC.[22] The following subsections introduce some of the main concepts.

6.2.1 Complex Adaptive System

Leonard Sweet, with very little explanation, states that "The church is a complex adaptive system."[23] What does this expression stand for? Three terms need to be discussed: system, complex, and adaptive. In complexity science, the term *system* refers to a set of connected or interdependent agents (for example, molecules, ants, or persons), who behave according to their own principles of local interaction, while being bonded in a co-

[18] T.R. Young, "Chaos Theory and Social Dynamics: Foundations of Postmodern Science," in Robin Robertson and Allan Combs, eds., *Chaos Theory in Psychology and the Life Sciences* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995), 220, 232.

[19] Russ Marion, "Complexity in Organizations: A Paradigm Shift," in A. Sengupta, ed., *Chaos, Nonlinearity, Complexity: The Dynamical Paradigm of Nature* (Berlin: Springer, 2006), 248.

[20] Margaret Wheatley, for example, talks about a return to "mythic wisdom." Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 115. Just like her, many other authors appeal to mythology, oriental (especially Buddhist or Taoist) wisdom, ancient tribal understandings of belonging, and forms of New Age spirituality. See in general on the popularity of the new science in the New Age movement, John P. Newport, *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview: Conflict and Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 446-469.

[21] It is sometimes referred to as 'living systems theory', as in Fredrickson, "An Ecclesial Ecology for Denominational Futures...," 146 ff and, most recently, in Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 233 ff.

[22] Cf. the references to complexity, emergence, and fractals in Leonard Sweet, Brian D. McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer, *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003). See also Leonard E. Hjalmarson, *An Emerging Dictionary for the Gospel and Culture: A Conversation from Augustine to Zizek* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), s.v. Chaos and Complexity.

[23] Leonard Sweet, *AquaChurch 2.0: Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2008), 219.

operative dynamic by a common purpose, and being open to influence from the outside environment. The word *complex* has to do with the interrelatedness and interdependence of agents as well as their freedom to interact, align, and organize into related configurations. The more agents are involved and the greater number of possible ways in which they can relate, the higher the complexity.[24] When a system's environment changes, so does the behavior of its agents, and, as a result, so does the behavior of the system as a whole. It is in the interactive process of experimenting and searching for new ways of doing things,[25] while making sense of the emerging patterns of meaning and knowledge, that people in an organization are said to be 'learning'. This enables their organization to constantly *adapt* to the ever changing conditions around it.

To sum up, in a system in which complexity is high, agents can generate novel behavior for the collective as a whole. Such a learning, neural-like network of interactions among interdependent agents who are connected to a cooperative dynamic by a shared goal, perspective or necessity is called a *complex adaptive system* (CAS).[26] Authors within the Emerging-Missional milieu who are influenced by complexity theory are likely to depict the church as a CAS.[27] But sometimes other organizations are also thus designated, for example, The Northwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.[28]

6.2.2 Self-organization and Nonlinearity

Another expression that we encounter in the EMC is that of a 'self-organizing' system. In the words of Phyllis Tickle, the church is a "self-organizing system of relations, symmetrical or otherwise, between innumerable member-parts that themselves form subsets of relations within their smaller networks, in interlacing levels of complexity."[29] The expression *self-organizing* can be understood as follows. Connectivity and interdependence in a human system, such as a local congregation, mean that a decision or action by any agent may affect related agents. When a system develops out of these interac-

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[24] There are many different interpretations of 'complexity'. Benyamin Lichtenstein submits in his survey that these interpretations do share an essence, i.e. to provide "new ways to understand *how and why order emerges*." Benyamin B. Lichtenstein, "A Matrix of Complexity for Leadership: Fourteen Disciplines of Complex Systems Leadership Theory," in James K. Hazy, Jeffrey A. Goldstein and Benyamin B. Lichtenstein, eds., *Complex Systems Leadership Theory: New Perspectives from Complexity Science on Social and Organizational Effectiveness* (Mansfield, MA: ISCE Publishing, 2007), 289.

[25] Cf. Darshan A. Desai, "Co-creating Learning: Insights from Complexity Theory," *The Learning Organization* 17, no. 5 (2010), 388-404.

[26] Cf. Mary Uhl-Bien, Russ Marion, Bill McKelvey, "Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting Leadership From the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Era," *The Leadership Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (2007), 302-303.

[27] A recent example is Robert Elkington, *Missional Imagination: Re-Visioning the Church In the West as a Missional Community* (lulu.com, 2011), 130 ff.

[28] Bryan D. Sims, "Complexity, Adaptive Leadership, Phase Transitions, and New Emergent Order: A Case Study of the Northwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church," (PhD diss., Regent University, 2009), 91-96. We return to this example below (6.4.3).

[29] Phyllis Tickle, "The Great Emergence," *Sojourners*, (August 2008), 30, as quoted in Andrew Sandlin, "Incompatible Views of the Church: High, Low and Emergent," *Christianity & Society* 19, no. 2 (Winter 2009), 36.

tions, or when an already existing system changes its internal structures spontaneously and adaptively in order to cope with or to manipulate its environment, this is called *self-organization.*[30] In a local church, for example, self-organization may take the form of a team spontaneously forming to perform a task (or for some other purpose). The team decides what to do, how to do it and when to do it, and no one outside this group directs those activities.[31]

Self-organization, in short, refers to the spontaneous emergence of order. This order arises from the interaction of individual elements of the system, but it may be difficult to predict the final state beforehand by studying the individual elements. Put in complexity terms, the interactions are *non-linear*. This means that there is not always a logical relation between cause and effect, input and output. Small changes in system variables can have disproportionate outcomes (cf. the 'butterfly effect').[32] Nonlinearity also contains the idea that the system as a whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Comparable to the "swarm intelligence"[33] of ants, for example, a swarm of bees as a whole operates according to a logic that cannot be discerned in any of the activities of individual bees.[34] As a collective, the bees (the agents) produce complex behaviors, which result in resilient beehives with an near-constant internal temperature of 98 degrees Fahrenheit and honeycombs with an amazingly perfect design.[35]

Applied to the Emerging-Missional milieu, the insight of nonlinearity is that the knowledge and innovative ideas that are generated when team members in a missional community work together are not just the sum of existing ideas, but rather, something quite new and possibly unexpected. It is quite fitting, then, that one of its proponents, John Casti, labels complexity theory "the science of surprise."[36] In this line of thinking, a Dutch scholar of public opinion calls the fundamental uncertainty of the future that is

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[30] Paul Cilliers, *Complexity and Postmodernism: Understanding Complex Systems* (London: Routledge, 1998), 90.

[31] Cf. Eve Mitleton-Kelly, "Ten principles of Complexity and Enabling Infrastructures," in Eve Mitleton-Kelly, ed., *Complex Systems and Evolutionary Perspectives on Organizations: The Application of Complexity Theory to Organisations* (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2003), 41-42.

[32] Meteorologist Edward Lorenz coined the well-known term 'butterfly effect' (the idea that the flap of a butterfly's wing in Brazil could potentially set off a tornado in Texas) to thereby illustrate the sensitivity of a complex nonlinear system like the weather to small changes in initial conditions.

[33] Eric Bonabeau and Christopher Meyer, "Swarm Intelligence: A Whole New Way to Think About Business," *Harvard Business Review* (May 2001), 107-114.

[34] See the section "Examples in Nature: Bees and Beehives," in Richard T. Pascale, Mark Millemann and Linda Gioja, *Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business* (New York: Crown Business, 2002), 116. Their book also contains many references to ant behaviour.

[35] Mathematicians have calculated that the design of a bees' honeycomb is the most efficient possible. It wastes no space at all and is the strongest and most effective structure for preventing collapse. See "The Mathematics of the Honeycomb," in James Nickel, *Mathematics: Is God silent?* (Ross House Books, 2001), 212-214.

[36] John Casti, as quoted in Mark C. Taylor, *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 24.

stressed by the new science the "metaprinciple of all metaprinciples."[37] Against this background, it is not surprising that one of the "new rules" for managers and leaders is to "be open to surprises across all level of scale."[38]

6.2.3 Emergence

One important term that is used in the EMC has yet to be explained, and that is *emergence*. Tim Keel, for instance, refers to the "new science of emergence" that teaches us that "life emerges in unique ways when an environment is created that allows for bottom-up and top-down interactions."[39] What does the concept of 'emergence' that Keel refers to designate? As is the case with complexity, there is no universally acknowledged definition of emergence, and there is still a lot of discussion and disagreement.[40] This is partly because reflections on emergence cover a broad array of sciences: from cosmology and quantum physics, through the biological sciences, and on to contemporary debates concerning neuroscience, consciousness, and religion.[41] The Emerging Church Movement comes in view as well: religious journalist Phyllis Tickle regards this movement as part of a vast cultural shift, which she calls "The Great Emergence."[42]

In general, the term 'emergence' is used by scientists to describe the spontaneous appearance of unprecedented orderliness in nature. In the first issue of the journal *Emergence* (1999), Jeffrey Goldstein offered the following definition of emergence: "The arising of novel and coherent structures, patterns and properties during the process of self-organization in complex systems."[43] According to the Dutch philosopher and theologian

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[37] Jaap van Ginneken, *Breinbevingen: Snelle omslagen in opinie en communicatie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2000), 309. English translation: *Collective Behavior and Public Opinion: Rapid Shifts in Opinion and Communication* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003). This book is an application of the new science on public opinion.

[38] James K. Hazy, "More Than a Metaphor: Complexity and the New Rules of Management," in: Steve Maguire, Peter Allen, and Bill McKelvey, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Complexity and Management* (London, UK: Sage, 2011), 530.

[39] Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 202-203.

[40] Among the most important topics of contention are the following: how should emergence be defined; what ontological categories of entities can be emergent; what is the scope of actual emergent phenomena; is emergence an objective feature of the world; does emergence imply or require the existence of new levels of phenomena; and in what ways emergent phenomena are autonomous from their emergent bases. See the introduction to Mark A. Bedau and Paul Humphreys, eds., *Emergence: Contemporary Readings in Philosophy and Science* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 3-6.

[41] Philip Clayton, "Conceptual Foundations of Emergence Theory," in Philip Clayton and Paul Davies, eds., *The Re-Emergence of Emergence: The Emergentist Hypothesis from Science to Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27. Carl Gillett goes so far as to conclude that "recent work on emergence in science-and-religion, as well as other areas, is at the heart of perhaps the grandest intellectual battle of our times." Carl Gillett, "The Hidden Battles over Emergence," in Clayton, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, 816.

[42] Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008).

[43] Jeffrey Goldstein, "Emergence as a Construct: History and Issues," *Emergence: Complexity and Organization* 1 (1999), 49. Note, however, the remark of Peter Corning that there is "no universally acknowledged definition of emergence." Peter A. Corning, "The Re-Emergence of 'Emergence': A Venerable Concept in Search of a Theory," *Complexity* 7, no. 6 (2002), 20.

Jacob Klapwijk, "the emergence of a higher level of organization implies a qualitative renewal that (a) is more than a reorganization of the properties that are characteristic of the previous level of being; (b) does not offer just an additional functionality but a structural renewal of the organism as a whole; (c) is so radical that a scientific explanation in the form of a total reduction to a previous level of being is excluded."[44] Generally speaking, "emergence theory focuses on the novelty, unpredictability, and irreducibility...of higher level phenomena."[45] Furthermore, theories of emergence can help to understand radical change and innovation in organizations: "It refers to those kinds of changes that are deeply rooted in the organization and that significantly increase an organization's capacity to quickly adapt to environmental changes and opportunities."[46]

To understand what this may mean for a Christian congregation, the following case may be helpful. A few years ago, an extensive study was conducted in Travis Park United Methodist Church (San Antonio, Texas). This local church was in severe decline when a handful of young people, partly out of boredom, had the idea of offering Sunday morning breakfasts to homeless people. The group served its first breakfast five weeks later. Within a short time, church volunteers were feeding over 200 homeless people on Sunday morning. A few years later, the church provided a day center for several thousand homeless people and served over 20,000 meals a year! Homeless people began joining the church, singing in the choir, and ushering at the major worship service. "Neither predicted nor intended, a cycle of continuous, radical change – for the church and its immediate environment – *emerged*."[47] In other words, in this local church, changes took place that were novel, unpredictable, and irreducible.

What was the role of leadership in the process? It appeared that the leaders of this church did not rely on top-down vision statements and prescriptions for change, but that they "successfully detected and labeled patterns in small changes that emerged."[48] The leaders acted as sense-makers, using language and symbols to encourage coherence and give meaning to the emerging changes. In sum, the researchers found that leaders in complex systems – that is, systems whose central feature is emergent, self-organizing behavior – *destabilize* rather than stabilize the organization; *encourage innovation* rather

[44] Jacob Klapwijk, *Purpose in the Living World? Creation and Emergent Evolution* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 94.
[45] Ibid., 95.
[46] Jeffrey Goldstein, James K. Hazy, and Benyamin B. Lichtenstein, *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership: Leveraging Nonlinear Science to Create Ecologies of Innovation* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 77.
[47] Donde Ashmos Plowman et al., "Radical Change Accidentally: The Emergence and Amplification of Small Change," *Academy of Management Journal* 50, no. 3 (June 2007), 516.
[48] Donde Ashmos Plowman and Dennis Duchon, "Dispelling the Myths about Leadership: From Cybernetics to Emergence," in Mary Uhl-Bien and Russ Marion, eds., *Complexity Leadership, Part I: Conceptual Foundations* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008), 140.

than innovate; *interpret change* rather than create change, and *manage words* rather than manage people.[49]

In summary, complexity has to do with the interrelatedness and interdependence of individuals and groups in an organization (e.g. a local congregation). It also refers to their freedom to interact, align, and self-organize. The more these 'agents' are involved and the more they are able to relate, the higher the complexity and greater the likelihood of the emergence of new and unexpected ideas and nonlinear patterns of behavior. The role of the formal leaders in this process is to facilitate mutual interaction and to stimulate innovative change, while simultaneously interpreting what is happening to the community at large (i.e., making sense of it). Complexity theory may provide helpful concepts for these efforts, as it specializes in studying the dynamics of complex adaptive systems which are non-linear and have self-organizing attributes and emergent properties.

6.3 Complexity Theory and the Emerging-Missional Conversation

This section aims to clarify what authors in the Emerging-Missional milieu see as the contribution of complexity theory (or new science). In short, it is seen to provide an alternative, more suitable worldview, or macro paradigm (6.3.1); attractive and theologically fruitful perspectives on the church (6.3.2); and appealing metaphors and insights that help to better understand what is important concerning structures, leadership, change, creativity and innovation within twenty-first century Christian communities (6.3.3). As will become clear, these points are directly related to each other.

6.3.1 Complexity Theory and Worldview

An interpretation that resonates well within the Emerging-Missional milieu is that the new sciences (read: complexity theory) offer an *holistic worldview*, and therewith – in the words of Leonard Sweet – "shift our perspectives from control to flow, from abstract and disembodied reason to embodied and imaginative reason, from representation to participation, from literalism to metaphor, from fixed (or flexible) to fluid."[50] Another attractive aspect of the holistic quality of the new sciences is that they emphasize the interdependency and relationality of our world – Sweet calls this the 'Wholeness Principle'. "At the very foundations of the universe, at the most fundamental and sensitive levels of the atomic and subatomic, physics has unveiled the truth that there is a relational, communal, interdependent, and interpenetrating structure to reality. Even galaxies

[49] Donde Ashmos Plowman et al., "The Role of Leadership in Emergent, Self-organization," *The Leadership Quarterly* 18 (2007), 354.

[50] Leonard Sweet, *Post-modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 152.

group together in clusters."[51] Simply put, according to Sweet, nature underlines what the Bible already told us about what is important in life, and also in the church, viz., relations and community. Within the EMC, worldview issues are thus seen as critical to church design. "Ecologically based world views yield leadership structures, participatory expectations, and community impact awareness different from those of other more 'self-centered, humanistic worldviews....Hierarchical cosmologies yield hierarchical ecclesiologies, while egalitarian, participatory worldviews demand more collaborative structures."[52]

6.3.2 Complexity Theory and Church

Complexity theory provides attractive ways of thinking about the church – and broader, the kingdom of God. One of the popular concepts in the EMC is that of 'network'.[53] For example, Dwight Friesen, in his book *Thy Kingdom Connected*, provides "a relationally connective paradigm of God's networked kingdom." His hope is that "when this relational paradigm...is applied to the study and praxis of ecclesiology, the people of God will be better prepared to live into the image of God, thus incarnating the mission of God."[54] The most important contribution of complexity theory, however, is that it undergirds the legitimacy of conceiving of the church as an 'organism',[55] with all that this entails. The next paragraph gives a short overview of this idea.

"Your life and your community are living organisms," Leonard Sweet informs his readers. "That word *organism* means they are by definition self-organizing, complex, adaptive, self-regulating systems. An organic system makes it up as it goes along. Each system will organize itself differently, nourish itself differently, heal itself, and reproduce itself."[56] In the same vein, Joseph Myers suggests "using principles of *organic order* to develop an environment where community can emerge,"[57] instead of relying on a master plan or fixed church model. Howard Snyder concurs, interpreting the church as "a complex organism, partly because it is a living organism."[58] In a book chapter that is headed "The Church – *A Complex Organism*" Snyder discusses several lessons from the so-

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[51] Leonard Sweet, *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic* (Dayton, OH: Whaleprints, 1991), 111.

[52] Linda Bergquist and Allan Kerr, *Church Inside Out: A Guide for Designers, Refiners, and Re-Aligners* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 99.

[53] Some scholars interpret complexity theory to be a theory of networks. See for example Albert-László Barabási, "Scale-Free Networks: A Decade and Beyond," *Science* 325 (July 24, 2009), 412-413.

[54] Dwight J. Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church Can Learn from Facebook, the Internet, and Other Networks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 20.

[55] Friesen also uses much organic metaphors, even freely mixing them with network language, for example by calling the pastor a "network ecologist." Ibid., 112 ff.

[56] Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2009), 43.

[57] Joseph R. Myers, *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 27, 41.

[58] Howard A. Snyder with Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 31.

called complexity sciences.[59] Erwin McManus, pastor of Mosaic, Los Angeles, purports to do the same. He suggests that the most basic lesson is that "we know that the church has the capacity for environmental adaptation."[60] Neil Cole's book *Organic Church* contains not only biological analogies and metaphors, but also references to chaos theory and fractals, both taken from mathematics.[61] Likewise, chaos theory features large in Alan Hirsch's *The Forgotten Ways,* as do insights from biology and emergence.[62] Tim Keel also refers to the new science of emergence, as we saw above. He adds that Emergent Village "takes its name from this emerging branch of science"[63] – which, incidentally, is incorrect.[64] Parallel to Keel's interpretation, the German writer Fabian Voigt states that *the* claim of the Emerging Church Movement – even in the name itself – is that recently discovered laws on how complex organisms emerge and function can be transferred to the church.[65] In his booklet, Voigt aims to sketch an introduction to what the Emerging Church is, and he does so by appealing to the fields of emergence and biology.[66]

6.3.3 Complexity Theory, Church Structures, and Change

Both Kester Brewin from the UK and Fabian Voigt are among the most explicit on the implications of complexity theory for structures, leadership and change within the church. A short description of their views is as follows.

Emergent systems have the following four characteristics, according to Kester Brewin.[67] (1) They are *open* to their environment: sensing it, responding to it and, in turn,

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[59] Snyder, *Decoding the Church*, 31 ff.

[60] Erwin Raphael McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church GOD had in Mind* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001), 14.

[61] Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 123-129. In his *Organic Leadership*, Cole refers to popular leadership books that are influenced by insights from complexity theory, stating that these "have more to do with the kingdom than do most of the organizational books and seminars available in Christendom." Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 170.

[62] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 247-271. Cf. 5.4.1, above.

[63] Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 202-203.

[64] The name Emergent [Village] was chosen because of its association with the 'coming to the surface' of new organic life, see 2.2.2. This is not the same as a reference to the *science* of emergence.

[65] Fabian Voigt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church* (Glasshütten/Emmelsbüll: C&P Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006), 2.2-2.5. (The booklet does not contain page numbers, but references to parts of chapters.) Voigt refers to the book of Lloyd Morgan, *Emergent Evolution* (1923), which describes the spontaneous emerging of order in complex systems.

[66] Note that his definition of the Emerging Church also has biological overtones: "Die 'Emerging Church' ist eine Kirche, die in der Lage ist, sich bewusst auf ihre jeweiligen Lebensbedingungen einzustellen, weil sie sich in einem regen Austausch mit der Umwelt befindet und sich selbst als Einfluss nehmender Teil der Gesellschaft versteht." [The Emerging Church is a church that is able to consciously prepare herself for the actual prerequisites for life, because she finds herself in a regular exchange with the environment and sees herself as an influential part of society.] Voigt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church*, 5.1.

[67] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 75-86.

shaping it. (2) They *adapt* themselves to its unique and localized needs. (3) They are *learning systems* in that a 'virtuous cycle' of sensing, learning, adapting and changing is going on constantly. "It is not parachuted in every four years for a big shake-up, but permeates the whole organism and is continually effecting changes quietly in the background."[68] (4) They have *distributed knowledge*: knowledge is not stored centrally, for example, in 'all knowing' leaders, but it is dispersed over a large variety of agents (cf. the Internet).

Fabian Voigt has basically the same analysis.[69] He comments on six aspects of complex systems: openness, adaptability, willingness to learn, decentralization, free information flows, and change that is fueled by bottom-up processes. These characteristics are then applied to the church [*Gemeinde*], since the church can also be called an emergent system, according to Voigt. Theologically, he grounds his approach in a theology of creation [*schöpfungstheologischen Ansatz*]: God's creation appears to reveal more about how healthy communities (complex adaptive systems) function than we ever thought possible. Brewin doesn't refer to the creation, but to the *incarnation* as a theological principle: "I believe that if the body of Christ is going to become... incarnate in the emergent city, then it will need to become emergent itself. To do this, we need to first understand something of the science of emergence."[70]

What are the characteristics of an 'incarnate, emergent' church? Or, what does God's creative work in nature teach the church?[71] Briefly, applying the principles of the science of emergence to the church is, in the words of Brewin, "all about bottom-up change."[72] The emergent church "will be committed to sensing changes in its environment and through this be able to adapt and respond to them, as well as use its memory and wisdom to pre-empt change and actually influence its environment too."[73] It is about *change*[74], Voigt concurs: "Change is not a negative word [*kein Unwort*], but a continuous and existential process in which all elements participate."

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[68] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 81.

[69] Voigt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church*. Since this is a small booklet, no detailed references are given in following footnotes.

[70] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 53.

[71] Cf. Alan Hirsch, "Why would we not look to creation itself for clues as to how God himself has intended for authentic human life and community to manifest?...The cosmos itself seems to operate in a profoundly intelligent way; the more we find out about it from science, from the structures of atoms, the patterns of weather, the migration of birds, the human psyche, the more stunningly ingenious it all seems." Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 180. Hirsch's suggestion is clearly that the study of nature yields important clues for the church.

[72] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 16.

[73] Ibid., 85.

[74] Note that the recurrent emphasis on *change* in the EMC is not disconnected from theological reflection – on the contrary. As Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim put it, "Innovation is deeply rooted in our theology. In fact, we can basically acknowledge that simply to encounter God is to change; it will always require change in us, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote." Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 199. They continue by referring to the well-known emerging church leader Erwin McManus, "who sees God as both

Change, moreover, is not directed from above – this is impossible – but instigated and carried out from the bottom up. The role of leaders in emerging churches is much more of a background role than is the case in most traditional churches. Their role is not to plan and subsequently announce change, but to resource it, by facilitating free information flow and intensive communication between all members of the community.[75] The churches of the future, Voigt announces, "reduce their leading organs to a minimum." The structures that are chosen should help increase adaptability, flexibility, and, above all, the sense of responsibility that each individual has for the community as a whole. The church needs to become an "open source" – like Linux – "with distributed agents able to feed solutions, rather than it being left to a closed clique of experts."[76]

6.4 Critical Discussion

It appears that some important criticisms and *caveats* can be suggested concerning the popularized use of insights from complexity theory in the literature of the EMC, without discarding the relevance of complexity theory for churches and leadership in the twenty-first century. These criticisms can be subdivided in two categories, those of epistemology (6.4.1) and ontology (6.4.2). Our discussion also brings a few ethical questions to the fore. We offer some appreciative comments in a final subsection (6.4.3).

6.4.1 Epistemological Issues

A basic question concerns the appropriateness of using ideas and concepts from a young, nascent field of 'hard' science on the social terrain – complexity theory is, at its core, highly mathematical. This endeavor as such is not new. In the nineteenth century, sociologist Henry Carey believed that 'social attraction' was a legitimate application of Newton's theory of gravitation (which concerns attraction between material objects). As I.B. Cohen points out, however, Carey's ideas were not only faddish, but plainly wrong: Newton's theories do *not* fit social dynamics.[77] How can we be sure that ideas derived from complexity theory – which are said to contribute to a contemporary 'physics of so-

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the originator of change and the one who demands it from us. He points out that many of the most important words in the scriptures (*repentance*, *justification*, *conversion*, *discipleship*, *new life*, *sanctification*) involve movement and change. He then goes on to encourage leaders to keep up with the leadership of God in this manner by promoting innovation and embracing a culture of change..." Ibid.

[75] This insight is – in various forms – widely echoed in EMC literature on leadership. Robert Dale, to mention just one example, writes that "Communities are always in conversation. In fact, leadership processes are conversations – guided and free-flowing – between communities and contexts, people and places. People in communities are constantly interacting, and leaders 'host' these interactions." Robert D. Dale, *Seeds for the Future: Growing Organic Leaders for Living Churches* (St. Louis, MS: Lake Hickory Resources, 2005), 29.

[76] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 87.

[77] I. Bernard Cohen, "Analogy, Homology, and Metaphor in the Interactions between the Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences, especially Economics," in Neil de Marchi, ed., *Non-Natural Social Science: Reflecting on the Enterprise of* More Heat than Light (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 11-12, 34, 36.

ciety'[78] – are not similarly inappropriate when they are applied to the church, or to organizations in general?[79] In other words, how can we escape 'epistemological domain conflation', which "involves the denial of different kinds of co-existing realities or discourses?"[80] More specifically, how can physical models account for the intricacies of human behavior, including the role played by emotion?

To illustrate the problem from another angle, the field of biology is also very important in complexity theory. Biology has, however, often been abused by social scientists in the past, with horrendous social and political consequences.[81] Moreover, "biology is not itself free of mechanistic metaphor and reductionist methods. A large number of biologists are committed to reductionism, even explaining biological phenomena in physical terms."[82] How can we be sure, then, that viewing churches as 'living systems' is not equally, albeit unwittingly, reductionistic?

It is important that the limitations of the 'complexity' approach are acknowledged and that the methodology is carefully considered and applied. In the literature of the EMC, however, one seldom encounters such methodological considerations. Authors in the EMC base their arguments on popularized accounts of complexity science and its applications to management or organization theory. This might, perhaps, make their arguments attractive at first glance, but not very persuasive when analyzed in a more critical way. For example, caricatures are often made – or implied – concerning the 'old' versus the 'new' science and its implications. Consider the following statement of Kester Brewin: "Living in an emerging, complex, bottom-up city, we attend churches that are hugely top-down, mechanistic, obsessed with hierarchy and authority."[83] In this quote, the city is idealized as a specimen of spontaneous processes of emergence, i.e. nonlinear processes in nature, while churches are associated with mechanical thinking and top-down linearity. In reality, however, *both* linear and nonlinear processes can be found in

[78] "Scientists are beginning to realize that the theoretical framework that underpins contemporary physics can be adapted to describe social structures and behavior, ranging from how traffic flows to how the economy fluctuates and how businesses are organized." Philip Ball, *Critical Mass: How One Thing Leads to Another* (London: Arrow Books, 2005), 13.

[79] As if anticipating this question, the editors of a recent handbook on complexity and management state the following: "Complexity is the science of organization – and in particulars [*sic*] its origins and evolution – and is therefore the natural framework for considering organization and connected entities." Steve Maguire, Peter Allen, and Bill McKelvey, "Complexity and Management: Introducing the *SAGE Handbook*," in: Steve Maguire, Peter Allen, and Bill McKelvey, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Complexity and Management* (London, UK: Sage, 2011), 3.

[80] Petruska Clarkson and Katerina Nicolopoulou, "Developing Existing Consciousness about Complexity: Seven Domains of Discourse," in Mitleton-Kelly, ed., *Complex Systems and Evolutionary Perspectives on Organizations*, 234.

[81] See, for example, Michael Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

[82] Sabine Maasen and Everett Mendelsohn, *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 347.

[83] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 62.

nature; they should not be set against each other as opposites.[84] Moreover, an epistemological problem seems to underlie Brewin's reasoning, which can be sketched as follows. Thinking in linear, 'law-like' terms is rejected as belonging to a 'mechanistic' past, while, at the same time, the reader is persuaded to believe in other 'laws' (of emergence, nonlinearity, self-organization, etc.). Much weight is given to notions such as 'instability' and 'uncertainty', but this is done with much certainty. "This rehearses the postmodernist's dilemma of proscribing fixity and firmness yet holding such proscriptions fixedly and firmly."[85]

Furthermore, in literature of the EMC it is not sufficiently acknowledged that complexity theory is essentially a descriptive theory, rather than a normative theory. It reports evolution and it analyses, and suggests how to analyze phenomena, but it does not speak to values, norms, morals, responsibility or accountability. "Complexity theory is highly pragmatic and suggests that what is right at any moment is what works at that time to ensure survival."[86] This makes complexity theory vulnerable to the charge of relativism. In addition, we are warned not to leap the chasm that exists between description and prescription too quickly.[87]

Authors in the Emerging-Missional milieu, however, are prone to offer normative statements that, when put into practice, could prove to be damaging. Suppose, for instance, that church leaders started acting on Bill Easum's conjecture (derived from popularized notions of chaos theory[88]) that "the future belongs only to those who can change the fastest and with the least amount of angst," and that, therefore, "the last thing they seek is balance":[89] the result would likely be quite chaotic!

It is quite fascinating that the results of this kind of reasoning can actually be observed in the impending demise of Emergent Village as an organization. In 2008, it was decided to decentralize leadership, in accordance with its principal disdain for structure and formalization. "In doing so," two commentators observe, "it neglected to recognize a key attribute of successful emergent systems: form."[90] The authors conclude that iro-

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[84] Cf. Bill Frederick, "Frontier, of Course," in Michael Lissack, ed., *The Interaction of Complexity and Management* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002), 247.

[85] Keith Morrison, "Complexity Theory, School Leadership and Management: Questions for Theory and Practice," *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 38, no. 3 (2010), 378. Cf. Aaron C.T. Smith and Clare E. Humphries, "Complexity Theory as a Practical Management Tool: A Critical Evaluation," *Organization Management Journal* 1, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004), 91–106.

[86] Keith Morrison, "Educational Philosophy and the Challenge of Complexity Theory," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 40, no. 1 (2008), 29-30.

[87] Cf. Philip Ball, "What a physics of society cannot do is tell us how we should live our lives, how we should define our individual and collective responsibilities, how to decide what is important....There are no laws of nature that tell us how to behave or how to govern." Ball, *Critical Mass,* 576.

[88] See 5.4.1, above.

[89] Bill Easum, "Mid-storm Equations for the Emerging Church," in Leonard Sweet, ed., *The Church of the Perfect Storm* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 96-97.

[90] Travis I. Barbour and Nicholas E. Towes, "The Emergent Church: A Methodological Critique," *Direction* 30, no. 1 (2010), 37.

nically, the "commitment of emergents to one aspect of emergence (the self-organizing principle) keeps them from more fully appreciating what true emergence means."[91] This is a perceptive assessment, and it is worth adding that in the more sophisticated forms of complexity theorizing, leadership has not become any less important than it previously was – as is often suggested in popular accounts[92] – but is seen to *function in a different way* than it would in more stable conditions. For example, "emergent leaders encourage *unplanned* interaction in teams that can speed up the emergence of distributed intelligence throughout an organization," and they "use language as a means for sense making related to emergent patterns and order."[93]

6.4.1.1 Lack of Conceptual Rigor and Realism

Authors of popular books often use the vocabulary of complexity theory in a loose, vague, oversimplified or even incorrect way, leading to "blatant malapropisms as 'organizational entropy' or 'adding chaos to organizations'."[94] Since these publications are also popular within the EMC, it is not surprising to see that concepts from complexity theory are often used with a lack of precision within this conversation. Tim Keel, for example, opts for a description of church leaders as 'environmentalists' on the basis of the science of emergence. What does this entail? "Environmentalists can help to shape relational and spiritual ecologies that generate life as the natural outgrowth of a healthy and dynamic ecosystem."[95] The teeming organic metaphors in this description do not clarify what the concrete behavior of such a leader consists of – and where exactly it differs from that of an "administrator running programs."[96] Concepts are often left vague or unclear, and partly because of this it is doubtful how practical and realistic the proposals are. At the very least, authors in the EMC would do well to acknowledge that the need for advocating (even the possibility of having) 'bottom up' change and shared leadership in a particular congregation depend on many factors, including the theology,

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[91] Barbour and Towes, "The Emergent Church: A Methodological Critique," 37.

[92] Much of the popular literature that seeks to connect complexity theory to the field of leadership gives the impression that 'self-organization' will only come about if enough hierarchical command and control infrastructures are dismantled. EMC authors are prone to echo this sentiment. This is, however, a misunderstanding of what complexity science means for organizations and leadership. Goldstein et al., *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership*, 80 and 128.

[93] Sims, "Complexity, Adaptive Leadership, Phase Transitions, and New Emergent Order," 21-22.

[94] Jeffrey Goldstein, "Complexity and Management: An Expanding Traveling Wave," in Michael Lissack, ed., *The Interaction of Complexity and Management* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002), 258.

[95] Keel, *Intuitive Leadership*, 242.

[96] Ibid. Other authors do provide some specific guidelines, however. For example, the leadership conception of Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk is close to that of Tim Keel, i.e., "cultivating an environment that innovates and releases the missional imagination present among a community of God's people." Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 5. In several chapters (pp. 143-203) they explain what this means in practical terms.

identity, vision, polity, lifespan, state, style, and stance of the congregation.[97] Furthermore, the different social systems to which participants belong, are influenced by their respective histories, which should also be taken into account.[98]

In addition, it appears that Kester Brewin's idea of "distributed agents able to feed solutions"[99] works best when members in a specific organization are highly educated, self-managing and self-leading.[100] It is to be expected that this ideal will not easily accommodate church members who cannot operate creatively, rationally and responsibly because of mental, physical, or emotional limitations.[101] Complexity theory enthusiasts often seem to assume that people are willing to live in an open, unpredictable and non-linear world. But as many church pastors would affirm, a lot of people prefer equilibrium and certainty.[102]

6.4.1.2 Complexity Metaphors

Since metaphors are central to the EMC (see chapter 5), it is not surprising to learn that complexity theory is mostly used as a rich reservoir of striking and inspiring metaphors.[103] It must be acknowledged, however, that these metaphors are sometimes used in rather loose ways, which can result in superficiality, "old prescriptions in new jargon, or careless advice."[104] For example, Dwight Friesen is enthusiastic about network theory and the "interconnections of the world created by God."[105] He continues, "Some call it the 'web of life'; others call it 'Gaia'; and Jesus revealed it as the 'kingdom of God'."[106] Friesen does not stop to ask himself if these concepts really refer to the same thing.

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[97] Israel Galindo, *The Hidden Lives of Congregations: Discerning Church Dynamics* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004), 170. (Galindo explains these concepts in his book.)

[98] K. Houchin and D. MacLean, "Complexity Theory and Strategic Change: An Empirically Informed Critique," *British Journal of Management* 16 (2005), 152, 164.

[99] Brewin, *The Complex Christ*, 87.

[100] Gayle C. Avery, *Understanding Leadership: Paradigms and Cases* (London: Sage, 2005), 30, 41, 117.

[101] A recurring theme in interviews with leaders of emerging churches in urban deprived areas in the UK was that of "leaders going into these urban poor situations hoping to build up leadership teams involving local people and finding that there was a perceived or actual lack of skills, low self-esteem leading to a lack of confidence in what skills they did have and other deep needs that stopped people being able to contribute." Eleanor Williams, *Fresh Expressions in the Urban Context* (n.p.: YTC Press, 2007), 56.

[102] "The discourses of complexity may over-emphasize unpredictability, difference, diversity, openness, change, freedom and emergence, and under-emphasize similarity, sameness, the value of homogeneity, predictability and control. Perpetual novelty, agency and autonomy are not characteristics of many people's lives." Morrison, "Educational Philosophy and the Challenge of Complexity Theory," 31-32.

[103] Note that this is also quite common outside the Emerging-Missional milieu. According to Ken Baake, the term 'complexity' often functions "as a collective abstraction that shepherds more concrete terms into *making metaphoric contacts* [emphasis added] across fields." Ken Baake, *Metaphor and Knowledge: The Challenges of Writing Science* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 181, cf. 202. Baake's study provides an extensive analysis of the use of metaphors within the Santa Fe Institute (in which complexity theory is studied).

[104] Ralph D. Stacey, Douglas Griffin and Patricia Shaw, eds., *Complexity and Management: Fad or Radical Challenge to Systems Thinking?* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2.

[105] Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected*, 19.

[106] Ibid.

While he uses metaphors exuberantly, he doesn't specify the differences and points of overlap between the source domains from which they are taken and the target domains to which they are applied.[107] In addition, it is not always easy to discern exactly what he is trying to convey. For example, while he is presumably hinting at the potential for conflict that exists when people try to form a community, Friesen writes the following: "Network ecologists are mindful of the connective space necessary for the process of the catalytic conversation of potentially toxic energies that inevitably arise when lives bump into each other."[108] In our opinion, the metaphors in this quote obscure rather than illumine. That being said, within EMC publications – including those of Friesen – we also encounter helpful metaphors which are inspired by concepts derived from complexity theory, including the theory of networks.[109]

6.4.2 Ontological Issues

Margaret Wheatley ventures that organizations are not just *like* living systems, but that they are literally alive.[110] Wheatley is often cited in the EMC, and this interpretation of hers (and of other authors[111]) is often appropriated as well, sometimes along with its New Age connotations.[112] In this line of thought, organizations are spoken of in highly idealistic and reified terms such as 'living systemic wholes', with intentions or qualities such as 'harmonious', 'caring', or 'soul'. This approach, however, risks covering up the greed, envy, jealousy, aggression, power struggles and ideological influences that are as much a part of human life as caring, loving and giving are.[113] Douglas Griffin submits that the highly idealistic holistic philosophy behind many trade books on complexity

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[107] Cf. Angelique Chettiparamb, "Metaphors in Complexity Theory and Planning," *Planning Theory* 5, no. 1 (2006), 77.

[108] Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected*, 112.

[109] Friesen rightly sees a connection between network theory and complexity theory. As Goldstein et al. write, "Networks that combine scale-free, hub-type, and clustered periphery networks tend to be associated with naturally growing, 'self-organizing' complex systems that are constrained by system-level demands from the environment." Goldstein et al., *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership*, 160.

[110] Cf. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 85. The universe itself – in which organizations are embedded – is living as well, Wheatley suggests on many pages of her book.

[111] Cf. Lewin and Regine, "Businesses are not only *like* natural ecosystems, but also share some fundamental properties, specifically nonlinear processes." Lewin and Regine, *The Soul at Work*, 34-35. Richard Pascale and his co-authors write: "'Living systems' isn't a metaphor for how human institutions operate. It's the way it is." Pascale et al*., Surfing the Edge of Chaos*, 7.

[112] New Age type literature, for example publications of Ken Wilber, is not shunned within the progressive wing of the EMC. Rob Bell, for one, advises thus, "For a mind-blowing introduction to emergence theory and divine creativity, set aside three months and read Ken Wilber's *A Brief History of Everything*." Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 194n143.

Canadian minister Bruce Sanguin goes much further in his *The Emerging Church: A Model for Change and a Map for Renewal* (Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2008). In his specious proposal for a creation-centred, evolutionary paradigm, Sanguin combines New Age thought, popular scientific conceptions of emergence, and extremely liberal theological convictions. This emphatically non-evangelical author is, however, not representative of (nor well-known within) the Emerging-Missional milieu.

[113] Douglas Griffin, *The Emergence of Leadership: Linking Self-Organization and Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 55.

and leadership can itself be considered to constitute an ideology, with its concomitant forms of rhetoric. "The appeal to ancient system, the reification of organizations as living organisms and the belief in a whole outside the experience of local interaction in the living present, taken together, reflect an underlying ideology that underpins particular challenges to current power relations."[114] If Griffin is correct in his warning about idealistic, even ideological thinking – and his argument seems compelling[115] – we should be cautious to conceptualize churches as systems that are literally living. As we saw in 6.3.2, thinking about the church in organic terms is very popular in the EMC. Since New Testament authors also readily use organic metaphors to refer to the church, there is good reason to commend it.[116] Conceiving of the church as an organism may, however, become problematic when this means that less agreeable human traits such as envy or aggression are thereby covered up, or when the emphasis comes to lie on the functional subservience of the individual to the greater whole.[117] Another problem may be the lack of discussion about what the purpose or end of cooperative behavior should be.[118] At the same time, there are authors in the Emerging-Missional milieu, who realize that "there is a huge distinction between an ecological, living-systems *worldview* and the use of a living-systems organizing *metaphor*."[119]

6.4.3 Closing Remarks

The above sketched points of critique do not disqualify references to complexity theory as such. For one, Brewin, Voigt and other authors make us aware of our existing mental and theological models (or paradigms, in terms of chapter 3) of church, change and leadership, and ask whether they are appropriate in the twenty-first century. To men-

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[114] Griffin, *The Emergence of Leadership*, 55.

[115] Two fairly recent Dutch publications are full of the kind of rhetoric and ideological thinking that Griffin hints at. On the one hand, things deemed hierarchical, mechanistic, modern or Newtonian are repudiated. On the other hand, there is a stress on the importance of community, diversity, dialogue, organic thinking, post-heroic leadership, egalitarian relations, self-organization, and spiritual values. However, both emphases are combined with emphatic denunciations of Christianity and the Bible, and with metaphysical speculations that amount to a veritable declaration of faith in (the benevolent effects of) Cosmic Evolution. Jan Bommerez (with René Hoppenbrouwers), *Door de bomen het bos zien. Ontdek de eenvoud onder de complexiteit in relaties en organisaties* [Seeing the forest through the trees: Discover the simplicity under the complexity in relations and organizations] (Haarlem: Altamira-Becht, 2007) and Han Bekkers, *De druppel en de oceaan. Leiders voor een nieuwe wereld* [The drop and the ocean: Leaders for a new world] (Baarn: Ten Have, 2008).

[116] Thorsten Grahn, "Analogies between Gardening and Organizational Leadership," *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (May 2008), 1-21.

[117] "Positing a harmonious whole removes diversity and conflict. Since diverse persons, by definition, are not submitting to the whole and so not losing their individuality, there is bound to be conflict, but this is either ignored or condemned....most applications of complexity theory to organizations, ignore diversity and conflict and their role in generating novelty." Douglas Griffin and Ralph Stacey, eds., *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations* (London: Routledge, 2005), 24.

[118] See the extensive discussion in Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Community: A Trinity of Models* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1986), 138 ff.

[119] Linda Bergquist and Allan Kerr, *Church Inside Out: A Guide for Designers, Refiners, and Re-Aligners* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 362.

tion one example, the underlying ontology of many existing models that are used to think about church organization may be too static. In our opinion, writers in the EMC are correct in their intuition that complexity theory provides a more dynamic ontology that involves change, adaptation and the capacity for novelty. The literature of the EMC can stimulate readers to adopt different assumptions and vocabulary, such as thinking of the local church as a complex adaptive system, or 'ecosystem', that can be just as theologically grounded[120] and that result in alternative choices for the practical life of the church.

The following case is interesting in this regard. Terri Elton did research in five congregations of her own denomination (the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) which were changing to a missional model. It appeared to her that leaders who operated from within a so-called 'post-Newtonian, complexity worldview' – with its notions of change and interconnectivity – were able to assist these congregations in processes of change, with positive results. The new paradigm led to a focus on participatory management, the tending of relationships, working within networks, sharing information, and the creation of meaning.[121]

To give another example, in his study of emerging churches in Melbourne, Australia, Darren Cronshaw found that in one of the communities called Solace, people were intentionally reflecting on the relevance of chaos theory and organic systems thinking. "Participants in focus groups noted how much books like *Leadership and the New Science* and *Surfing the Edge of Chaos* have been influential."[122] The practical effect was that one of the leaders, Olivia, sought to learn and develop new skills in more organic and less hierarchical approaches. Of the four emerging churches that Cronshaw had been investigating, Solace had the most clearly articulated approach to leadership, change and decision-making. "Its leaders practice open consultation and give permission for anyone to contribute input and debate to whatever issue they like. They draw on sights from chaos and emergence theory for cultivating innovation in organic ways."[123] Empirical findings such as these are obviously relevant for understanding leadership within the Emerging-Missional milieu.

Furthermore, it appears that a methodologically careful use of complexity theory contributes to an understanding of innovation and organizational change, including change in church communities. The case of Travis Park United Methodist Church that was mentioned above (6.2.3) illustrates that "emergence comes about through a recognition,

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[120] See for example Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry*. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 123-137.
[121] Terri Martinson Elton, "Characteristics of Congregations that Empower Missional Leadership: A Lutheran Voice," in Craig van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 201.
[122] Darren John Cronshaw, "The Shaping of Things Now: Mission and Innovation in Four Emerging Churches in Melbourne," (DTh. thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2008), 281.
[123] Ibid., 285.

amplification, and dissemination of those seeds of innovation that come from micro-level diversity of experiments in novelty."[124] This particular church exemplified the kinds of change, bottom-up processes and leadership that Brewin, Voigt and others hinted at. Whatever the shortcomings of their approach, they might be pointing in the right direction – a direction that is, as yet, largely unexplored by Christians and churches.[125]

It is only recently that attempts have been made to study this subject in depth. The PhD dissertation of Bryan Sims highlights how coaches from Spiritual Leadership Inc[126] used complexity leadership theoretical concepts in an organizational setting, the Northwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, that found itself polarized and unable to function effectively. As a result of their intervention, the organization embarked upon positive changes. Several leaders of the conference spoke of a paradigm shift that was involved, "from technical and positional leadership, politics, control, division, distrust, and isolation to adaptive leadership, empowerment, connection, trust, risk, and a shared sense of purpose."[127] The lesson they drew was that, "In the midst of the right environment, the interactions of people within an intentional process have the capacity not only to produce innovation, but also have the ability to grow the adaptive capacity of the organization potentially producing new emergent order."[128]

We conclude that many authors in the EMC have rightly grasped that complexity theory does succeed in providing "a number of useful metaphors, which enable sense-making of many aspects of current organizational life,"[129] and that this may be relevant for churches as well. For example, complexity metaphors encourage people to take on a systemic vision,[130] and provide a richer understanding of change in organizations,[131] including churches. Moreover, complexity metaphors illustrate, exemplify, and focus one's attention, and they can also be used as constitutive 'models' to explore and extend

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[124] Goldstein et al., *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership*, 13.

[125] Malcolm Torry, writing in 2005, is still cautious and not very concrete, stating that "we might find that complexity theory has something to offer to the emerging discipline of the study of the management of religious and faith-based organizations." Malcolm Torry, *Managing God's Business: Religious and Faith-Based Organizations and their Management* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 62.

[126] SLI coaches work with teams or groups of people within an organization to discover, develop, and deploy spiritual leaders to bring greater missional effectiveness to their organizations and thereby transform their communities. SLI sees its work as creating environments that foster change and adaptation. In practice, this works means coaching groups toward healthy team environments with high levels of trust, healthy conflict, commitment, and accountability. Sims, "Complexity, Adaptive Leadership, Phase Transitions, and New Emergent Order," 34.

[127] Sims, "Complexity, Adaptive Leadership, Phase Transitions, and New Emergent Order," 98.

[128] Ibid., 34-35.

[129] Peter J. Murray, "So What's New About Complexity?," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 20 (2003), 16.

[130] Pak Tee Ng, "Examining the Use of New Science Metaphors in the Learning Organisation," *The Learning Organization* 16, no. 2 (2009), 173.

[131] Richard Burnes, "Complexity Theories and Organizational Change," *International Journal of Management Reviews* 7, no. 2 (2005), 73-90.

thought,[132] which can potentially lead to new insights. Complexity theory, furthermore, provides some useful advice for leaders, such as "favour discussion, dissent and diversity to encourage the emergence of patterns and ideas; set *general* [emphasis added] barriers to delineate behaviours...because an excessive control may inhibit progress possibilities...; allow time for communication and reflection; [and] provide clear and easy communication tools."[133] Perhaps most importantly, churches that are faced with challenges that defy known solutions and that are too complex for individual leaders to fully understand alone, may be helped by two empirically tested findings from complexity theory.

The first is that developing a common understanding through deep conversation (M. Wheatley) or reflexive dialogue (P. Senge) is essential to the process of organizational learning and change. That is to say, when participants in a community are able to confront their own assumptions and the assumptions of the other side – when they are open about their feelings and seek to build common ground – this may lead to "building new assumptions and a new culture."[134]

The second and closely related finding is that "true catalysts of innovation are the *web of relationships* [emphasis added] – in the nexus of interactions – that connect members to each other and to others in the environment."[135] This emphasis on relationships reminds us of the contours of ecclesiology in the EMC, which were outlined in chapter 2, and will later resurface in part B, which is specifically concerned with leadership issues.

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[132] Cf. Joep P. Cornelissen and Mario Kafouros, "The Emergent Organization: Primary and Complex Metaphors in Theorizing about Organizations," *Organization Studies* 29, no. 7 (2008), 961.

[133] Elena Olmedo, "Complexity and Chaos in Organisations: Complex Management," *International Journal of Complexity in Leadership and Management* 1, no. 1 (2010), 80-81.

[134] David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 9, 32-33, 135.

[135] Goldstein et al., *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership*, 1. While not explicitly referring to complexity theory, Alan Roxburgh does convey insights that are very similar, stating for example that "The new maps for missional life emerge from the interconnections and interrelationships that form between members of a congregation. They emerge from among the diffuse, noncentralized nodes of energy and creativity continually swirling among people." Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 179.

PART B. LEADERSHIP

CHAPTER 7. *"WE WANT LINUX, NOT WINDOWS"*: EMERGING-MISSIONAL VIEWS ON LEADERSHIP

7.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have argued that, in the EMC, the church is interpreted as the people of God who together form a 'living system' or organism, a dynamic and relational community which is an earthly reflection of the divine Trinity. The church, moreover, is a missional church. This means that she is called to actively participate in God's mission in specific physical and temporal contexts.

The present chapter addresses the implications of this for leadership. Its main theme concerns perspectives on leadership as found within Emerging-Missional literature. The emphasis is *not* on the widely spread criticisms and denunciations of 'modern' forms of leadership – which are thought to be unsuitable for postmodern, post-Christendom contexts[1] – but instead focuses on more constructive proposals. The central question of this chapter is the following: *What views on leadership exist in the EMC and how can these be interpreted in a larger theoretical framework?* After outlining some definitions, labels and metaphors of leadership (7.2), we will focus our attention on the main themes as follows:[2] church structures (7.3), authority and power (7.4), decision making (7.5) and leadership styles, roles, and tasks (7.6). Next, we compare EMC views and the so-called Organic leadership paradigm (7.7). We argue that EMC perspectives on the different leadership aspects can be conveniently located within this overarching framework, which incorporates important recent developments in the conceptualization and practice of leadership. The chapter concludes with a discussion of this topic, providing a transition to the next chapter.

As in the previous chapters, the sources used primarily consist of writings from within the Emerging-Missional milieu. In order to do justice to the diversity within this milieu, attention is given to a heterogenous theological and international spectrum of views and practices. Some additional insights, as well as descriptions and analyses of practices are obtained from a number of scholarly publications and theses.

7.2 Leadership Definitions, Labels, and Metaphors

Publications in the EMC on the topic of leadership mostly limit themselves to sketching the following: aspects of leadership that are thought to be crucial to leadership within

[1] Key terms attributed to so-called modern forms of church and leadership in the EMC are the following (put in alphabetical order): autocracy, bureaucracy, centralization, clergy centered, control, disempowering, hierarchy, inflexibility, position, program driven, status, and thinking in a 'mechanical' way.

[2] These themes are based on a classification of leadership aspects as discussed in Gayle C. Avery, *Understanding Leadership: Paradigms and Cases* (London: Sage, 2005). Another aspect of leadership that Avery mentions, is that of 'leadership philosophy'. We already covered this in 6.1, above.

missional communities, and why they are so important; what leadership tasks are involved; and what skills or other qualifications are important. Seldom do we encounter a clear definition of what leadership actually *is*. Alan Hirsch is one exception to this general rule, in that he does define the term, speaking of it as an influence, i.e., "a field that shapes behaviors."[3] This definition is both broad and vague. It is true that Hirsch tries to provide focus and content by using different labels such as apostolic leadership, organic leadership, inspirational leadership, adaptive leadership, and missional leadership, but he does not place these terms in an overarching conceptual framework.[4]

Some definitions of leadership offered by other EMC authors have a more specific focus than just 'influence'. Eddie Gibbs, for instance, equates the term leadership with *leaders*: "By missional leadership, I mean leaders who can read the Scriptures with fresh eyes, relating the story of redemption to the human condition in its present cultural contexts."[5] Likewise, the definition of missional leadership as proposed by Terri Elton focuses largely on leaders and, more specifically, on their self-perception. Elton suggests that missional leadership "includes persons who *understand their calling* [emphasis added] as disciples of Jesus Christ, *see themselves* [emphasis added] as equipped by God with certain gifts..., and believe that they are empowered by the Spirit to engage the world by participating in the creative and redemptive mission of God."[6] Scott Hagley, on the other hand, proposes to think of missional leadership as "something bigger than the missional leader."[7] He defines missional leadership as a discursive practice "whereby *congregations* [emphasis added] discern their identity by negotiating a plausible telling of the Scriptural story for their particular time and place."[8]

Although these authors offer important insights, their definitions do not cover all of the important aspects or dimensions of missional leadership. These aspects come more in view in the following list of leadership labels and metaphors.

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[3] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 152.

[4] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 162, 118, 151, 255.

[5] Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 20.

[6] Terri Martinson Elton, "Characteristics of Congregations that Empower Missional Leadership: A Lutheran Voice," in Craig van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 178.

[7] Scott J. Hagley, "Improv in the Streets: Missional Leadership as Public Improvisational Identity Formation," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 78-79.

[8] Ibid., 78. Hagley emphasizes that "those in positions of leadership...hold an important, but not determinative role in identity-formation." Ibid. 81. Their role is not determinative, because missional leadership is a "*process* [emphasis added] of cultivating conversation and discernment around the identity of the congregation in relationship to God's dynamic activity in the world." Ibid. 83.

7.2.1 Leadership Labels and Metaphors

One can hardly fail to notice the many different 'labels' and metaphors of leadership that are used and advocated in the EMC.[9] They are summed up here – only a few that are particularly important, or unknown, receive an explanatory footnote. As to labels, we encounter – in alphabetical order – *adaptive* leadership, *apostolic* leadership,[10] *authentic* leadership,[11] *catalytic* leadership,[12] *collaborative* leadership, *community-led* leadership, *connective* leadership,[13] *creative* leadership,[14] *cultivating* leadership,[15] *curating* leadership,[16] *dis-*

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[9] The most important sources for what follows, are Brewin, *The Complex Christ*; Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected*; Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church*; Gibbs, *Church Next* and *Leadership Next*; Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*; Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*; Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*; Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers*; Keel, *Intuitive Leadership*; McLaren, *Church on the Other Side*; Yaconelli, ed., *Stories of Emergence*; Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*; and Thomas R. Ryan and Ron A. Carucci, eds., *Leadership Stories from Tomorrow: Theologies, Philosophies, Anxieties & Hopes from Promising, Emerging Leaders* (Xulon Press, 2009). This book consists of essays written by students of the revisionist Mars Hill Graduate School [currently named The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology], who are working to imagine "a more relational way of leading that leans on the expertise and voices around them, a vision for leadership that values each voice in the room, where they become *curators of a conversation* [emphasis added] rather than the dictator of a particular view." Ryan and Carucci, eds., introduction to *Leadership Stories from Tomorrow*, xx, xxiv.

[10] In short, apostolic leadership has to do with facilitating ongoing renewal and missional innovation in the church. The concept has recently been worked out in Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012). In their thinking, "The apostolic role provides the key that unlocks the power of New Testament ecclesiology insofar as its ministry is concerned. In the power of the Holy Spirit, apostles are given to the ecclesia to provide the catalytic, adaptive, movemental, translocal, pioneering, entrepreneurial, architectural, and custodial ministry needed to spark, mobilize, and sustain apostolic movements." Ibid., xxxviii.

[11] Authenticity is thought to be a very important quality of leaders. An example of what is meant by authentic leadership is provided by the leader of a British emerging church, whose repeated affirmations of his own "weaknesses, frustrations, lack of confidence, or uncertainty about some aspects of Christianity" (Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church*, 110) helped to foster a transparent atmosphere in the community as a whole. On the role of authenticity in general, see James S. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

[12] Or 'catalyst'. See for example the digital magazine Catalyst Leadership, Leadership Journal Net, "Catalyst Leadership," http://christianitytoday.imirus.com/Mpowered/book/vcat12/i2/p2 (last accessed February 22, 2012). This creative and digitally savvy magazine/website truly puts the 'hip' into leadership, while engaging serious themes as well (the March-April 2012 issue, for example, is about consumerism).

[13] 'Connectivity' is a technical term describing connections between electronic devices. The word is based on 'connective' which is defined as 'connecting or serving to connect'. Note that *being 'connected'* refers to an established connection (past tense), whereas *connectivity* denotes a process that is presently going on, with options for the future. Increasingly the concept of connectivity is being used as a metaphor for intra- and inter-organizational interactions. Darl G. Kolb, "Exploring the Metaphor of Connectivity: Attributes, Dimensions and Duality," *Organization Studies* 29 (2008), 127-144. Within the EMC, the word connectivity is used either as an allusion to the relation building activities and capacities of leaders, or to the importance of relational (including digital) networks for joint missional activities. See for this last aspect Jonathan Augustine, *Weaving the Net: Missional Synergy through Cordic Connectivity* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010).

[14] Creative leadership in the EMC has to do with discovering and putting to use talents of artistry, creativity and imagination, during worship of in other community building events, but it can also refer to the cultivation of imaginative conversation and discernment around the identity of the congregation in relationship to God's dynamic activity in its context. Cf. Hagley, "Improv in the Streets..." 61-85.

[15] 'Cultivating' is the one expression that returns in Alan Roxburgh's works on missional leadership in particular. In Roxburgh's view, "leadership is about cultivating an environment that innovates and releases

cerning leadership, *dispersed* (or: *distributed*) leadership, *eco-leadership*, *enabling* leadership, *emergent* leadership, *empowering* leadership, *equipping* leadership, *facilitative* leadership, *flexible* leadership, *hubbing* leadership,[17] *implicit* leadership, *incarnational* leadership, *innovative* leadership, *inspirational* leadership, *interpretative* leadership, *intuitive* leadership, *kingdom-like* leadership, *missional* leadership,[18] *moral* leadership, *networking* leadership, *nonlinear* leadership, *organic* leadership, *passionate* leadership, *permission giving* leadership, *participative* or *participatory* leadership, *pioneering* leadership, *post-Christendom-style* leadership, *postmodern* leadership, *plural* leadership, *relational* leadership,[19] *representational* leadership,

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the missional imagination present among a community of God's people." Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 6. The cultivation metaphor receives an extensive comment in Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*, 182-188.

[16] "Curating is more collaboration with a collective than commanding a brigade. Authority comes not from your 'position', but from your *contribution* to your community's well-being, your *connection* to the artisan/priests you apprentice, and your inner *cohesion* and integrity, so what you say and what you do in your own life and among those who lead, coheres." Karen M. Ward, "Back to the Future: Visionary, Entrepreneurial, Missional Anglican Leadership for Today's Church," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 170.

[17] Dwight Friesen explains that "Hubs are facilitators of relational connection. Hubs help to link nodes to people, to ideas, to resources, to nature, to God, to x. This is a democratic process, democratic in the sense that the nodes decide when and for how long they will connect to any given hub. When a hub, for whatever reasons, no longer connects nodes in ways perceived to be valuable to the nodes, the nodes will seek connection elsewhere." Dwight Friesen, "Scale-Free Networks as a Structural Hermeneutic for Relational Ecclesiology," http://www.tapestrycalgary.com/blog/wpcontent/uploads/2006/04/ScaleFree%20Network20.pdf (accessed February 19, 2009). See also Dwight Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church Can Learn from Facebook, the Internet and Other Networks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009).

[18] In EMC literature 'missional leadership' likely is the most used term when the topic of leadership is under consideration in an encompassing way.

[19] The following quote is typical of EMC views: "The future of leadership holds relationships as primary." Ryan and Carucci, eds., *Leadership Stories from Tomorrow*, 62. Stephanie Spellers submits that "Of the church leaders I know who have...helped their communities to become missional Christian communities, the single most significant common denominator is their practice of relational (or community) organizing: *the art of building relationships* [emphasis added] in order to move groups into action around a common purpose." Stephanie Spellers, "The Church Awake: Becoming the Missional People of God," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 38. There is a parallel here with Small Christian Communities (SCC's) in the Roman Catholic Church. Since relationships are central in these communities, they "require a new style of leadership....Leaders cannot maintain their distance from those they serve." James O'Halloran, *Living Cells: Vision and Practicalities of Small Christian Communities and Groups* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2010), 221. Worldwide there are several thousands of SCC's. For a recent Dutch discussion, see Kees Slijkerman and Fred van Iersel, eds., *Kleine geloofsgroepen. Wegen naar een vitale parochie* (Heeswijk: Abdij van Berne, 2011).

responsive leadership, *sense-making* leadership,[20] *servant* leadership, *shared* leadership, *spiritual* leadership,[21] *team* leadership, *transformational* leadership, and *visionary* leadership.[22]

Of course, there is overlap between some of these labels, e.g. between 'creative' leadership and 'innovative' leadership, or between 'facilitative' and 'permission giving' leadership. Still, this arresting array of adjectives suggests something of the richness and complexity of leadership, as one of the topics written about in the EMC.

In addition to these diverse descriptors,[23] multifarious *metaphors* are used for leadership in the EMC. Jason Clark has coined – or borrowed – four:[24] ethical steward, information alchemist, systems thinker and tribal storyteller. Brian McLaren has come up with ten:[25] spiritual sage, listener, friend, dancer, amateur or learner, quest creator, apologizer, includer, seeker, and team builder. Other metaphors for leaders that are popular within the EMC are the following (in alphabetical order):[26] catalyst, change agent, cultivator, cultural architect, empowerer, entrepreneur, environmentalist, fellow journeyer or fellow traveler, gardener, jazz band leader, midwife, narrator, poet, spiritual artisan, spiritual guide, spiritual entrepreneur,[27] symphony conductor, and traffic controller.[28]

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[20] "Sensemaking...is not simply a process of leaders interpreting reality on others' behalf; rather, it involves a deep, relational conversation of listening and speaking in which all parties risk learning as well as changing....For pastors used to being the experts who hold the answers, this may represent a major redefinition of role." Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," 61. Clearly, sense-making (or meaning making) is seen as not just a task for pastors and leaders; others are also involved. As Scott Cormode puts it, "Leadership arises from the *mutual* [emphasis added] efforts of the people in the community to make meaning." Scott Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 9. On the term 'sense-making', see also chap. 5, n87.

[21] Spiritual leadership in the EMC has to do with (a) providing spiritual direction or mentorship; (b) practicing the classic spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, etc.) and encouraging others to do so as well; and (c) spiritual discernment, i.e. seeing where God is not at work, and keeping Him in the conversation. Spiritual leadership is considered to be very important, whereby it is acknowledged that the disciplines it is concerned with are "largely alien to most pastors, who in modernity were trained in the techniques of counseling, not spiritual formation and religious practice." Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 169.

[22] As is the case with sense-making, visionary leadership is conceived as a communal, conversational affair. In the words of Craig van Gelder, "Visionary leadership involves a large number of persons in both formal and informal roles who help shape a congregation's ministry....The emphasis here is on *leadership* rather than *leader*." Craig van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 148.

[23] Note that some ways of describing leadership – such as 'cultivating' leadership – are in fact also instances of metaphorical language.

[24] See 5.5.1.

[25] See 5.5.1.

[26] Sources here are the same as mentioned in n9. See, in addition, Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling?! Leaders Lost in Transition* (Eagle, ID: ACI Publishing, 2005), McManus, *An Unstoppable Force*, Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution*, and Leonard Sweet, *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic* (Dayton, OH: Whaleprints, 1991). He proposes leadership to be "an acoustical art" in Leonard Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 17. This book is packed with acoustical metaphors, as Sweet's *Aqua Church* is with aquatic ones, in congruence with his vision that leaders in postmodern times should be "metaphorical theorists". Leonard Sweet, *AquaChurch 2.0: Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2008), 132 (cf. our discussion in chapter 5).

[27] Note that there are no less than three 'spiritual' metaphors. This emphasis on spirituality has to do with the critique voiced in the Emerging-Missional milieu that "evangelicals have appropriated too much from

Again, there is some overlap here, for example, between a cultivator and a gardener. The point to notice for now is that within the EMC, metaphors and marks denoting leadership draw especially on images connected to creativity and the arts, the natural world and organic thinking, computers and the internet, and recent postmodern organization studies. In addition, 'missional', or apostolic, and 'spiritual' leadership are deemed essential.

7.3 Church Structures

In the EMC, it is acknowledged that there is no *best* way of organizing and structuring that will work equally well for all Christian communities, because "an organism is unique, growing out of one-of-a-kind symbiosis of its parts."[29] Also, since organisms live in different environments, they will face different demands and will consequently be forced to respond in varying ways.[30]

That being said, it is also stated that, in order to fit within the emerging postmodern context – which is conceived of as a fluid, shifting environment – church structures "will need to have the characteristics of a self-organizing system, open to change and centered on a clear purpose in order to survive."[31] Ideally, these structures are conducive to dialogue,[32] decentralized, dynamic, flat, flexible, fluid, highly relational[33] and network-

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the business world and that, broadly speaking, evangelical pastors are professional ministry CEOs and not specifically spiritual leaders." Scott Michael Davis, "A Comparative Analysis of Younger and Older Pastors' Perceptions of Leadership," (EdD thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006), 13. Davis' thesis is about leadership metaphors.

[28] It is worth noting that the leadership metaphors proposed in recent secular scholarship come very close to those within the EMC. Fahri Karakas, for example, discusses the emergence of seven new creative roles for organization development professionals in the 21st century: social artist, ethical pioneer, spiritual visionary, creative catalyst, cultural innovator, holistic thinker, and community builder. Fahri Karakas, "New Paradigms in Organization Development: Positivity, Spirituality, and Complexity," *Organizational Development Journal* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 11-26.

[29] Bob Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church: Learning from Emerging Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006), 134.

[30] Mary Jo Hatch, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 53, as quoted in Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church*, 124 and 133.

[31] Terri Elton, "Corps of Discovery: A Twenty-First Century Contextual Missiology for the Denominational Church in the United States," in Craig Van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 155.

[32] Cf. David Boshart, "If, in postmodernity, organizational structures are not to be controlled, it would seem that fostering productive dialogue that leads to generative learning will provide the best hope for organizational transformation." David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 119.

[33] Being relational is not just an abstract ideal but can be observed in reality, for example in Solomon's Porch, Minneapolis. Researcher Karyn Wiseman writes as follows of her experiences: "I believe this is one of the most approachable and engaging congregations that I have ever encountered. They are people-centered in their mission and ministry. They use the creative talents of their members in worship, music development, missional outreach, and small group ministries. They are definitely more concerned with 'being the church' than they are with 'going to church'." Karyn L. Wiseman, "Grace Space: The Creation of Worship Space for the Postmodern/Emerging Church," (PhD diss., Drew University, 2006), 189.

based. "What is required is a reconceptualization of church organization for a network age,"[34] Dwight Zscheile proposes. "The good news is that the church has been here before. The early church functioned essentially as a network of local congregations and house churches linked by personal relationships....Churches were held together not by centralized organizational structures, standardized policies, or hierarchical lines of authority, but rather by bonds of fellowship, teaching, and support among leaders and members, including itinerant apostles."[35]

In the literature of the EMC, the concept of 'network' includes many references to computer technology. "The ways that emergent Christians gather in communities," Tony Jones affirms, "have a lot in common with the traits of scale-free networks, open-source software, and wikis."[36] According to Jones, the following characteristics of Wikipedia are also operational in emerging churches (the 'Wikichurch'): open access, trust, mutual accountability, agility, connectivity, and "a certain messiness."[37] To be sure, open source does not mean anarchy, as some participants in the EMC, or certain outside observers, may think. An open source organization "still values some level of structure and clarity regarding purpose."[38] The particular value of open source thinking lies in its understanding that "the more you dictate process, the more you strangle creativity and innovation."[39]

"We want Linux, not Windows,"[40] is how Karen Ward[41] puts it. "With Linux, everyone is a coder. The code determines how the system works, and for Linux, there is great freedom to determine how the system works because each person can code or customize the system. With Windows, there is a fixed structure."[42] Ward recognizes that the community is placed in a vulnerable situation when all are allowed to participate – and especially, when all are allowed to take on the role of a leader. "There is always the threat of a virus in the form of a crazy person. However, this is okay, because the rest of the coders aren't crazy, and they can figure out a way to disable the virus, take down the

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[34] Dwight Zscheile, "Social Networking and Church Systems," *Word & World* 30, no. 3 (2010), 251.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Tony Jones, *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emerging Frontier* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 182.
[37] Ibid., 182-191.
[38] Landon Whitsitt, *Open Source Church: Making Room for the Wisdom of All* (Herndon, VA: Alban, 2011), 4.
[39] Ibid., 57.
[40] Cit. in Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 162-163.
[41] Karen Ward – a black woman ministering to whites, an aficionado of Belgian beers and techno-trance music, and self-proclaimed 'cyber monk' – is among the most well-known leaders in the Emerging-Missional milieu in the United States. She introduces herself with the following vignettes: "vintage xer. pomo pilgrim. liquid thinker. world citizen. sushi fan. mac user. beer hunter. cultural embed. event promoter. movement instigator. vision caster. liturgy curate. cyber monk. emerging christian. apostles church karebear. friend of god. servant of christ. 'post' everything." http://submerge.typepad.com/about. html (accessed February 23, 2009).
[42] Cit. in Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 162-163.

page....They take the person aside and deal with him peaceably, and they model the change we seek."[43]

Emerging churches attempt to give a concrete shape to their open source and network based ideals. For example, the steering group of Moot (UK) does not make all of the decisions, but rather "enables the community to run smoothly."[44] Beginning in September 2007, the steering group set up an online workspace – a 'wiki' – to develop thought, planning and organization. They explain that "this is an experiment in inclusive and transparent governance, promoting bottom-up ways of community development."[45]

This way of organizing, however, may also cause tension, as Ian Mobsby illustrates in his book *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church*.[46] The challenge concerning leadership structure, as Mobsby sees it, has to do with two rival ways of thinking about leadership in the four fresh expressions of church that he researched (Moot, B1 and Sanctus1, all in the UK, and Church of the Apostles in Seattle). One way of thinking is non-hierarchical and driven by a model of "shared communal leadership."[47] The other approach is a "mixture of the hierarchical and shared-communal."[48] There is also a parallel between the way of thinking and the extent to which participants share an Anglican identity. Some see Anglicanism as controlling, irrelevant or overly hierarchical, and therefore as something to be avoided.[49] Others are "happy to identify with Anglicanism as a rich tradition that supports their project."[50]

Mobsby formulates his perspective on leadership in emerging churches as follows: "It is true that in a post-Christendom and postmodern context, the role of the ordained leader needs to shift to skills of envisioner, empowerer, resource and facilitator. However there also needs to be some form of visible governance structure where accountability is strongly identified."[51] He argues in favor of a system that "gives representation of all those involved," but that "promotes some form of safety and boundaries as well."[52]

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[43] Karen Ward, as quoted in ibid., 168.
[44] Moot Community, "Community Organization," http://mootcommunity.wetpaint.com/ (accessed February 16, 2009).
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ian Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* (London: Moot Community Publishing, 2006), 64-65.
[47] Mobsby cites one participant in a (not specified) emerging church as saying, "Yes we love our flexibility and our organic identity...our non-existent, non-hierarchical...non-structure." As quoted in Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church*, 79.
[48] As quoted in ibid., 65.
[49] Karen Ward, for example, admits that her denomination is a weight around her neck. "They are a mainframe; instead, they should be a hub and a router. They see themselves as having the source and the content." Karen Ward, as quoted in Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 321.
[50] Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church*, 73.
[51] Ibid., 79.
[52] Ibid.

7.4 Authority and Power

Ideally, authority and power are not institutional, positional or based on academic credentials. This means that authority and power are not vested in an ordained clergy, denominational staff, self-proclaimed 'experts' or an intellectual elite.[53] In sociological terms, the benefits of the 'religious capital' brought by formally trained religious professionals are received, while certain limits are imposed on the "institutional effects of the social capital"[54] which tends to be developed by qualified religious professionals. This is done, for example, by employing clergy part-time, while employing local workers with little or no professional credentials on a full-time basis.[55] The pastor, moreover, often does not speak from a distant stage or pulpit that is raised several feet higher than the audience (indeed, many emerging churches intentionally do not have a stage or pulpit). Preferably, he or she speaks from the middle of the congregation. This is symbolic of how these communities attempt to overcome the distinction between clergy and laity. The 'laity' – a term that is mostly avoided – is to be restored as the driving force behind the ministry of the church,[56] including its worship. Since liturgy is understood as something that comes out of the life of a community, it seems as if anybody willing to "bounce ideas around"[57] can get involved in the shaping of worship services, as Jonny Baker (UK) writes. Baker's list includes poets, photographers, ideas people, geeks, theologians, liturgists, designers, writers, cooks, politicians, architects, moviemakers, storytellers, parents, campaigners, children, bloggers, DJs, VJs, and craft makers.[58]

Emerging church practices, furthermore, include communally written sermons, open mike time (an opportunity for people to share and respond) and online discussion forums regarding past and future sermon topics. "In the postmodern environment, the church must move away from the role of the preacher as the enlightened expert separated from the audience,"[59] Jason Clark declares. "Preaching must become a process

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[53] Whitsitt introduces James Surowiecki as claiming that "a group of normal people can outperform an expert almost every time if the following four conditions are met: diversity, independence of thought, decentralization, and aggregation of collective wisdom." Whitsitt, *Open Source Church*, 68. Congregations therefore "need to stop thinking they need an expert to solve their problems, for everything they need is already present in the diverse people God has gathered together in each community." Ibid., 95.

[54] Josh Packard, "Resisting Institutionalization: Religious Professionals in the Emerging Church," *Sociological Inquiry* 81, no. 1 (February 2011), 24.

[55] Ibid., 15.

[56] A fine example of the importance of the laity in the Emerging-Missional milieu is provided by the innovative and missionally minded Anglican church of St. Thomas in Sheffield, UK. Over thirty of its midsized missional communities – 'clusters' as they are called – are led by lay leader teams "all supported by secular employment....Their model of community is lightweight and low maintenance." Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen, *Clusters: Creative Mid-Sized Missional Communities* (Sheffield, UK: 3dministries, 2007), 37.

[57] Jonny Baker, "Curating Worship," *Liturgy* 26, no. 2 (2011), 17.

[58] Note how Baker describes the role of the leader as *curator*: i.e., to hold open a creative and generous space where the gifts of the diverse contributors might be shared and to manage a process whereby worship can be created through a creative team. "The old reflex of control has to be kept at bay to be replaced with trust – trust of the people, of the process, and for God to be present." Ibid.

[59] Jason Clark, "Via Media: The Necessity of Deeper Theological Reflection for the Genuine Renewal of Church in the Emerging Culture and Context," (DMin thesis, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, 2006), 84.

of connection and dialogue."[60] Instead of emphasizing positional or expert authority, the focus within the Emerging-Missional milieu is twofold.

First, leaders derive their influence from their character, competence, gifts, and moral, spiritual, or inspirational authority.[61] "In other words, authority is not invested by virtue of the office bestowed but by the trust and respect that are earned."[62] Leadership is thus interpreted in functional rather than sacramental ways. This is well illustrated by the fact that the concept of 'church office' does not play an important role[63] and that, generally, the distinction between 'clergy' and 'laity' is rejected, or at least softened.[64] Emerging church participants, in other words, do not believe that ordained leaders "bear the presence of Christ in a way that an ordinary believer cannot."[65] It should not be overlooked that there are dozens of emerging churches that do have ordained clergy, particularly those that belong to mainline denominations (e.g., Anglican, Lutheran or Methodist). Even in such communities, however, laity often preach sermons or respond to them in conversation during a designated feedback time. Gray-Reeves and Perham observe that "This is a clear shift in thinking about who is authorized to teach the faith, elevating the importance of personal experience and reflecting a desire to welcome into a public faith conversation the variety of perspectives found among those worshipping on any given occasion."[66]

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[60] Clark, "Via Media,", 84. Cf. Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 191-195; Leonard Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2007), 34; Doug Pagitt, *Preaching Re-Imagined: The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan, 2005), 12-22 and 113-118. The preaching of four well-known American EMC voices is analyzed in John Bohannon, "Preaching and the Emerging Church: An Examination of Four Founding Leaders: Mark Driscoll, Dan Kimball, Brian McLaren, and Doug Pagitt" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

[61] Cf. Hirsch and Catchim, "The most authentic forms of apostolic ministry forgo the hierarchical, top-down, transactional forms of leadership and power and draw mostly on what can be called inspirational, or moral, authority. Built on vision, meaning, and purpose, inspirational authority is able to motivate and sustain networks without the promise of remuneration that the transactional forms of leadership are built on." Hirsch and Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution*, 112.

[62] Eddie Gibbs, *ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 69. Gibbs adds the following: "Its authority base must be less positional and far more relational than in previous generations. This shift is particularly hard to digest for older and more traditional pastors who were told during their seminary years not to make their friends in the parish!" Ibid. During focus group sessions (described in chapter 10), a few Dutch theology students recounted how they were – indeed – advised not to make friends in the congregation, but continually keep a 'professional distance'.

[63] In many emerging churches the word office is not used – except as the name of a work space in a building. A clear exception is Mark Driscoll, who does refer to the "biblical offices" of elders and deacons. Mark Driscoll, *On Church Leadership: A Book You'll Actually Read* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 70.

[64] During his ethnographic research, Tony Jones found that "In contrast to traditional mainline ecclesial structures, ECM churches have a 'lower' view of ordination, or a 'higher' view of lay involvement. Or both." Tony Jones, *The Church is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement* (Minneapolis, MN: The JoPa Group, 2011), 118.

[65] For this expression, see Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 92.

[66] Mary Gray-Reeves and Michael Perham, *The Hospitality of God: Emerging Worship for a Missional Church* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 29.

Second, in regard to the authority and power of *followers*, Stephanie Spellers asserts that a leader within an emerging church is "dedicated to building a movement of people who know themselves individually and collectively as the leaders."[67] She continues, "a relational organizer understands that all people have power – that is, the ability to act effectively."[68] Within the EMC, then, the emphasis is on sharing and distribution. "Distributed authority is when power is given to others without regard to their position,"[69] explains Neil Cole, director of Church Multiplication Associates and an influential voice in the EMC. "In a flat structure...authority is distributed to each person to accomplish all God has for him or her to do, without needing layers of middlemen to pass the authority down."[70] It must be added that Cole may well be too idealistic, perhaps even naïve,[71] in his commitment to the "ideal of the church operating without a hierarchical structure."[72] He seems to overlook the fact that groups always develop an *informal* power structure that can be just as much of a challenge to deal with as a formal one.[73] Because of a lack of accountability, an informal hierarchy or power structure may even lead to dangerous situations, in which people get emotionally hurt and the community damaged.[74] In particular those emerging churches that have their roots in the neo-charismatic movement may still, in effect, be leader centered, with founding leaders who hold a great deal of power.[75] Also, the same people who emphasize the 'flattening of hierarchies' may themselves hold great *symbolic* power within the Emerging-Missional milieu through their publications, speaking tours, and so on.

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[67] Spellers, "The Church Awake: Becoming the Missional People of God," 40-41.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 180.
[70] Ibid., 180-181.
[71] This may be a wider problem in the Emerging-Missional milieu. As Tony Jones cautions, "Both the polity that is developing in the ECM, and the embrace of social media as a means for connecting with one another betray a possible naiveté about the nature of human relationships....How the movement will deal with the inevitable foibles of its members and leaders remains to be seen." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 123.
[72] Cole, *Organic Leadership*, 93.
[73] Cf. the admission of Philip Roderick, "As a young organization we wrestle with the nature of authority and decentralization, power and sacrifice, responsibility and autonomy." Philip D. Roderick, "Dynamic Tradition: Fuelling the Fire," in Louise Neltrop and Martyn Percy, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church* (London, UK: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2008), 147. Note how he continues: "In this encounter, we have come to know that authenticity is marked by self-emptying, by kenotic lifestyle and leadership." Ibid. Roderick is an Anglican priest who founded and leads Contemplative Fire, a post-monastic community and fresh expression of church. Contemplative Fire, "Creating a community of Christ at the edge," www.contemplativefire.org (last accessed December 7, 2011).
[74] Cf. Mady A. Thung, *The Precarious Organisation: Sociological Explorations of the Church's Mission and Structure* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 238-239 and 325; Günter Breitenbach, *Gemeinde leiten. Eine praktisch-theologische Kybernetik* [Leading the congregation: A practical theological cybernetics] (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 180-181.
[75] For an English example, see Cory E. Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church: A Congregational Study of a Vineyard Church* (Farnham, GB: Ashgate, 2009), 80. An American case is discussed in Margaret M. Poloma and Ralph W. Hood, Jr., *Blood and Fire: Godly Love in a Pentecostal Emerging Church* (Rochester, NY: New York University Press, 2008), 212.

That being said, visitors to emerging churches often find the locus of authority to indeed reside within the community.[76] In such cases, the basis of leadership is, to a large extent, located in mutual sense-making within the group and in 'emergence' (instead of being formally appointed, leaders emerge).[77] The *aspiration* within emerging churches, then, is that power[78] is distributed or shared among multiple persons.[79] Moreover, it is thought that this sharing of power among different leaders implies that followers' power and accountability is also high.[80] "In a relationship based on 'inspirational' or 'moral' leadership," Alan Hirsch confirms, "both leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality by engaging each other on the basis of shared values, calling, and identity."[81]

The significance of the last part of this quote should not be overlooked. While it is true that EMC participants, generally speaking, are not much concerned with protecting 'boundaries' (i.e., "develop laws or prescriptions for determining who is in the church and who is out"),[82] this does not mean that the importance of having a shared core identity and shared values is underestimated.[83] On the contrary, it is acknowledged

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[76] According to Gray-Reeves and Perham, "when asked where authority lies, emergent Christians will...say that it is found in the mix between Scripture and the community – not as handed down by the institution of the church, but rather as it is locally discerned by those in the body." Gray-Reeves and Perham, *The Hospitality of God*, 31.

[77] Cf. Gibbs and Bolger, "In many emerging churches, leadership is implicit rather than explicit. In other words, leaders emerge naturally through the recognition and affirmation of the community." *Emerging Churches*, 203. Cf. 205, "Emerging church leadership...arises out of an intrinsic authority that the community recognizes and acknowledges rather than out of a formal position or title."

[78] There are different definitions of power; we interpret it here as the capacity to make things happen or to prevent them from happening by enabling or constraining people. This interpretation is the outcome of a long conversation on power that this writer had with his brother-in-law and Philips CEO, Bob Esmeijer.

[79] "In our visits," Jeff van Kooten and Lois Barrett write, "we discovered these aspects of missional church authority: *a community of multiple leaders* [emphasis added], leaders who focus on missional vocation, and leaders who foster missional practices, both new and from the tradition....Virtually all the congregations we visited had multiple people in authority." Jeff van Kooten and Lois Barrett, "Missional Authority," in Lois Y. Barrett, ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 141-142.

[80] Cf. Richard Osmer, "Many of the missional church leaders believe that they have an important role in helping their congregation live in the tension between 'permission-giving' and congregational accountability and discernment." Richard R. Osmer, "Formation in the Missional Church: Building Deep Connections between Ministries of Upbuilding and Sending," in Dwight J. Zscheile, ed., *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*, advanced copy edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 40.

[81] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 160. Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen explain what is necessary to create a culture not of control, but of accountability. "First, a grassroots, bottom up movement of accountability has to be initiated. Preaching and teaching have to explain and affirm accountability. This will be supported by every member being regularly encouraged, both in public messages and one to one, to voluntarily find their own accountability partner of partners....Secondly, a more formalised accountability framework has to become the norm of folk at every level of leadership." Hopkins and Breen, *Clusters*, 80-81.

[82] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 47 ff. The authors opt instead for a 'centered set' church in which membership is defined by proximity to Jesus, who is her center.

[83] Cf. Reggie McNeal, "Missional communities need more emotional glue than that people simply like each other and want to hang out together. They require shared mission vision and values to thrive." Reggie McNeal, *Missional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass,

that the willingness to immerse a church's life "deeply into a complex social context must be directly related to the security and confidence the members of a church have in their own centered-set core convictions."[84]

7.5 Decision Making

As regards decision making, the literature of the EMC generally refers to a shift from the leader to the group.[85] In principle, everyone may be involved in the decision making process, for example, by providing suggestions. Mutual decision making and mutual agreement, or 'consensus', are sought after. It is not the case, however, that all decisions in emerging churches are actually made by the group or community. It is increasingly acknowledged that churches need a platform from which important decisions are made and where accountability is located – something like a leadership team or staff.[86] That being said, the community or congregation often does play a crucial role in the decision making process.[87] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch express their ideal like this: "We see Christian leadership operating best as a community within a community."[88] Theologically, Werner Jeanrod captures this vision well: "Leadership is a function of the Christian community and not a status over against it. The abolition of the 'laity' and the appreciation and integration of all the different gifts (*charismata*) in the community are preconditions for a Church trying to respond faithfully to the religious and social initia-

2011), 52. Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen affirm that without agreed values, "there is no basis for accountability and everything has to be constantly re-negotiated." Hopkins and Breen, *Clusters*, 81 ff.

[84] Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 125. Boshart's research demonstrates that it is quite a challenge for emerging churches to be open to the local context and the surrounding culture, while simultaneously building a strong missional identity that may on certain points (e.g., in regard to consumerism) need to be countercultural. The challenge can be met, however, as Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen explain in their book about lay-led missional communities. "The passive consumer culture of inherited congregation is broken as everyone is encouraged and enabled to contribute and to grow in their calling." Hopkins and Breen, *Clusters*, 109.

[85] Cf. Gibbs and Bolger, "In a non-hierarchical community, all members help make decisions and take turns leading, actions that serve as counter to the control and oppressive tendencies of modernity." Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 194.

[86] Note that 'leading as a body' is hard to realize in urban deprived areas where "the level of educational attainment is lower, there are problems with drug addiction, alcohol abuse and mental illness and there is a culture of dependency, apathy and low self-esteem." Eleanor Williams, *Fresh Expressions in the Urban Context* (n.p.: YTC Press, 2007), 27.

[87] The leaders of Solace, Melbourne for example, "practise open consultation and give permission for anyone to contribute input and debate to whatever issue they like. They draw on sights from chaos and emergence theory for cultivating innovation in organic ways." Darren John Cronshaw, "The Shaping of Things Now: Mission and Innovation in Four Emerging Churches in Melbourne," (DTh. thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2008), 285.

[88] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 68. It is interesting to notice the parallel reasoning within Small Christian Communities in the Roman Catholic Church, in which leaders are called 'animators' and a form of team leadership is preferred. "Theologically, if there is a team of animators rather than a solitary one, the principle of community is maintained even in the leadership. *The motor of the community is itself a little community* [emphasis added]. And, after all, isn't the universe facilitated by a team of Three?" O'Halloran, *Living Cells*, 80.

tives of Jesus Christ and his disciples."[89] In the Emerging-Missional milieu, leadership is thus understood as an aspect of the community, rather than a possession of the leader – "a communal capacity and a communal achievement."[90]

It should be noted, however, that this picture is not always applicable. In Mars Hill Church (Seattle), important decisions are made in 'courts' made up of elders. This has to do with theological and sociological factors. Due to theological motives, the elders are accorded the highest authority in Mars Hill rather than the congregation. Decision making is not to be done the same way as in a democracy or a secular volunteer organization.[91] Sociologically speaking, community decision making is hampered by the size of the church, which has grown exponentially from thirty members in 1996 to more than 12,000 each Sunday in ten churches in two states, Washington and New Mexico.[92] Megachurches such as Mars Hill are led differently from smaller congregations. Among other things, larger churches need to shape their direction and make decisions with the direct involvement of fewer people.[93]

Sociological factors thus clearly influence the way leadership is approached in the Emerging-Missional milieu. To mention another example, many highly educated people are involved in XRR (Rotterdam, NL), people who are capable of and used to bearing responsibility. A form of team leadership is the logical corollary.[94] There is another emerging church in the same city, called Thugz.[95] The participants in this church are mostly less well-educated young people, originally from the former Netherlands Antilles. Many have scars from their years spent in poverty and crime; they often have a low self-image, and find it difficult to accept responsibility. Moreover, in the Antillian cul-

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[89] Werner G. Jeanrod, "Community and Authority: The Nature and Implications of the Authority of Christian Community," in Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy, eds., *On Being the Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 97-98, as quoted in Douglas Edward Fakkema, "Who Speaks for God? Exploring a Trinitarian Response to Reformed Ecclesiology," (MA thesis, Regent College, 2001), 100-101.

[90] This expression is borrowed from Wilfred Drath, *The Deep Blue Sea: Rethinking the Source of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), xvi. Cf. the findings of Terri Elton in five missional churches: "Each congregation had formal leadership roles, but all of the people within these faith communities had a part in the leadership dance: leadership was *communal* in nature....There was a leadership dance occurring within these congregations, a give and take between clergy and lay leadership and between formal and informal leaders." Elton, "Characteristics of Congregations that Empower Missional Leadership," 190.

[91] "As I studied the Bible," Driscoll writes, "I found more warrant for a church led by unicorns than by majority vote." Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 103.

[92] Mars Hill Church, "Gods Work, Our Witness," http://marshill.com/gods-work (accessed January 13, 2012).

[93] Cf. Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.*, 195.

[94] XRR Crossroads Rotterdam, "Het Leidersteam," http://www.xrr.nl/wiepg.asp?pagecontentID=16 (accessed July 28, 2011).

[95] "Thugz Church," http://www.thugzchurch.nl/page.php (accessed July 28, 2011). The name Thugz – hip hop slang for 'bandits' – is derived from Thugz Mansion, a song from the rappers 2Pac and Nas. On the background of Thugz, see Daniel de Wolf, *Jezus in de Millinx. Woorden én daden in een Rotterdamse achterstandswijk* {Jesus in the Millinx: Words ánd deeds in a poor quarter of Rotterdam} (Kampen: Kok, 2006). Interestingly, leaders of the 'yup' church XRR assist the 'bandit' church Thugz in different ways, including financial ones.

ture, authority, hierarchy and directive leadership are highly valued. Thugz-founder Daniel de Wolf cannot, therefore, rely much on forms of shared or distributed leadership,[96] but instead, often needs to fulfill the firm role of a so-called command-and-control leader.

7.6 Leadership Styles, Roles, and Tasks

Although the literature of the EMC does not often give detailed descriptions of leadership styles and roles, two recurring emphases may be noted. The first is that emerging churches prefer diversity, since this is seen as being an asset in a pluralistic culture. They also recognized that different people have different gifts or charisms. Leadership *teams* are therefore deemed indispensable – not only on sociological but also on theological grounds.[97] Working in teams makes it possible for people to match their gifts with their responsibilities, tasks, roles and preferred style of leadership.[98] In general, a broad mix of people in leadership is preferred: the theologically trained and untrained,[99] women and men,[100] and a wide range of ethnicities. It is clear that emerging churches emphasize that leadership needs to be plural.[101]

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[96] Thugz Church is led by a leadership team of six persons, two of whom (a married couple) are from an Antillian background. It is, however, true that Daniel de Wolf is the crucial factor in the team. See "Thugz Church: een boevenkerk in Rotterdam," in Gerrit Noort et al., *Als een kerk opnieuw begint. Handboek voor missionaire gemeenschapsvorming* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2008), 178.

[97] Cf. the monograph of George Cladis (endorsed by Leonard Sweet and others), *Leading the Team-based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999). Cladis writes that "The perichoretic nature of God as Trinity gives us...key attributes of ministry teams that reflect the image and community of God." (31) For example, a ministry team should be collaborative, because "there is no competition among the persons of God." Ibid., 13. It should be empowering, because "God in perichoretic fellowship is constantly giving." Ibid., 15. See also Dwight J. Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2007), 43-63, and 2.4.1, above.

[98] "Missional worship in the twenty-first century," according to Daniel Collison, "will include multiple worship forms designed by teams of people operating in deliberate, creative planning systems." Collison, "Toward a Theology and Practice of Missional Worship," 135. Cf. Gray-Reeves and Perham, "We discovered in emergent churches that in preparing liturgy, groups study together, listen to one another's experience of Scripture, the tradition and the culture. They have a conversation." Gray-Reeves and Perham, *The Hospitality of God*, 28.

[99] Cf. Gray-Reeves and Perham, "No matter the emphasis, we found the mode of liturgical creation consistently conversational: collaborative and inclusive of many voices, some not often heard in the institutional church." Ibid., 29.

[100] After two decades of experience in the Emerging-Missional milieu, Doug Gay writes, "The emerging project, wherever I have encountered it and whatever struggles it faces in practice to realize this, imagines the future of the Church as a shared partnership between women and men, rooted in a fundamental equality of status and calling." Doug Gay, *Remixing the Church: Towards an Emerging Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 2011), 75.

[101] Mark Lau Branson, "Ecclesiology and Leadership for the Missional Church," in Craig van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 118.

The second emphasis is on a *variety of roles* in leadership teams. The pastor-teacher or priestly types of leaders, in the words of Frost and Hirsch, "have tended to be maintainers of the status quo rather than initiators or pioneers of new mission and producers of innovative forms of church."[102] They imply that the church is left the poorer for leaning on only one or two 'maintenance' styles of leadership. Persons with roles or leadership styles such as those of an apostle (an 'entrepreneur': the groundbreaker and strategist who initiates the churches mission); prophet (a 'questioner': the one who disturbs the status quo and challenges the church to move in new directions); or evangelist (a 'recruiter': a communicator who takes the church's message to those outside) are harder to find. Within the EMC, it is reasoned that "When all the roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are operating effectively within a church, then all the people are being prepared for service and are being built up."[103] Mission-shaped churches therefore wish to have these roles present – and perhaps other ones too – in order to fulfill the missional calling of the church.

Leadership tasks are often divided into three different, but related categories. First, leaders assist in cultivating vision[104] and meaning-making, e.g. helping to define reality[105] or naming viable novelty when it emerges.[106] Second, they empower people: tending to relations, for example, by creating a climate of trust, mutual support and learning. Furthermore, leaders are involved in equipping others for ministry: "call it discipleship training, Alpha-courses, confirmation classes, training in diakonia and evangelism, mentoring one-to-one; here is the task of the leader today."[107] Third, leaders pro-

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[102] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 183n4.

[103] Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad, *The Passionate Church: The Art of Life-Changing Discipleship* (Colorado Springs, CO: NexGen, 2005), 139.

[104] This expression is chosen to emphasize the conviction voiced within EMC literature that leaders are not supposed to (top down) provide a vision for the congregation, but to "cultivate environments that call forth and release the mission-shaped imagination of the people of God in a specific place and time." Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 77. The expectation is that out of these environments a shared vision – Alan Roxburgh calls it a congregation's *core identity* – will come forth. Ibid., 134 ff.

[105] Cf. Max DePree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: Dell, 1989), 11: "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality." Our leadership conceptualization implicates that formal leaders do not necessarily have to define reality themselves, but they should see to it that it happens and facilitate the necessary conversational processes. Defining reality has to do with questions such as "where are we at the present moment?" Cf. the title of Patrick Keifert's book, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era* (Eagle, ID: Allelon, 2006). It also involves listening to what people are passionate about. The leaders of St. Thomas Philly (Sheffield, UK) help people conduct what they call 'passion audits' to get at this. "They ask people about their hearts' desires – *what excites your heart?* But they also ask people about their holy discontent – *what breaks your heart?* They further engage people in conversations about where they think grace or peace is needed – such as certain neighborhoods or people groups – as well as where the opportunities are for missional engagement." McNeal, *Missional Communities*, 52.

[106] See for this expression Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 233. In what follows, Hirsch's notions on missional leadership are reckoned with as well.

[107] Ryan Bolger et al., eds., "The Local Church in Mission: Becoming a Missional Congregation in the Twenty-First Century Global Context and the Opportunities Offered Through Tentmaking Ministry,"

vide appropriate structures, i.e. organizing, for example, building networks that facilitate the emergence of novelty.[108] Mark Branson captures these encompassing leadership tasks in terms of *interpretative*, *relational* and *implemental* perceptions and practices.[109] Scott Cormode provides three models of leadership that cover the same ground.[110] The *gardening* model is that of symbolizing, sense-making and meaning making. The *shepherd* model emphasizes "relationships, rather than roles, people rather than positions."[111] The *builder* model is an organizational approach in which goals, structures and roles are emphasized. Cormode adds that all three leadership aspects are important and indispensable.[112] When adaptive challenges arise, however, such as situations of ambiguity and change, the "gardening model is primary,"[113] Cormode argues. This conviction is widely shared within the EMC.[114]

7.7 The Organic Leadership Paradigm

Is it possible to get a deeper understanding of the various ways that leadership is referred to in the EMC, and an improved conceptual grip as well? This section suggests that this is indeed possible – thanks to the work of Gayle Avery, founding head of the Insti-

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Lausanne Occasional Paper no. 39 (2005), Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, http://www.Lausanne.org/docs/2004forum/LOP39_IG10.pdf (last accessed January 14, 2012).

[108] Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk provide another characterization of the three main leadership tasks: (1) cultivating people; (2) forming mission environments and congregations; (3) engaging context. Since it appears to be analytically difficult to distinguish these three from each other, we did not choose them for our typology. Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 114 ff.

[109] Mark Lau Branson, "Ecclesiology and Leadership for the Missional Church," in Craig van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 94-125.

[110] Scott Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership: The Christian Leader as Builder, Shepherd, and Gardener," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 69-104.

[111] Ibid., 79.

[112] This is in line with the cybernetic approach – in which the congregation is seen as an organic system – of the German practical theologian Günter Breitenbach. He discerns, first, the *hermeneutical* dimension, in which images [*Bilder*], interpretations, concepts and vision are primary. The second is the *communicative* dimension, in which the focus is on persons and relations. The third is the *organizational* dimension that is necessary for the clearance of rules and roles, the deployment of resources, etc. In short: "Systeme brauchen geklärte *Leitbilder* [emphasis added], eine entwickelte *Kultur des Miteinanders* [emphasis added] und eine angemessene *Organisationsgestalt* [emphasis added]. Gemeindeleitung geschieht ihm spannungsvollen Zusammenspiel dieser Dimensionen." [Systems need clear *leading pictures*, a developed *culture of togetherness*, and a fitting *organizational form*. Congregational leadership happens within the tension laden interplay of these dimensions.] Günter Breitenbach, *Gemeinde leiten. Eine praktisch-theologische Kybernetik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 236.

[113] Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership," 85 ff.

[114] The emphasis on envisioning is also characteristic for new models of Roman Catholic parishes in the United States. Researchers Marti Jewell and David Ramey found that pastoral leaders "often described the emerging local church as a *process of discerning* [emphasis added] local needs, grounded in the *faith-based reflection* [emphasis added] of parishioners, local leaders, and diocesan officials on the preferred identity and structure of the local church." Marti R. Jewell and David A. Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church: Emerging Models of Parish Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2010), 37.

tute for Sustainable Leadership in Sydney, Australia. In her book, *Understanding Leadership*, she differentiaties between four broadly distinguishable paradigms[115] of leadership, the last of which is the most interesting for our purposes. After a short sketch of three of Avery's paradigms (7.7.1), the last 'Organic' paradigm is outlined in more detail (7.7.2). This paradigm is then compared with views on leadership in the literature of the EMC (7.7.3), followed by some concluding reflections (7.7.4).

7.7.1 The Classical, Transactional, and Visionary Leadership Paradigms

Until the late twentieth century, the *Classical* paradigm of leadership was the most influential, and still is in some organizational contexts or cultures, such as Russia.[116] This paradigm is typified by a clear hierarchy and a strong emphasis on command and control. Leaders carry the responsibility for success or failure; followers have limited power, influence and responsibility – their main task is to carry out the leader's commands.

The *Transactional* paradigm of leadership became dominant in the 1970s. In this paradigm, followers are viewed as individuals, and there is a greater focus on their skills, needs and motives than is likely in classical leadership. Ideally, decisions are the result of agreements, or transactions, between leaders and followers. Leadership is seen as a process in which one individual uses intentional influence to "guide, structure and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization."[117] This vision, which is still popular, reflects the basic idea behind the Transactional paradigm.

Both Classical and Transactional leadership imply a Newtonian, mechanistic view of the world in which outcomes are predictable. Leaders do not have to be visionary to be effective; they can impact events by setting goals, controlling their execution and monitoring their outcomes. Both paradigms suit times of stability or slow change in which the future is relatively predictable, major shifts in direction or action within the organization are unecessary, and work processes and markets are known and predictable.[118]

At the end of the twentieth century – a time of increasing complexity and rapid change, cf. 4.3.4 – conditions changed to "permanent white-water."[119] This called for a different style of leadership, variously called 'visionary', 'charismatic', 'inspirational', or 'transformational'. These approaches came to the fore in the 1980s and may be grouped, Avery suggests, under the *Visionary* paradigm of leadership. In this paradigm, the inspiring and charismatic leader who is able to communicate and implement the vision

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[115] Avery's leadership 'paradigms' are actually models, i.e., *frameworks for thinking* about the complex and multilayered reality that we call leadership. As such, they encourage speculation about relationships and correspondences between different dimensions and aspects of leadership.

[116] Grigory Ambrozheichik, "Cultural Profile of Russian Leadership," *International Journal of Leadership Studies* 6, no. 3 (2011), 310-335.

[117] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 22.

[118] Ibid., 24.

[119] Peter B. Vaill, *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996). In river rafting, 'white water' refers to conditions involving challenging rapids and strong currents that require skilfull manouvering.

of the organization and thereby enables it to stay on course in stormy weather is important. Emotions, intuition, values and moral issues are emphasized to a much greater degree than they were in the other paradigms. Also, in this paradigm, the leader is thought to be a completely different person from the manager. However, this approach still tends to be based on the idea of relatively simple Newtonian causality between the leader and the behavior and organizational performance of followers. In addition, these leaders tend to be seen in 'heroic' terms.[120]

7.7.2 The Organic Paradigm

In the late 1990s, an Organic paradigm (which we could designate 'post heroic') became increasingly influential. This paradigm is characterized by the idea that *leadership* – interpreted as interactions of reciprocal influence among people – is central, rather than the *leader* as a person. Leadership is understood to be distributed across the whole organization and not bound to specific positions and roles. Members of an organization participate in the process of leadership in different ways and at different times, and most decisions are mutual or group decisions. This can be compared to a jazz band in which members take turns in initiating and improvising. Leadership, then, is not necessarily vested in particular individuals, although people might assume leadership roles for a particular purpose. For example, the role of the formal leader may be that of "gathering the 'players' together, providing the stage, setting the tempo, developing a structure for distributed leadership, and providing appropriate accompaniment to ensure the growth of collective efficacy."[121] Other possible roles for leaders in an Organic organization include those of a teacher (for example, someone teaching juniors how to lead), a mentor (who functions as a coach, counselor, evaluator and promoter), or a steward or servant (this primarily refers to someone who is not focused on power or position, but on serving both the followers and the mission of the organization).[122]

In the Organic paradigm, authority and power reside in the collectivity of the organization. Power is not concentrated at the top but distributed among the members. In this way, the commitment, accountability and responsibility of members increases. In addition, a diversity of opinions is valued and multiple perspectives can be heard on an issue. Reaching decisions, however, often requires extensive communication and negotiation. Organic organizations may be more political than traditional enterprises, because they rely heavily on referent and expertise power. An additional leadership role comes to the fore here: "Part of a leader's role is dealing with conflicting interest groups

[120] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 99.
[121] Paul M. Newton, "Leadership Lessons From Jazz Improvisation," *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 7, no. 1 (March 2004), 97.
[122] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 130-131.

(i.e. dispute resolution), fights over scarce resources, and coping with enduring differences in the organization."[123]

Vision and shared spiritual values are very important, as in the Visionary paradigm (much more than in the Classical and Transactional paradigms). Since Organic organizations have little control or direction from above, members need to align themselves with the organization's vision and values. However, the source and protector of these need not be one particular leader. In the Organic paradigm, vision and values emerge out of the intensive and continuing interactions between participants.[124] "The basis of organic leadership is communication, often aimed at mutual sense-making."[125]

Often, organizations characterized by a form of Organic leadership are network-based and have simple and flexible structures ('adhocracies'). This has to do with the emphasis that the Organic leadership paradigm places on continuous and fast change – both inside and outside the organization – and on flexibility, creativity and innovation. In the Organic leadership paradigm, people are well aware of the dynamic environment, the social, cultural and physical 'milieu' in which they are located and of which they form a part. An important goal is to stay organically connected to this environment.

The aversion to hierarchy and bureaucracy found in the Organic Paradigm is also related to some specific cultural factors. In terms of Hofstede's well-known cultural dimensions,[126] Organic organizations are low in power distance equality,[127] uncertainty avoidance,[128] and masculinity.[129] Furthermore, individualism is discouraged in favor of a form of 'in-group collectivism'.[130]

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[123] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 44.

[124] In this respect, the Organic paradigm is in line with the growing interest in non-Western or pre-modern approaches to leadership, such as *ubuntu* in Africa, or native American ways of leading. See, for example, Mike Boon, *The African Way: The Power of Interactive Leadership* (Cape Town, SA: Zebra Press, 2007); Linda Sue Warner and Keith Grint, "American Indian Ways of Leading and Knowing," *Leadership* 2 (2006), 225-244; Mark Julien, Barry Wright, Deborah M. Zinni, "Stories From the Circle: Leadership Lessons Learned From Aboriginal Leaders," *The Leadership Quarterly* 21 (2010), 114-126. In the Emerging-Missional milieu these kinds of pre-modern approaches are generally warmly welcomed.

[125] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 34.

[126] Geert H. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1984). Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 53 ff.

[127] Power distance deals with people's expectations of, and relationships, to authority. In low power distance inequality cultures, leader-follower relationships are close and less formal.

[128] Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which people in a culture prefer certainty and predictability, finding ambiguity stressful. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures, we find greater risk-taking and tolerance of organizational ambiguity and change.

[129] In masculine cultures, assertiveness, challenge and ambition are valued. In feminine cultures, a greater emphasis is placed on cooperation and good working relationships. Organic leadership fits the characteristics of the last more.

[130] One criticism of Hofstede's approach is that he does not differentiate between different *kinds* of collectivism. He uses a simple individualism-collectivism continuum. It is, however, better to distinguish between in-group collectivism and institutional collectivism. Jagdeep S. Chhokar, Felix C. Brodbeck and Robert J. House, *Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Ass., 2007), 3 ff. *In-group collectivism* reflects the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations, families, circle of close friends, or other such small

Finally, the underlying philosophy of Organic leadership is based upon the new science perspectives of unpredictability, self-organizing systems, complexity, uncertainty, and a focus on the system as a whole, rather than its parts. Organic leadership distances itself from a Newtonian, mechanistic view of the world in which outcomes are predictable and in which leaders can impact events by setting goals, controlling execution and monitoring outcomes. "Organic leadership allows order to arise from chaos....Here the advice is to let go of control, not try to create order, and to share information."[131] Rather than bringing order and control, an Organic leader's role is to contain the anxiety of its members as they operate on the edge of chaos where they are creating and discovering a new future that is difficult to foresee.

It is important to realize that Avery's four paradigms are not meant to suggest incontrovertible, mutually exclusive categories. Some form of Organic leadership may indeed prevail in individual departments that need high levels of creativity – such as Research & Development departments[132] – while the more regulated areas function under Transactional leadership.[133] The paradigms allow leadership to vary depending on the context (from the operating environment to regional and national cultures[134]) and to respond to organizational needs and preferences. They help us acknowledge that the expectations and ideas of leadership that are embedded in the minds of organizational members can play a significant role in deciding whether particular processes or behaviors will be recognized as leadership or not.

In addition, the leadership paradigms can be used to challenge stereotypical views of leadership and help people accept that leadership is complex and that it encompasses multiple dimensions. "If people can be helped to see where others are coming from, they can appreciate the differences rather than dismissing them. Furthermore, the paradigms can help in the change process by highlighting the current paradigm(s) prevailing in an organization, showing where the people need to move and why."[135] In sum,

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groups. *Institutional collectivism* reflects the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action (think here for example of countries like China and Japan). Organic leadership comports well with in-group collectivism, and not with institutional collectivism.

[131] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 51.

[132] Interestingly, emerging churches are often called the Research and Development parts of the church. Listen, for example, to Brian McLaren's lecture on "The Emerging Church and Mainline Theological Education," held on November 12, 2005. Pomo Musings, "Brian McLaren's Lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary," http://pomomusings.com/2005/11/16/brian-mclarens-lecture-at-princeton-theological-seminary / (accessed August 12, 2009).

[133] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 150.

[134] It is true that Hofstede's book, on which Avery relies, received incisive criticisms (cf. n130, above). Brendan McSweeney for example criticizes Hofstede supposing that within each nation there is a uniform national culture. Other types of culture are allowed little, if any, influence in his conceptualization. Brendan McSweeney, "Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and their Consequences: A Triumph of Faith – A Failure of Analysis," *Human Relations* 55, no. 1 (January 2002), 89-118. These critiques of Hofstede do not, however, put in question the value of Avery's paradigms as such.

[135] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 151.

the four paradigms appear to be a convenient way of summing up different visions of leadership at an abstract level.[136] A range of leadership styles can be seen, from the dominance of 'classical' leaders to a de-emphasis on individual formal leaders under the Organic paradigm.[137] In moving from Classical to Organic leadership, the focus on who is important in the relationship shifts increasingly from the leader to all the members of the organization, while follower responsibility and accountability also tend to grow.[138]

We now proceed by comparing Avery's fourth paradigm, the Organic paradigm, to views on leadership within the EMC.

7.7.3 The Organic Paradigm Compared to EMC Views on Leadership

This subsection compares the Organic paradigm to EMC conceptions of leadership by using a table. On the left side, key elements of leadership are summarized in twelve points.[139] Moving to the right, the next column sketches the Organic paradigm in key words. The right column does the same for key aspects of the EMC visions, labels and metaphors on leadership that were delineated in sections 7.2-7.6, or in earlier chapters.[140]

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[136] Within each paradigm, finer distinctions can be made. For example, Organic Leadership can encompass organizations with or without leaders. Cf. Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 34.

[137] It is important to note that many participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu, leaders included, often are not attracted to the idea of being a leader, or considering someone else to be one. (See for example the essays in Ryan and Carucci, eds., *Leadership Stories from Tomorrow*.) This may be part of a larger trend among 'postmoderns', as the following story illustrates. "As part of a recent leadership conference at my university, undergraduate student leaders invited a poet and hip-hop artist as the keynote speaker. To the surprise of many, the artist spoke almost entirely about how he didn't know anything about leadership and didn't want to know about it, how he hated leaders, and how he didn't trust anyone to be a leader, especially those who proclaimed to BE leaders....The response to his speech was dismay from the administration, astonishment from the faculty, and great enthusiasm from the majority of the students. *Those students resonated with his antileadership message* [emphasis added], even though they had voluntarily attended the day-long conference designed to develop their leadership skills." Susan Herman, "Leadership Training in a 'Not-Leadership' Society," *Journal of Management Education* 31, no. 2 (April 2007), 151.

[138] It is illuminating to discover that these shifts concur with the observations of Jimmy Long, regional director for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, USA. He discerns a "major divergence of views on who a leader is and what a leader does as we are running headlong into this emerging culture." Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships Between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 12. Furthermore, Long predicts that "leadership and all other types of ministry will look different than they did before – sometimes radically different." Ibid., 42. The main shifts that he detects are the following: from heroic to post-heroic leadership, from guarded to vulnerable, from positional to earned authority, from task to community, from directing to empowering, from destination to journey, and from aspiring to inspiring.

[139] Our table is inspired by the one sketched in Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 39-40.

[140] The present chapter does not follow the structure of twelve aspects exactly, because this was thought to be inconvenient. Aspect 12 for example (leadership philosophy) was already discussed in chapter 6. Our discussion of EMC views on leadership in this and previous chapters does, however, cover the content of all twelve aspects.

Table 7.1 The Organic Paradigm Compared to EMC Leadership Views, Labels and Metaphors

Aspects of Leadership	**Organic Paradigm**	**EMC Leadership Views, Labels and Metaphors**
1. Key players	The entire group; emphasis on leadership emergence and distribution: there may be many leaders, a few leaders, or no formal leaders	Leaders emerge rather than being formally appointed; leadership is distributed among different members, e.g. in a leadership team *Labels: emergent, dispersed (or: distributed) collaborative, implicit*
2. Main leadership roles	Facilitator, servant, teacher, mentor, communicator	Leaders operate as catalysts, facilitators, servants, mentors, or spiritual directors. *Labels: cultivating, enabling, facilitative, permission giving, servant, equipping, discerning, empowering, apostolic, interpretative* *Metaphors: catalyst, cultivator, (symphony) conductor, jazz band leader, listener, traffic controller, empowerer, midwife, team builder*
3. Power and authority	Emphasis on collaboration, shared power, member expertise and attributions	Emphasis on collaboration, shared power, expertise and attributions of participants; locus of authority is within the community, out of which a leadership team is constituted *Labels: shared, representational* *Metaphors: fellow traveler, quest creator*
4. Decision making	Emphasis on the group, mutuality and consensus	The community is central; consensus is desired *Labels: community-led, team*
5. Responsibility and accountability	High for both leaders and followers; emphasis on self-accountability and self-responsibility, which is enhanced by commitment to the vision of the organization and to other people	Both leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality; mutual accountability of leaders and followers, enhanced by a commitment to the community's mission or vision and to other participants *Labels: curating, participative/participatory*
6. Main emphases	Communication, creativity, diversity	Communication, creativity, diversity, relations *Labels: responsive, creative, innovative, plural* *Metaphors: information alchemist, poet, dancer, cultural architect, includer*
7. Vision and spiritual values	Visions and spiritual values are central; they emerge through mutual sense-making	Shared values, calling, and spiritual identity form the basis of leadership; emphasis on mutual sense-making within the group

		Labels: visionary, spiritual, inspirational, kingdom like, missional, passionate, transformational, moral, sense-making *Metaphors: spiritual sage, spiritual artisan, spiritual entrepreneur, ethical steward, narrator, tribal story teller*
8.Adaptability	The organization can be agile and flexible because members are constantly prepared for change	Agility, flexibility, and change are highly valued *Labels: adaptive, flexible* *Metaphor: change agent, entrepreneur*
9. Matching structure	Simple, flexible structure: adhocracy, network	Decentralized, dynamic, flat, flexible, highly relational, network-based *Labels: hubbing, networking*
10. Matching context/ environment	Complex, dynamic	Complex, dynamic, postmodern, post-Christendom *Labels: eco-leadership, incarnational, post-Christendom-style* *Metaphors: environmentalist, gardener*
11. Cultural dimensions	Low in power distance equality low on uncertainty avoidance low on masculinity individualism is discouraged in favor of a form of 'in-group collectivism'	Egalitarian (thus: low in power distance equality); a certain messiness is taken for granted (thus: low on uncertainty avoidance) critical of: autocracy, bureaucracy, centralization, control, hierarchy, position, status (these criticisms reflect a cultural dimension that is low on masculinity); emphasis on *communitas* is meant to counter individualism *Labels: relational, authentic, pioneering, intuitive* *Metaphors: connective, apologizer, friend, seeker, amateur/learner*
12. Leadership philosophy	New science perspectives of unpredictability, self-organizing systems, complexity, uncertainty focus on the whole system	New science perspectives of unpredictability self-organizing systems, complexity, uncertainty focus on the whole system *Labels: nonlinear, organic, postmodern* *Metaphor: systems thinker*

The table suggest a close match between the Organic leadership paradigm and visions of leadership in the EMC, from their shared emphasis on leadership emergence (aspect 1) to their background philosophy of new science (aspect 12). Many other similarities

surface as well, such as the predilection for flexibility, creativity and innovation (aspects 6 and 8) and the importance of vision and shared values (aspect 7).

In addition, the general impression of this table is that the array of labels we encountered in 7.2.1 corresponds with aspects of the Organic leadership paradigm. This is not to suggest, for example, that 'creative' leadership (see at 6) has nothing to do with vision and values (see at 7), nor that 'participative' leadership only highlights where the real responsibility and accountability lie (see at 5). Clearly, some leadership labels fit into more than one box. In addition, one could argue about the exact meaning of 'intuitive' leadership, for example, and whether this tag is appropriately placed alongside the Organic leadership aspect of 'low on masculinity' (see at 11).[141] Thus, it is surely possible to discuss the distribution and exact interpretation of terms in this table. The many parallels are, nonetheless, striking.

There are also clear 'family resemblances' between EMC metaphors for leadership and the Organic paradigm. As indicated by the table, it appears that the leadership metaphors are actually metaphors for *leaders*, not for leadership in a broader sense.[142] Partly because of this, they do not cover all aspects of the Organic leadership paradigm – although, again, some tags fit in more than one box, for example, the leader as 'jazz band leader' (see at 2) may be placed in 1-6 and in 11. It is not, however, the details that we are concerned with, but the overall picture: EMC leadership metaphors correspond closely to aspects of leadership that are emphasized in the Organic paradigm.

7.7.4 Concluding Reflections

Our overall conclusion is that the Organic paradigm or model matches the main perspectives on leadership within the EMC, which is helpful in order to better understand and evaluate them. Seven insights can be gained from this comparison.

First, the Organic leadership paradigm has only recently come to the fore, and is probably not yet widely known. Many people and organizations, including churches and theological seminaries, operate within a different paradigm.[143] Furthermore, they all have their reasons for doing so – whether they be theological, sociological, psychological, etc. There may even be emerging churches such as Thugz, as we saw earlier, that perhaps need to operate more in line with the Classical paradigm.

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[141] Sally Morgenthaler, a voice in the EMC favours our interpretation when she characterizes the "best leadership in the postmodern setting" as "connective, intuitive and responsive at its core" and connects this with female influence. Sally Morgenthaler, "What Is Leadership in an Age of Unprecedented Connectedness?," in Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds., *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 187.

[142] From this it may not be inferred that EMC authors have individualistic conceptions of leadership, because their leadership labels – some of which have metaphorical connotations themselves (cf. n23) – clearly suggest otherwise.

[143] For example, in recent years many leadership conferences or popular writings have been focused on the Visionary paradigm, with its emphasis on the leader-with-vision.

Second, the fact that there are four different paradigms, that all have proved their worth in different contexts, may help us to realize that mental models of leadership held by church members will determine who or what is seen as good (adequate, benevolent, effective, etc.) leadership.[144] Gender differences come into play here, but heterogeneous and even contrasting conceptions of leadership can also be found in differing generations, cultures, countries, subcultures and organizations.[145] For the Organic paradigm and any other paradigm to be effective, the beliefs and behaviors of both leaders and followers need to be aligned with it, as well as the community's systems and culture. In relation to the three other paradigms, and especially the Classical one, the Organic paradigm represents a *radical change* of thinking about leadership, followers and church structure. "It involves letting go of conventional notions of control, order and hierarchy, replacing them with trust and an acceptance of continual change, chaos and respect for diverse members of the organization."[146] This particular paradigm, moreover, may be uncomfortable for church members, in particular for those who seek certainty and predictability.[147]

Third, the emergence of the Organic leadership paradigm is directly related to the fact that many organizations today are facing very complex and dynamic, even turbulent environments. This environmental complexity rules out the idea that there is one right answer or 'vision' for a leader to formulate for a group, as in the Visionary paradigm. Instead, by enabling people to interact freely, share ideas, experiment with new strategies and learn from the outcomes, Organic leadership promotes the variety and creativity that is necessary for the next variation to emerge. Here, the parallel with Emerging-Missional thinking is plain to see. As discussed in chapter 4, participants in the EMC interpret their cultural context to be that of 'postmodernity', characteristics of which include fast-paced change, increased ambiguity and increased uncertainty. Consequently it is thought that church structures need to be flexible, for example.[148] Underlying these suggestions is the assumption that adapting to the changing environment is necessary for churches to survive and thrive. Christians who do not share this assumption, or do

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[144] Cf. Haslam et al., "it is less the case that particular leadership people have leadership qualities than that followers *confer* leadership qualities on particular people." S. Alexander Haslam, Stephen D. Reicher, and Michael J. Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 2011), 199.

[145] Cf. Felix Brodbeck et al.: "GLOBE has implicitly reaffirmed the critical role of 'leadership is in the eye of the beholders'. Effective leadership is likely to fit the implicit leadership concepts held by followers. And leadership is most effective when the fit between attributes of a leader and the followers' concepts is high." Brodbeck et al., "Culture and Leadership in 25 Societies...," 1071.

[146] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 29-30.

[147] Cf. ibid., 30.

[148] Cf. Eddie Gibbs, "in the culture of postmodernity, change is discontinuous rather than incremental. It comes rapidly and without warning." Eddie Gibbs, *ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 31. According to Gibbs, this circumstance calls for flexibility and rapid response.

not consider it to be theologically justified, may find it difficult to adopt the Organic paradigm.

Fourth, organizations operating within an Organic leadership paradigm often have a structure that is organic, 'project-like',[149] or networked. Emerging churches can likewise be seen as networked agencies that are characterized by direct action strategies, internet communications, relatively flat organizational structures, and more informal modes of belonging focused on issues of shared concern.[150] The point to note is that the leader's role is different in a network structure from in a more bureaucratic one. In the kind of ambiguous contexts that networks are, the leader's role "is to create enthusiasm and commitment and act as change-agent, cheerleader, coach, teacher and integrator. People in leadership roles act more like facilitators than directors."[151] In addition, leaders in churches that are organized as networks will need to operate through vision and values which permeate the entire culture at all levels. This demands, among other things, high relational capabilities.[152]

Fifth, Organic leadership is particularly found in organizations that highly value creativity and innovation, such as marketing or Research and Development departments. Again, a parallel can be noted with participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu who belong – at least to a large extent – to what Richard Florida has called the 'creative class'.[153] This word denotes knowledge or technical workers, symbolic analysts or professionals whose work entails creating "meaningful new forms."[154] The implication is that Organic leadership may be less suitable for members of Christian communities who

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[149] Cf. Mady Thung's opinion on what is needed for a so-called missionary church: "a considerable capacity for observation of the environment and the ability to shift rapidly from one project to the other, hence our suggestion of a project-like organisation." Thung, *The Precarious Organisation*, 221. Note that this book was already written some decades ago.

[150] Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 19-20.

[151] Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 28. Cf. this comment from a Roman Catholic context where new models of parish leadership are emerging: The "role of pastor or parish life coordinator as *facilitator* [emphasis added] and *change agent* [emphasis added] may reflect an understated, but critically important, reality of the skill sets and needed organizational abilities that build parish communities." Jewell and Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church*, 118.

[152] Sociologist Rosabeth Kanter's remark about the 'post-entrepreneurial' corporation pertains to missional communities as well: "The post-entrepreneurial corporation...with its stress on teamwork and cooperation, with its encouragement of imagination and commitment to the process of building the new, brings people closer together, making the personal dimension more important." Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *When Giants Learn to Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 280.

[153] According to Tony Jones, "the ECM has been instigated primarily by individuals who fit into the 'creative class'....In the early days of the ECM, leaders verbally associated themselves with Florida's thesis, considering their tribe to be the Creative Class among younger American Protestants." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 42-43. Cf. the discussion of EMC participants as Innovators in 2.2.3.

[154] Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 68. In a more recent book, Florida argues that his thesis still holds in spite of economic collapse. Richard Florida, *The Great Reset: How New Ways of Living and Working Drive Post-Crash Prosperity* (New York: Harper, 2010). This book is referred to in Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 43n24.

do not wish to be innovative or creative, or those who ask for "chaplaincy"[155] from their leaders rather than leadership that pertains to a shaping of the congregation's vision or "equipping others for ministry."[156]

Sixth, the discussion of the Organic paradigm (7.7.2) makes us aware of the fact that reaching decisions in an 'organic' church often requires extensive communication and negotiation. There may, in fact, be more politics involved in emerging churches than meets the eye, especially as this 'eye' is blurred by idealistic conceptions of non-hierarchical structures. Leaders in emerging churches cannot avoid dealing with conflicts, disputes, or fights over scarce resources, nor can they avoid coping with lasting differences.[157]

Finally, the Organic paradigm perfectly fits the reconfiguration of authority resulting from the recent ascendency of digital technologies – think of digital social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube – which function as "animated symbol[s] of radical new globalized modes of access, participation, co-creativity, and distributed authority."[158] As a practice, 'digital' leadership is fluid, distributed and collective rather than individual, as well as directly connected to social communication practices.[159] Just as in the Organic paradigm, positional leadership is not important in a 'digital' milieu,[160] and the role of the leader does not consist of providing master plans, but largely of the ability "to gather people together into informal communities where they can express their own ideas, engage with others, and collectively shape new realities in which all involved have a personal investment."[161] If the cultural impact of the new mobile and digital social media further increases, as experts expect it will, churches will need many members (formal leaders included) who are willing and capable of contributing to leadership in an Organic paradigm. Leaders within the Emerging-Missional milieu may well be considered to be among the pioneers in this field,[162] from whom much can be learned.

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[155] Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 126.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Cf. Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 44.
[158] Elizabeth Drescher, *Tweet if You Heart Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2011), 1.
[159] Ibid., 127.
[160] In the digital milieu (Drescher speaks of a Digital Reformation), "communication practices allow a new manifestation of leadership to emerge within the context of collaborative, overlapping, distributed communities. *Any* of the individuals who participate in a conversation might emerge as a 'thought leader'. Likewise, anyone's humble Facebook page could become a hub for conversation, serving as a temporary leadership forum in that digital space." Ibid., 15-16. Note that these insights comport with complexity theoretical approaches to leadership (see chapter 6).
[161] Ibid., 148.
[162] Cf. Tony Jones, "If ECM congregations are on the avant garde of social media, it is not only reflective of the first decade of the twenty-first century, but also in keeping with their theological convictions. The communal hermeneutic with which they are experimenting – crowd sourced sermons, dialogical preaching, and global conversation partners brought into the sanctuary by technology – is yet another way that these churches and leaders are negotiating the ambiguities at the intersection of an ancient practice and a postmodern culture." Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 108.

We conclude that framing EMC visions on leadership within the Organic paradigm is pertinent and illuminating. This paradigm, however, is still rather abstract, complex, and – as such – without theological content. It may be useful for EMC participants or theological educators, but only to a certain extent. A suitable leadership definition might give more theological focus and clarity. The next chapter seeks to provide such a definition.

CHAPTER 8. *ENVISIONING MISSION*: REFLECTIONS ON A DEFINITION OF 'MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP'

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides and theoretically reinforces an encompassing definition of missional leadership, thereby answering this research question: *How may perspectives on leadership within the EMC be conceptualized in a definition of 'missional leadership' – and what does this stand for?* As we argued in 7.2, such a definition is not yet available in the literature of the EMC. Our conceptualization is meant to facilitate the assessment of how prospective leaders are trained, and to formulate future guidelines. Thus, the aim is not just for a functional definition – such as "leadership is influence"[1] – but for a proactive and intentionally normative one as well.[2]

This is why the adjective 'missional' is chosen instead of – for example – emerging, organic, participative, servant, transformational, or adaptive.[3] Speaking of *missional* leadership directs the attention to the focus on mission and the Triune God of mission, which we have found to be especially emphasized within the EMC. In other words, a theological definition of leadership was preferred, without being too specific, because the Emerging-Missional milieu covers a broad theological spectrum. As previously explained, however,[4] a point of convergence between the emerging and missional movements is the conviction that (a) God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world and (b) that this 'sentness' has all kinds of practical implications for church life. In addition, three other requirements are considered for defining missional leadership.

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[1] Cf. 7.2, above. A functionalist emphasis can also be detected in A. Bryman's definition of leadership, which the Dutch practical theologian Albert Remmelzwaal takes as his own: "Leadership is a process of social influence, in which a leader directs group members in the direction of a goal." Albert J. Remmelzwaal, *Actief en afhankelijk. Een praktijktheorie voor leiderschap in kerkelijke gemeenten* [Active and dependent: A theory of practice for leadership in church congregations] (Delft: Eburon, 2003), 73. This definition suggests that leadership is value-free and defines it simply in terms of its instruments, viz., influence. Furthermore, there is no hint as to *which* goal(s) should be pursued.

[2] Cf. church consultant K. Callahan, "We need an understanding of the nature of leadership that is more proactive and less reactive. We need an understanding of leadership that is more intentional and less passive, more relational and less organizational, more missional and less institutional." Kennon L. Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990), 21. Callahan's own definition of leadership, remarkably, lacks a missional focus: "Leadership is the art of discovery and fulfillment, the art of helping people to discover fulfillment in their foundational life searches." Ibid., 64.

[3] The adjective 'adaptive' is avoided, as it can easily have the connotation of coping – as if one must passively submit to an unbending reality. Cf. Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14, and Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 26-7.

[4] See 2.3.5 and 2.4.2.

First, the definition of leadership proposed should be concise, practical and straightforward, so that practitioners in church and those in theological education[5] can make use of it.

Second, it should be sufficiently broad to encompass what is essential in leadership within a Christian community with characteristics or aspirations similar to those we encountered in the Emerging-Missional milieu. At the same time, the definition needs to be adequately focused, to prevent our getting lost in vague generalizations or relying on leadership paradigms that are less appropriate.[6] The adjective *missional* – which is widely known and used in the EMC – functions to provide such a necessary focus.

Third, the definition should incorporate authoritative insights on leadership in order to be a scholarly definition.[7]

Taking these conditions into account, as well as the various visions on leadership within EMC that were discussed in the previous chapter, we submit the following definition: *Missional leadership refers to the conversational processes of envisioning, cultural and spiritual formation, and structuring within a Christian community that enable individual participants, groups, and the community as a whole to respond to challenging situations and engage in transformative changes that are necessary to become, or remain, oriented to God's mission in the local context.* This definition is meant to concisely summarize how leadership is thought of in the literature of the EMC, while at the same time drawing on current scholarly insights (including the Organic leadership paradigm, see 7.7.2). In this sense, the definition is *descriptive* and able to function analytically. This means that it enables one to recognize the leadership dimensions that are operative in any Christian community. The descriptive or analytical aspect of the definition is, furthermore, meant to assist in assessing the training of prospective leaders in the Emerging-Missional milieu (chapter 9) and in institutes of theological education in the Low Countries (chapter 10). The characterization is also *prescriptive*, in that it proposes a specific way of envisaging leadership in churches that aim to be mission-shaped. Viewed from this perspective, the definition provides a focus for leader education and thus is helpful in formulating actual challenges for theological education (chapter 11).

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[5] It may be asked, "Is a clear understanding of what leadership actually is important to a leadership development program?" Skip Bell answers this question in the affirmative, as does the writer of this thesis. Skip Bell, "Learning, Changing, and Doing: A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Religious and Non-profit Organizations," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2010), 102. Cf. also the sources mentioned in chap. 1, n71.

[6] Cf. Alan Roxburgh, "Missional communities that engage the constant change that lies ahead will need to transform congregational, denominational, and educational paradigms of leadership." Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling?! Leaders lost in Transition* (Eagle, ID: ACI Publishing, 2005), 175.

[7] This chapter presupposes that 'secular' insights on leadership should be taken seriously, a view that is shared – among others – by Malcolm Grundy, Director of the Foundation for Church Leadership of the Anglican Church: "Unjustifiably these days is the disdain shown by some church leaders towards well-researched ideas about leadership, and what seems worse to some of them, management." Malcolm Grundy, *What's New in Church Leadership? Creative Responses to the Changing Pattern of Church Life* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2007), 181.

The rest of this chapter discusses the different components of this definition. First, the expression 'conversational processes' is explained (8.2). Next we specify what is meant by the following components: envisioning (8.3), cultural formation (8.4), spiritual formation (8.5), and structuring (8.6). In this same section, our main findings are summarized and discussed in a figure (8.6.1). Next, we discuss three more elements of the definition: 'within a Christian community' (8.7), 'individual participants, groups, and the community as a whole' (8.8) and 'that enable... to respond to challenging situations and engage in transformative changes that are necessary to become, or remain, oriented to God's mission in the local context' (8.9). The chapter ends with some general conclusions and reflections on the implications of the discussion (8.10).

8.2 Conversational Processes

The expression 'conversational' is chosen to call attention to the fact that conversations are much emphasized in both the Emerging-Missional milieu[8] and in recent works on leadership that make use of insights from complexity theory. "[C]onversational leadership," according to Peggy Holman, "invites us all into leadership work....Emergent change processes engage the diverse people of a system in focused yet open interactions that lead to unexpected and lasting shifts in perspective and behavior."[9]

Furthermore, in the definition leadership is comprised of *processes*. This term is chosen in order to prevent our attention being drawn toward formal leaders or specific personality traits; thinking in terms of processes encourages us to observe the many different ways in which people in a Christian community exercise leadership without "being leaders."[10] This is congruent with the Organic paradigm (especially the aspects 1, 3 and 5).[11]

By focusing on leadership processes, however, we do not mean to suggest that leaders are somehow irrelevant in a missional community. Leaders are very important – indeed, as Milfred Minatrea recognizes, "missional churches do not exist without visionary mis-

[8] With Tony Jones, one could speak of 'practices of hermeneutical enrichment', which act as catalysts for conversation in a congregation. "This shifts the role of the clergyperson from that of the community's primary hermeneut to one of a *facilitator of conversations* [emphasis added]. Whether it be the community's act of interpreting the Bible or the more mundane aspects of congregational life like electing leadership or deciding on a budget, conversation is encouraged, and the conviction is repeatedly articulated that everyone's interpreted skills are enriched when more people are invited into the process of conversation and decision making." Tony Jones, *The Church is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement* (Minneapolis, MN: The JoPa Group, 2011), 17. See on 'conversation' also 1.1.2 and 6.4.3.

[9] Peggy Holman, *Engaging Emergence: Turning Upheaval into Opportunity* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2010), 111, 201.

[10] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 20. Informal leadership may consist in, for example, "an insightful comment at a church meeting, the initiative to do a task others had neglected, or an idea that could potentially improve outreach." Norma Cook Everist and Craig L. Nissan, *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 165.

[11] In short, these were the following (see 7.7.3): 1. Key players: entire group. 3. Power and authority: emphasis on collaboration. 5. Responsibility and accountability: high for both leaders and followers.

sional leaders."[12] In addition, from a Christian perspective, leadership (*proistamenos*, Rom. 1:28; *kubernèseis*, 1 Cor. 12:28) can be thought of as a charism, a gift from the Spirit – or at least as a particular configuration of a number of related 'motivational' gifts.[13] And in the context of the Christian community, charisms are entrusted to particular people.[14] Moreover, the definition implies that there are individuals who have the leadership capacity to interpret the interactional processes within a Christian community as contributing to missional leadership, or as being conducive of something else. That being said, the definition may help prospective missional leaders to correct a possible individualistic conception of leadership[15] by also drawing attention to groups and to the community as a whole. Rather than focusing on charismatic leaders, EMC literature emphasizes building up the local church as a charismatic community of ministry and mission.[16] The definition attempts to capture this emphasis.[17] Speaking of missional leadership instead of missional leaders provides a permanent reminder that the *solus pastor* mindset – which may still be the default position of many Christians and churches – is not appropriate. At the same time, the definition does not prescribe the degree to which an individual leader needs to play a determinative role in the particular phase or cultural context in which his or her community finds itself. In general, however, it can be said that more persons need to take on the responsibility of being actively involved in mis-

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[12] Milfred Minatrea, *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 156. In the UK, George Lings argues that he "knows of no *mature* fresh expression or emerging church that does not have its own full-time leader." George Lings, as quoted in Sara Savage and Eolene Boyd-MacMillan, *The Human Face of the Church: A Social Psychology and Pastoral Theology Resource for Pioneer and Traditional Ministry* (London: Canterbury Press, 2007), 78.

[13] Bruce E. Winston, "The Romans 12 Gifts: Useful for Person-Job Fit," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2009), 114-134.

[14] Put somewhat more abstractly, "The Holy Spirit gives the missional church a community of persons who, in a variety of ways and with a diversity of functional roles and titles, together practice the missional authority that cultivates within the community the discernment of missional vocation and is intentional about the practices that embed that vocation in the community's life." Lois Y. Barrett, ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), xiv.

[15] Australian Denham Grierson was already lamenting some decades ago that "It is to be regretted that much of the church's work in theological education implicitly assumes an isolated and singular role function for ordained Christians." Denham Grierson, *Transforming a People of God* (Melbourne: The Joint Board of Christian Education, 1984), 142.

[16] Cf. Israel Galindo, "The idea that congregational leadership is a corporate function seems to be one of the most challenging concepts for pastors to accept." Significantly, he adds that, "Likely, this is because most have been trained with concepts about leadership that focus on the office of the clergy." Israel Galindo, *The Hidden Lives of Congregations: Discerning Church Dynamics* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004), 185. It is a bit puzzling, however, that Galindo suggests that the leadership function of providing vision falls exclusively to the pastoral leader. Ibid., 145. Why would this be so? What if a pastor is simply not capable of doing so? And does this statement not contradict Galindo's emphasis on leadership as 'corporate' and his insight that "leadership functions may arise from elsewhere in the system other than in the officially designated leader"? Ibid., 149.

[17] Cf. Everist and Nissan on 'transformative' leadership: "Transformative leadership is not about the heroic leadership of the individual but the growing capacity for leadership within the entire faith community. Transformative leadership is shared leadership, as the gifts of other people are nurtured and celebrated." Everist and Nissan, *Transformative Leadership,* 164.

sional leadership, because very few individuals have the gifts to function effectively in all three of the dimensions that are involved. This indicates the need for a form of shared leadership.

Using the word *processes*, then, agrees with a "theory and a practice of church organizational development and change that builds up and strengthens the church as an organism – a body – a corporate entity."[18]

8.2.1 Three Central Terms

The definition refers to conversational processes in relation to terms like 'envisioning', 'formation' and 'structuring'. At the outset, it might be helpful to point out that these expressions together cover most of what is involved in leadership.[19] Three descriptions of scholarship on leadership may help to clarify this.[20]

Philip Selznick uses a three-fold description of leadership tasks:[21] (1) defining the organization's mission and role (this might be called envisioning); (2) embodying that purpose in its organizational life (this refers to structuring), and (3) helping the organization and its members give expression to their distinctive values in the face of threats, from both within and without (this has to do with cultural and spiritual[22] formation).

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[18] Paul M. Dietterich, "Toward a Theology of the Church as Organization," a Center for Parish Development Theological Paper (Chicago, IL: Center for Parish Development, 1982), 4. It is relevant to note that clear parallels to this view are articulated in emerging models of parish leadership within the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. These 'Vatican II model parishes', in which the people of God are central, "focus on leadership as a *system of relationships* [emphasis added] through which the community is led, rather than on the leader as a single person. What is emerging is an organic whole, where the roles of pastor, staff, and parishioner are critical, interdependent, and unique. The Spirit is calling *all* [emphasis added] the baptized to participate in providing a welcoming Eucharistic community." Marti R. Jewell and David A. Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church: Emerging Models of Parish Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2010), 77-78.

[19] The terms used in our definition are analytic terms, which is to say that in any community or organization a dimension of vision, culture, and structure may be detected. However, the emphasis and specific content that each of these properties receives, vary widely.

[20] Cf. also the three main leadership tasks as discussed in 7.6.

[21] Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957). The tasks are summed up in Jackson W. Carroll, *As One With Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry* (Louisville, KT: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 98.

[22] Terms like 'spiritual' and 'spirituality' are not habitually used by leadership scholars, Selznick included, although the scene is changing. What Selznick calls 'values' can also be conceived of as 'spiritual ideals', such as integrity, honesty, and humility. Similarly, practices traditionally associated with spirituality as demonstrated in daily life have also been shown to be connected to leadership effectiveness. Think of showing respect for others, demonstrating fair treatment, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, recognizing the contributions of others, and engaging in reflective practice. Laura Reave, "Spiritual Values and Practices Related to Leadership Effectiveness," *The Leadership Quarterly* 16 (2005), 655-687. For some additional insights on spiritual leadership, see the special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly* 16 (2005), and Joanna Crossman, "Conceptualising Spiritual Leadership in Secular Organizational Contexts and Its Relation to Transformational, Servant and Environmental Leadership," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 31, no. 7 (2010), 596-608.

Bolman and Deal mention "three basic leadership challenges."[23] The first one is 'setting an agenda', this means helping to articulate a vision and creating focus and direction (thus: envisioning). The second is 'building a network', by inspiring trust and investing in relationships. In the characterization of missional leadership these are aspects of cultural formation and of spiritual formation as well, if we include trusting and relating to God. The third is 'using the network to get things done'. This means, *inter alia*, building structures to implement the vision (in terms of the definition: structuring).

Mary Hatch and her coauthors focus on three leadership roles as well. First, there is the role of the *manager* (the structuring dimension). Second, the *priest* is able "to inspire the courage to change while providing comfort and reassurance to face the fear change brings" (the dimension of cultural and spiritual formation). Third, there is the role of the *artist*, who questions old assumptions and offers new ideas that awaken passions and motivate change (the envisioning dimension).[24]

We also point to the fact that we chose to use a form of verb-centered language[25] in our leadership definition, from 'envisioning' to 'respond'. First, this may help convey the impression that missional leadership is something that requires activity and energy, and, indeed, this is very often the case. For example, leadership involves engaging people in the critical issues that require change, as well as dealing with aspects of a "maintenance mentality,"[26] which can easily gain the upper hand in churches and Christian communities. Second, our choice of terms places an emphasis on dynamic, continuing processes, rather than something that is static. For example, the definition does not focus our attention on the adopted *structure* of Christian communities as much as it does on the relational *process* of organizing (or 'structuring').[27] Expressions such as these, moreover, sug-

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[23] Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, fourth ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 324, 345, 142.

[24] Mary Jo Hatch, Monika Kostera, Andrzej K. Kozminsky, *The Three Faces of Leadership: Manager, Artist, Priest* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), vii, 4 and *passim*. For Christians, the use of the word 'priest' leads one to consider whether the three dimensions in the definition coincide with the traditional threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. If the *priest* matches the dimension of cultural and spiritual formation, perhaps the *king* can be said to cover the aspect of structuring, and the *prophet* that of envisioning. Cf. Mark Driscoll, "Prophets tend to be strong at vision, study, preaching, teaching, doctrinal truth....Priests have a deep understanding of human suffering and are compassionate and merciful in tending to the needs of hurting people….Kings excel at systems, policies, procedures, planning, team building, mission executing, and simply maximizing resources to accomplish measurable results." Driscoll, *On Church Leadership*, 67.

[25] Verb-centered language includes using adjectival participles such as 'envisioning' and 'structuring'. Our choice is in line with EMC preferences. Joseph Myers, for example, devotes an entire chapter to explain the difference between noun-centric language and verb-centric language. He clearly prefers the latter, as being more relational, experiential, action oriented, and open to mystery. Joseph R. Myers, *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 144-157.

[26] Aubrey Malphurs humorously typifies adherents of the maintenance mentality: "Come weal or come woe their status is quo, and their motto is, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'" Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 45.

[27] Cf. W. Richard Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, fifth ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 98.

gest that missional leadership is a never-ending process, an ongoing quest with no guarantee of ever getting to the finish line.[28]

Leadership interpreted as proposed in this chapter thus provides a practical orientation. Events and actions may be evaluated while they are still in progress, without waiting for specific outcomes. Some questions that may be asked along the way are the following: Are the participants in our community testing their views of the challenges they face against competing views or are they defensively sticking to a particular perspective and suppressing others? Are they seriously testing the relationship between means and ends? Are conflicts over values and the morality of various means open to examination? Are policies analyzed and evaluated to distinguish fact from fiction?[29]

8.3 Envisioning

We now turn to the term 'envisioning', which as previously mentioned (7.7.2) is very important in the Organic paradigm, as it is within communities in the Emerging-Missional milieu. Furthermore, it is recognized that "how this vision emerges and is cultivated, and how it is held by the various stakeholders is a key issue in the vitality and viability of emerging churches."[30] Often, a process of mutual sense-making is necessary to arrive at a shared vision and mission for a particular Christian community.[31] That is why the term envisioning was chosen, which can be interpreted as a communally exercising of theological imagination and discernment, in which Bible study[32] and prayer[33] play a crucial role, in order to discern the identity and calling of the congregation.[34]

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[28] Kevin G. Ford, *Transforming Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008), 141.

[29] Cf. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 25-26.

[30] David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 31.

[31] In the envisioning process, Dave Daubert emphasizes, "It is not the pastor's job to announce the last word (the vision and goals); rather, the pastor is called to announce the first word (God's) and to *foster a conversation* [emphasis added] where people own, process, and apply the word to the lives and mission in which they participate." Dave Daubert, "Vision-Discerning vs. Vision-Casting," in Craig van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 157. Cf. Graham Cray: "leadership is not so much about how leaders discern as about their enabling God's people to discern." Graham Cray, *Discerning Leadership: Cooperating with the Go-Between God* (Cambridge, UK: Grove Books, 2010), 15.

[32] The purpose of Bible study in regard to envisioning is to connect Scripture to the daily conversations, issues, and problems of the community. It is recognized that this is something that needs practice. See on the hermeneutical issues involved Patrick Keifert, ed., *Testing the Spirits: How Theology Informs the Study of Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

[33] In her very inspiring, hope-filled book Susan Hope writes, "Prayer is the crunch issue for mission. It is the one vital ingredient....The journey cannot be undertaken without the Holy Spirit, and the way to access the Spirit and the Spirit's power is through prayer." Susan Hope, *Mission-Shaped Spirituality: The Transforming Power of Mission* (London: Church House Publishing, 2007), 61. Cf. Michael Goheen, "Quite simply, the church that does not learn to pray fervently and corporately can never become a truly missional church." Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 207. Goheen remarks that much prayer "is turned inward in our own needs but

Furthermore, the process of envisioning often entails reflecting on one's paradigms[35] and the devising of appropriate metaphors or other forms of pictorial language.[36] Envisioning also implies hermeneutics, since neither the local context in which the community is located, nor scripture can be taken at face value.[37] They both need interpretation.[38] In addition, envisioning entails discernment[39] (or discerning). "Congregational discerning offers the possibility of fuller awareness of God's presence breaking into the world through a conversation with another."[40] Another part of discernment is being able to see through complex issues and find out what is truly important for the years to come. This is necessary to make the appropriate strategic (i.e., direction setting) deci-

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also lacks any expectation that God will do anything anyway." He pleads for leaders "modeling prayer that is expectant and outward looking in corporate times of worship and small group settings." Ibid., 208.

[34] This may have many repercussions. In Spring Garden Church (Toronto) for example, during an intense year of 'missional conversation' the central vision took shape, i.e., to be responsive to concerns across the city in Christ's name and in Christ's way. The worship focus of this missional church is now shaped by, and shapes, the actions of the congregation in things like economic development projects, local evangelism, international mission teams, and social reconciliation. In addition, members of this church gather on Saturday morning to pray for the shopkeepers, for civic officials, for corporations, for older residents on fixed income, for young families starting out, for wealthy new Asian immigrants, and others. George R. Hunsberger, "Discerning Missional Vocation," in Lois Y. Barrett ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 47.

[35] In the Organic paradigm, "leadership is a process that requires people to constantly examine and redefine their basic assumptions." Gayle C. Avery, *Understanding Leadership: Paradigms and Cases* (London: Sage, 2005), 28. See also chapter 3.

[36] See chapter 5.

[37] Craig Van Gelder, "The Hermeneutics of Leading in Mission," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 3, nos.1-2 (Spring/Fall 2004), 139-171. "The challenge is," Alan Roxburgh adds, "in learning to communicate the biblical stories to connect with the underlying cultural narratives that dominate the lives of most of us today." Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 181.

[38] This insight lacks in Aubrey Malphurs' definition of leadership: "Christian leadership is the process whereby servants use their credibility and capability to influence people in a particular context to pursue their *God-given direction* [emphasis added]." The expression 'God-given' gives insufficient attention to the process of human interpretation. Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, 10.

[39] At present, there is no simple definition of, or scholarly consensus about, what discernment means. The concept often refers to a complex, multidimensional process of "decision making by logic and reason, by empathy gained through reflection and understanding, and by moral ethics determined by one's spirituality." Hazel C.V. Traüffer et al., "Towards an Understanding of Discernment: A Conceptual Paper," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 31, no. 2 (2010), 178.

[40] David C. Hahn, "Congregational Discerning as Divine Action in Conversation," in Dwight J. Zscheile, ed., *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*, advanced copy edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 163. Hahn continues, "If there is a leadership key through this process that is being proposed, it would be to track the conversation and attend to it again and again, exploring and imagining how the Holy Spirit is present and active through the conversation."

sions.[41] In the terms of practical theology, envisioning refers to the visional and obligational levels.[42]

Moreover, in the conceptualization of missional leadership which we submitted, the *content* of the process of envisioning receives a focus. In this respect, the definition is normative. In missional communities, participants can be expected to tackle the following question from time to time: how can we remain oriented to God's mission in this time and context?[43] For example, the fifteen missional congregations that are discussed in the book *Treasure in Clay Jars* all continually ask questions of location and identity, such as "*where* they are, in a geographic, social, cultural context; *when* they are, in the flow of history and change; *who* they are, in continuity with a tradition, re-forming it in the present; [and] *why* they are, welcoming God's call, entering God's coming reign."[44]

8.4 Cultural Formation

The term *cultural* points to the fact that each community has a unique culture,[45] climate,[46] or code.[47] Although a community may also be viewed as a subculture of an even larger culture, our leadership characterization focuses on the 'internal' cultural dimension.[48] The larger culture is assumed to form the *context* – in Browning's terms: the 'environmental-social level' – in which the missional community finds itself.

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[41] See on discernment, Cray, *Discerning Leadership*; Hahn, "Congregational Discerning as Divine Action in Conversation"; Richard R. Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville, KT: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 43-55 and 283-302; and Luke Timothy Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment: Decision Making In The Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

[42] The reference here is to Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 70 ff.

[43] See also 8.9, below.

[44] Hunsberger, "Discerning Missional Vocation," 39.

[45] The culture of a congregation, according to Roxburgh and Romanuk, is "how it views itself in relationship to the community, the values that shape how it does things, expectations of one another and of its leaders, unspoken codes about why it exists and who it serves, how it reads Scripture, and how it forms a community." Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 63. Sociologist Penny Becker describes (congregational) culture as "local understandings of identity and mission...that can be understood analytically as bundles of core tasks and legitimate ways of doing things." Penny Edgell Becker, *Congregations in Conflict: Cultural Models of Local Religious Life* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7.

[46] Jan Hendriks, a Dutch expert on congregational development, defines 'climate' as the way in which people are being 'seen' (or not being seen) and how this is given form in procedures. Jan Hendriks, *Verlangen en vertrouwen. Het hart van gemeenteopbouw* [Longing and trusting: The heart of congregational renewal] (Kampen: Kok, 2008), 101.

[47] A church's code, Kevin Ford suggests, is its "collective personality...shaped in part by their unique histories, experiences, and contexts." Ford, *Transforming Church*, 89. Code "shapes the stories we tell, the rituals we observe, and the unspoken rules we follow." Ibid., 96-97. Symbolic expressions of code are myths, rituals, heroes, visual style and architecture. Ibid., 102, 122 ff.

[48] Mary Jo Hatch, with Ann L. Cunliffe, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives,* second ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 213.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the dynamic process of culture *formation*[49] is a very important aspect of missional leadership.[50] This is to say that missional leadership not only monitors the 'tendency need level' (Browning) but also provides for core religious and pastoral functions and rituals. In addition, culture formation means intentionally *acting on* culture, primarily by shaping conversations, including the content of announcements, testimonies, lessons, and sermons.[51] These intentional leadership acts are aimed at the formation and reformation of culture in such a way that the missional vision of the community is facilitated.[52] This may entail inspiring a "culture of experimentation with a genuine pioneering spirit,"[53] creating unrest and resisting complacency, or opposing impulses toward self-centeredness and self-preservation or toward provincialism and parochialism.[54]

There are good reasons to call attention to culture formation. An empirical study conducted in the Netherlands shows that it is possible for a Christian community to start with a missional focus but subsequently develop a culture that is heavily oriented on insiders. This inwardly focused culture then puts a brake on missional initiatives.[55]

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[49] Pastoral leaders who are deeply involved in the missional church discussion often use the terms 'formation', as well as congregational 'culture'. This is one of the findings of the Missional Leadership Project in which Richard Osmer was involved. Richard R. Osmer, "Formation in the Missional Church: Building Deep Connections between Ministries of Upbuilding and Sending," in Dwight J. Zscheile, ed., *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*, advanced copy edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 32-33.

[50] Well-known author Edgar Schein even suggests that "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture." Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, third ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 11. Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim refer to Schein's three levels of culture: the *tangible* (i.e. the things most easily observed by an outsider when looking at an organization), the *theory* (i.e. what the organization officially claims about its values, mission, goals, and beliefs), and the *thought world*: this third and deepest level is associated with "controlling stories, metaphors, and paradigms that the organization lives and interprets its world by. The thought world is the ideological fountain out of which organizational culture flows." Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 129. Thus, the authors suggest, "Truly mobilizing a community for mission requires engaging that community's deepest paradigms – its ideological scripts and foundations." Ibid. We dealt with the topic of paradigm in chapter 3.

[51] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 123. "To change a culture," McNeal asserts, "you have to change the conversations." Ibid., 122. For an empirical study, see Randy Willis, *Leadership Communication: How Leader-communicators Shape a Missional Culture* (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2011).

[52] Cf. the insight of Lovett Weems, "Once a new vision emerges, there must be new structures to support that new vision, and one must make sure that *traditions, values, customs, and habits* [emphasis added] are consistent with the new vision." H. Lovett Weems, *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture, and Integrity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1993), 103. In this quote, we again encounter the three dimensions of envisioning, structuring, and cultural formation.

[53] Alan Hirsch with Darryn Altclass, *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 19. See also Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, *The Faith of Leap: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure & Courage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011).

[54] Cf. David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 496.

[55] See the book of Gert de Jong, who conducted an empirical study in the Dutch provincial city of Amersfoort. Gert de Jong, *Doen alsof er niets is. Sociologische gevalsstudie over een kerkelijke gemeente als dynamische confi-*

Another Dutch ethnographic study describes a church that started out missional[56] but that subsequently developed an internal culture of distrust, with a lack of open, honest and transparent processes of communication and conflict resolution. This proved to be one important reason why the church's missional focus and practice became less and less pronounced over the years.[57] A congregation's culture, then, is clearly not something that should be neglected.[58] It may be conducive for a community to become, or to remain, missional, but a culture can also be obstructive.[59] That is why missional leadership is necessary. This is, as we argued above, a proactive and intentional kind of leadership, which may, among other things, periodically assist the community to reactivate and re-equip itself for its original intent.[60] The congregations in the Netherlands that were referred to apparently lacked this kind of leadership.[61]

There is also an aspect of cultural formation that has to do with what can be called *community building*. This entails "facilitating relationships, mutual understanding, and deep communication that lead to trust, expressed in direct honesty, candor, and freedom."[62] In order to help build community, it is necessary for the leaders to have an appreciative and realistic understanding of the people in their group, "their strengths and foibles, reason and emotion, desires and fears."[63] They should realistically address the

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guratie [Pretend there is nothing: Sociological case study concerning a church congregation as dynamic configuration] (Wageningen: Ponsen & Looyen, 2008).

[56] In its aims and self-description, that is. It goes beyond our purposes here to ascertain to what extent the interpretation of 'missional' as operative within this community matches with those currently articulated within the EMC.

[57] Rein Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenschap. Het verhaal van een protestantse geloofsgemeenschap* [Believing in community: The story of a protestant faith community] (Kampen: Kok 2009), particularly chapter 7 on leadership and communication. Brouwer's research was also conducted in Amersfoort but in a different church from that of De Jong (see n55).

[58] Cf. Roxburgh and Romanuk, "We have learned unless the culture of a congregation is changed all the sound programs and organizational changes that have been implemented evaporate." Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 63.

[59] Cf. Ronald Heifetz, "Adaptive leadership requires understanding the group's culture and assessing which aspects of it facilitate change and which stand in the way." Heifetz et al., *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 57.

[60] Cf. Allan Effa, "Missional Voices Down Under: A Canadian Response to the Missiology of Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch," *Missiology: An International Review* 38, no. 1 (January 2010), 64.

[61] The emphasis of the leaders of De Jong's congregation was on the 'structuring' dimension of leadership (planning, organizing, etc.), not on culture formation. Their leadership proved to be ineffective, since the cultural dimension was eventually more influential than the formal leadership interventions. De Jong, *Doen alsof er niets is*, 192-194. In Brouwer's church the formal leadership did not operate from a clear missional vision; moreover, it did not sufficiently facilitate an internal culture of openness and talking through of differences, and it let inflexible structures frustrate evangelistic initiatives. Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenschap*, 249-300.

[62] John Dreibelbis, "Beyond Wish Lists for Pastoral Leadership: Assessing Clergy Behavior and Congregational Outcomes to Guide Seminary Curriculum," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), 46.

[63] Bolman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 21. The risk for a community that genuinely seeks to be missional (and consequently change-oriented), is that the level of anxiety rises to a level that some participants cannot cope with. By staying calm and yet connected to those who are anxious, leaders can help reduce the level of anxiety. "People who do this are automatically positive and helpful leaders in the church, whether

ability of individuals to be actively involved within the community, because giving people an opportunity to participate in decision making, tackling challenging projects, and taking on exciting tasks – as is likely to be done in missional communities – draws substantially on their time, energy, and emotions.[64] Moreover, there may be persons with certain mental, physical, or emotional limitations who should be taken care of. Consequently, openness and caring, mutuality, listening, coaching and empowerment are central to this element of cultural formation.[65] Transparent communication and sharing of information,[66] building a climate of safety and trust,[67] providing hope,[68] and dealing with individual differences[69] – including people's anxieties and feelings of loss and grief in times of transition[70] – are of great importance in the cultural formation dimension of missional leadership.

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or not they hold an official office." Ronald W. Richardson: *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership, and the Congregational Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 51.

[64] Cf. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *When Giants Learn to Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 293.

[65] Bolman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 361. Cf. also the advocated leadership practice of 'encouraging the heart' in the influential book of J.M. Kouzes and B.Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002) and the aspect of 'individualized consideration' that is deemed important in transformational leadership. Cf. Jan Hendriks, who even equates the 'core' of leadership in the church with the pastoral function: "Leiding geven in de kerk...is in zijn kern pastoraat." Jan Hendriks, *Een vitale en aantrekkelijke gemeente. Model en methode van gemeenteopbouw* [A vital and attractive congregation: Model and method of congregational development] (Kampen: Kok, 1990), 71.

[66] Cf. Gayle Avery, "Communication and sharing information occupy considerable time in an organic organization. Diverse views and values are accepted and accorded equitable treatment." Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 64.

[67] Four kinds of trust may be distinguished: trust in the organization, trust in the leadership, trust in the process, and trust in the outcomes. Robert M. Sloyan and James D. Ludema, "That's Not How I See It: How Trust in the Organization, Leadership, Process, and Outcome Influence Individual Responses to Organizational Change," *Research in Organizational Change and Development* 18 (2010), 233–277. Their research "supports the conceptualization of trust as an emergent state in which every action and interaction is a possibility to increase or decrease trust. People will begin a change initiative with a predetermined level of trust. Trust can be built throughout a change initiative incrementally. However, trust can be lost instantly." Ibid., 268. Alan Roxburgh confirms that "Trust is critical for innovating a culture of missional transformation." Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 85. See, for an extensive treatment of this theme, Paul James Dunbar, "The Impact of Trust on Congregational Readiness for Missional Change," (DMin thesis, Biblical Theological Seminary, 2007).

[68] See on the importance of hope as an 'energy source', Gil Rendle and Alice Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations* (n.p.: The Alban Institute, 2003), 96-100. On the role of hope with an explicit eschatological dimension, see Raymond L. Wheeler, "Therefore I Have Hope: Utilizing Hope as a Leadership Emergence Factor and Catalyst to Organizational Responsiveness and Innovation," (DMin thesis, Claremont School of Theology, 2008).

[69] Mary Louise Brown, "Culture Change and Individual Differences in the Scottish Episcopal Church," (PhD diss., Robert Gordon University, 2007) and Jeffrey S. Rogers, *Building a House for All God's Children: Diversity Leadership in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008).

[70] Terri Elton submits that "Framed theologically, transition is a death and resurrection process. In many ways managing transitions is similar to walking with people in the process of grief." Terri Martinson Elton, "Leading in the Midst of Change: A Theologically Grounded, Theoretically Informed Hermeneutic of Change," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 30. See also Johannes Zimmermann, "Change, Grief, and Conflict in Church Development in East Germany," *International Journal for Practical Theology* 13 (2009), 46-61.

8.5 Spiritual Formation

An equally indispensable and related, but distinct, aspect is that of spiritual formation.[71] Spiritual formation can be defined as "our continuing response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world."[72] The idea is that, in a missional community, all participants – including young people,[73] and formal leaders[74] – are learning what it means to be disciples of Jesus[75] and to attend to the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in conversational processes in the congregation.[76] Furthermore, the Bible has a continuing, converting, formative role in the life of the community.[77] Policy and practice are informed by prayer. Preaching, teaching, contributing to communal worship activities, and pastoral counseling or spiritual direction, all contribute to spiritual formation and they may all be said to be works of leadership.[78] These activities can be

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[71] The topic of 'Spiritual Formation' in connection with missional thinking has lately gained much attention. For example, The Ecclesia Network held their 2011 National Gathering on "Spiritual Formation in Missional Congregations." Ecclesia Network, http://www.ecclesianet.org/ (accessed December 4, 2011). Furthermore, the sixth annual Missional Church Consultation, which was held at Luther Seminary in November 2010, was called "Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation." The papers of this conference have been published in Dwight J. Zscheile, ed., *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

[72] Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary Challenges," in Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 24, as quoted in Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), 26.

[73] Brian Kirk and Jacob Thorne, *Missional Youth Ministry: Moving From Gathering Teenagers to Scattering Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/YS, 2011); Tim Sudworth, with Graham Cray and Chris Russell, *Mission-Shaped Youth: Rethinking Young People and Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2007).

[74] Scholars Birch and Parks remind us that "church leaders can choose to ignore the loss of robust intimacy with God" and that the "drifting that follows from that loss is dangerous territory." Lewis A. Parks and Bruce C. Birch, *Ducking Spears, Dancing Madly: A Biblical Model of Church Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 128. The authors recognize the importance for leaders of being self-differentiated, self-aware, and reflective, but they value their spiritual life as being the most important. Ibid., 113-114. This vision accords with EMC views.

[75] Cf. Alan Hirsch, "The quality of the church's leadership is directly proportional to the quality of discipleship. If we fail in the area of making disciples, we should not be surprised if we fail in the area of leadership development....Discipleship is primary; leadership is always secondary." Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 119. The idea of discipleship is elaborated in Alan and Debra Hirsch, *Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010).

[76] Hahn, "Congregational Discerning as Divine Action in Conversation," 163.

[77] Darrell Guder, "Biblical Formation and Discipleship," in Lois Y. Barrett, ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 59.

[78] Cf. Jackson W. Carroll, *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 127. Spiritual direction is especially emphasized in the EMC. Cf. Gibbs and Bolger, "Emerging church participants receive spiritual direction from their mentors as they seek to live a balanced rhythm of life in all spheres of reality, balancing prayer, community, and outreach." Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 232.

called aspects of missional leadership in so far as they enable the transformative work that is necessary to become or to remain oriented to God's mission.[79]

To put it another way, leadership as it is referred to in the EMC is interested in furthering a 'missional spirituality' within the community. Participants should be equipped "to be incarnational missionaries in their communities and workplaces who know how to exegete and engage culture and live the gospel in deed and word."[80] Missional spirituality, then, is a spirituality that forms and feeds mission. It is about "an attentive and active engagement of embodied love for God and neighbor expressed from the inside out,"[81] and it involves "compassionate identification, participation, and companionship with those suffering under sin, oppression, injustice, exclusion, and despair."[82] Important leadership activities in this regard are preaching, teaching, mentoring (including training leaders[83] and 'discipling' them, i.e. addressing their character, leading skills, faith development and spirituality[84]), sharing the gospel with others, and mobilizing.[85] This last aspect may involve small groups, or 'mission teams' in which Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and service are significant components, or it may happen through gatherings, church boards, or retreats, among other things. In addition, formal and informal conversations, when fostered by a generous and hospitable ethos in which people have a shared sense of belonging and contribution, can help "equip and mobilize a missional spirituality in a community."[86]

8.6 Structuring

Stated in an encompassing way, the structures of a congregation are "those formal elements of congregational life such as policies, buildings, creeds, curricula, boards, and committees, as well as the hidden, informal relationship structures of cliques, networks,

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[79] The task of missional leaders is *not* to be involved in all kinds of programs or activities, but to ask, "What cultural containers – church, worship style, small group ministry, evangelism methods and approaches, discipleship processes, etc., – will be most effective in this context?" Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 55.

[80] Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, 216.

[81] Ibid., 31, 72, 194.

[82] Dwight J. Zscheile, "A Missional Theology of Spiritual Formation," in Dwight J. Zscheile, ed., *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*, advanced copy edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 19.

[83] Cf. Michael Goheen: "It is impossible for a pastor to carry and implement a vision for a missional church alone. Identifying and training leaders who can journey and act as change agents together is essential." Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 220.

[84] Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen, *Clusters: Creative Mid-Sized Missional Communities* (Sheffield, UK: 3dministries, 2007), 159.

[85] This list is based on Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, 215-219, and Osmer, "Formation in the Missional Church," 34.

[86] Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, 219-220.

norms, and roles."[87] The 'structuring dimension' of a Christian community allows "for the right people to focus on the right tasks at the right time with the right tools, instead of scrambling to cover for what should have been done by someone else last week."[88] This quote is a reminder that in Christian organizations, as in secular ones,[89] operational goals should be formulated and implemented. Members should know what their tasks are and have sufficient support, tools and mandate to act on them. Boundaries should also be clear as to the roles, responsibilities, and conduct of individuals or groups. This helps to prevent one person from holding an inordinate amount of power – or holding power for too long. If this 'rule-role level' (Browning) is neglected, a missional community risks developing lofty visions and issuing proclamations that it is entirely unable to fulfill and have no further impact or effect.[90]

Missional leadership, however, does not just focus attention on the dimension of structuring in the sense of organizing or management – including dealing with questions that relate to 'politics' and power, such as "how decisions are arrived at and which interpretations are agreed and 'authorized' vis-à-vis the direction and theological/ethical 'position' of the community."[91] *The particular task of missional leadership is to analyze the chosen structure(s) and suggest adjustments to keep the focus on the mission and vision of the community.* This is necessary because a structure has the potential to make itself an authority, adversely affecting the lives of its members. It can claim and demand things of individuals or the group as a whole. Even though the original intent is to reduce chaos and maintain order to complete the mission, a reversal can take place which brings about enslavement. "What began as a force for good turns into a power that maintains the status quo for better or worse."[92] Thus, *surveying* the structural dimension is a crucially important aspect of missional leadership. In this conversational process, the following ques-

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[87] Galindo, *The Hidden Lives of Congregations*, 44. The author discerns three broad leadership functions: (1) the theological interpretation of meaning; (2) the formation of a local community of faith; (3) the function of institutional development (161). Note that these three match our dimensions of envisioning, cultural and spiritual formation, and structuring.

[88] Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 206.

[89] A Christian missional community exhibits organizational traits which in many respects resemble those of comparable secular organizations. Joseph F. McCann, *Church and Organization: A Sociological and Theological Enquiry* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993).

[90] Thung, *The Precarious Organisation*, 155; cf. Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenschap*, 196, 253-255. An empirical case is the Mennonite Church USA, who has adopted a missional ecclesiology as its declared foundational framework. However, "there does not seem to be a clear strategy for aligning the parts of the church to bring this priority into operation throughout the denominational system." Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 44. Thus, at the point of a six-year review the Executive Board of this denomination had to acknowledge that "declaring that our vision and call to engage in God's purposes in the world is not adequately supported by our present relationships, behaviors and organization." Ibid., 22.

[91] Mark Mason, "Living in the Distance Between a 'Community of Character' and a 'Community of the Question'," in Louise Neltrop and Martyn Percy, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church* (London, UK: Canterbury Press, 2008), 99.

[92] James F. Cobble, Jr., *The Church and the Powers: A Theology of Church Structure* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 48. See also Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 183.

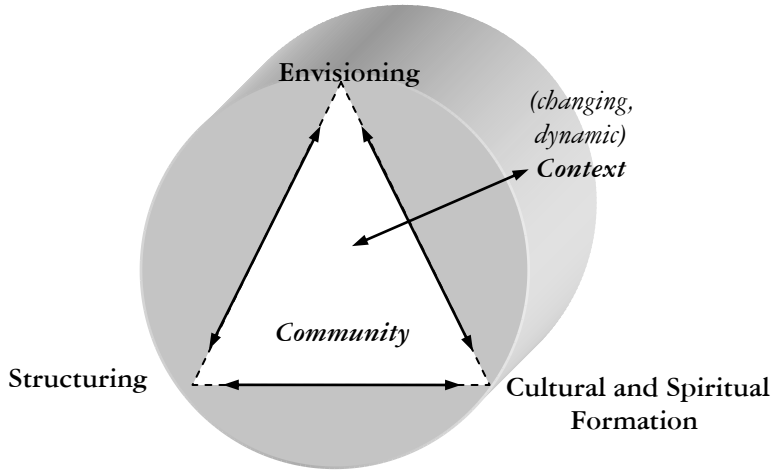
tions should be asked: What attitudes and motivations are reinforced by the way our community is organized? Have aspects of the structure(s) turned into an impersonal spiritual force that rigidly controls the lives of those who are involved? Has the structure reached a point of status quo, where preservation of the past takes precedent over adapting to the future? Does the structure serve us or do we serve it?[93]

In short, structures and organizational procedures should enable the Christian community to be missional in a particular time and place. It is a leadership task to see to this, because "God has ordained the mission, not the structures."[94] If the structures stand in the way of the mission, they should be changed. They cannot, however, be prepackaged and imported from elsewhere (e.g. from sixteenth century Geneva, or from successful contemporary churches that are located in another region than we ourselves live in). "New structures will have to emerge out of a difficult process of letting go of many standard scripts and models of what it means to be a church and passing through a period of experimentation, risk-taking, and failure."[95]

8.6.1 Missional Leadership in a Dynamic Configuration

Before proceeding with the other terms of the definition of leadership, the elements that have been covered thus far are put together in a figure.

Figure 8.1 A Dynamic Configuration of Missional Leadership



[93] Cf. Cobble, *The Church and the Powers*, 49.
[94] Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership*, 203.
[95] Osmer, "Formation in the Missional Church," 46.

The triangle symbolizes a local congregation,[96] located in a certain context. 'Context' is a rich and complex term.[97] It encompasses demographics, lifestyles and general cultural trends, among other things. In addition, context can best be interpreted as referring to three levels. The micro level: this is the local context, for example, a particular neighborhood in South-East London; the meso level (say, cultural and religious developments in England); and the macro level (e.g., the economic and political effects of globalization, or processes that are involved in a transition from modernity to postmodernity, or from Christendom to post-Christendom). The most important thing to note about the context – in more organic terms: the environment, or ecosystem – is this: it is subject to forms of unpredictable, rapid, and discontinuous change. The community and its leaders[98] are assumed to be open to the context (cf. the dotted line) and to take notice of what is happening there, in a proactive way.[99] This means that individuals and groups within the community are consciously involved with and influenced by contacts and cultural developments outside of the community, which may have consequences for communal worship,[100] including its spatial aspect,[101] among other things. In turn, the

[96] Note that the figure has fractal-like qualities. It facilitates analyzing leadership processes within a particular church, or even a denomination as a whole, but also the processes of envisioning, cultural and spiritual formation, and structuring which occur in – say – the team which is responsible for youth work.

[97] For an extensive analysis, see Didzis Stilve, "Theological and Missiological Implications of Contextualization: Interdisciplinary Analysis of the Concept of Context," (PhD diss., Concordia Theological Seminary, 2007).

[98] Although many people are involved in the three dimensions of missional leadership, some are more visible and more effective than others. This kind of people may be called 'leaders'. Leaders are part of the community – indeed, the EMC ideal is that they emerge from its own ranks.

[99] According to Richard Osmer, "Congregational leaders with strong missional orientations often respond to micro- and macro contexts simultaneously." Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 201. James Bielo found that Emerging Evangelicals are in particular concerned about the micro context, including its multiple histories, social dynamics, social structures and social semiotics. "Church planters, especially, cultivate an intricate, nuanced sense of place in their missional locales." James S. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 191-192.

[100] To give an example, Sanctuary Covenant Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, implements worship that reflects the context that has hip-hop as its 'language'. This is particularly so during the monthly Hip Hop Sunday, with DJ's, MC's, graffiti, break dancing, and popping. Sanctuary Covenant Church, http://www.sanctuarycov.org/about/hip-hop-sunday (accessed July 11, 2011). Cf. Daniel Collison, "Toward a Theology and Practice of Missional Worship," (DMin thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2009), 115-116. Worship practices in the Emerging-Missional milieu – including musical styles – are as varied as local contexts require. Heather Josselyn-Cranson, "Local and Authentic: Music in Emerging Congregations," *Worship* 83, no. 5 (September 2009), 415-430. See also the case study in Stanley Glenn Parris, *Instituting a Missional Worship Style in a Local Church Developed from an Analysis of the Culture* (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2011). Cf. also the communities that are portrayed in Barrett ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars*, which are driven by a deep conception of worship and its relationship to mission. "Among them, we saw a great variety of styles and elements in worship: traditional liturgy, rock music, meditation, drama, dancing." (Ibid., 101-102)

[101] Cf. practical theologian McAlpine, "The missional mindset prayerfully discerns what God is already doing, determines what involvement in that mission needs to look like in a particular setting, and creatively considers what kinds of sacred spaces will be necessary to the fulfillment of that mission." William R. McAlpine, *Sacred Space for the Missional Church: Engaging Culture through the Built Environment* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 168.

missional community has an impact on the local context (cf. the arrow pointing in two directions).[102]

In the missional community, leadership is exercised on a daily basis. That is, people interpret situations and make meaning of them by conversing together. Through their interactions, they influence the internal culture and each others' spiritual lives; furthermore, they plan and organize. In other words, participants and groups operate in three dimensions, which together form a dynamic configuration. Sometimes these dimensions interact in harmony, and sometimes they do not. For example, inflexible structures, improper management, or certain individuals who wield great power without the possibility of being restrained by others hinder the implementation of initiatives flowing out of a missional vision. Or there may be a lack of trust in the community (the cultural dimension) that hinders the execution of planned activities (the structural dimension). Moreover, it is assumed that the different entities change, rather than that they are static. For example, the vision and direction of a particular community may become obscure, or a culture of distrust and resentment may develop. That is why it is presented as a *dynamic* configuration.[103]

When viewed as described above, the figure provides a convenient tool for analysis and description. There is, however, also a prescriptive and normative quality to it. This becomes clear when we realize that it is a typical leadership task to monitor and help influence the configuration (and thereby the community) in a particular direction. *Missional* leadership occurs when the focus is on the three dimensions – beginning at the top (envisioning) – with the intention of having individuals, subgroups, and the community as a whole become or remain oriented to God's mission. Acting adequately on three dimensions is obviously too much to ask from just one person (the pastor or the presider of the church council, for example) which is why missional leadership principally involves multiple leaders with complementary gifts, preferably working in teams.

8.7 Within a Christian Community

The term 'community' is used in the definition because this is seen as essential in the Emerging-Missional milieu.[104] As was pointed out earlier (2.5.3), however, some emer-

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[102] Sanctuary Covenant Church (see n100) for example is committed to urban ministry, mentoring and pervasive social action.

[103] De Jong, *Doen alsof er niets is*, 251. De Jong states – on account of the Dutch sociologist J.B.G. Jonkers – that a local church community can be seen as an organization, as a community, and as a movement. These three together form a dynamic configuration. Our emphasis is a little different, namely on how think about missional leadership. The particular verbs that were chosen, however, do match the forms [*gestalten*] of De Jong. Structuring refers to *organization*; cultural and spiritual formation has to do with *community* (building); envisioning is related to *movement*: where do we want to go?

[104] According to the late Robert Webber, "The missional church evangelizes primarily by *immersing the unchurched in the experience of community*. In this community, they see, hear, and feel the reality of the faith." Ro-

ging churches may risk being, or becoming, not much more than contexts in which people are just hanging out, so to speak. The kind of leadership in such a community resembles that of the human relations approach,[105] which stresses being permissive and non-directive. Leaders who think in terms of human relations are prone to conceive of goals as the emergent purposes of the group. The result of this way of thinking may be that no clear goal is formulated. Members may "dissipate efforts on endless discussions of who they are as a collective, what they want to achieve, and how to accomplish aims."[106] Moreover, the structure of such a community is often so fluid that it is amorphous and unstructured.[107] Without adequate formalization and coordination an organization "does not have the capacity to act as a 'tool' that enables members' efforts."[108]

When used as an heuristic instrument, the definition of missional leadership can help to discern to what extent a particular community has, perhaps unwittingly, adopted a human relations approach, as it stimulates analysis of the processes that are occurring within the three interrelated leadership dimensions (envisioning, cultural and spiritual formation, and structuring). An honest and critical analysis may stimulate the community in question to become more intentional and convictional, i.e. a "community of character" (Stanley Hauerwas) or a "covenant community" (Darrell Guder). Put differently, while the experience of supportive fellowship is important, people also need to be energized by a shared vision, and given authority, information, and other resources in order to be able to make meaningful and successful contributions.

8.8 Individual Participants, Groups, and the Community as a Whole

The conceptualization of missional leadership does not just focus on individuals. They are certainly important, if only because involvement and participation by individual persons result in greater commitment to a process of change. Congregations also contain groups, however, i.e., specialized subsystems that do or do not accomplish certain aspects of the communities' purpose. Intentional leadership, therefore, also gives sustained

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bert Webber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), 62. This book is an inspiration for many participants in the EMC.

[105] Peter F. Rudge, *Ministry and Management: The Study of Ecclesiastical Administration* (London: Tavistock, 1968), 28.

[106] Katherine K. Chen, *Enabling Creative Chaos: The Organization Behind the Burning Man Event* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 13. During Emerging Church events in the Netherlands – such as weekend retreats or conferences – this researcher had long talks with Dutch 'emerging' opinion leaders who were experimenting with alternatives to current church models, such as Oase in Soest. The impression was gained that 'underorganizing' seemed a risk to emerging church initiatives in the Netherlands. That is why the choice was made not to focus on the Dutch scene in this dissertation: it was deemed too fluid and transitory. On Oase, see "Oase in Soest: een postevangelicale emerging church," in Gerrit Noort et al., *Als een kerk opnieuw begint. Handboek voor missionaire gemeenschapsvorming* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2008), 205-212.

[107] Rudge, *Ministry and Management*, 35.

[108] Chen, *Enabling Creative Chaos*, 11.

attention to processes that occur in groups. The 'community as a whole' refers to the dynamic entity that consists of, but is greater than, the sum of its constituent parts. In this regard, the metaphor of a jazz ensemble is a favorite in the EMC,[109] which is similar to the Organic paradigm, in which organizational change is described as "improvisational ensemble work of a narrative, conversational nature, a serious form of play or drama with an evolving number of scenes and episodes in which we all create our parts with one another."[110]

8.9 That Enable…to Respond…and to Engage

Missional leadership facilitates individuals, groups, and the community as a whole to act and, more specifically, to respond and to engage. Part of the 'responding' that is needed is conversation or dialogue within the community.[111] Among other things, this is centered on discerning and clarifying exactly what the situations and problem(s) consist of, as far as that is possible. From a missional perspective, however, with respect to congregational discerning, conversation "functions more than as a communicating tool for generating tasks, visions, responsibilities. It is the means for cultivating and creating an experience of shared participation and restorative engagement in the divine."[112]

The verb *engage* is related to engagement, this is "a multi-faceted construct, requiring attention to process, relationships and personal identity."[113] Engagement, moreover, "describes a sense of begin deeply involved and focused on an activity, project, goal and on people so that you are motivated to achieve or complete the event no matter what."[114]

The word *enable* probably best captures the idea of facilitation. In essence, enabling refers to an educational task. That is, leaders help people in their communities to form an accurate understanding of changes in their local environment, to reflect critically on the norms and practices that have guided the community in the past, and to form a response that is based on the values it deems most important to its purpose.[115] This is difficult for everyone, including the formal leaders themselves, because our understandable, even legitimate personal anxieties "create blind spots, prevent new learning, and constantly

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[109] Cf. Alan Hirsch, "A jazz ensemble creates an emergent sound that no one could imagine from listening to the individual instruments." Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 263.
[110] Patricia Shaw, *Changing Conversations in Organizations: A Complexity Approach to Change* (London: Routledge, 2002), 28.
[111] Cf. Alan Roxburgh, "we will need to become comfortable with living in a world where we don't have answers but build communities of dialogue, both inside and outside the church, in which ordinary men and women discover that the imagination for thriving in this new space is among them in their everyday lives." Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making*, 31-32.
[112] Hahn, "Congregational Discerning as Divine Action in Conversation," 159.
[113] Jane Trinder, "A Leader's Journey to Engage," in Kim Turnbull James and James Collins, eds., *Leadership Learning: Knowledge into Action* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 58.
[114] Ibid., 59.
[115] Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*, 159.

restrain action in some aspects of our living."[116] It is therefore assumed that responding to particular situations and engaging in a certain kind of change involves a *learning process*. The question now is: what kind of situations and changes can be thought of in this regard?

Here, it is appropriate to differentiate between two kinds of situations. On the one hand, there are situations that consist of *technical* problems. Technical problems are difficulties or questions that we do know how to respond to. They may not be easy, and they may be important, but they can be solved with mastery and ingenuity.[117] Technical problems have to do with short-term, operational thinking and planning. In addressing a technical problem, minor changes are involved. Forms of instrumental leadership are relevant and sufficient to solve technical problems and deal with incremental (i.e. small-scale and slow) change.

On the other hand, there are *challenging* situations – varying from internal tensions or demographic changes in the local context to more general or controversial cultural shifts such as the move from a modern to a postmodern culture. These are much more difficult to respond to.[118] In challenging conditions, the problem that must be dealt with is unclear, and its solution is unknown. This might be hard for certain people in leadership positions to admit.[119] In general, a challenging situation brings to the surface conflicts in the values that people hold, as well as gaps between people's values and the reality they face. A community's vision may have to be reframed in response to this reality. Its culture may need to adapt and its structures may need to change.[120] The kind of

[116] Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 48.

[117] Cf. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 71. Heifetz distinguishes between technical problems and adaptive problems. Adaptive problems in Heifetz' book are congruent with our 'challenging situations'.

[118] Heifetz and Linsky report that "The single most common source of leadership failure we've been able to identify...is that people, especially those in positions of authority, treat adaptive challenges like technical problems." Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 14.

[119] Cf. the critical estimation of Alan Roxburgh, "[The] refusal to acknowledge the sea change all around us is precisely what is still happening in our churches and among our leaders when we assume that our crisis can be fixed by working harder at things like improved worship, better preaching, more effective discipleship, and more passionate spirituality." Roxburgh, *Missional Map*-Making, 42-43.

[120] Cf. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 87. Again: these changes in peoples' values etc. cannot come about without a learning process. According to Heifetz and Linsky, "Adaptive challenges require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization and community. Without learning new ways – changing attitudes, values, and behaviors – people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment. The sustainability of change depends on having people with the problem internalize the change itself." Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 13.

changes[121] that challenging circumstances evoke eventually have great impact on the community. That is why we call these changes 'transformative'.[122]

These transformative changes are meant to assist the community in becoming or remaining oriented to God's mission. In general, a community that is oriented to mission and that seeks the will of God in this endeavor, can be said to be a welcoming, evangelizing, and serving community of faith.[123] The ways in which particular communities give concrete form to their orientation towards God's mission may vary widely, due to specific theological considerations and because the (local) contexts of these communities are very different.[124] There is one commonality, however, and that is that these contexts are continuously changing – demographically, culturally, and religiously. It is therefore important that a missional community conducts solid (for example, ethnographic) research into its particular 'ecology'.[125] Also, in order to stay relevant to an ever-changing context, *change* must become part of the fabric of a missional community.[126] This entails: (1) being willing to learn;[127] (2) dealing with conflict based on different values and perspectives within the community;[128] and (3) proactive relation building, also with individuals, communities and organizations outside the community.[129]

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[121] Note that more than two kinds or types of change kan be discerned in actual communities; W. Hobgood discusses seven, varying from 'maintenance', on the one end of the spectrum, to 'transformation' on the other end. William Chris Hobgood, *Welcoming Resistance* (Bethesda, MA: Alban Institute, 2001), 36-43.

[122] On the difference between incremental and transformative change, see church consultant Paul M. Dietterich, "Why Incremental Changes Won't Work," *Transformation* 2, no. 2 (Chicago, IL: The Center for Parish Development, Spring 1995), 1-7. See also the following contributions from the Center for Parish Development in Chicago: "Take Time to Be Holy: Cultivating the Missional Church," by Inagrace T. Dietterich and Dale A. Ziemer (n.d.); "Beyond the Inspiring Leader," by Paul M. Dietterich (1990), "Transformation: Going to the Roots," by Inagrace and Paul Dietterich, *Transformation* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1994), and "A Missional Transformation Process" (no author specified, 2004).

[123] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 82. Cf. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 28: "Through Jesus' eyes, the church is the sent people of God. A church is not a building or an organization. It is an organic collective of believers, centered on Jesus and *sent out into the world to serve others in his name* [emphasis added]."

[124] This is one reason why many authors in the EMC emphasize that there is no such thing as a 'model' of a missional church that can be transported from one cultural context to another – for example, from Great Britain to the United States, or from Australia to the Netherlands. In the Emerging-Missional milieu, there is – generally speaking – a keen awareness of national, regional, and local diversity.

[125] Cf. Rein Brouwer, "Missional Church and Local Constraints: A Dutch Perspective," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 30, no. 2 (2009). To give an example: before Spring Garden Church was set on a missional course (see n34), pastor John McLaverty did extensive research into the social history by which the modern 'edge city' of North York, Toronto, had come to be a new kind of urban space. Ethnographic interviews put him and the church in touch with Asian populations now finding their home in the area. As he learned, so did the other staff and officers of the church. "This contextual 'reality therapy' was matched with theological exploration into the nature and witness of the church." Hunsberger, "Discerning Missional Vocation," 47.

[126] Cf. Craig Van Gelder, "Anticipating and accepting change becomes a natural part of the unfolding journey for congregations as they seek to participate in God's mission in their context." Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 19.

[127] See the concluding reflections below.

[128] Alan Roxburgh suggests that "Effective change leadership is like the process of creating a good marriage. Healthy, strong marriages are a combination of two personalities who work diligently at the points of

In reality, without missional leadership to keep the community focused on its mission, the chance is great that in due time it will grow stagnant, complacent, irrelevant, or ineffective.[130] That is why "...or remain" was added to the definition. And "...to become" was mentioned to clarify that, although some emerging churches may not be missional,[131] they may choose to become so. Naturally this also pertains to existing traditional churches, including mainline ones.[132]

8.10 Concluding Reflections

This chapter proposed a definition as a means of capturing the main threads of thinking within the EMC as regards leadership, while correlating these with current scholarship. While it comprises what are understood to be the essentials of leadership in mission-shaped communities, by retaining a certain level of abstractness, this conceptualization does take theological and contextual diversity into account as well. Participants in an Anglican fresh expression of church in Melbourne, for instance, will emphasize different points in their conversations concerning vision, spiritual and cultural formation, and structuring than members of a 'Reformed relevant' mega church in Seattle will, or – for that matter – an embryonic English pub church in which theological reflection is stimulated by soliciting different "pints of view."[133]

In conclusion, reflecting on our discussion in this chapter, it may be said that the essence of the taxing work that is involved in missional leadership can be described as a

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conflict, difference, and change that inevitably confront the relationship. They choose to enter and move through the difficult issues and hard work." Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 159.

[129] Cf. Mark Branson, "Churches cannot assume that ideas alone create change. Organizations are held tight by inertia. New life usually comes out of new relational connections, especially across boundaries. Stories, cares, dreams, and work need new synapses, new synergy, thus requiring new relationships." Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004), 87.

[130] Cf. Ford, *Transformative Leadership*, 19 and 229. The process is described in detail in Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenschap*.

[131] Cf. the critical questions of David Wilkinson, "Are some fresh expressions really missiologically driven? Are they simply new expressions of church for those with faith who are bored and unfulfilled by traditional church?" David Wilkinson, "What Are the Lessons From Evangelism and Apologetics for New Communities?," in Steven Croft, ed., *Mission-shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 103.

[132] On this topic, a number of Doctor of Ministry theses have been published since 2005, e.g., Keith Edwin Griswold, "Becoming a Missional Church in Post-Christendom Suburban America," (Drew University, 2006); Kathryn Stoner-Lasala, "On the Doorstep: A Conversion from 'Mission' to 'Missional'," (Drew University, 2007); Rod MacIlvaine, "Selected Case Studies in How Senior Leaders Cultivate Missional Change in Contemporary Churches," (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2009); Rose Madrid-Swetman, "The Practicing Church," (Bakke Graduate University, 2010). Jackson Carroll mentions a fine example of a mainline church turned missional: St. Mark United Methodist Church in downtown Atlanta. Carroll, *God's Potters*, 209-210.

[133] Peter Howell-Jones and Nick Wills, *Pints of View: Encounters down the Pub* (Cambridge, UK: Grove Books, 2005).

particular kind of *learning*.[134] According to Thomas Hawkins, "Leadership in a permanent white-water society is inextricably tied to helping people learn...so that God's people can minister both faithfully and effectively in a time of turbulent social, demographic, and technological change."[135] Missional leadership can, indeed, be said to have its focus on developing a Christian congregation into a learning community[136] – i.e., a "community of commitment"[137] – in order to mature and effectively fulfill its mission to the world.[138] Rather than stressing permanence, uniformity and stability, learning communities cultivate impermanence and change. They encourage monitoring the environment, questioning, and continuous experimentation.[139] A learning community expands its capacity to explore and clarify its purpose, nurtures new and expansive patterns of thinking, modifies behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights, and sets free collective imagination and aspiration.[140]

Interestingly, an ethnographic study of six Hungarian missional churches reveals that these are, in effect, all characterized by a 'learning culture' (Peter Senge). "Individuals were encouraged and given the freedom to grow in knowledge and skills, experimentation and risk were a way of life, methods were constantly evaluated for effectiveness, and the synergy of many people thinking and working together pulled the group for-

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[134] 'Learning' here does not refer to – say – studying theological treatises, but to *learning from experience*. This involves (a) recognizing when new behaviors and ways of thinking about issues are appropriate and called for; (b) accepting responsibility for development; (c) having self-understanding; (d) intentionally seeking out growth opportunities; (e) engaging in activities that provide the opportunity to learn or test the new behavior; and (f) working to develop and use a wide variety of learning tactics to acquire a skill. David V. Day, Michelle M. Harrison, and Stanley M. Halpin, *An Integrative Approach to Leader Development: Connecting Adult Development, Identity, and Expertise* (New York: Psychology Press, 2009), 109-110.

[135] Thomas R. Hawkins, *The Learning Congregation: A New Vision of Leadership* (Louisville, KT: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 17.

[136] In mainline circles this expression has been put forward by Norma Cook Everist, *The Church as Learning Community: A Comprehensive Guide to Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002). Chapter 7 is especially pertinent in regard to missional leadership. For a Dutch discussion of the 'learning congregation', see the special issue of the journal *Praktische Theologie* 2 (2000), edited by Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer, Jan Hendriks, and Evert Jonker. The term 'learning community' with an explicit missional connotation has been recently introduced in the Netherlands by pioneer Rudolf Setz, Director of *Nederland zoekt* [The Netherlands is searching]. Setz has been inspired by the missional 'clusters' that are active in the UK. Gerald Bruins, "Nederland Leert beoogt missionaire metamorphose" [The Netherlands is Learning aims for a missional metamorphosis], *Nederlands Dagblad*, December 27, 2011, 2-3.

[137] Fred Kofman and Peter M. Senge, "Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations," in Sarita Chawla and John Renesch, eds., *Learning Organizations: Developing Cultures for Tomorrow's Workplace* (Portland, OR: Productivity Press, 1995), 15-43.

[138] See Michael B. Pawelke, "Training Leaders: A Systems Approach to Leadership Development," (D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2002), 130. Cf. Alan Hirsch, "A genuine missional church is...a genuine learning organization." Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 260. Cf. also Gayle Avery: "Organic leadership is expected to be the paradigm most concerned about creating teaching and mentoring organizations." Avery, *Understanding Leadership*, 149.

[139] Kester Brewin speaks about a "virtuous cycle of sensing, learning, adapting and changing" and even states that "change *equals* learning." Kester Brewin, *The Complex Christ: Signs of Emergence in the Urban Church* (London: SPCK, 2004), 79.

[140] Dale A. Ziemer, "Cultivating a Learning Community," *Transformation* 2, no. 3 (Chicago, IL: The Center For Parish Development, Spring 1995), 1-7.

ward."[141] Likewise, the Solace community in Melbourne is also growing healthily as a learning organization. Although Solace's leaders do not always use the terminology of Peter Senge (whose books they did read),[142] they are developing a shared vision and encourage out-of-the box thinking. Moreover, they are teaching systems thinking and apply it to church and broader community group leadership. In general, "they are fostering a learning community characterised by interactive exploration of tough issues."[143]

In order for a community to develop into a learning community, however, its participants[144] and its formal or informal leaders in particular should be learners themselves.[145] That is, they should be willing to step out of their comfort zones,[146] and be eager to share and reflect on their own ministry. Learning and adaptive change, moreover, may involve "engaging self-deception, acting on faith, dealing with paradox, and surrendering oneself to an unproven vision."[147] Leaders who learn[148] are, furthermore, not afraid of looking at their own role and leadership style, when they are present in the midst of change. They take an appropriate amount of responsibility for what's happening in the community without overly identifying with what's happening, and they are *lifelong* learners.[149]

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[141] Alan Ray Weaver, "Toward a Cross-Cultural Theory of Leadership Emergence: The Hungarian Case," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2004), 231-232.

[142] Peter Senge's most well-known book is *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

[143] Darren John Cronshaw, "The Shaping of Things Now: Mission and Innovation in Four Emerging Churches in Melbourne," (DTh. thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2008), 143.

[144] Most Christian communities are, of course, not solely made up of persons with a high level of (cognitive) sophistication. However, as Elizabeth Price puts forward, "cognitive complexity is not necessary for the membership as a whole of a learning congregation....What is needed is some critical mass of flexible thinkers." Elizabeth Box Price, "Cognitive Complexity and the Learning Congregation," *Religious Education* 99, no. 4 (Fall 2004), 368. In addition, a so-called 'allocentric attitude' is important, i.e., being open for diverse perspectives and for new encounters. This can be learnt, but not everyone can be expected to *want* to learn this. See Hans A. Alma, "Individuele mogelijkheden en collectieve intentie," [Individual possibilities and collective intention], in Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer, Jan Hendriks, and Evert Jonker, eds. "'Laat u geen meester noemen.' De lerende enkeling en de lerende gemeente." ["Let no one call you master": The learning individual and the learning congregation.] *Praktische Theologie* 2 (2000), 110 ff.

[145] Cf. Edgar Schein, "the world of tomorrow...will be *different*, more *complex,* more *fast-paced*, and more *culturally diverse*. This means that *organizations and their leaders will have to become perpetual learners.*" Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 393.

[146] Cf. Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, "In order to learn and develop beyond our current state, we have to journey to the edge of our comfort zones and enter into what developmental learning pioneer Lev Vygotsky called the 'zone of proximal development.' This is the pivotal place where we are forced to acknowledge our own inadequacies, thereby opening us op to receiving guidance and training from someone who is more competent than we are in that particular practice." Hirsch and Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution*, 78.

[147] Robert E. Quinn, Gretchen M. Spreitzer, and Matthew V. Brown, "Changing Others Through Changing Ourselves: The Transformation of Human Systems," *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9, no. 2 (June 2000), 149.

[148] This way of putting it asks attention for the fact that "Multiple researchers have confirmed the interconnectedness between leading and learning." Joan F. Marques, "The Interconnectedness between Leadership and Learning: A Reaffirmation," *Journal of Management Development* 26, no. 10 (2007), 923.

[149] See on the necessity of perpetual learning Johannes Pasveer, *De gemeente tussen openheid en identiteit. Een open-systeemtheorie als model voor de gemeente ten dienste van haar opbouw* [The congregation between openness

What are the implications of this for theological education – for instance, how does one learn to be a learner and to help others develop into learners, in order that a learning community may grow?[150] More generally, what should seminaries do to prepare missional leaders for the 'church after Christendom'?[151] These questions bring us to the topic of leader education, which is addressed in part C.

and identity: An open systems theory as model for the congregations in service of her formation] (Gorinchem: Narratio, 1992), 242 ff.

[150] We think that while this question is of strategic importance, it should also be acknowledged that in a plural church landscape such as that of the Netherlands, there will be individuals and groups that are not able or do not want to 'learn' in the sense that we described above, and that terms such as 'learning community' or 'learning congregation' risk being used in a way that is too optimistic, indeed utopian. Cf. Albert K. Ploeger and Joke J. Ploeger-Grotegoed, *De gemeente en haar verlangen. Van praktische theologie naar de geloofspraktijk van de gemeenteleden* [The congregation and its desire: From practical theology to the practice of belief of congregational members] (Kampen: Kok, 2001), 381.

[151] Darrell L. Guder, "Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership after Christendom," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (2007), 251.

PART C. LEADER EDUCATION

CHAPTER 9. *'TRANSFORMISSIONAL'*: LEADER EDUCATION IN THE EMERGING-MISSIONAL MILIEU

9.1 Introduction

As mentioned in previous chapters, within the EMC there is a realization that the identity, ministry, and future of God's people "depend on a renewed sense and experience of mission practice and vitality for the church,"[1] and that this mission practice requires what was called missional leadership.

The next topic concerns the perspectives of participants in the EMC regarding the training needed to facilitate missional leadership. The question to be answered is: *What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu?* This chapter seeks to employ the definition of missional leadership – described in chapter 8 – as a heuristic instrument in order to shed light on perspectives on leader education. We ask, for instance, what the *purpose* of theological education is. This question focusses on the 'envisioning' aspect mentioned in the definition, since the perceived purpose of theological education has everything to do with vision for what that theological education should look like.

In this way, we adopt the definition as an analytical tool to help develop a coherent framework of questions; this is the goal of section 9.2. Using this model of questions, section 9.3 sketches out prominent perspectives on leader education as encountered within the Emerging-Missional milieu. Section 9.4 rounds this chapter off by giving a short summary of our findings.

9.1.1 Defining Our Terms

Before proceeding with this chapter, it might be helpful to explain how some recurring concepts are used.

First, the word 'seminary', or 'theological school', is generally meant to refer to institutions that provide post baccalaureate training for men and women for various ministries in churches. Other designations for such schools include 'school of theology' and 'divinity school', the latter generally referring to schools that are an integral part of a university.[2]

Second, 'theological education' and 'leader education' will be used interchangeably, since this is in line with common usage.[3] Note, however, that our discussion is not focu-

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[1] James B. Lemler, "Identity and Effectiveness in the Twenty-First Century," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (2010), 90.

[2] Jackson W. Carroll et al., *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9.

[3] Charles M. Wood, "Theological Education and Education for Church Leadership," in Jeff Astley, Leslie J. Francis, and Colin Crowder, eds., *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 307.

sed on theological education in general, which would include, for example, the training of future scholars. Rather, the interest lies, more specifically, in those programs that are directly aimed at equipping men and women to provide leadership in Christian communities.[4]

Third, some scholars differentiate between education (with a focus on the future), training (with a focus on the present task at hand) and development (with a focus on the organization).[5] In this chapter, however, all three words are used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified. Education, training, and leader development all are interpreted as referring to intentional contributions made to the complex of epistemic cognition, moral and spiritual development, and identity formation of students.

9.2 A Framework of Nine Questions

The present section outlines the research questions that are deemed crucial for the endeavor of giving a description of leader education in the next section (9.3). It will become clear that the first four questions (to be discussed in 9.2.1 to 9.2.4) are directly related to our conceptualization of missional leadership, and question 5 indirectly so (9.2.5). The remaining questions (see 9.2.6 to 9.2.9), however, ask attention to topics that focus specifically on educational matters, such as the curriculum, the pedagogy and didactics, and the actors (teachers and students). Each of the nine proposed questions is followed by some pertinent insights found in scholarly works.[6] These background sketches of current international discussions may contribute to a better understanding of the questions and their importance.

9.2.1 What Is the Purpose of Theological Education?

This question focuses on the dimension of *envisioning* mentioned in the definition of missional leadership. In changing times, dialogue concerning the goal or purpose of theological education and dialogue on the vision or mission of a particular institute is important, because theological institutions tend to become inwardly focused, losing their connection to changing churches and contexts. This was already recognized in the sixties, when the periodical *Theological Education* devoted a special issue to the theme of 'The Purpose of a Theological School'. The insight then dawned that "theological education, like the church, has suffered overlong from lack of or vagueness of purpose" and that "the bona fide statement of purpose is determinative of everything of importance that

[4] The programs we have in mind are called *predikantenopleiding* (mainline churches) or *opleiding tot voorganger* (evangelical churches) in the Netherlands.

[5] Richard Bolden, ed., *What is Leader development? Purpose & Practice*. Leadership South West, Research Report 2 (University of Exeter: Centre for Leadership Studies, June 2005), 9.

[6] The emphasis in this section is on literature from outside the EMC, because sources from within the EMC are consulted in the next one. It has to be admitted, however, that it is sometimes difficult to determine which publications or views fall within, and which fall outside, the Emerging-Missional milieu, because its boundaries are vague and porous.

goes on in the school."[7] Forty years later, the importance of formulating a clear purpose, or mission was again voiced.[8] Mission statements, in Michael Jinkins' estimation, "can provide an indispensable focus of a school's purpose that can help its leadership avoid 'mission creep,' the perennial temptation to abandon the essential for the sake of the important."[9] An additional reason for asking about the purpose of theological education is the insight that, currently, the cultural "pace of change is so rapid that schools run the danger of preparing students for a ministry that no longer meets the needs of the church."[10] Due to these circumstances, "possibly the biggest issue facing theological schools is the question of their own mission," according to Timothy Weber. "To use the language of the marketplace: what business are theological schools in?"[11]

As to the suggested *content* of the purpose of theological education, Weber wishes that traditional theological education would act with determination and innovative vision to enable ministers of the future to "know how to move beyond the mindset and practices of 'Christendom' in order to think and act like cross-cultural missionaries."[12] Weber's assessment concurs with that of other authoritative commentators.[13] The South-African theologian Desmond P. van der Water, for instance, thinks that the purpose of theological education should be "the preparation of persons who engage themselves and who enable others to be engaged in the *missio Dei*."[14] And Michael Herbst observes from his German context that "students are trained to be scholars but they have to act as leaders and managers in their churches" and that they "are trained for Christendom but they have to develop a life in a mission context."[15] The goal of theological education, in his

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[7] Editorial Introduction, "The Role of Purpose," *Theological Education* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1966), 61-62.

[8] It has been noted, for example, that "the rationale of theological education in the Church of England has never been made fully explicit." It is therefore likely that "the academic paradigm has been adopted by default, by university-educated church leaders who assumed that this was the only possible or desirable approach." Gary Wilton, "From ACCM22 to Hind via Athens and Berlin: A Critical Analysis of Key Documents Shaping Contemporary Church of England Theological Education with Reference to the Work of David Kelsey," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 4, no. 1 (2007), 43.

[9] Michael Jinkins, "Mission Possible: Making Use of the School's Mission Statement in Curriculum Review," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007), 18.

[10] Faith E. Rohrbough and Laura Mendenhall, "Recommendations of the Task Force of the Theological Schools and the Church Project," *Theological Education* 44, no. 1 (2008), 94.

[11] Timothy Weber, "The Seminaries and the Churches: Looking for New Relationships," *Theological Education* 44, no. 1 (2008), 85.

[12] Weber, "The Seminaries and the Churches," 85.

[13] See also the contributions on the website "The Future of Theological Education", http://thefutureoftheologicaleducation.com/, and those on the website of the World Council of Churches, http://www.oikoumene.Org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenicalformation/ecumenical-theological education-ete/edinburgh-2010-international-study-group-on-theological-education.html (both last accessed December 17, 2011).

[14] Desmond P. van der Water, "Transforming Theological Education and Ministerial Formation," *International Review of Mission* 94, no. 373 (April 2005), 208. The author refers to C. Duraisingh, "Ministerial Formation for Mission: Implications for Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 81, no. 321 (January 1992), 38.

[15] Michael Herbst, "Evangelism in Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 96, nos. 382 and 383 (July/October 2007), 267-268.

opinion, is to educate students "for the new mission context of a post-Christendom society."[16]

9.2.2 What Is the Ideal Internal Culture of a School?

This second question centers around the dimension of *cultural formation*, including the aspect of community. A seminary's 'culture'[17] may be defined as "those shared symbolic forms – worldviews and beliefs, ritual practices, ceremonies, art and architecture, language, and patterns of everyday interaction – that give meaning and direction to the life of the schools and the people who participate in them."[18] Although the influence of the internal culture, or 'climate', may still be unnoticed or underestimated,[19] it is increasingly recognized that an educational institution's culture articulates a normative message[20] to students and plays a powerful role in how they are actually shaped.[21]

For example, as the writers of *Being There* confirm, in a conservative evangelical seminary, students get the idea that "debating ideas" and "hard scholastic work" are most important practices for Christian leaders.[22] In addition, many students buy into the belief "that the truth of the Bible can be obtained only by conscientious study," because this is the implicit message of the seminary as modelled by the faculty.[23] The faculty, in turn, tend to think that their material must be organized, packaged, and delivered in ways consistent with their own studious schooling.[24] The pedagogical culture of conser-

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[16] Herbst, "Evangelism in Theological Education," 268.

[17] In reality a theological school has multiple cultures, or subcultures, that can be found within individual offices, constituencies, or alliances of people with common interests or shared experiences (e.g., the culture of the class of 2012). Cf. Anita Fitzgerald Henck, "Walking the Tightrope: Christian Colleges and Universities in a Time of Change," *Christian Higher Education* 10 (2011), 201. Our focus, however, is on the broader institutional culture.

[18] Carroll et al., *Being There*, 5, 262, 268.

[19] Cf. R. Banks, "Theological institutions have a complex organizational culture....Understanding the importance of this is not yet as strong as it is within the business community." Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 208.

[20] Sherryl Kleinman, for example, identified a central message at Midwest Seminary, i.e. to shape students into empathetic pastors, willing to listen and abstain from judgment on human frailty. In short, the message was: become a humanistic professional. Sherryl Kleinman, *Equals Before God: Seminarians as Humanistic Professionals* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

[21] Cf. one of the main conclusions in Carroll et al., *Being There*, 270. See also Charles R. Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006), 34-35, and 44-50, and Gary Peluso-Verdend and Jack Seymour, "Hearing the Congregation's Voice in Theological Education: A Response to the Consultation Conversation," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), 91.

[22] Carroll et al., *Being There*, 241.

[23] Ibid. Cf. Bernhard Ott, "A heavy emphasis on the authority of the Bible, combined with the understanding that orthodox theology can be deduced from the Bible as propositional truth, tends to create an educational milieu [read: 'culture'] in which cognitive, deductive learning is at the centre." Bernhard Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education. A Critical Assessment of some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2001), 297.

[24] Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Newburgh, IN: EDCOT Press, 2008), 310.

vative evangelical seminaries, therefore, often is that of a *schooling* culture, which rewards the solitary, often competitive learner. This culture risks – so to speak – imparting a sense of "justification by religious knowledge."[25] by overestimating the importance of knowledge and cognitive approaches, When the *modus operandi* of a seminary is based closely on a schooling paradigm, furthermore, students are inculcated with the perception that "schooling values and principles are the key ways for the learning of ministry, and the shaping of ministers."[26] It is therefore likely that they will adopt it as the "normative model for their own educating role in the church or organization."[27] This is one reason why administrators are encouraged to map their own school cultures, at least informally, to see if they are in line with the mission and vision of the school, emphasize their good features, and attempt to minimize harmful ones.[28]

9.2.2.1 Community

The culture of a theological school is closely related to the topic of *community*. This expression partly suggests something about the desired quality of the relationships between participants – such as accepting, altruistic, cooperative, and informal[29] – but more is involved. Ideally, community in theological education expresses itself in "*generosity* and *sharing*, *friendship* and *belonging*, *mission* and *identity*, *freedom* and *risk-taking*, *passion* and *partnership*."[30]

As far back as 1965, the difference between preparing for a career and laying the foundations for ministry was recognized. "Career-building is essentially self-centered and disjunctive. The work of the ministry is outgoing and conjunctive. One can thrive on individual effort; the other requires community."[31] Several proposals for enhancing community and providing an holistic form of education have been put forward. For example, features of an Indian Ashram could be copied, which offers comprehensive community living, creates a spiritual environment, provides a holistic curriculum, values flexibility, and encourages self-evaluation.[32]

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[25] See for this expression Paul W. Hoon, "Report of the Task Force on Spiritual Development," *Theological Education* 9, no. 1 (Autumn 1992), 42.

[26] Allan G. Harkness, "De-schooling the Theological Seminary: An Appropriate Paradigm for Effective Ministerial Formation," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 4, no. 3 (2001), 145.

[27] Ibid., 146.

[28] Carroll et al., *Being There*, 271.

[29] Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Organizations or Communities? Changing the Metaphor Changes the Theory," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (May 1994), 214-226.

[30] M. Riddell, as quoted in Harkness, "De-schooling the Theological Seminary," 150.

[31] Ernest T. Campbell, "The Formation of Ministers for the Late 20th Century: Community on Campus," *Theological Education* 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1965), 6. (The theme of the Autumn 1965 issue of *TE* was "The Theological School as Community.") In 1990, the International Council of Accrediting Agencies for evangelical theological education identified one of the most significant challenges of evangelical seminaries as the need to build a great sense of community on their campuses. See Gordon Johnston, "Old Testament Community and Spiritual Formation," in Paul Petit, ed., *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008), 86 and the sources mentioned there.

[32] Kraig Klaudt, "The Ashram as a Model for Theological Education," *Theological Education* 34, no. 1 (Autumn 1997), 34 and *passim*.

Many schools have spent large amounts of energy and resources to promote being "a community of scholars" or a "seminary family."[33] Still, in the estimation of Robert Banks, who writes on the threshold of the twenty-first century, "The dilution of community is one of the problems facing many theological institutions...and this increasingly includes Bible colleges and schools of mission as well as seminaries."[34]

9.2.3 How Is 'Spiritual Formation' Perceived and Given Form?

The third topic revolves around the dimension of *spiritual formation*. There is no single definition of this term. The more 'ecumenical' a theological school is, the more difficult it is to even settle on a working definition.[35] For some schools and faculties, spiritual formation is synonymous to sanctification, deepening religious commitments, practicing Christian habits such as prayer (in some circles, this is called 'Christian discipleship'[36]), or a combination of those. For others, spiritual formation is understood as growth in Christian maturity or as psychological, moral, or character formation. In general, spiritual formation can be taken to mean "something like growing in grace, becoming more like Jesus, learning to live a holy life, increasing our love for God and service to others, or practicing the Christian virtues."[37]

Several proposals and pleas for the spiritual formation of (future) church leaders have recently been put forward, both in articles[38] and in scholarly monographs.[39] These studies can best be seen against the background of the reality that, in the Protestant[40]

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[33] Donald Senior and Timothy Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum, Formation, and Cultivation of Ministerial Leadership in the Good Theological School?," *Theological Education* 30, no. 2 (1994), 26.

[34] Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 205. Cf. Mary-Ann Winkelmes, "Today's seminary communities are fragmented." She quotes a senior faculty member: "We drive up here and teach our classes, then climb back into our cars and flee to our homes." Mary-Ann Winkelmes, "Formative Learning in the Classroom," in Malcolm L. Warford, ed., *Practical Wisdom: On Theological Teaching and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 161.

[35] Senior and Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum…," 23.

[36] Douglas Hall, for one, opts for the "more biblical and traditional language of discipleship." Douglas John Hall, "Theological Education as Character Formation?," *Theological Education* 24, Supplement (1988), S58.

[37] Senior and Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum…," 24.

[38] Cf. the Dutch missiologist and theological educator Stefan Paas, "Spiritual formation needs to be included in our theological curricula, both in theory and in practice. Our students need to know how to help people who ask questions like 'how can I pray?', 'what will happen if I become a Christian?', 'why can't I control my temper?', 'how can I find more balance between my work and my life?' and 'what does your faith have to say about family feuds?'. They need to become sensitive to the pathfinder spirituality of modern people and to find ways to be on the road with them." Stefan Paas, "Prepared For a Missionary Ministry in 21st Century Europe," *European Journal of Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011), 128-129. See also *The Theological Educator: Official Journal of the European Evangelical Accrediting Association* 2, no. 1 (March 2007): Special on Spiritual Development and Mentoring in Theological Education.

[39] One American example is L. Paul Jensen, *Subversive Spirituality: Transforming Mission through the Collapse of Space and Time* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009); an English study is provided by Andrew D. Mayes, *Spirituality in Ministerial Formation: The Dynamic of Prayer in Learning* (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2009).

[40] Roman Catholic seminaries have a long and valued tradition in regard to spiritual formation. See, for example, Daniel Buechlein, "The Catholic Tradition of Spiritual Formation," *Theological Education* 15, no. 1 (Autumn 1978), 67-72 and John W. O'Malley, S.J., "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Ca-

world, special programs of spiritual formation have been "slow to develop" for many years.[41] The deep and lasting influence of the Enlightenment with its rationalistic epistemology is often mentioned in this regard.[42] In the 1980's, liberal theological schools were so afraid of fundamentalism and anti-intellectualism that they often found themselves "indentured to a barren rationalism."[43] Historic religious practices were "ignored or derided in favor of psychological practices rationalized into a Christian context."[44] Apart from rationalism, other profoundly influential forces that work against spiritual formation in theological education are said to be those of institutionalization and professionalism, with their functionalist emphases.[45]

During the last decade, however, there has been more openness to spiritual formation on Protestant theological school campuses[46] – if only because it is recognized that, more so than in the past, new students' earlier life experiences have not adequately formed or scarred them spiritually.[47] It is true that there are questions on which there is no consensus. For example, what should be the relation between internal (personal) and external (i.e., focused on the world) spirituality, between academics and spiritual formation,

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tholic Traditions – Their Past and Present," in Richard J. Neuhaus, ed., *Theological Education and Moral Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 79-111.

[41] George Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," *Theological Education* 24, Supplement (1988), S15.

[42] Cf. S. Hancock, "the more mainstream Protestant churches and their seminaries attempted to abide by the canons and norms of the academy with its commitment to academic standards and scientific (especially social scientific) methodologies, the more they have relativized the very faith they assumed students would bring to seminary." Steve Hancock, "Nurseries of Piety? Spiritual Formation at Four Presbyterian Seminaries," in Milton J. Coalter, John M. Mulder, Louis B. Weeks, eds., *The Pluralistic Vision: Presbyterians and Mainstream Protestant Education and Leadership* (Louisville, KT: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 98.

[43] Alan Jones, "Are We Lovers Anymore? (Spiritual Formation in Seminaries)," *Theological Education* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1987), 16. Roughly a decade later, there was apparently no improvement in the situation, see A.J. van den Blink, "Reflections on Spirituality in Anglican Theological Education," *Anglican Theological Review* 81, no. 3 (Summer 1999), 429-449.

[44] Tilden H. Edwards, Jr., "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools: Ferment and Challenge," *Theological Education* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1980), 25.

[45] For an extensive treatment of these matters, see Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*, 45-128.

[46] Cf. H. Frederick Reisz, Jr., "Assessing Spiritual Formation in Christian Seminary Communities," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), 30.

[47] Victor Klimoski, "Evolving Dynamics of Formation," in Malcolm L. Warford, ed., *Practical Wisdom: On Theological Teaching and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 30. Cf. Senior and Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum...," 25-26. Other concerns that stimulated the need for spiritual formation in recent years were (1) students' searches for God's guidance; (2) greater contact with other religious traditions that created a sharper awareness of spirituality; (3) a rediscovery of the Christian contemplative tradition; (4) the presence of women in formerly all-male student bodies and faculty; (5) the social and political crisis that motivated a concern for the spiritual; and (6) increasing concern over a fragmented curriculum with no integrating centre. "Spiritual formation, it was felt, could provide that centre." See Marilyn Naidoo, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Education: Spiritual Formation in Protestant Theological Institutions", in Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, and Namsoon Kang, eds., *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives – Regional Surveys – Ecumenical Trends* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 185-186.

and between personal and communal spirituality?[48] Another delicate question is as follows: to what extent and in what way may spiritual formation be said to be mandatory, and how can this be assessed?[49]

These and other questions[50] notwithstanding, it is broadly agreed that it would be wrong to assume that spiritual formation will happen automatically. If it is not a part of the purpose and mission of the theological school, "it is extremely difficult to implement structures and policies to support the initiative."[51] Spiritual formation, furthermore, cannot be marginalised or left fragmentary, for example by providing independent courses "added to an already overloaded program."[52] Integration must be actualized and visible, and not simply left to the student to achieve on his own.[53] In a gripping metaphor, it is recognized that "you cannot grasp the finger of spirituality without having to grasp the whole fist of the educational experience."[54] The cultivation of spiritual practices for future clergy may involve "faculty attention to the mutuality of worship, small groups fostering spirituality, and individual spiritual guidance in educating seminary students."[55]

9.2.4 What Is Emphasized in Regard to the Institutional Dimension?

The definition of missional leadership also draws attention to the dimension of *structuring*, i.e. organizational and institutional aspects. Two viewpoints need to be addressed in this respect.

First, prominent educational scholars such as Linda Cannell acknowledge that "institutional structures that resemble a series of loosely connected boxes of administrative functions and specialized disciplines has shaped the way we think about theological schooling for generations,"[56] and that this is no longer satisfactory in light of the current needs of the church and church leadership.

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[48] These are some of the major issues addressed in Samuel Amirtham and Robin Pryor, eds., *Resources for Spiritual Formation in Theological Education: The Invitation to the Feast of Life* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1989).

[49] Robert P. Meye, "Theological Education as Character Formation," *Theological Education* 24, Supplement (1988), S119-120 and Edwards, Jr., "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools," 16-19.

[50] E.g.: What is the role of classroom worship? What are the purposes of corporate worship in theological education? What is the definition of and link between 'spirituality' and 'character'? What is the shape of biblical authority for contemporary faith and practice? What is the role of traditional devotional practices?

[51] Merv Mercer, "Formational Initiatives at Wycliffe College," *Theological Education* 39, no. 2 (2003), 58.

[52] Edwards, Jr., "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools," 11.

[53] Cf. The WCC Iona Document on Spiritual Formation: "The fragmentation of theology as a whole and the departmentalization of the theological learning process can well be seen as one main obstacle in the way of a holistic process of spiritual formation." As quoted in Amirtham and Pryor, eds., *Resources for Spiritual Formation in Theological Education*, 162.

[54] Hoon, "Report of the Task Force on Spiritual Development," 43.

[55] Cf. Foster et al., *Educating Clergy*, 294.

[56] Linda M. Cannell, "Theology, Spiritual Formation and Theological Education: Reflections Toward Application," in Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 242.

Second, in the last decade, several commentators have emphasized that, ideally, the structures of a theological institute should be those of complex adaptive systems,[57] which are in a process of constant formation and reformation. According to the theologian Mark C. Taylor, for example, to be effective in today's world, the organizational structure of colleges and universities "have to become much more flexible and adaptable to accommodate the ongoing transformation of the substance and organization of knowledge."[58] Linda Cannell concurs: "Organizations that adapt and endure are more like organisms than rigid bureaucracies. Since education truly is about learning, educational organizations should be the most adaptable on the planet."[59] Taylor and Cannell can be paraphrased as saying that the seminary of the future – particularly when it is intent on educating missional leaders – is not only an organization for learning but also a learning organization. This entails, among other things, an "institutional commitment to encourage faculty to innovate and adapt."[60] Furthermore, it means that all the mechanisms of learning that the staff and faculty seeks to promote among their students should be employed in creating plans, such as "brainstorming, making connections between disparate ideas, understanding the implications of decisions, and deconstructing information and building it back up in a new and more useful way."[61] Becoming a learning organization may be quite a challenge, especially when it goes against the grain of a more bureaucratic organizational model that encourages (among other things) caution, which is said to be especially typical of mainline Protestant seminaries.[62] As Timothy Weber puts it, "Theological schools like to see themselves as agents of prophetic change; but institutionally most of them are quite conservative and resist significant change."[63]

9.2.5 What Is the Preferred Relationship between Theological Institutions and the Local Context, Specifically the Local Church?

The fifth question has to do with the dimension of *context*. This is not spelled out in the definition of leadership, but it is implied.[64] This chapter focuses on the relation between

[57] This term was explained in 6.2.1.
[58] Mark C. Taylor, *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 265.
[59] Cannell, *Theological Education Matters,* 119.
[60] Victoria A. Farrar-Myers and Dana Dunn, "Campus Stories: Three Case Studies. Part A: Institutionalizing Pedagogical Change: A Case Study in Building a Learning Organization," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 124, (Winter 2010), 74.
[61] Farrar-Myers and Dunn, "Campus Stories," 69.
[62] James K. Wellman, Jr., *Evangelical vs. Liberal: The Clash of Christian Cultures in the Pacific Northwest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 178.
[63] Weber, "The Seminaries and the Churches," 83. On the same page, Weber writes that "The structures, work patterns, and operating values of theological schools are anchored in tradition and continuity. In most instances, they remain the same for long periods or change very, very slowly." See also Anita Henck, "Walking the Tightrope: Christian Colleges and Universities in a Time of Change," *Christian Higher Education* 10 (2011), 196-214.
[64] See figure 8.1, above (p. 214).

institutes of theological education and local congregations. The fact that the relationship between theological colleges and their (local) ecclesial communities was the major theme of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) in 2004, well illustrates the importance of this topic.[65]

The interest in this theme can best be seen against the background of criticism about the gap between seminaries and local churches. This criticism is not new,[66] but it seems that it is currently being shared more widely and voiced with more urgency. For instance, there are complaints that theological institutions turn out graduates who are "lacking when it comes to the skills necessary for ministerial practice;"[67] that seminaries and pastors do not communicate adequately with each other and that there is much mutual suspicion;[68] that "much of education for ministry trains persons to be chaplains for dying congregations, rather than transforming, missional leaders;"[69] that most courses that presume to offer ministry or leadership development are generally ill-timed and out of any context where skills and professional behaviors can be learned effectively;[70] that, in seminaries, the Christian life is "summarized as a life of the mind;"[71] and that "faculties are more interested in scholarship than in matters of faith or practical ministry."[72]

In recent years, the realization has dawned that since theology is not abstracted from life or place, as in the Enlightenment paradigm,[73] there are good reasons why seminaries

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[65] Jeremiah McCarthy, "Deepening Connections between the Church and the Theological School: Implications for Theological Education," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 1, no. 2 (2004), 175-183.

[66] Paul Hammer, for example, argued in 1973 that theological education that follows New Testament models involves a believing community (the church). This means that pastors, laymen and laywomen should be extensively involved in the educational programs of seminarians. In reality, however, seminaries often exhibit a kind of academic semi-isolation, with the following results: many pastors feel inadequately equipped; many lay persons have little understanding of any vital relationship between seminaries and local congregations; and many people in community or government agencies have little idea that theological education has anything to do with them. Paul L. Hammer, "New Things and Old: A New Testament Model for Theological Education," *Theological Education* 9, no. 2 (Winter 1973), 95-96.

[67] Marilyn Naidoo, "Ministerial Training: The Need for Pedagogies of Formation and of Contextualisation in Theological Education," *Missionalia* 38, no. 3 (November 2010), 364.

[68] Faith E. Rohrbough, "Brief History of Task Force Meetings of the Theological Schools and the Church Project," *Theological Education* 44, no. 1 (2008), 12.

[69] Gary Peluso-Verdend and Jack Seymour, "Hearing the Congregation's Voice in Evaluating/Revising the MDiv Curriculum: the Church Relations Council," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), S56.

[70] Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*, 119.

[71] Rohrbough, "Brief History of Task Force Meetings of the Theological Schools…," 13.

[72] Weber, "The Seminaries and the Churches...," 82.

[73] Cf. W. Cahoy: "The modern university is rooted in a distinctly modern, specifically Enlightenment epistemology that makes the role of place irrelevant." William J. Cahoy, "A Sense of Place and the Place of Sense," in Stephen R. Haynes, ed., *Professing in the Postmodern Academy: Faculty and the Future of Church-Related Colleges* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2002), 75. However, "if all knowing is rooted in some sustaining community, as postmodernists contend, then the church-related college becomes not an anomaly or even the oxymoron some would claim but a variation on the structure common to all knowing and all colleges." Ibid., 101.

should work more closely with the local church[74] – in particular with transforming, missional congregations.[75] Providing important leadership development opportunities for theology students is of particular importance in this partnership.[76] Pleas are voiced, moreover, to "create a theology that is as relevant as it can possibly be – relevant to the faith of the community, the traditions of the community and the life situation of the community."[77] The seminary should present itself as a community of scholars who, with humility, assist congregations in understanding their identity and purpose as the people of God.[78]

9.2.6 What Are Essential Elements of the Curriculum?

One topic that has stood out in the last decade concerning proposals for curriculum reform is that of *leadership*. A review of theological education in the United States points out that, "leadership is key for the future of congregations and the church, yet the seminaries do not seem able to do that leadership training."[79] This estimation is confirmed by a recent PhD dissertation which suggests that "'dissatisfied' is the adjective that might best describe the sentiment of many who examine leadership and leadership development in theological education in the last two decades."[80] Other researchers likewise conclude that there is a "critical need for leadership development in the curriculum of traditional seminaries."[81] Leadership preparation and leadership formation, in other words, are seen to be "an absolute requirement"[82] in the twenty-first century. Leadership is not an easy subject to teach, however, especially not through independent cour-

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[74] One qualification needs to be made here. To 'take theological education back to where the churches are' and into different social and cultural contexts was already advocated by the so-called Theological Education by Extension Movement in the 1960's (spreading from Guatemala). See F. Ross Kinsler, "Extension: An Alternative Model for Theological Education," in *Learning in Context: The Search for Innovative Patterns in Theological Education*, edited by The Theological Education Fund: A Service of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (Bromley, UK: New Life Press, 1973), 27-49. This book provides examples of 'contextual' theological education from many different regions. For recent developments, see Ross Kinsler and Desmond Tutu, eds., *Diversified Theological Education: Equipping All God's People* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011).

[75] Peluso-Verdend and Seymour, "Hearing the Congregation's Voice...," 56.

[76] According to George Hillman, "Students need more actual time in the leadership laboratory of real-life ministry, under the watchful eye of qualified ministry mentors." George M. Hillman, "Leadership Practices and Current Ministry Experience of Master's-Level Seminary Students," *Christian Higher Education* 5, no. 2 (2006), 154 and 156.

[77] Ofelia Ortega, "Contextuality and Community: Challenges for Theological Education and Ecumenical Formation," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 388 (April 2009), 28.

[78] Cf. Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*, 40.

[79] Rohrbough, "Brief History of Task Force Meetings of the Theological Schools...," 12.

[80] Thomas Lee Kiedis, "A Comparative Analysis of Leadership Development Models in Post-Baccalaureate Theological Education," (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 5.

[81] Skip Bell and Roger Dudley, "Leadership Formation in Ministerial Education – Part 3: A Comparison of Transformational Effect in Three Selected Programs," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 43, no. 1 (2005), 64.

[82] Kirkpatrick G. Cohall and Bruce S. Cooper, "Educating American Baptist Pastors: A National Survey of Church Leaders," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 19 (2010), 51.

ses.[83] Thus, a paradigm revision in the mission of graduate theological education is called for, one that "accomplishes integration of theory and practice and theological reflection and leadership skills within a professional learning context inclusive of coaching. Faithfulness to mission in graduate theological education requires such change."[84]

Another subject that is increasingly seen as essential to the curriculum of future (co-) leaders – judging from recent publications in ecumenical, international journals – is that of *(missional) ecclesiology*.[85] The article by Mark Laing[86] serves as a representative example here. "As the seminary goes, so the church goes," Laing argues. "The future agenda of the church will be shaped by its future leaders, and their understanding of the church is largely derived from their theological education. Therefore for the church to awaken to its apostolic nature there needs to be a radical reappraisal of the ecclesiology taught in seminaries."[87] The reappraisal that Laing advocates, is the recovery of a missionary ecclesiology. "This does not demand merely a revision of the place of missiology in theological education but, more radically, places mission at the heart of the theological curriculum."[88]

It has been acknowledged, furthermore, that "Missional theology can devolve into little more than pragmatic, activist strategizing about techniques for the church's numerical growth if it is divorced from the formative impulse to foster qualitative growth in faith, hope and love nurtured in the community's worship and prayer."[89] The theologi-

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[83] Cf. the frank remarks of practical theologian Thomas Frank: "The biggest problem with teaching leadership and administration courses in a school of theology is that nobody wants to take them.…most of the students have little or no clue what I am saying....Most of them...are not actually bearing the burdens of being a pastor, or carrying out the responsibilities of a full-time position in a church or non-profit." Thomas Edward Frank, "Teaching Leadership and Administration: Pedagogy and Poetics," in Kathleen Cahalan, Carol Lakey Hess, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Teaching Practical Theology: Introducing Six Perspectives," *International Journal for Practical Theology* 12 (2008), 67-73.

[84] Bell and Dudley, "Leadership Formation in Ministerial Education," 76.

[85] This is an encompassing subject, as "a missionary ecclesiology demands a central place for the teaching of a broad-based concept of missiology, intercultural theology and ecumenics (or world Christianity) in theological seminaries and faculties." Dietrich Werner, "Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education in the 21st Century: Pointers for a New International Debate on Theological Education," Edinburgh 2010 International Study Group on Theological Education/WCC World Study Report, 2009, 21, http:// www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-theological-education-ete/edinburgh-2010-international-study-group-on-theological-education.html (accessed December 17, 2011).

[86] Mark Laing, "Recovering Missional Ecclesiology in Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 388 (April 2009), 11-24.

[87] Laing, "Recovering Missional Ecclesiology in Theological Education," 22.

[88] Ibid. Cf. the Edinburgh 2010 International Study Group on Theological Education: "theological education itself is part of the holistic mission of the Christian church and therefore is missionary in character." Werner, "Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education," 19, with a list of literature in n28. Note that the concept of 'theological education' in this report is broad, encompassing and transcending that of ministerial formation.

[89] Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary Challenges," in Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 35.

cal curriculum, then, should not only be re-envisioned "as if the *missio Dei* mattered"[90] but also be connected to *spiritual formation* (cf. 9.2.3, above).[91]

9.2.7 What Educational Philosophy and Teaching Practices Are Adopted?

The fundamental convictions concerning learning, pedagogy and didactics can be called an *educational philosophy*. Convictions on this topic in scholarly journals are, to a large extent, based on interdisciplinary research concerning how humans learn. This research has accumulated fast in the last few decades; indeed, it has been claimed that "we know more about learning now than we have ever known before in the history of human society."[92] In many leadership courses, both in the Christian and in the secular world, the prevalent educational philosophy is based on the pillars of experiential learning and social constructivism.

One of the most important claims of thinking in terms of *experiential learning* is that integral learning only takes place when people interact with their social and physical environments.[93] This insight is put into practice by "affirming experimentation, valuing the learning failure provides, providing peer feedback systems, offering coaching, and performance reviews that emphasize the creativity taking place while doing the work itself."[94]

In *social constructivist thinking*, it is believed that knowledge and beliefs are formed within the learner; learners personally imbue experiences with meaning; learning processes should cause learners to gain access to their experiences, knowledge, and beliefs; learning is a social activity that is enhanced by shared inquiry; reflection and metacognition are essential aspects of constructing meaning and knowledge; learners must play a critical role in assessing their own learning; and that the outcomes of the learning process are varied and often unpredictable.[95] In short, it is assumed that the learner pro-

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[90] Cf. J. Andrew Kirk, "Re-envisioning the Theological Curriculum as if the Missio Dei Mattered," *Common Ground Journal: Perspectives on the Church in the 21st Century* 3, no. 1 (Fall 2005), 23-40.

[91] Cf. the Edinburgh 2010 International Study Group on Theological Education: "This report is convinced that *character and spiritual formation* [emphasis added], preparation for good governance, proper management principles and a code of conduct for church leadership should become a key factor to be put forward in curriculum development." Werner, "Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education," 24.

[92] Reg Wickett, "Adult Learning Theories and Theological Education," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 2, no. 2 (2005), 160.

[93] D. Christopher Kayes, "Experiential Learning and Its Critics: Preserving the Role of Experience in Management Learning and Education," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 1, no. 2 (March 2002), 137.

[94] Skip Bell, "Learning, Changing, and Doing: A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Religious and Non-profit Organizations," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2010), 110.

[95] Margaret Szabo and Linda Lambert, "The Preparation of New Constructivist Leaders," in Linda Lambert et al., *The Constructivist Leader*, second ed. (New York: Teachers Colleges, 2002), 220. It is relevant to note that these assumptions also fit the current interest in the new sciences and complexity theory. See, for example, Inna Semetsky, "On the Creative Logic of Education, or: Re-reading Dewey through the Lens of Complexity Science," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 40, no. 1 (2008), 83-95; Keith Morrison, "Educational Philosophy and the Challenge of Complexity Theory," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 40, no. 1

duces and reproduces knowledge evolutionarily and actively. The term 'evolutionarily' is chosen to indicate that the social constructivist approach to learning emerged from an epistemology in which knowing is thought of as being essentially biological in nature. As such, it does not acknowledge the existence of causal powers outside of nature, nor, more specifically, that God may work on humans as an agent of transformation (cf. the apostle Paul: a person may be 'taught by God').[96] Social constructivist thinking instead emphasizes that "an organism encounters new experiences and events and seeks to *assimilate* these into existing cognitive structures or to adjust the structures to *accommodate* the new information."[97] Note that this approach comports with the influential concept of adaptive leadership,[98] and with basic assumptions about the learning organization.[99] In education based on social constructivist principles, students and teachers create, share and shape their own and each other's meanings together. Pedagogy is not transmissive and fixed, but cast in a language and practice of 'possibility', of openness, freedom, autonomy and exploration.[100]

Partially reflecting the educational philosophical insights described above, much of leader education today reverses the traditional educational priorities: from theory to practice,[101] from knowledge to learning, from 'teaching-centred' to 'learning-centred',[102]

(2008), 19-34, and Donald L. Gilstrap, "Dissipative Structures in Educational Change: Prigogine and the Academy," *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 10, no. 1 (2007), 46-69.

[96] See on this expression Karen Marie Yust and E. Byron Anderson, *Taught by God: Teaching and Spiritual Formation* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2006), 11-18.

[97] Deborah Walker, "Constructive Leadership: Standards, Equity, and Learning – Weaving Whole Cloth from Multiple Strands," in Linda Lambert et al., *The Constructivist Leader*, 7. The biological theory of knowing owes much to the very influential and nowadays much studied American philosopher and educationalist John Dewey (1859-1952). Cf. Reijo Miettinen, "The Concept of Experiential Learning and John Dewey's Theory of Reflective Thought and Action," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January-February 2000), 65. Dewey's so-called 'instrumentalist' educational philosophy – which emphasized method and function over content – was strongly influenced by the late nineteenth-century American pragmatic school of philosophy, and by Darwinism. In a sense, pragmatism can be described as the application of the idea of survival of the fittest on the field of convictions: the (ethical) conviction that 'survives' the struggle of views is the strongest and thus the best. See Philip P. Wiener, *Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 24 and 199. Cf. p. 68, "Ideas are beliefs on which man is prepared to act, and thus have an evolutionary or survival value."

[98] Adaptive leadership is defined as "the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive," while "the concept of *thriving* is drawn from evolutionary biology." Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14. The authors explicitly state that their work has "deep roots in scientific efforts to explain the evolution of human life, and before us, the evolution of all life going back to the beginning of the earth." Ibid., 13.

[99] Cf. Sherrie Bartell, "Today more than ever before, survival of the fittest means survival of the 'fittest to learn'. The popular term used to describe this regenerative organizational species is the 'learning organization'." Sherrie Myers Bartell, "Training's New Role in Learning Organizations," *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 38, no. 4 (2001), 354.

[100] Morrison, "Educational Philosophy and the Challenge of Complexity Theory," 27.

[101] According to two experts, "the state-of-the art in development is helping leaders learn more effectively from their work, rather than taking them away from their work to learn." David V. Day and Patricia M.G. O'Connor, "Leadership Development: Understanding the Process," in Susan Elaine Murphy and Ronald E. Riggio, eds., *The Future of Leadership Development* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 22.

from individual knowledge to partnerships or a community of learning approach,[103] and from detached analysis to reflexive understanding[104] – or *phronèsis* (practical wisdom).[105]

In regard to theological education, pleas are voiced for a shift from "teacher-directed learning" to "self-directed learning."[106] Another author calls it a shift from a "transmission model" to an "inquiry-based model."[107] It is agreed – at least among practical theologians – that our knowledge, including all of our activity, is thoroughly embodied, and that our bodies are thoroughly contextual. "If the modern ideal of knowledge is objective and impersonal, postmodernity has exposed the fact of the embodied and embedded self in knowing."[108] Concurrent with this line of thinking, experiments are being conducted with 'action reflection' models.[109] Moreover, there has been a renewed interest in the ancient Greek educational ideals of *phronèsis* and *paideia* (formation), as opposed to the one-sided Enlightenment emphasis on *theoria* (theoretical knowledge).[110]

9.2.7.1 Teaching Practices

Teaching practices, as they are called, are related to educational philosophy. Teaching practices can be defined as sustained pedagogical and didactical methods and interactions that aim to help the student function in an increasingly proficient way in the missional community.[111] In educational circles, it is increasingly acknowledged that tea-

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[102] Cf. Claus Nygaard and Clive Holtham, eds., *Understanding Learning-Centred Education* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2008).

[103] A community of learning approach takes advantage of discussions, projects, critical thinking, and other techniques involved in making the learner spend more time on processing and synthesizing information, rather than memorizing and recalling information.

[104] Tony Bush and Derek Glover, *Leadership Development: Evidence and Beliefs*. A Review of the Literature Carried out for National College for School Leadership (National College for School Leadership, Spring 2004), 6.

[105] Keith Grint, "Learning to Lead: Can Aristotle Help Us Find the Road to Wisdom?," *Leadership* 3 (2007), 231-246. "*Phronèsis*," according to Grint, "is essentially rooted in action rather than simply reflection. It is something intimately bound up with lived experience rather than abstract reason (*epistèmè*) but it is not a set of techniques to be deployed (*technè*)." Ibid., 236.

[106] Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation*, 220-221.

[107] A *transmission model* assumes that the student is the recipient and benefactor of the professor's experience and knowledge, and uses the lecture as a means of transmitting that knowledge to the student. An *inquiry-based model* is open-ended and it values the accumulated information, ideas, and schemata that have been generated by the students' collective experience. Moreover, this model links a dialogical process to classroom instruction and practical field experiences in the context of a learning community. Arch Chee Keen Wong, "Clues of How Pastoral Leaders Learn in Context: Implications for Theological Education," *Religious Education* 106, no. 2 (March-April 2011), 229-230.

[108] Robert K. Martin, "'Mind the Gap': Closing the Distance between Theological Method, Theological Education, and Practical Theology for Religious Leadership," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 9. See also Graeme Fancourt, "The Participative Self: An Enquiry Into the Merits and Limits of a Theological and Postmodern Anthropology," (DTh. thesis, Durham University, 2010).

[109] The 'action reflection' model assumes that the experiences of life provide the opportunity for learning; that ideas about life are shaped by context; and that engagement in participation in mission is informed through grappling with issues and not only through quality of knowledge. See Werner, "Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education," 37.

[110] See for example Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*, 41-42.

[111] Cf. Foster et al., *Educating Clergy*, 26.

ching *about* leadership is easier than teaching students how to adequately exercise leadership in practice. For example, it is asked what teaching practices are best suited to stimulate students in the development of a "sense of reality," of political judgment, of discernment, and of the deep "semi-instinctive skill" of leadership.[112] Probably the most prevalent albeit not uniformly defined[113] concept in this regard is *reflection*, in a variety of forms.[114] This is often traced back to Donald Schön's notion of the 'reflective practitioner'[115] and is linked to experiential learning approaches such as David Kolb's 'learning cycle'.[116] Reflection is central because it is thought that "the cultivated self is a leader's greatest tool."[117] Leaders need "to be able to look at themselves in the mirror of self-awareness and reflect on who they are as people,"[118] including their basic epistemological assumptions. The importance of reflection is displayed by the fact that teaching practices, especially those that center not on the transmission of theory, but on enhancing reflection and action in context, have been increasingly refined. Three examples of such teaching practices are action learning,[119] case-in-point teaching,[120] and mentoring.[121]

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[112] M. Jinkins, "A 'Sense of Reality': How Austin Theological Seminary Teaches Leadership," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 4, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Fall 2005), 75.

[113] David Denton, "Reflection and Learning: Characteristics, Obstacles, and Implications," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 43, no. 8 (2011), 839. Different levels of reflection can be distinguished, for example "a technical, problem-solving level; a hermeneutic level focused on interpreting different views; and an epistemic, critical level that emphasizes analyzing fundamental points of reference." Henk Procee, "Reflection in Education: A Kantian Epistemology," *Educational Theory* 56, no. 3 (2006), 238-239.

[114] Reflection *in* action (i.e. thinking, improvising, trying things out, and so on *during* one's acting) is differentiated from reflection *on* action (this can be done afterwards and has an evaluative character), for example. Then there is *reflection-on-reflection-in-action*, which entails reflecting about one's own reflecting.

[115] Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Temple Smith, 1983).

[116] Alice Y. Kolb and David A. Kolb, "Experiential Learning Theory: A Dynamic, Holistic Approach to Management Learning, Education and Development," in S.J. Armstrong and Cynthia V. Fukami, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Management Learning, Education and Development* (London, UK: Sage, 2009), 42-68.

[117] David Kolb, as quoted in John West-Burnham, *Developing Outstanding Leaders: Professional /Life Histories of Outstanding Headteachers*. Full report 2009 (National College for School Leadership, 2009), 6.

[118] Steven Kenning, *The Intelligent Gaze: Leadership Lead Learners and Individual Growth – a Reflective Enquiry* (National College for School Leadership, 2002), 3. Cobus Pienaar likewise affirms that self-awareness, self-knowledge, awareness of limitations in self and others, and the ability to recognize, learn and profit from failures and mistakes contribute greatly to leadership effectiveness. Cobus Pienaar, "The Role of Self-Deception of Leadership Ineffectiveness: A Theoretical Overview," *South African Journal of Psychology* 39, no. 1 (2008), 133-141.

[119] Action learning can be typified as a systematic way by which individuals, groups, and organizations learn in the context of real (not simulated) work, see Michael J. Marquardt et al., *Action Learning for Developing Leaders and Organizations* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009). Action learning "attempts to balance the role of action and reflection for the purpose of learning from experience and developing more complex ways of knowing, doing, and being." Patricia M.G. O'Connor and David V. Day, "Shifting the Emphasis of Leadership Development," in Jay A. Conger and Ronald E. Riggio, eds., *The Practice of Leadership: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 72.

[120] Case-in-point teaching draws on several well-established learning traditions and methods – seminar, simulation, presentation of ideas and perspectives (through lecture, reading, and film), discussion and dialogue, clinical-therapeutic practice, coaching, the laboratory, the art studio, writing as a form of disciplined

The topic of teaching practices currently receives much attention in journals about theological education as well. We read, for instance, about the need for teaching practices that are more learner-centered, focused on method,[122] and geared towards facilitating the student's "active learning, questioning, critical thinking, and problem solving."[123] Proposals are voiced for configuring mentorship in theological education;[124] for church leadership courses that are "cross-disciplinary, integrative, and team taught;"[125] and for lifelong learning and experiential learning.[126]

Some caution is voiced about competency[127] based curricula – for one thing, because "competencies may not help to train students for mission."[128] In secular quarters, competency based curricula are also increasingly criticized. It is argued, for example, that competency frameworks "tend to reinforce individualistic practices that dissociate leader from the relational environment in which they operate and could, arguably, inhibit the emergence of more inclusive and collective forms of leadership."[129] Another criticism of

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reflection, and the case study method. Characteristic of case-in-point teaching is that what goes on in the classroom itself is an occasion for learning and practicing leadership within a social group. Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership* Can *Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World (*Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2005), 6-7.

[121] Mentoring can be described as "a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two (or more) individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals. Learning is the fundamental process, purpose, and product of mentoring." Lois J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 3. For a mentoring relationship to be effective, "both the mentor and protégé need to learn from one another in a relationship that is built on trust and commitment to the other's growth while respecting differences, preferences, and past experiences." Deborah A. Olson and Deborrah Jackson, "Expanding Leadership Diversity Through Formal Mentoring Programs," *Journal of Leadership Studies* 3, no. 1 (2009), 48.

[122] Alison Le Cornu, "The Shape of Things to Come: Theological Education in the Twenty-First Century," *British Journal of Theological Education* 14, no. 1 (2003), 14 and 17.

[123] Graeme Smith, "Something That Can Be Learnt but Not Taught: Teaching Theological Reflection through Enquiry-based Learning," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 5, no. 1 (2008), 23.

[124] Leona M. English and Lorna M.A. Bowman, "Working With Experience: the Mentor, the Context, the Possibility," *British Journal of Theological Education* 12, no. 1 (2001), 37-52.

[125] David Forney, "Integrative Church Leadership: Columbia Theological Seminary's Approach," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 4, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Fall 2005), 33-49.

[126] Reg Wickett, "Adult Learning Theories and Theological Education," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 2, no. 2 (2005), 153-161.

[127] The term 'competency' has been defined in different ways. One widely quoted definition sees it as "the set of behavior patterns that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its tasks and functions with competence." Christopher Maybe and Tim Finch-Lees, *Management and Leader Development* (London: Sage, 2008), 166.

[128] Roland Riem, "Why Calling Matters More: Weighing Vocational and Competency Approaches to Ministerial Development," *British Journal of Theological Education* 14, no. 1 (2003), 84. Note that the articles mentioned are mostly British. This might have something to do with the fact that the (American/Canadian) journal *Theological Education* "has been slow to embrace innovations in education, whether in curricular design, delivery systems, instructional technology, or alternative educational methods (collaborative learning, problem-based learning, etc)." Thomas L. Fuller, "Themes in the Journal *Theological Education*, 1964-2006: What Do They Say?," *Christian Higher Education* 6 (2007), 342.

[129] Richard Bolden and Jonathan Gosling, "Leadership Competencies: Time to Change the Tune?," *Leadership* 2 (2006), 159.

the competency-focused approach is that it draws heavily on positivist or objectivist theoretical foundations based on objective, descriptive and explanatory processes. A hermeneutic understanding of leadership, however, "views leading as a constantly emergent, interpretative act – as continually seeing with new eyes."[130]

In light of these actual discussions, it is relevant to ask what the views on educational philosophy are within the EMC and what teaching practices are adopted.

9.2.8 What Are Important Requirements of the Faculty?

The themes that were mentioned above – those of purpose, spiritual formation, curriculum, educational philosophy and teaching practices – have repercussions for those involved in teaching.[131]

As to *purpose*, a reasonable assumption is that the purpose and mission of a theological institute is better served by alignment than by misalignment. In other words, if faculty appointments are tailored to the goal and the mission, there is a greater chance that the purpose of the institute will actually be served and its general objectives reached.[132] This is one reason why it is meaningful to look for statements within the EMC concerning the appointment of faculty members.

Spiritual formation is seen as connected to community formation,[133] and the "vertebrae of the community" – so it is argued – "are the faculty."[134] This entails that the faculty should see themselves as a "formational faculty," a "collegium of men and women intentionally committed to helping students become formed into a measure of the full stature of Christ."[135] Spiritual formation, in short, is dependent on the faculty who model spirituality to their students.[136]

As to *curriculum*, a theological institute that decides to focus on missional leadership more intentionally than before will most likely choose to make changes to the curricu-

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[130] J. Brian Woodward and Colin Funk, "Developing the Artist-Leader," *Leadership* 6, no. 3 (2010), 301.

[131] To put it in a rhetorical question: "What will be the impact of new vision statements, revised curricula, paradigmatic changes in the educational philosophy, and new methodologies of delivery, if the teachers are still representatives of old models?" Bernhard Ott, "Mission and Theological Education," *Transformation* 18, no. 2 (April 2001), 96.

[132] Cf. Foster et al., *Educating Clergy*, 36.

[133] According to Tilden Edwards, "Intentional Christian community is the necessary context for spiritual formation." Edwards, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools," 37.

[134] Hoon, "Report of the Task Force on Spiritual Development," 45.

[135] Ibid., 46.

[136] This conclusion was already voiced in the 1972 report of the Association of Theological Seminaries on spiritual formation: "The spiritual formation and development of seminary students begins with, and is dependent upon, the spiritual formation and development of the faculty." Hoon, "Report of the Task Force on Spiritual Development," 161, cf. 179. This insight should have consequences for the selection of faculty, the report states. They should be appointed not just for academic achievement, but for spiritual concern and spiritual charism as well. Ibid., 188, cf. 168 and 197.

lum.[137] In turn, "a revised curriculum will be the fruit of change in the perspectives, beliefs, and practices of the faculty."[138]

As to *educational philosophy*, the shift "from traditional deductive learning (transmitting a pre-packaged set of truth through classical classroom teaching) to inductive learning (entering into an action-reflection process of common, teacher and student learning in which the teacher, as the more educated, will facilitate the process)"[139] demands new forms of teaching, and this requires more competence on the part of the teacher.[140] New teaching practices, such as mentoring, may have to be adopted, which may require special skills.[141]

9.2.9 What Views Are There on the Recruitment of Students?

Education is focused on students, so obviously they must be in view as well, with a focus on recruitment. C. Douglass Lewis devised a (perhaps somewhat idiosyncratic) definition of this term that fits the purpose of this chapter. He interprets the word recruitment as referring to the "process by which an individual is assisted in discovering as much as possible about himself, his interests and talents, and the demands and possibilities of a particular schooling and career option."[142]

According to Jackson Carroll, recruitment is a critical issue facing the church, "and it will play a crucial role in shaping the future of pastoral leadership."[143] Carroll thinks that local congregations will become "fertile seedbeds for recruitment when clergy and lay leaders create the conditions that encourage both young and older members to consider whether God may be calling them to ordained leadership."[144]

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[137] Mary Hess, "'The Seminary as Apostolate': Reflecting upon practices of teaching that have as their central vision equipping people for mission in the North American context," Seminary as Teaching Apostolate, http://www2.luthersem.edu/apostolate/grant_narrative.asp (last accessed January 7, 2012).

[138] Robert T. O'Gorman, Kathleen Talvacchia, W. Michael Smith, "Teaching from a Community Context: The Role of the Field Educator in Theological Education," *Theological Education* 37, no. 2 (2001), 22. Cf. Jack Seymour, "Curriculum revision is not simply about courses and processes of education. Curriculum revision is about the ministry of the faculty to fulfill the mission of the school." Jack L. Seymour, "Best Practices in Master of Divinity Curriculum Revision: A Research Report," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007), 37.

[139] Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation*, 267.

[140] Cf. Senior and Weber, "in the future, theology schools of all kinds will have to keep formational needs in mind as they recruit new faculty and build the corporate character of the faculty as a whole." Senior and Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum...," 31. Linda Cannell concurs: "The necessary question for theological educators is, what is involved in training others who will be able to train others also?" Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*, 123.

[141] Senior and Weber acknowledge that most faculty were hired not because of their mentoring abilities, but because of their academic expertise. Senior and Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum...," 31.

[142] C. Douglass Lewis, "The Role of Seminaries in Recruitment," *Theological Education* 5, no. 4 (Summer 1969), 321.

[143] Jackson W. Carroll, *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 221.

[144] Carroll, *God's Potters*, 222-223.

Likewise, Susan Willhauck advocates cultivating a "culture of the call" in congregations.[145] A culture of the call entails stimulating a commitment to invite persons in all age groups to acknowledge and explore their calls to ministry, both ordained and lay people. Local churches should understand and teach that all baptized Christians are called to ministry as members of the people of God. In that kind of culture, where the general call to ministry is taken seriously, God's special call is more likely to be heard and encouraged.[146]

Generally speaking, however, the reality in the West is often far from from this ideal. For example, a 2005 report shows that many Asian American parents actively *dis*courage their children from considering a call to ministry. Parental support can apparently no longer be taken for granted.[147] Gary Peluso-Verdend and Jack Seymour state that "the ecology of institutions that previously recruited for ministry...has almost dissipated."[148] It is furthermore acknowledged that socially weak institutions – as Western churches increasingly are – attract weak candidates to positions of leadership.[149] Not many volunteers can be found for a position that pays poorly and has declining status and influence. As a result, a greater proportion of those who do apply "have less academic and social ability than those who wish to serve in more prosperous professions."[150] In times of fast and extensive change, however, organizations, including churches and missional communities, need adequate leadership.

With this insight we round off the discussion of our framework of nine research questions.[151]

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[145] Susan Willhauck, "Cultivating a Culture of the Call: A Model for Lay Theological Education," *Theological Education* 38, no. 2 (2002), 111-125.
[146] Carroll, *God's Potters*, 223.
[147] Carroll, *God's Potters*, 222.
[148] Peluso-Verdend and Seymour, "Hearing the Congregation's Voice...," 52.
[149] Cf. Ralph Winter in his opening address of the annual conference of the Association of Christian Continuing Education Schools and Seminaries (ACCESS): "all over the world, especially in the United States, but also wherever the 'long hand' of the Western church reaches, precisely the more gifted leaders of the Christian movement are being sidetracked and not being recruited into ministry." Ralph D. Winter, "The Largest Stumbling Block to Leader development in the Global Church," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 20, no. 3 (Fall 2003), 86.
[150] Glenn T. Miller, "Historical Influences on Seminary Culture," in Malcolm L. Warford, ed., *Practical Wisdom: On Theological Teaching and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 104. Cf. John Dreibelbis, "Researchers over forty years have noted a tendency toward selection of less assertive and more timid people for ordained ministry." John Dreibelbis, "Beyond Wish Lists for Pastoral Leadership: Assessing Clergy Behavior and Congregational Outcomes to Guide Seminary Curriculum," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), S39.
[151] No more crucial topics – those that arguably could not be left out – came to the fore during our study of literature on theological education (conceived of as leader education).

9.3 Leader Education in the Emerging-Missional Milieu

This section outlines the main views and practices concerning leader education that are found in the Emerging-Missional milieu, including its institutional segments. The goal of this section is to paint a picture of the field viewed from a wide angle, but with enough detail to be able to embark upon a fruitful discussion in chapter 11. A sub-goal is to test the heuristic potential of the framework of questions, which will be used again in the next chapter in a modified form. The nine questions explained above introduce the themes of the subsections that follow (9.3.1-9.3.9).

Before we start, a note about our sources is in order. As before, publications from the EMC play an important role, while some additional sources – such as course catalogues – were found on the internet. Short phrases such as 'Missional Leadership Course' or 'Mission Shaped Leadership Education' helped to locate institutions in Australia,[152] Canada,[153] the Netherlands,[154] Switzerland,[155] the United Kingdom,[156] and the United States[157] where programs are offered – mostly postgraduate ones[158] – with a focus on educating missional leaders. From a comparison of the information given on the various websites, including vision statements, course descriptions, explanations of teaching methods, and so on, it appears that there are many similarities in the goals of these programs and in how they attempt to achieve them. This is the case even though the institutions cover a theological spectrum that varies from 'relevants'[159] to (moderate) 'revisionists'.[160] Concerning the issues on which this section is focused, the differences are

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[152] The Australian College of Ministries (New South Wales), and Forge Mission Training Network (several places).

[153] Tyndale Seminary, Toronto.

[154] Since 2009, the Theological University at Kampen has offered a MA specialization called Missional Congregation [*Master Missionaire Gemeente*]. See http://www.tukampen.nl/pr/TUK%20Master%20Missionaire%20gemeente.pdf (last accessed April 14, 2012).

[155] IGW International, Zürich.

[156] Centre for Missional Leadership (London); Cliff College (Derbyshire); Cymru Institute for Contemporary Christianity (Wales); Springdale College (Birmingham); and Pioneer Mission Leadership Training, as offered in several institutes – among which are Cranmer Hall (Durham); St. John's College (Nottingham); Ridley Hall (Cambridge); and Wycliffe Hall (Oxford), see http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/training/related/opm (accessed November 9, 2011).

[157] Among the institutes that we encountered the following were especially interesting for the purposes of this section: George Fox University (Oregon); Luther Seminary (Minnesota); Northern Seminary (Illinois); Northwest University (Washington); the Resurgence Training Center of Mars Hill Church (Washington); Rochester College (Michigan); The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology, formerly called Mars Hill Graduate School (Washington); and Western Theological Seminary (Michigan).

Programs on Missional Leadership (or equivalents) are increasingly popular in the United States. During the research for this section in 2009 only a few could be located; two years later many more of such programs appeared to be offered. Still more are on their way, such as the Missional Leadership program of Fuller Theological Seminary that – according to its website – is due to start 2013 in Vancouver, http://www.fuller.edu/academics/school-of-theology/dmin/mlc.aspx (accessed November 4, 2011).

[158] Courses leading to degrees such as Doctor of Ministry, Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, or Master in Mission.

[159] E.g. the Resurgence Training Center of Mars Hill Church (Washington).

[160] E.g. The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology (Washington).

less striking than the many similarities. Our goal in what follows is to provide representative examples and illustrative quotes that are helpful in our broad survey of the landscape.

9.3.1 What Is the Purpose of Theological Education?

Within the EMC, the concern is voiced that many institutions of theological education "seldom structure their academic programs and course requirements according to a rapidly changing world,"[161] and therefore "train ministers for settings that simply no longer exist."[162] In addition, it is said that these institutions are not designed to equip leaders for a missional context.[163] Mostly, they are still geared towards producing "'professionals' for a Christendom church model,"[164] leaders of a "maintenance type,"[165] or scholars for a context where the primary need is able leadership. But scholarship and leadership, it is argued, require very different kinds of people and gifts.[166]

In his book *Mission Mover,* church consultant Thomas Bandy formulates some related criticisms that are quite typical of EMC views, although we hope his ranting style is not. Brian McLaren is convinced of the importance of Bandy's publication, stating that "if a seminary president in the English speaking world refused to read and ponder this book and take its message seriously, I think he or she should be gently but firmly replaced."[167] What is the message of *Mission Mover* that evinces such rhetorical support? The basic admonition of Thomas Bandy is twofold.

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[161] Brian D. McLaren and Tony Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 158.

[162] See the website of Rochester College, http://www.rc.edu/academics/graduate-missional-leadership/ (accessed November 9, 2011). Cf. Tim Keel, *Intuitive Leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor & Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 60.

[163] Mike McDaniel even concludes from his case study research that "Missional churches [thus: *not* seminaries] will have to lead the way in developing missional leaders." Mike McDaniel, "Case Studies of Selected Missional Churches that Examine Strategies Used to Engage the Unchurched in Post-Christendom Context," (DMin thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2010), 156.

[164] Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), 222.

[165] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 120. Interestingly, James Wellman – a self-proclaimed liberal Christian who seems not to be involved in the EMC – confirms this estimation by Hirsch. According to Wellman, those pastors who move through the "nearly labyrinthine gate keeping of Protestant denominations" have a "rule-following nature." James K. Wellman, Jr., *Evangelical vs. Liberal: The Clash of Christian Cultures in the Pacific Northwest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 178. A layperson from a mainline church who was interviewed by Wellman agrees: "If you had one ounce of entrepreneurial spirit you could not put up with the ordination process in mainline denominations." Ibid.

[166] Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 114.

[167] Brian D. McLaren, foreword to Thomas G. Bandy, *Mission Mover: Beyond Education for Church Leadership* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 9.

First of all, he claims that few young people actually want to be educated for church leadership in the traditional sense of the word.[168] "No one wants to preserve an institution. No one wants to endure the backbiting...and constant whining for personal attention from an aging remnant."[169] Instead, he thinks, "increasing numbers of people, often at the margins of traditional 'churchy' life, are eager to immerse themselves in a missional movement that has Christ at the center of the mayhem."[170] In other words, they want "education for mission immersion."[171] Bandy implies that seminaries do not provide this kind of education.[172]

Second, in brief summary, Bandy thinks that theological education needs to focus on helping students to challenge the status quo in local churches; to overcome the divide between the evangelical and the ecumenical worlds, and those between denominations; and to be effective in mission within the context of a post-Christendom society. In sum, the thrust of Bandy's treatise is comparable to that of most leading voices and institutes in the Emerging-Missional milieu: the purpose of theological education should be *to develop missional leaders*,[173] *who are "prepared to help the church engage the world*."[174] The urgent questions of today are therefore not centered on how to prepare preachers. It is more important to ask, "How do we equip leaders who will also equip others in what it means to love God from all one's heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself?"[175] Or: "What skills and resources does a leader require to cultivate

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[168] Cf. Brian McLaren, "our brightest young Christians do not consider seminary (or, by implication, church ministry) an attractive place of worthwhile challenge." McLaren and Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point*, 163. Cf. from the UK the comment of Rob Frost, "young people don't want to subject themselves to...models of ministry which seem more reminiscent of 'More tea, vicar?' than prophetic engagement with a hurting and broken world." Rob Frost, "The Great Disconnection," in Rob Frost, David Wilkinson, and Joanne Cox, eds., *The Call and the Commission: Equipping a New Generation of Leaders for a New World* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009), 17.

[169] Bandy, *Mission Mover*, 22.

[170] Bandy, *Mission Mover*, 14.

[171] Bandy, *Mission Mover*, 23. Cf. the Anglican principal Martyn Atkins, "integrated, practical, whole-life, missional theology resonates profoundly with many contemporary candidates for ordination, and not least younger adults." See Martyn Atkins, "Counting the Cost...and Paying It," in Rob Frost et al., *The Call and the Commission*, 52.

[172] Cf. Alan Roxburgh, "the development and training of...missional leaders requires more than traditional seminary programs. Master of Divinity programs are not designed to equip leaders for a missional context." Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling?!*, 159.

[173] Tyndale Seminary in Canada, for example, states that their mission is "to provide qualified candidates with a quality academic and professional milieu and program *for the further growth of mature missional leaders* [emphasis added] who can develop congregations, ministries, and persons that manifest Christ in our world." This mission statement is placed on the bottom of each page of their course catalogue of the Doctor of Ministry course. http://www.tyndale.ca/sites/default/files/DMin-Booklet-Feb-16-10.pdf (accessed November 14, 2011).

[174] Craig Van Gelder, "Theological Education and Missional Leadership Formation: Can Seminaries Prepare Missional Leaders for Congregations?," in Craig Van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 37.

[175] Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, 226. The authors continue, "This framework empowers all theology, spirituality and mission. It's inadequate merely to offer courses in systematic theology and

missional communities of Jesus in neighborhoods where people struggle to manage and survive in a confusing, turbulent, 'risk society'?"[176]

One more voice needs to be heard, that of Darrell Guder. He goes one step further than most contributors to the EMC, emphasizing that "from a missional perspective, the desired outcome of theological education is not the competent, well-equipped professional clergyperson....The test of missional theological education is the equipped and faithful witness of called and sent communities. The people of God in concrete assemblies and fellowships must be the focus of missional theological formation and not merely the incumbents of ordered ministry structures."[177] In effect, Guder reiterates here the distinction between *leader* development and *leadership* development[178] that was emphasized in chapter 1.[179] In other words, Guder rejects what James Hopewell referred to as a "clerical paradigm,"[180] which Hopewell hoped would disappear.

9.3.2 What Is the Ideal Concerning the Internal Culture of the School?

In the EMC, there is an undeniable preoccupation with the 'cultural dimension' that is involved in leader education, even if this interest is mostly not referred to under that label. The topic is much too complex to discuss in any depth here. Think of it: in the 1990's, it took four authors almost eight years to produce a 'thorough description' of the culture in just two theological schools.[181] For the purposes of this subsection, it suf-

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ethics that are stand-alone studies abstracted from the practice of theology for spirituality and mission." Ibid.

[176] Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling?!*, 33.

[177] Darrell L. Guder, "Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership After Christendom," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (2007), 255-56.

[178] In recent scholarly literature, *leadership* development refers, among other things, to 'the development of the leadership culture', and to 'connecting', i.e., the "capacity for leaders to work as translators across organizational discourses and agendas, to encourage dialogue within the organization, as well as between the organization and external stakeholder groups." Wilfred H. Drath et al., "Direction, Alignment, Commitment: Toward a More Integrative Ontology of Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 19 (2008), 649. In addition, leadership development is "used to advance a shared understanding and practice of the *mission* of the organization in enhanced and useful ways." Kim Turnbull James and James Collins, "Meeting the Challenge of Leading in the 21st Century: Beyond the 'Deficit Model' of Leadership Development," in Kim Turnbull James and James Collins, eds., *Leadership Learning: Knowledge into Action* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 21; cf. Patricia M.G. O'Connor and David V. Day, "Shifting the Emphasis of Leadership Development," in Jay A. Conger and Ronald E. Riggio, ed., *The Practice of Leadership: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 75.

[179] See chap. 1n66.

[180] According to Hopewell, "the clerical paradigm encourages solipsism in its participants, implying that ministry originates within the self and affects the world by the personal action of the individual....I advance the idea of a fundamentally revised curriculum, different both in form and focus, that shifts theological education from a clerical to a congregational paradigm. The primary object of the program would be the *development of the congregation* [emphasis added], not the student." James F. Hopewell, "A Congregational Paradigm for Theological Education," *Theological Education* 21, no. 1 (Autumn 1984), 62-63.

[181] Jackson W. Carroll et al., *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Exactly what seminaries are described, is not stated. The authors simply call the two schools Evangelical Theological Seminary and Mainline Theological Seminary.

fices to note the fact that theological institutes in the Emerging-Missional milieu appear to share a strong emphasis on (a) the conscious development of certain shared symbolic forms, and (b) a vision concerning the importance of forming an intentional community. Both topics will now be given more attention.

9.3.2.1 Shared Symbolic Forms

The Emerging-Missional milieu gives explicit attention to the 'message' that is being communicated by art and architecture. All across the spectrum, art and creativity are being actively promoted.[182] Also, within teaching and learning, expression is given to painting, sculpture, music, song, novel, drama, poetry, film, video, craft, and dance, just as Robert Banks envisioned over a decade ago.[183] Interestingly, in this respect, even participants in the EMC who have solid evangelical convictions have values and practices that are more in line with mainline theological schools than with conservative evangelical or fundamentalist ones.[184]

Concerning 'patterns of everyday interaction' – which is another aspect of shared symbolic forms and therefore of culture (see 9.2.2) – the following comment by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch is typical of the EMC. "What is the implicit 'message' of the seminary?," they ask. "If the shape of the academy looks like a room full of chairs all facing the front with a platform and a lectern, it oughtn't to surprise us that church buildings look the same. Likewise, the model of having one expert passing on information isn't too different from a church service....The medium *is* the message!"[185]

When referring to the implicit message of the seminary, Frost and Hirsch touch on the dimension of culture. They surmise that when students are primarily being lectured during their formative years of theological education, this entails the subtle endorsement of 'lecturing' as an important value, norm, and pattern of behavior outside the seminary – and in the church as well. Participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu, however, feel much more comfortable promoting what George Cladis (ideal typically) describes as a *learning* culture instead of a *schooling* culture – both in educational institutes and in Christian missional communities.[186]

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[182] As to architecture, it is difficult to make general statements on the basis of our sources. An interesting case though concerns Mars Hill Graduate School (renamed The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology), which moved from an office park in the suburbs – a location which obviously did not articulate EMC values – to an old warehouse with exposed wood beams and brickwork, located in the trendy Seattle neighborhood of Belltown.

[183] Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 203.

[184] Jackson Carroll et al. note that the dominant culturally endorsed message at 'Evangelical' seminary was the primacy of cognitive approaches and verbal expression, and the inadequacies of pictures. Decoration in the seminary was minimal; religious art and music – if present – was traditional. Carroll et al., *Being There*, 207.

[185] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: 2003), 153.

[186] Cf. George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 147-151.

In a schooling culture, experts give lectures to laymen on certain specialized topics. The listeners are not addressed as being knowledgeable themselves, nor are they expected to take on any other role than that of a listener. A learning culture is more personal, flexible, connected to real-life issues, invitational, engaging, rich in learning experiences, innovative, open to emergent and generative knowledge, playful, focused on inquiry, complex cognition, problem finding and – especially – dialogue.

Undeniably, this sounds somewhat rhetorical: in reality, most theological schools will probably have a mixture of these two cultures, and perhaps the reality in the Emerging-Missional milieu does not always live up to the ideal. It should not be overlooked though, that institutes in the Emerging-Missional milieu actively seek to implement this ideal of a learning culture in concrete ways.[187] Two examples illustrate this.

The first one concerns the Student Handbook of Mars Hill Graduate School (before its name was changed to The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology).[188] In the following quote, we have underlined the elements that are especially pertinent in regard to fostering a learning culture: "We believe that the best way for students to learn the art of leadership is not merely through the obtaining and executing of good information and technique but through embodiment – entering into the wild drama and dance of pursuing life with one another on behalf of others....We believe it is in the context of a community of 'WE' an education's life-transforming impact is maximized. We all play a role in creating and supporting 'a community of learners' at MHGS."

Our second example comes from the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM), which epitomizes a class-based *conversation approach* to learning.[189] "Facilitators are told not to lecture or answer all questions as the 'fount of all knowledge' but stimulate discussion and offer frameworks for learning....The best facilitators draw on creativity, small group leaders skills, practical experience, a broad subject knowledge and the ability to ask good questions."[190] The underlying reasons for the conversation approach is that "students taught with a conversational model are more likely to foster collaborative and mutual models of ministry. They are more likely to adopt healthy approaches to leadership and change that invite the input of their congregations. And they are more likely to come alongside seekers for spiritual conversations."[191]

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[187] See in this regard also subsection 9.3.7.1 on teaching practices.

[188] http://www.mhgs.edu/Files/Documents/Academic-Docs/09-10-Handbook-Final (accessed November 2, 2009). We could not locate this document while researching the new website: http://theseattleschool.edu/prospective-students/programs/mdiv/features-and-objectives (accessed November 7, 2011).

[189] Cf. Robert Banks who advocates a "shift from a presentational to a conversational model of teaching and learning." Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 179-180.

[190] See Darren Cronshaw, "Reenvisioning Theological Education, Mission and the Local Church," *Mission Studies* 28 (2011), 98.

[191] Ibid.

9.3.2.2 Intentional Community

A second aspect of the cultural dimension is as follows. Negatively speaking, a theological school should not reflect and promote the same values as secular universities that prize cognition above all else and that lack theological convictions and virtues.[192] Instead, missional leaders of the future should be schooled in the context of an intentional missional community, "shaped by ecclesial practices and disciplines of accountability."[193] Classrooms, Darrell Guder suggests, should become "covenant communities where spiritual formation and discipleship are practiced."[194]

The theological reasoning behind this proposal is clearly formulated by Leanne van Dyk of Western Theological Seminary: "If the missional church is called to embody the reign of God, then that sense of community and accountability is appropriate in the theological seminary as well."[195] The seminary tries to give this form in the morning routine of community worship, followed by a community coffee time during which there is room for prayer requests.

The proposed model that consistently comes up, according to Tony Jones, is the monastic model. "Theological education in a monastic setting is more like apprenticeship than like a traditional university education. A combination of work, reading, silence, prayer, and teaching makes up the life of a monastic in community." Jones is confident that "emergents will surely adapt these historical monastic practices to present situations."[196] The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology incorporates something of this, as chimes sound at three-hour intervals inviting students to pray – if possible, in the chapel, filled with orthodox iconography. Although probably not all EMC participants would opt for a monastic model, theological educators are challenged as to how students can be invited into a holistic community that provides a spiritually enriching and personally supportive culture.[197]

According to their websites and brochures, all the educational institutes in the Emerging-Missional milieu that we researched attempt to give form to this ideal: varying from creating spaces where students, staff and faculty can eat and relax together, to the cooperative development of courses. Western Theological Seminary provides a particularly unexpected form of community: the Friendship House. The website explains that

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[192] See Tony Jones' paragraph "Time to Rethink Seminary" in his *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emerging Frontier* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 209.

[193] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 217.

[194] Guder ed., *Missional Church*, 218. He refers in this connection to the well-known practices of John Wesley and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

[195] Leanne Van Dyk, "The Formation of Vocation – Institutional and Individual," in L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, eds., *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 236.

[196] Jones, *The New Christians*, 210.

[197] Inagrace T. Dietterich, "Discerning and Participating in God's Mission: The Relationship between Seminaries and Congregations," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), S97.

this concerns a unique living situation where adults with cognitive impairments share apartments with seminary students. "WTS students and Friends live life together, learning from and teaching each other. Including these new friends into the WTS community has impacted everyone in the seminary. Each student, staff member, faculty, and future ministry leader at WTS carries in their heart a heightened awareness, a sense of compassion for all persons with disabilities, and a basic ability to minister to them and their families."[198]

9.3.3 How Is 'Spiritual Formation' Perceived and Given Form?

EMC ideals of leader education place particular attention on the spiritual formation or discipleship training of students. It is acknowledged that "a leader can't become competent to accomplish the tasks of church ministry without the foundation of spirituality – for example, the practices of union with Christ, obedience and humility with a surrendered life led by the Spirit. Spirituality and virtue are first, then leadership."[199] Before the advent of universities, Susan Williams points out, churches and monasteries were a primary source of 'transformative' learning, which "incorporated lifestyle change, growth of character, identity development, and changed relationships with others and with God."[200] The university, on the other hand, is understood to be organized almost solely around the transfer of concepts and ideas. "And so the seminaries, or institutions built on a similar academic model," Alan Hirsch claims, "are largely unable to produce disciples and missional leaders."[201]

According to Robert Webber, "The problem lies with the perpetuation of an Enlightenment agenda in a postmodern world. Education...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 knowledge embodied and lived out individually and in community."[202] Theological institutes, however, have – to a large degree – separated theology from practice, it is argued in the EMC. An example that Webber mentiones in this regard, is that of a student who is assigned to write a paper about the question which portions of the pastoral letters are from Paul, while "the *message* of Paul is not adequately discussed or applied to ministry."[203]

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[198] http://www.westernsem.edu/about/history/ (accessed November 11, 2011).

[199] Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, 227. The quote is taken from Appendix 1, "Equipping for a Missional Spirituality in the Church and Academy," which as a whole is pertinent to this subsection.

[200] Susan Williams, "Fit for Purpose? Equipping the Church for the Twenty-First Century," in Frost et al., *The Call and the Commission*, 116.

[201] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 122.

[202] Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 171.

[203] Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, 169. Webber himself received his theological education some decades ago, and we think it likely that he did not, in his assessment, incorporate more recent approaches, such as that of Jacob Elias. This New Testament professor developed a pedagogical model for a course on the Co-

Alan Kreider notes, in a more general vein, that Christian leaders in pre-Christendom "assumed that people did not *think* [emphasis added] their way into a new life,"[204] which – Kreider suggests – has become common later on. In the first centuries, rather, Christians "*lived* [emphasis added] their way into a new kind of thinking."[205]

It is not surprising, in the light of the points made above, that the curricula of all the Missional Leadership programs that were surveyed for this chapter pay particular attention to spiritual formation. Northern Seminary, for instance, provides a "small group experience under faculty leadership with designated readings, prayer, guided discussion, peer reflection and support," in a course on Formation for Christian Ministry.[206] Western Seminary offers a Seminar in Spiritual Formation, during which "students explore formation in loving God with heart and soul and mind," using "variety of spiritual practices and through critical reflection."[207] Students of Cliff College (UK) who follow the unit Leading, Mentoring and Pioneering the Emerging Church are encouraged to develop "appropriate habits of holiness and spiritual discipline," as well as "engaging in healthy practices of accountability."[208]

However the courses are named or whatever the exact practices that are embarked upon, there is no denying that, in the Emerging-Missional milieu, leader education is coupled with a commitment to spiritual formation. And spiritual formation, in turn, is thought to be an important dimension of personal formation in a more encompassing sense. The Personal Formation program at the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM), for example, includes mentoring, a formation group, a retreat, and setting growth goals and written reflections on formational issues. Formation groups focus on three outcomes: spiritual formation, character formation and ministry formation. Led by a facilitator known as the Formation Director, the goal is to build "trust relationships in a confidential environment where students support and encourage each other on their individual faith and life journeys."[209] The PF syllabus includes a theology of formation, of relationships, of autobiography and self-awareness, of vocation and calling, of balance and boundaries, of emotions, of vulnerability, of spirituality and of sexuality.[210]

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rinthian Correspondence of Paul, in such as way that it parallels "the patterns of Paul's pastoral care from a distance as he relates to the Corinthian congregation by personal visits, delegations from and to the congregation, letters from and to the congregation, and unofficial grapevine types of communication." See Jacob W. Elias, "From a Distance: Pastoral Care and Theological Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 9, no. 1 (2006), 44.

[204] Alan Kreider, *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 23.

[205] Ibid.

[206] http://www.seminary.edu/mediafiles/2010-2011-northern-seminary-catalog.pdf (accessed December 5, 2011).

[207] http://www.westernsem.edu/resources/course-description/#3 (accessed November 4, 2011).

[208] Cliff College Postgraduate Prospectus 2011-12, http://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/page/emerging_church (accessed October 31, 2011).

[209] http://www.acom.edu.au/page/196/Personal+Formation (accessed November 5, 2011).

[210] Cronshaw, "Reenvisioning Theological Education, Mission and the Local Church," 105.

9.3.4 What Is Emphasized in Regard to the Institutional Dimension?

The previous chapter ended by showing that in EMC thinking, a local missional church would have to become a learning community (or learning organization): adaptive, creative, experimenting, flexible, networked, and open to its contextual surroundings – in short, "the antithesis of bureaucracy."[211] Furthermore, foundational to such an institute is a clear and widely shared vision and mission that is understood and supported by all. One would expect that the institutes which train leaders for such communities would strive to be such learning communities (or learning organizations) themselves.[212]

It is revealing to discover that, in regard to Luther Seminary, at least, this is indeed the case.[213] For one thing, the term *mission* has become "embedded in the consciousness and imagination of most of the faculty."[214] For another, one of their stated goals is outlined as follows: "To accomplish our mission, we must become a *responsive learning organization* [emphasis added] that actively and consistently anticipates the needs of the church and the world, assesses our efforts to meet those needs, monitors change in the church and society, and adapts and responds faithfully to what we learn about ourselves and the world in light of our mission."[215]

Educating for missional leadership has two other consequences for theological institutes. The first is that the "highly departmentalized structures of theological education"[216] are called into question. Again, Luther Seminary may serve as a representative example.[217] Historically, the academic organization at Luther Seminary was structured around departments. Prior to the early 1990s, each department (Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology, etc.) functioned separately from the others. A shared

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[211] Peter Jarvis, "The Church and the Learning Society," *British Journal of Theological Education* 14, no. 2 (2004), 146.

[212] Cf. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 213-214.

[213] It is not farfetched to assume that other seminaries that are in the process of adopting a 'missional model' of theological education strive to be a learning organization, just like Luther Seminary. As Clinton Lowin found out, at least ten American graduate theological education institutions are evaluating how a 'missional model' would alter the mission and ethos, pedagogical strategies, desired student outcomes, and programs of their institutions. As a result, they are making "paradigm shifts in how their institutions are cultivating leaders with the necessary competencies for congregational ministry." Clinton William Lowin, "Assessment of the Missional Model of Graduate Theological Education: A Case Study," (EdD thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 3.

[214] James L. Boyce and Richard W. Nysse, "Preparing Leaders for Mission: The Experience of Assessment at Luther Seminary," *Theological Education* 41, no. 2 (2006), 48. "Luther Seminary educates leaders for Christian communities," says the headline of its mission statement. This is followed by three specifications concerning these leaders: they are called and sent by the Holy Spirit; to witness to salvation through Jesus Christ; and to serve in God's world. http://www.luthersem.edu/about/our_mission.aspx?m=3382 (last accessed November 5, 2011).

[215] Cf. The Strategic Plan of Luther Seminary (2010-2011 Update), at Goal 5. http://www.luthersem.edu/strategic_plan/pdfs/StrategicPlanFINAL.pdf (last accessed August 1, 2011).

[216] Eddie Gibbs, *ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 104-5.

[217] Sheila Strobel Smith, "Serving the Promise of Our Mission: Leadership at Luther Seminary," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 4, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Fall 2005), 51-72.

curricular strategy did not exist; the contributions of each department were neither integrated nor coordinated with one another. In particular, pastoral theology was a separate department. Contextual education and the internship year tended to be independent of the rest of the organization. The focus was on preparing pastors as preachers and caregivers, with little attention being given to the importance of context, community, and mission. After some years (!) of joint reflection, however, the focus of theological education changed to "the formation of leaders and their participation in leading Christian communities to participate in God's mission in the world."[218] This change in ultimate commitment entailed a reorganization, in which a new Leadership Division was created that was designed to foster integration across different departments and disciplines. Integration is sought, in addition, through interdisciplinary teaching teams which develop and share responsibility for course content. It is clear that preparing leaders for mission had repercussions for organizational structures.

The second consequence of educating for missional leadership is that the question is asked, from time to time, how God is involved in the organizational life of the theological institution – in its traditions, structures, the ethos of faculty meetings, and in decision-making processes.[219] In regard to this last topic, just like local missional churches, seminaries strive after so-called *missional* decision-making practices. These practices include "collective spiritual disciplines and worship, deeper engagement with constituents, and shared or open discussion on organizational purpose, identity and vision – practices centered in discerning greater awareness of and engagement with God's movement in the world."[220] In sum, it is acknowledged that educating students for collaborative ministry, which is part of their missional leadership formation, has consequences for the decision-making practices of the school.

9.3.5 What Is the Preferred Relationship between Theological Institutions and the Local Context, Specifically the Local Church?

The word 'context' in this subsection particularly signifies the relationship between theological institutions and local church, although it sometimes more broadly refers to a local or regional 'mission environment'.

Within the Emerging-Missional milieu, relationships between theological schools and local missional churches are often perceived to be underdeveloped.[221] Seminaries are

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[218] Smith, "Serving the Promise of Our Mission," 56.

[219] Cf. Kyle J.A. Small, "Missional Imaginations for Theological Education: Mixed Model, Exploratory, Action-Oriented Research Mapping the Theological Identity and Organizational Readiness for Change of Five Theological School Systems in the United States Originating after 1945," (PhD diss., Luther Seminary, 2009), 4.

[220] Small, "Missional Imaginations for Theological Education," 51.

[221] Western Theological Seminary recognized this and undertook initiatives for increased collaboration with area churches. This has "heightened the visibility of the seminary in the community and has resulted in an increase of community appreciation and support for the seminary." Van Dyk, "The Formation of Vocation – Institutional and Individual," 236.

thought to value the 'gown' over the 'town', and are said to retreat into an ivory tower, disconnected and aloof from what is going on in the streets beneath them.[222] The "development of a truly missional concept of leadership training," however, requires closer contact between theological colleges and churches.[223]

Among the activities that can facilitate this closer contact are these three:[224] (1) encouraging new arrangements with scholars and practitioners working on multidisciplinary projects and serving particular constituencies; (2) making the seminary resources much more widely available through extension sites and Web-based courses; (3) establishing a liaison group between the seminary and a consortium of churches to evaluate current programs and identify future needs.

A specimen of this last category is Luther Seminary's major congregational assessment project, titled Focus on Leadership. The goal was to hear and learn from congregations about the kind of graduates and leaders they need and seek. Interestingly, "Nearly all of the congregations reported significant changes in their communities that called for corresponding changes in leadership and programming in order to fulfil missional goals that varied with differing contexts of ministry."[225]

The reasoning behind suggestions and initiatives to strengthen the relation between congregations and seminaries has two major supports.

The first is theological: the *missio Dei* and, consequently, the people of God in their mission, should be the center and perspective of theological studies that aim to prepare leaders for the church. In other words, the church by way of its mission (and not the seminary as an institution) provides both the functional and material integrative center.[226] "If mission is the mother of theology, then our theological development best takes place in a *mission environment* [emphasis added], in churches and agencies that are involved in the cultures encountered in the communities they serve."[227] Ideally, then, there should be a close relationship between the theological training school and an actual missional community. Together they should train these leaders-in-formation.

The second support is pedagogical or didactic. This topic is discussed more fully below (9.3.7). Here, it may be briefly articulated thus: "Leaders will grow in a more holistic manner, intellectually and experientially, when their learning context challenges performance and creates risk."[228] Missional theological education that is worthy of the name is

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[222] Instead, Eddie Gibbs suggests, "The street must become as much the classroom as the theological college or Bible college is." Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (IVP, 2005), 170.

[223] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 182. Gibbs also calls attention to the relationship between seminaries and mission agencies.

[224] Ibid., 119.

[225] Boyce and Nysse, "Preparing Leaders for Mission...," 44.

[226] Cf. Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation*, 239.

[227] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 185.

[228] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 186.

therefore always partly or even wholly field based, involving "some measure of doing what is being studied."[229]

Theological and pedagogical or didactic considerations such as those mentioned above are the reasons why students involved in Missional Leadership programs are required to work part-time within a ministry setting, while critically reflecting on it. This reflection is often quite extensive. In Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, it involves "a thorough exegesis of the context in which the leader is located – culturally, linguistically, socially, economically, politically, theologically, historically and globally."[230] Training in cultural and contextual exegesis, including demographic analysis, is also typical of other programs aimed at educating missional leaders.[231]

9.3.6 What Are Essential Elements of the Curriculum?

This section gives a summary of the main emphases concerning the curricular elements of theological education that are considered to be especially important in the Emerging-Missional milieu. Generally speaking, the consensus is that the *Missio Dei*, which is connected to the kingdom (reign) of God as announced by Jesus Christ, should be at the center.[232] This entails that the core of the curriculum should focus on missiology (or, as was recently suggested: 'missional theology'[233]) as an integrative discipline that moves across the boundaries of theological departments and 'get's into everyone's business'.[234]

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[229] Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 142.

[230] http://www.tyndale.ca/sites/default/files/DMin-Booklet-Feb-16-10.pdf (accessed November 4, 2011).

[231] A module at Springdale College (UK) for example is called Engaging the Local. The course description reads, "Reading a community. The local context is vitally important. We examine how to develop skills to read and understand our local context." http://springdalecollege.org.uk/courses/ma-in-missional-leadership/ (accessed November 4, 2011).

[232] Cf. Van Gelder, "Theological Education and Missional Leadership Formation," 38. See also Darrell Guder, "Missio Dei: Integrating Theological Formation for Apostolic Vocation," *Missiology: An International Review* 37, no. 1 (January 2009), 1-13.

[233] Missional theology can be defined as "a kind of practical theology that explores in every aspect of the theological curriculum and praxis of the church the implications of the missionary nature of God with the purpose of forming congregations to better articulate the gospel and to live faithfully their vocation to participate in the ongoing redemptive mission of God in a particular context." Benjamin T. Conner, *Practicing Witness: A Missional Witness of Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 11. Conner acknowledges that this definition is provisional, as missional theology is still an "emerging discipline and a continuing conversation." Ibid., 40. Another definition is offered by Fritz Peyer, President of IGW International in Zürich, Switzerland: the effort to let all our speaking and learning about God to be determined in the first place by the foundational missionary nature and acting of God in the world and in history. Fritz Peyer, "12 Thesen zur missionalen Theologie," in Rainer Ebeling and Alfred Meier, eds., *Missionale Theologie.* GBFE Jahrbuch 2009 (Marburg an der Lahn: Francke, 2009), 131.

[234] Darrell L. Guder, "Growing Evangelizing Churches," in Patricia Lloyd-Sidle and Bonnie Sue Lewis, eds., *Teaching Mission in a Global Context* (Geneva, 2001), 145, as quoted in Claire Annelise Smith, "Foundations for Missional Christian Education," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 2005), 16. Cf. Robert Banks, missiology should be allowed "to become the integrating center and operational framework for all theological study." Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 236. (Interestingly, this plea echoes that of the Dutch theologian J.C. Hoekendijk in the 1970's.)

Missiology entails "looking at all theological questions from the point of view of theology of mission which takes what God is doing in different cultures seriously."[235]

At the same time, the whole curriculum needs to be viewed from the perspective of leadership, "including theology, Scripture, and other areas of learning."[236] This is because missional leadership is multidimensional. For one thing, it entails dealing with change.[237] For another, to function as a missional leader requires "being a cultural anthropologist, a contextual theologian, a student of organizational leadership theory, and one who empowers others....The leadership skills are about cultivating people, forming mission environments and congregations, and engaging contexts. The personal attributes are personal maturity, conflict management, personal courage, and developing trust."[238]

Designing courses that take the above statements into account would likely result in modules that focus on missiology, culture or context, and leadership, in addition to seminars on spirituality and spiritual formation (see 9.3.3). Indeed, these very topics were central in the course catalogues of all the institutes that were read for this chapter, albeit in a variegated way.[239] Three examples illustrate this unity-in-diversity.[240]

Resurgence Training Center (Seattle) offers the following courses.[241] The course Missional Christology focuses on the "relevance to the mission of the church in expressing and extending the mission of Christ," while Missional Ecclesiology explores the identity, ministries, growth, government, and ordinances of the missional church. The module

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[235] David Wilkinson, "Turning the Corner: Educating the Theological Educators, Shaping Church Traditions and Engaging a New Generation," in Rob Frost et al., *The Call and the Commission*, 205.

[236] Lemler, "Identity and Effectiveness in the Twenty-First Century," 101.

[237] "Instructors do a disservice to students if they do not address, simulate, and invite, at first in experimental space and then increasingly through direct experience, complex, chaordic scenarios combined with theoretical and theological study of change." Lisa R. Withrow, "Change: Exploring Its Implications for Religious Leadership – A Pedagogical Inquiry," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 51.

[238] Terri Martinson Elton, "Characteristics of Congregations that Empower Missional Leadership: A Lutheran Voice," in Van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation*, 206.

[239] The variety is enhanced by the fact that modules often are multi-, inter- or cross-disciplinary, and have a cross-cultural and even international scope. Western Theological Seminary, for example, has been strongly influenced by missional theology. The result is that "courses that integrate, that are interdisciplinary, that cross traditional boundaries of academic field and specialty are the norm rather than the exception." Van Dyk, "The Formation of Vocation...," 237.

[240] Our overview is limited to courses focused on themes that are typical for missional leadership programs. It is relevant to note, however, that these central themes may also receive attention in, e.g., a Biblical studies course. Western Seminary, for example, offers a seminar called New Testament and Church Leadership. It examines the historical, social, theological, and practical dimensions of leadership in the New Testament, with special attention for church leadership today. Another module is called Scripture in Congregational Life. "The Bible is the foundational text for Christian identity and congregational ministry," it is explained, "but that does not mean it is always used, or used thoughtfully or consistently in our leadership initiatives." The goal of this module is to "reflect on how scripture can shape congregational vision, be used to form cultural critique, provide the vocabulary for worship and liturgy, nurture expressions of visible social grace, and outline the spiritual disciplines that mold disciples of Jesus." www.westernsem.edu/resources/course-description/#3 (accessed November 4, 2011).

[241] http://theresurgence.com/files/ReTrain_Catalog_2009-10.pdf (accessed November 3, 2009; a more recent catalog could not be found in November 2011).

Missional Missiology helps students to better understand cultural shifts, the missional and sending nature of the church, effective communication in various cultural contexts, and emerging ministry patterns in North America. In addition, courses on leadership are offered, in particular, three courses on The Leader as Prophet; The Leader as Priest; and The Leader as King. The course Spiritual Formation provides the student with basic skills associated with spiritual formation, continuous worship, redemptive community, and missional living to help the student begin the lifelong journey towards becoming an effective disciple-maker of God's people.

George Fox University (Oregon) lets its Doctor of Ministry students focus their learning on the following themes:[242] the key technological, philosophical, cultural, political, sociological, and religious developments that are occurring worldwide; the key challenges and opportunities of our increasingly global context for effective Christian mission; the ethics, spirituality, and practice of leadership necessary for the new world that is emerging; how to develop Christian leaders capable of engaging in theological reflection about the complexities of the reconfigured global context and bringing their insights to bear upon their own ministry contexts and practices. The most important modules on these themes carry titles such as Vision and Voice in Postmodern Culture; Leading the Church in a Postmodern World; An Analysis of the Postmodern, Multicultural Context and Its Impact on Christian Identity and Ministry; Strategic Visioning in the Church; Contours of Leadership in Emerging Culture; Leadership in Biblical and Theological Perspective; The Person and Work of the Leader; Dynamics of Leadership and Congregations Using a Systems Perspective; Leadership in Cross-cultural Perspective; Spirituality and Leadership; Leadership and Personal Spiritual Formation; and Leadership and Community Spiritual Formation.[243]

The stream called Mission (Emerging Church) of Cliff College (UK) emphasizes the following themes:[244] Culture, Gospel and Church; Cultural Exegesis; Church Planting; Emerging Church Conversations; Essence of the Church; Narratives of Emergence;[245] Practices of Discernment;[246] and Spiritual Leadership. A third and extensive unit called Emerging Church Pioneering Placement seeks to systematically engage in comprehensive theological reflection on the theory and practice of the emerging church in a particular context; critically explore the principles of the emerging church in different mis-

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[242] http://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/dmin/gml/index.html#program_overview (last accessed November 4, 2011).

[243] http://www.georgefox.edu/catalog/graduate/sem/descriptions/index.html (accessed November 4, 2011).

[244] Cliff College Postgraduate Prospectus 2011-12, http://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/page/emerging_church (accessed October 31, 2011).

[245] One subtopic of this theme is "critical analysis of engagement with the narratives of our consumerist and techno-scientific culture in the 'emergent conversation' – systems thinking, complexity theory, evolutionary biology, neuroscience, nanotechnology, computer networking, etc."

[246] Among other things, this concerns discerning the 'signs of the times' through continuous listening, and "cultivating communities of discernment, discourse and deliberation through mission accompaniment, mentoring and coaching."

sion and ecclesial contexts; and develop a richer understanding of the skills associated with reflective practice in an emerging church context. This unit, then, is focused on an integration of theory and practice – on learning *in* ministry, instead of learning *about* or *for* ministry.[247] This brings us to the aspect of educational philosophy and teaching practices.

9.3.7 What Educational Philosophy and Teaching Practices Are Adopted?

The "missional model of theological education," according to Robert Banks, has a "view of learning that revolves around active involvement in ministry through both practical reflection and reflective practice. While it also stresses the importance of learning the tradition – biblical, historical, theological – this should take place in a formational and life-oriented way."[248] This dense statement communicates the thrust of the educational philosophy that is typical of programs on Missional Leadership,[249] and contains implications for the adopted teaching practices as well.

The educational philosophy of Forge (Australia), for instance, is fully in line with Banks' vision. Its designers believe that their approach is of great significance to the development of effective missional leaders and even for training leaders in general.[250] We summarize and, where appropriate, paraphrase the most pertinent points below, as this helps to get a sharper picture of the didactic and pedagogic approach that is characteristic of the Emerging-Missional milieu as a whole.

1. *Actional context is primary*: learning for mission and leadership should take place in the organic context of the student's or intern's workplace or mission setting. Different leadership styles will emerge from different mission contexts.
2. *Context is everything*: learning environments should be 'edgy', i.e. challenging; learning support is given on a need-to-know basis.
3. *Action-reflection learning model*: action is the starting point for reflection and learning.[251]

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[247] This emphasis is typical for all programs that educate for missional leadership. We give just one more example, this time from IGW International in Switzerland. Their Master program is not primarily meant for the transmission of theory, but students and teachers work individually and together on *Fragestellungen aus der Praxis*. Head, heart, hand, and feet should be moved by the learning process. See the "Factsheet Masterprogramm," http://www.igw.edu/informationen-zum-downloaden/ (accessed December 20, 2011).

[248] Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 157.

[249] It is also recognizable in the English *Mission-Shaped Church Report* of 2004 that is quoted in the Prospectus of the CMS Pioneer Mission Leadership Training Course: "A pattern of training, mentoring and apprenticeship 'on the job' should be developed, rather than outside or apart from the mission situation where the leader (or potential leader) is exercising their ministry." http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/sites/default/files/ cms-pioneer-prospectus.pdf (accessed November 7, 2011).

[250] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 221. What follows is derived from this same page and the next one (222).

[251] Cf. Eddie Gibbs, "Theory simply does not provide students with the skills for problem-solving; it must be front-ended with problem-settings that provide the basis for theoretical exploration." Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 177.

4. *Relational empowerment*: relationships are the primary means of transferring leadership and influence and are indispensable in the training of missional leaders. Therefore, weekly and monthly coaching sessions form the backbone of the Forge internship process.
5. *Practitioner-teachers*: teachers cannot teach what they do not personally know and cannot lead where they themselves will not go. Direct and current experience at a cutting edge mission, church plant, or ministry project is therefore a requirement for teachers.
6. *Inspiration, then information*: real motivation arises when people connect with their basic passion and calling.
7. *Life-oriented experiential learning*: people learn best when what they are learning matches their life experience.
8. *Imagination as a resource for leadership*: imagination is the basis of vision and innovation and creativity.[252] Interns and students are encouraged to think in pioneering and innovative ways of doing and being church.
9. *Leader development, not just skill development*: leadership is the key leverage area for change and missions. Therefore, the primary focus is on developing and nurturing distinctive *leadership* qualities and characteristics and then providing skills.

To sum up, a theory of learning is endorsed here which states that people learn best when they are (a) involved in *action*, ideally in a challenging context, and when they (b) receive appropriate personal support. The emphasis is on inductive learning – i.e., learning as an "act of shared discovery lived out in a close network of relationships"[253] – rather than on deductive learning. We also detect an emphasis on collaborative learning or team learning,[254] a focus on personal (spiritual) formation, and an orientation on people rather than content. In many respects, the educational philosophy of the Emerging-Missional milieu thus seems to be in line with the experiential and social constructivist learning theories. However, we did not get the impression that there is much reflection on these theories as such, or on the fact that they have their roots, at the least for a substantial part, in insights from evolutionary biology, and in assumptions that are strongly related to Darwinistic and pragmatic streams of thought.

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[252] The emphasis on creativity can be seen as a response to Leonard Sweet's lament "Why did universities offer degrees in creativity training before seminaries? Why must the church flock to the St. Peters (the departed sage Peter Drucker, Peter Senge, Laurence Peters, Tom Peters) of Wall Street and Wal-Mart?" Leonard Sweet, *AquaChurch 2.0: Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture* (Colorado Springs, CO: David Cook, 2008), 282.

[253] Earl Creps as quoted in Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl, *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008), 225.

[254] Cf. the 'Learning Community' approach that Northern Seminary gives academic credits for. http://www.weare3dm.com/uploads/HowLearningCommunitiesWork.pdf, and http://thefutureoftheologicaleducation.com/learning-communities (both accessed December 19, 2011).

Furthermore, the concept of 'competency' was not mentioned either. Competency-based curricula and courses are not widely popular in the EMC. Eddie Gibbs explains why: "it is somewhat artificial to list competencies for seminary courses without practical ministry. Competencies are apparent only after students have had opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency in ministry."[255]

9.3.7.1 Teaching Practices

Perhaps the favorite teaching practice that best matches with an EMC proof educational philosophy, is that of on-the-job coaching (or mentoring, as it is also called), as "a proven model of postmodern equipping of emerging leadership."[256] Bob Hopkins and Freddy Hedley report from their UK context that "what are variously called coaches and mentors are extremely beneficial for those developing fresh expressions of church."[257] Americans Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl describe 'transformissional coaching' as a new paradigm that enables the *transformation* of persons, which in turn leads to *missional* ministry (this explains the word transformissional).[258] Transformissional coaching is meant for a "new kind of leader" who is motivated to encourage spiritual formation, to create authentic community, and to engage culture redemptively, in an emerging-missional church setting.[259] Every Missional Leadership program that we researched for this chapter has an element of coaching or mentoring to it.

Other teaching practices that have been adopted and can be widely found in such programs are neatly summed up by Tyndale Seminary.[260] These include leadership assessments; project advisors and consultants; peer learning groups;[261] daily community worship in residencies; class sessions that are informative, experiential, interactive and reflective; web-supported interactive learning; personal growth support through executive coaching, spiritual direction, ministry mentoring, and counseling; relevant reading and assignments; the integration of conceptual learning, leadership behaviors, and project completion.

To conclude this subsection, the 'missional model' promotes (1) learning characterized by critical reflection and reflective judgment as found in modern andragogical theories;

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[255] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 122.

[256] Brian P. Simon, "A Responsive Coaching Model for Transformational Training of Emerging Postmodern Church Leadership," (DMin thesis, Regent University, 2006), 16.

[257] Bob Hopkins & Freddy Hedley, *Coaching for Missional Leadership: Growing and Supporting Pioneers in Church Planting and Fresh Expressions* (Sheffield, UK: ACPI Books, 2008), 7.

[258] Ogne and Roehl, *TransforMissional Coaching*, 7.

[259] Ibid., 16-17.

[260] http://www.tyndale.ca/sites/default/files/DMin-Booklet-Feb-16-10.pdf (accessed November 7, 2011).

[261] In the Episcopal Evangelism Network (EEN) in the United States these are called formation groups. "In these circles, seminarians learn skills like community organizing, spiritual narrative, appreciative inquiry, and contextual ministry discernment which rarely show up on a seminary curriculum but is crucial for creating...new missional communities." See the chapter "Training for Transformation: Seminarians Reimagine the Church," in Becky Garrison, *Ancient-Future Disciples: Meeting Jesus in Mission-Shaped Ministries* (New York: Seabury Books, 2011), 116.

(2) an emphasis on the integration of action and reflection; and (3) an embedded relationship between theory and practice.[262]

9.3.8 What Are Important Requirements of the Faculty?

The kind of leader education that the EMC stands for, obviously has implications for the faculty that is being appointed. Indeed, it is acknowledged that if change in theological education is to take place, "the best place to start is with the most delicate and difficult: *the self-images and self-identities of seminary professors*."[263] The most important requirements for faculty seem to be the following three.[264]

First and foremost, they need to be practitioners and missional leaders themselves.[265] "We believe that teachers cannot teach what they do not personally *know* and cannot lead where they themselves will not go," Frost and Hirsch state. "In light of this we expose our interns only to leaders and practitioners who have a *direct and current* experience at a cutting edge mission, church plant, or ministry project."[266] Eddie Gibbs strikes a comparable note: "Professors may be leaders in the world of ideas, but they do not have experience in leading a high-risk enterprise, which requires attracting talented and committed people and raising the necessary capital for the enterprise to function." For Gibbs, the implication is clear: "Just as it takes a disciple to make a disciple, so it takes a leader to mentor leaders."[267]

Second, teachers need to be models of Christian spirituality and character, and they need to connect their faith to research and teaching. "Only if teachers are in vital touch with the presence of God in their area of expertise, whatever that happens to be, will they be able to communicate this in a life-giving, life-changing, way."[268] Moreover, teachers should be able to situate their own field within the overall picture of God's purposes and dealings, and find ways of demonstrating its practical outcome and how it contributes to God's ongoing purposes. In short, spirituality, passion, vision, and action are all involved.[269]

Third, teachers need to be team players and be able to teach in teams, because (a) team building "constitutes a whole new area that urgently needs to be addressed in trai-

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[262] Lowin, "Assessment of the Missional Model of Graduate Theological Education," 79.
[263] Cornel West, as quoted in Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 169.
[264] Didactic requirements, such as cross-cultural sensitivity and the "ability to apply appropriate learning evaluation criteria" (Gibbs) will be left out from our succinct overview. Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 183.
[265] Cf. the conclusion of Clinton Lowin, who conducted empirical research in ten seminaries that adopted a missional focus in their theological education: "The faculty who serve...have global exposure as missionaries, pastors, and leadership in the academy....This exposure has given the faculty theoretical and practical perspectives of the mission of God. This enables the content of the curriculum to have a praxis foundation." Lowin, "Assessment of the Missional Model of Graduate Theological Education," 291.
[266] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 221.
[267] Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 115.
[268] Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 175.
[269] Cf. ibid.

ning centers for the church leaders of today and tomorrow"[270] and (b) in the seminary there needs to be increased interaction and integration to work on projects that require interdisciplinary expertise and collaboration with local churches.[271]

In institutes of theological education both within and outside the Emerging-Missional milieu, it is likely that there are faculty who are, in fact, not personally active in missional leadership (*contra* the first requirement mentioned above). Their contribution to (missional) leadership formation may be of a more indirect character. The following suggestions by Robert Banks might be relevant in such cases.

First, faculty in classical theological disciplines could begin to see themselves and meet together in ways that have more in common with associations of practical theologians or of practicing professionals. "Following this through would open up discussion of teaching as well as research, as well as on how theological disciplines could advance personal and ministry development. Within this, faculty could design collaborative ministry projects with students, and explore new issues for theological research."[272]

Second, faculty are encouraged to develop a *theological understanding* of professional associations and publications. "How much do theologians think about the purpose, dynamics, and structures of professional organizations and meetings, apart from the content of their own presentations?"[273] What would happen, Banks asks, if participants in a theological conference committed themselves to a variety of collaborative ministry efforts during part of their stay in the city where they were meeting?

Third, faculty *research and publications* could further extend this outward focus. Too much research and writing focuses on inside concerns, and too much of this can be purely technical, epistemological, and methodological, Banks submits. "In other words, much of what passes for theological scholarship is merely a linguistic, historical, or philosophical exercise," lacking a vital prophetic edge.[274]

9.3.9 What Views Are There on the Recruitment of Students?

As we have amply noticed, the EMC challenges churches to ask themselves what kind of leadership they need and want for the future – "the caretaker variety or the innovative but perhaps rebellious and boat rocking variety."[275] Within the EMC there is a clear predilection for the latter. In the formulation of Darrell Guder, "our churches and seminaries tend to attract and educate individuals whose leadership skills enable them to do

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[270] Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 111.

[271] Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 101. Cf. David Wilkinson, "The concept of the staff of a theological college being a constant group of people who have been teaching in that place for over a decade can no longer work....A smaller core team of tutors will co-ordinate networks of specialists from the Church and the academic world who will educate, mentor and pastor those who are being formed for ministry." Wilkinson, "Turning the Corner," 198.

[272] Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 216.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Ibid., 217.

[275] The expression is from Douglass Lewis, "The Role of Seminaries in Recruitment," 323.

little more than manage the current institutions."[276] The missional church of the twenty-first century, however, needs less pastor and preacher-type leaders and more apostolic, connective, missional, and inspirational kinds of leadership.[277] Local churches should therefore play a far more active part than is customary in recruiting and mentoring individuals they deem suitable for further training.[278]

One reason for active recruitment is that "the majority of people entering colleges have already been socialized in churches that are in maintenance mode," according to Eddie Gibbs. "They are not the kind of creative thinkers and risk-takers that the new missional challenges require."[279]

Another reason given is that both traditional churches and seminaries are often demotivating to persons with exceptional leadership skills. For one thing, "Their selection and acculturation process weeds out people with innate leadership ability. Successive levels of higher education may domesticate leadership, rewarding those who think and write well but are not risk takers and entrepreneurial innovators."[280] For another, people under thirty years of age are often not taken seriously, which is extremely undermining for young people when they are in the process of discovering what calling God has for their lives.[281] For some the problem is that they are put off by the sheer length of the time they need to study before they are deemed suitable for a leadership position.[282]

According to participants in the EMC, within the local congregation, young people with leadership skills, passion and vision should be identified and given a task, accompanied with coaching.[283] This is particularly the task of leaders. "They have to identify people with the vision and skills necessary to develop new ministries and train them to be replacements," according to Eddie Gibbs. "Leaders must be prepared to give of themselves, pouring out their life experiences into the lives of tomorrow's leaders."[284] After being found suitable – at the very least, the young potentials "need to have been transformed and redirected by the gospel message,"[285] and a "missional orientation"[286]

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[276] Guder ed., *Missional Church*, 219.
[277] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 20, 37, 43, 109, 139.
[278] Cf. Jimmy Long, "We have to be more proactive in our recruitment of leaders...invitations are critical." Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships Between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 174.
[279] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 179.
[280] Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 117.
[281] Jackson, *The Road to Growth*, 113.
[282] Cf. Rob Frost, "The kind of impatience with the institutional process is very evident among many of the young people I work with today. There is a deep frustration with the Church, and a real suspicion about its institutional culture." Frost, "The Great Disconnection," 8.
[283] Cf. Carl George, "Whether you direct choirs, teach Sunday school, lead a care group, do counselling, prepare the church bulletin, or organize trustee work projects, if you cultivate an apprentice, you will help instil a new culture in your church and open a door by which God can maximize the lay leadership potential among the gifted people he has already brought your way." Carl F. George, *The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1995), 43.
[284] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 169.
[285] Ibid., 32.

may also be important – then they are to be encouraged to embark on a more formal theological training.[287]

Recruitment and *selection*, then, go hand in hand. The job of the church is not only to recruit those who are suitable but also to screen out those who are unsuitable. "The active recruitment of young adults who are then prepared through the screening process has to be the name of the game."[288] One additional important criterion for selection, according to Eddie Gibbs, is engagement with society. "Those who seek ministry in the church as an escape from the pressures of secular employment need to be weeded out. At the same time, those offering themselves for ministry without any significant life experience outside of the church need to immerse themselves in the secular world – just as a missionary candidate would be encouraged to have pre-field cross-cultural experience."[289]

Anglican Bob Jackson argues in favor of 'a culture of recruitment'. He says that the culture and perhaps the theology dictates that the church should sit back and wait for people with an inner sense of call to come to it. The church today, however, "needs every parish priest and every church member to be a potential active recruiter of young ordinands."[290] Jackson believes that seminary candidates should show potential as leaders of mission and a commitment to enable others in mission and evangelism. Referring to the perhaps simplistic, but still suggestive table *Future shapes of ministry* below, he writes, "Sometimes our selection procedures and our culture have screened out the 'right hand' types of people in favour of those on the left. Now we actively need to recruit them:"[291]

Pastor to the flock	**Leader in mission**
Church curator	Church planter
Chaplain	Missionary
Settler	Pioneer
Conformist	Entrepreneur
Being safe	Taking risks
Maintaining existing forms	Pioneering fresh expressions
Doing the ministry	Ensuring it is done
Father Cork	Enabler of others' ministries
Multi-competent dog collar	Specialist team
Single-church leader	Oversight of churches

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[286] Cf. Guder ed., *Missional Church*, 213.
[287] Cf. Carl George, "It is fictitious to think that seminaries are able to create leaders. Seminaries can polish leaders; they can be identified, improved on, and perfected. The most practical approach is not to let anybody in who doesn't know already how to lead." George, *The Coming Church Revolution*, 299-300.
[288] Jackson, *The Road to Growth*, 117.
[289] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 38.
[290] Jackson, *The Road to Growth*, 117.
[291] Ibid., 121.

High-cost operation	Volunteer-led
Lone Ranger	Collaboration in the team
Middle-aged	The young
Manager of decline	Inspirer for growth
Building-centred	Relationship-centred
Rock of stability	Manager of change
Authority figure	Authenticity advert
Establishment figure	Counter-cultural leader
Independent operators	Working together

9.4 Summary and Concluding Reflections

This chapter began with an overarching question: *What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu?* A framework of nine questions was developed in order to give a coherent structure to our research on this topic (9.2). The conceptualization of missional leadership proved to be a fruitful heuristic tool in constructing the main parts of this framework (i.e. the first five questions). It became clear that different dimensions of leader education – the institution's purpose and internal culture, the aspect of spiritual formation, the organizational structures, the contact with local churches, the curriculum, the teaching methods and educational philosophy, the selection of faculty, and the recruitment of students – are highly interrelated.

In the process of describing the answers to our nine questions in section 9.3, we became acquainted with a so-called 'missional' model of theological education. As Robert Banks explains, this model "places the main emphasis on theological *mission*, on hands-on *partnership* in ministry based on interpreting the tradition and reflecting on practice with a strong spiritual and communal dimension."[292] The present section now proceeds to summarize the discussion of the previous one, point by point. Note that the descriptions below do not necessarily describe reality as it *is* (with the exceptions of points 6 and 7, that is), but as it *should* be, according to authoritative voices in the Emerging-Missional milieu. On the basis of our research, however, we expect that the reality within institutions that provide missional leadership programs closely corresponds, in many instances, with the ideals that are delineated below.

1. *Vision/purpose.* Theological education has a clear purpose, which is shared by the faculty, staff and students, and which determines the mission, culture, structures, and curriculum of the school. Generally in the West, and in Europe in particular, the proposed purpose for the twenty-first century is to equip leaders for a missional church in a postmodern, post-Christendom context.

[292] Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 144.

2. *Cultural formation.* The culture of a theological school is that of a learning culture, with all that this entails, including fitting physical (i.e., architectural) arrangements. In addition, students are part of an intentional holistic community that is personally supportive and spiritually enriching.

3. *Spiritual formation.* The spiritual formation of students has been made a priority of the school, and is integrated in the curriculum as a whole. It is given form in and outside the seminary community, by both students and faculty.

4. *Institutional dimension.* The curriculum, educational philosophy, and teaching practices have consequences for the structures of a seminary. A theological school is not only an organization for learning, but also a learning organization. Furthermore, the processses of organizing and decision making are characterized by concrete attempts to apply missional theology, such as sufficient time to listen to each other and to God.

5. *Local context.* Theological seminaries which offer Missional Leadership programs work closely with local churches, particularly with transforming, missional congregations. The *missio Dei* and, consequently, the people of God in their mission form the center of and provide perspective for theological studies. Leaders-in-formation are trained by the theological school and an actual missional community *in tandem*.

6. *Curriculum.* In the curricula of all the institutes that we researched, four subjects receive serious attention (in addition to modules on Biblical Studies, and other subjects): missiology or missional theology; culture or context; leadership; and spirituality or spiritual formation. Furthermore, modules are often multi-, inter- or cross-disciplinary, and have a cross-cultural or international scope. Also, theory is in service to praxis, as is characteristic of the curriculum.[293]

7. *Teaching methods and educational philosophy*. Forms of experiential and inductive learning are emphasized, rather than 'imparting information' in a secluded environment. The reason behind this is that people learn best when they are actively involved in a challenging context and then receive the appropriate personal support (coaching or mentoring) and the necessary knowledge or theory. Instead of individualistic learning and competitive performance, collaborative learning is central. While these and other aspects of educational philosophy receive attention, theological reflections about the underlying experiential and constructivist learning theories and the naturalistic assumptions that seem to underlie them are not prioritized.[294]

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[293] On this point there is a direct parallel to a shared emphasis among practical theologians. Kathleen A. Cahalan, "Three Approaches to Practical Theology, Theological Education, and the Church's Ministry," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9 (2005), 86.

[294] We submit that in a Christian educational philosophy that underlies the programs of a theological institute, it should be explicated not only *how* students get to know and learn things, but also *what* students may (truthfully) know, and what is the most important for them to know. Important questions are, furthermore, the following: How is God involved in processes of learning and theological education? What is the nature of the persons that learn? (E.g. what is the human potential for learning; do they always want to learn, provided the appropriate learning environment?) What notions of truth are central? This last ques-

8. *Teachers*. The appointed teachers are themselves missional leaders and able team players; they model Christian character, and integrate their personal faith and scholarship.

9. *Students*. It is acknowledged that good candidates for leadership are hard to find. Local congregations take special responsibility for recruiting potential students. Young people with leadership skills, passion and vision are identified and given a task, accompanied with coaching or mentoring. If deemed suitable, they are subsequently challenged to continue their studies in a seminary or in some other way.

We will return to some of the main findings of this chapter after we have discussed views on and practices of leader education within three theological faculties in the Low Countries. For now, we submit three short conclusions.

First, the literature of the EMC rightly suggests that in many instances it is likely that theological education – in so far as it is meant to educate for leadership – needs to be re-envisioned in the light of recent societal and cultural changes. As the respected theological educator Samuel Escobar put it, the problem of seminary education has taken on "dramatic urgency"[295] because of the sociological and cultural transitions toward post-modernity and post-Christendom in the Western world and its churches.

Second, views and proposals concerning leader education as formulated within the Emerging-Missional milieu – for example, their emphasis on reflexive understanding, on

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tion is important because different notions of truth imply and encourage different ideals in regard to thinking, knowledge, meaning, and learning.

Naturalistic thinking, for example, says that human cognitive abilities are a cerebral tool of bipedal primates, derived by genetic variation and natural selection from the struggle of existence. However, if this is true, than "human knowledge in its deepest impulse is not focused on truth but on fitness and pugnacity," and intellectual discussions become "boxing matches in the academic arena." Jacob Klapwijk, *Purpose in the Living World? Creation and Emergent Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 203. Since this prospect is neither attractive nor convincing, the question 'what is truth' and 'how may we know truth' should be tackled by educators.

This question extends also to the ethical sphere. According to the influential educationalist John Dewey, for example, ethics and morality are rooted in the physical and biological human constitution. Nature changes as a whole, and thus human nature, and thus his morality. Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 176. We see in this reasoning Jerome Popp's thesis illustrated that "John Dewey was the first philosopher to see in Darwin's thesis the basis for developing a naturalistic theory of meaning, including a naturalized theory of value." Jerome A. Popp, *Evolution's First Philosopher: John Dewey and the Continuity of Nature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), xi. This leaves educators with this quandary: if humans are biologically hardwired to form moral beliefs that contribute to their survival and reproduction, as both pragmatism and naturalism assume (and the assumptions of these intellectual currents underlie many of the popular experiential and constructivist learning theories, see n97) then these beliefs simply are what they are. We have no confidence – again – that they are *true*. Why then should a leader actually be good? Why should he care? Why should he pursue justice? If these questions cannot be answered by referring to the Bible and to God's character, where are these values being secured? John Dewey, in effect, "appeals to a *faith* [emphasis added] in our transactions within nature, that is, within a situation that can guide our plans, purposes, and judgments." Gregory Fernando Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 307. But what justifies such faith?

[295] Samuel Escobar, "Which Is the Ministry toward Which We Teach?," in Malcolm L. Warford, ed., *Practical Wisdom: On Theological Teaching and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 143 ff.

flexible, experiential and informal approaches, and on networks and learning communities – show many substantial analogies and resemblances to those that are formulated by authoritative authors and educators from both secular and Christian quarters (see 9.2). This confirms that they are actual and relevant.

Third, it is worthwhile pondering the following parallels between churches and seminaries that underlie many of the educational practices within the Emerging-Missional milieu: "The need within seminaries, no less than in churches, is for a fundamental shift in paradigms and practices: from equipping managers to equipping spiritual directors and leaders, from maintenance to mission, from church at the center to a kingdom frame."[296]

[296] Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, 221.

CHAPTER 10. *MAINLINE, REFORMED, AND EVANGELICAL*: LEADER EDUCATION IN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

10.1 Introduction

The previous chapter adopted a framework of nine questions – partly based on the conceptualization of missional leadership explained in chapter 8 – to help describe perspectives on and practices of leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu. To briefly summarize, the framework inquired into the *why* of theological education (purpose); the *what* (contents); the *where* (internal culture and institutional structures); the *how* (relation to the local context, pedagogical vision, didactics); and the *who* (teachers and students).

In the present chapter, we use this same model in order to answer our sixth research question, *What are salient views and practices concerning leader education within three theological institutes in the Low Countries?* In order to best address this topic, some research questions were formulated that were slightly more open. This better suited the empirical methods that were used (interviews and focus groups). More details on methodology follow below, after some introductory comments about the institutes in which the research was conducted.

The research for this chapter was carried out in the following three institutes of theological education.

1. The Protestant Theological University (PThU), located in Kampen, Leiden and Utrecht.[1] In this university, future pastors of the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederland*[2] (PKN) – the largest protestant church in the Netherlands – receive their theological education.
2. The Theological University in Kampen (TUK). This university is responsible for the education of future pastors of the *Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt)*.[3]
3. The Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF) in Leuven, Belgium. Strictly speaking, this institution is more connected to the international scene rather than just to the Netherlands. It does, however, train many students for the Dutch cultural context.[4]

Two institutions belonging to the Reformed tradition – both with *bevindelijke* (i.e. pietistic) roots – were also asked to participate in this research. These were the Theological University (Apeldoorn) of the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* [Christian Re-

[1] During the year 2012, the PThU moved to the cities of Amsterdam and Groningen, see 10.2.1, below.
[2] The Protestant Church in the Netherlands.
[3] The Reformed Churches (liberated) in the Netherlands.
[4] The ETF is accredited by the same organization as are the Dutch universities (i.e. the NVAO, the *Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie* [Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization]) and the ETF is the only institute outside the Netherlands that is a member of NOSTER, the *Nederlandse Onderzoekschool voor Theologie en Religiewetenschap* [Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion]).

formed Churches in the Netherlands] and the seminary of the *Hersteld Hervormde Kerk* [the Restored Reformed Church] (Amsterdam).[5] In both cases the requests were denied. The reason given in a letter by the Board of Directors of 'Apeldoorn' was that the teachers were too busy. The seminary in Amsterdam did not send a formal reply at all. Consequently the overview in this chapter is somewhat more limited than we originally intended.[6] Nonetheless, the three institutes that were researched represent an interesting spectrum of the Dutch protestant landscape: mainline reformed (PThU), orthodox calvinistic (TUK), and 'classic' evangelical (ETF).

In particular, the MA curricula were investigated, because, generally speaking, pastors in Dutch churches in the protestant tradition are required to have an academic degree at this level. More specifically, we researched the educational routes that are meant for future pastors and (co-)leaders of congregations, the so-called *predikantenopleiding*. Within these educational routes the spotlight was directed on those that are full-time, rather than part-time ones,[7] because exploring both was not feasible in the amount of time available. In terms of method, this means – *inter alia* – that the focus group sessions were conducted with full-time students.[8] Consequently, the results and conclusions are only indirectly applicable to part-time educational routes and their students.

Three methods were used to acquire the data that was needed: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and analysis of written sources varying from mission statements to specific course and examination descriptions. The first three subsections provide a general explanation of these methods (10.1.1-10.1.3). The next one explains the format in which the findings are presented (10.1.4). Discussions of the data found in each institute subsequently follow: the PThU in section 10.2; the TUK in section 10.3; the ETF in section 10.4. Some concluding remarks follow at the end of this chapter (10.5).

10.1.1 Semi-structured Interviews

We were able to use written sources for our earlier descriptions of EMC views on leadership (chapters 7-8) and leader education (chapter 9). When we searched for the

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[5] This seminary was established in 2005, in the wake of the merging of churches that created the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN)* The most conservative wing within the former *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* decided not to join the PKN, calling itself the *Hersteld Hervormde Kerk*. The mission statement of its seminary, located at the VU University Amsterdam, is focused on "the practice of reformed theology for church and society." Hersteld Hervormde Kerk Seminarium, http://www.hersteld hervormd seminarie.nl (accessed March 29, 2011).

[6] From an analysis of the curricula of both institutes, one thing that stands out is that leadership as an academic subject with connections to the fields of psychology, sociology, and missiology, as well as leader development – which in our opinion should encompass much more than doing homiletic exercises or giving catechesis – receive minimal attention, if any at all. This impression was confirmed by students of both institutes that were (informally) approached to react on this topic.

[7] One qualification should be added here: data concerning the three semesters in the MA trajectory offered in Kampen that are specifically focused on preparation for the pastorate [*beroepsgerichte deel*] are applicable for both full-time students and for part-time students with a BA certificate [*post-HBO-deeltijdstudenten*].

[8] The first focus group forms an exception, as is explained in 10.1.2, below.

views of Dutch theological universities and their faculty on these topics, however, there appeared to be only a few written sources available. That being the case, we decided to look for other means of obtaining additional data. In the time available it was not logistically possible to get a group of teachers together in a focus group setting, so we chose to do individual interviews instead. Between September 2010 and January 2011 we interviewed the following key persons within the three institutes: (a) the person co-responsible for the curriculum as a whole, i.e. the Dean, or the Director of Education; (b) teachers involved in those parts of the curriculum that have to do with leadership – as an academic field of study – and with the intentional development and training of future pastors and leaders in the church. Thus, we only chose those individuals who, because of their function, could be *expected* to know something substantial about leadership and leadership development. The dean was questioned primarily in order to get an impression of the vision and mission of the institute and the strategy for the coming years; to obtain suggestions for and access to the necessary resources (such as course catalogues); and to receive recommendations for potential interviewees who fell into category (b).[9] These persons were all involved in modules of practical theology or in forms of field education, or in other training programs that aim to contribute something to leader development. This means that professors who specialize in the field of systematic theology, for example, have not been asked about their views on leadership or leader education. This more limited focus entails that, on the one hand, the descriptions of the interview outcomes are not representative of the faculty as a whole. On the other hand, it may facilitate our discussion in chapter 11, because theological education within the Emerging-Missional milieu is characterized by a strong interest in topics that are typically the area of a practical theologian.[10]

All interviewees received a personalized letter or e-mail, to provide an opportunity for reflection prior to the interview, which explained the purpose of the interview in general terms and described the following nine questions – derived from the framework developed in chapter 9:

1a. What is the purpose of theological education at this particular institute (and in particular, the *predikantenopleiding* [= MA-route for pastors])?

1b. What are the visions on leadership and church office?

2. What is the ideal or vision concerning the internal culture of the school, including the aspect of community, and what does this mean in practice?

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[9] No further selection was made. That is to say that all the candidates who were suggested by the Dean or the Director of Education were interviewed, with two exceptions. One PThU professor was close to his retirement and thought that he would not be the best source of information; and one TUK professor withdrew shortly before the interview, due to illness.

[10] Cf. Benjamin Conner, "The missional theologian and the practical theologian must work together to make sure congregations in North America are prepared to address and engage their post-Christendom setting." Benjamin T. Conner, *Practicing Witness: A Missional Witness of Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 107. Earlier in his book, Conner had defined missional theology as a kind of practical theology, see chap. 9, n233.

3. What is the vision concerning the spiritual formation of students and how is this vision implemented?
4a. What are the most important characteristics of the institutional dimension of the *predikantenopleiding* and, more generally, of the school as a whole?
4b. How do these institutional characteristics relate to the goal of theological education, visions on leadership and church office, the ideal concerning the internal culture, and the spiritual formation of students?
5a. What is the vision concerning leader education on the one hand and the relation to the cultural context on the other – both the local context and 'context' in a more general sense?
5b. In what ways are students put in touch with the extra-ecclesiastical cultural context, both theoretically and practically (for example, by way of fieldwork)?
5c. In what ways are students put in touch with local Christian communities and churches, including those located close to the educational institute?
6. In what ways – including specific modules – are students prepared for a leadership position?
7. What does leader education entail for the educational methods adopted and, more generally, the educational philosophy?
8. What qualifications do the teachers have that are important for their role in the process of leader education?
9. What does leader education mean for the recruitment and selection of students (also during their studies)?

The main goal was to understand the ways in which the interviewees used the concepts of 'leader' and 'leadership' (or equivalents[11]) and what they meant by them, and what connections were made – if at all – between these concepts and topics like church office, missional vision, community, spirituality and spiritual formation, cultural developments, and educational methods and philosophy. In addition, the intention was to identify in what respects the framework of questions helped to uncover these issues. To accomplish this objective, we attempted to elicit responses both on the totality of questions (i.e. the framework as a whole) and on each one of the questions individually. This did not, however, always prove feasible as many interviewees began with something of a disclaimer regarding their expertise on some of the questions. Also, in some cases, the time available for the interview was simply not enough to discuss all the questions in-depth.

Another goal was to receive more detailed information on items that were found in course catalogues or module books (see 10.1.3). In effect, then, interviewees also functioned as sources of information by answering such questions as: "If these are the competencies that students should acquire, how do you ascertain that they have indeed

[11] As noted earlier (see chap. 1, n70) it is not customary in the Netherlands to designate pastors as leaders.

acquired them?" or "I read about extra course material that students receive during the classes; what material is this, and, if possible, how could I get access to it?"

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner: they did have a structure (the nine questions) but this structure was handled in a flexible way. Supplementary questions were asked that helped to solicit a wide range of comments, while some issues could be explored in-depth. At the same time, using the same framework of basic questions enabled a comparison of the responses to be made. Furthermore, interviews were held in person, while the sites varied from a living room (one person), to cafés (two persons), to working rooms on campus (nine persons). All conversations were recorded with a digital voice recorder, transcribed, and analyzed. The inquiries that were conducted in the PThU were finished first, followed by those in the TUK and the ETF. The following procedure was followed to analyze the data of each institute.

10.1.1.1 Interview Analysis

The first step was to carefully read through the transcripts of the interviews, looking for patterns, themes and categories in the data, or for relevant quotes. We used colored highlights to make this more visible. In subsequent readings we made notes in the margins of the transcripts.

The second step consisted of reflecting on the colored passages and the margin notes, in order to see whether there were recurring themes or other regularities from the different participants, i.e. analyzing for convergence.[12]

The third step was to analyze for divergence, by asking what data did not line up with the outcomes of step two. Did they deviate from other interviewees' responses, were they unclear, inconsistent with what was said earlier, or was there some other reason? We also gave attention to what was *not* said. Thus, a question for analysis was whether or not there were any references made to current scholarly insights on leadership (including those on leadership and complexity theory), to emerging or missional church literature (including views on missional leadership), or to recent literature on theological education.

The fourth step was to look for anything of substantive significance, by seeking to answer four key questions:[13]

(i) How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of the findings?

(ii) To what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied?

(iii) To what extent are the findings consistent with other knowledge (obtained in our case by the study of documents and by the focus groups)?

(iv) To what extent are the findings useful for the purpose of this chapter?

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[12] Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, third ed. (London, UK: Sage, 2002), 465 ff.

[13] Ibid., 467.

Consensual validation was sought by showing a brief first impression of preliminary findings to the two mentors of this dissertation, who both agreed on the significance of the outcomes. They also received the interview transcripts that were finished at that time.

The fifth step consisted of interpreting the findings for meaning and writing down our findings. When this was done, all interviewees and focus group participants were asked by e-mail to give feedback on the presentation of the data concerning their own faculty. While some details needed to be adjusted, the presentation as such was validated by all.[14]

10.1.2 Focus Groups

While we interviewed deans and teachers in person, we investigated students' opinions by using focus groups,[15] i.e. group interviews. Such groups typically consist of between five to eight participants that are held under the guidance of a facilitator. Focus groups are a direct method of obtaining rich information within a social context.[16] The most common purpose of a focus group interview is for an in-depth exploration of a research topic about which little is known. In our case it concerned Dutch theology students' perceptions of leadership and leader education.

Focus groups aim "not to infer but to understand, not to generalize but to determine the range, not to make statements about the population but to provide insights into how people perceived a situation."[17] A focus group encourages participants to discuss a concept like leadership in such a way that the underlying issues (norms, beliefs, values) might be uncovered.[18] Using a focus group – instead of, for example, questionnaires – ensures that priority is given to the respondents' hierarchy of importance, *their* language and concepts, *their* frameworks for understanding the world.[19] Supporting in this is the employment of the potential for synergetic interaction within a group. The exchange and discussion between the participants provide incentives for individual opinions and experiences to be made explicit and shared. The content of the discussion might also

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[14] Due to some changes in the structure of this thesis that we made in December 2011, we decided in January 2012 to e-mail the chapters 10-12 to the key persons of the three institutions (the Director of Education, and the two Deans, respectively) for a final check and validation. Before the end of the month, we received two e-mails and one telephone call in reply. The reactions were helpful to make a few small improvements in our presentation, but no major adjustments were needed.

[15] A focus group can be defined as an in-depth, open-ended group discussion of 1-2 hours' duration that explores a specific set of issues on a predefined and limited topic.

[16] Nicola Robinson, "The Use of Focus Groups Methodology – With Selected Examples From Sexual Health Research," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 29, no. 4 (1999), 905.

[17] R.A. Krueger, as quoted in Andre Parker and Jonathan Tritter, "Focus Group Method and Methodology: Current Practice and Recent Debate," *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 29, no. 1 (April 2006), 34.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Jenny Kitzinger, "The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants," *Sociology of Health & Illness* 16, no. 1 (1994), 108.

take unexpected directions or open up new topics.[20] Listening to discussions between participants gives the researcher the chance to acclimatize to certain aspects of the situation, for example, their preferred vocabulary for speaking about the topic (in our case leadership), and "prevents the researcher from prematurely closing off the generation of meaning in [his or] her own search for clarification."[21]

Our expectation was to gain new information about the participants' views, attitudes, beliefs, responses, motivations and perceptions on leadership – i.e. *why* students think or feel the way they do.[22] This fitted well with the hermeneutical approach of our research: the objective was to *understand* what students thought and felt about leadership and leader education. Moreover, when used for educational purposes, focus groups may be used to get insight into student *experiences* of a particular teaching method or program, or to generate ideas for the purpose of devising recommendations for future change and improvement in student learning and curriculum development.[23] Thus, we reasoned that this characteristic of focus groups would later be helpful for formulating some strategic proposals regarding theological education for leadership.

Between January and March 2011, one focus group session was held in each institute with students who were at the end of their full-time MA-program and who had completed all courses that could be said to contribute to leader development. Before these sessions were conducted, one was held with pastors active in the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* who had graduated from the PThU two or three years earlier. This was done for two reasons: (a) to get some input from persons who actually work in the church for a living and who were able to look back on their educational trajectory with that experience; (b) as a trial session, i.e. to 'test' the framework of questions in such a setting. As it turned out, it was more than just a trial because we were able to make use of the outcomes of this first focus group session.

All four focus group sessions were carried out in quiet and comfortable locations, with appropriate spatial distance between participants,[24] and with the help of an assistant moderator.[25] He helped in many ways, including evaluating the way the focus group sessions were moderated and assisting with the analysis of data.[26] This last point is obviously of great importance, partly because a total of four focus groups – two for the

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[20] Howard Denton, "Using Focus Group Methods to Improve Student's Design Project Research in Schools: Drawing Parallels from Action Research at Undergraduate Level," *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* 13 (2003), 130, and 133.

[21] Kitzinger, "The Methodology of Focus Groups," 108.

[22] Cf. Lia Litosselita, *Using Focus Groups in Research* (London: Continuum, 2007), 18.

[23] Rosanna L. Breen, "A Practical Guide to Focus-Group Research," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 30, no. 3 (November 2006), 464.

[24] On the importance of this aspect, see Edward F. Fern, *Advanced Focus Group Research* (London, UK: Sage, 2001), 67 ff.

[25] He was selected out of a group of eighteen applicants for this job, because of his initiative, intelligence, motivation, and work experience.

[26] Richard A. Krueger, *Moderating Focus Groups*: Focus Group Kit 4 (London, UK: Sage, 1998), 69 ff.

PThU and just one each for the TUK and the ETF – is rather limited. However, in the months available for research there were not enough participants to do more group sessions.[27] Consequently, the data needed to be interpreted with extra caution.[28] The assistant moderator's comments and his feedback on the presentation and interpretation of the data in this chapter which we acquired in focus groups improved their reliability.

Similar to the *semi*-structured interviews, the choice fell on *moderately* structured focus groups.[29] The structure provided was as follows. Each participant was asked to fill out a survey (see below) by writing an X in the place that he or she thought appropriate.[30] These forms subsequently formed the input for the group discussion. At the closing of the session, the students were given the opportunity to make any changes they saw fit, in light of what had been discussed.[31] The filled-out forms were then taken in for analysis. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed.

During the session, the different items mentioned on this survey were discussed, but in a flexible way. This tool proved to be very helpful to open up, focus, and structure the discussion, and to make the best use of the available time. It was not used in the first 'test' focus group (consisting of PKN-pastors, as pointed out above). Although the outcome of this session was highly interesting and relevant – as were all sessions – a lesson learnt in this first group was that a little more structure would be helpful. That is why the survey printed below was developed.[32] The topics mentioned on this A-4 are the same as those that were discussed with the teacher interviewees, but the specific questions and statements are formulated more pointedly. This was done to bring the themes somewhat closer to the personal experience of students.

[27] As we indicated in the foreword to this dissertation, only one day per week was available for the research, a circumstance that severely limited the options for the empirical research conducted for this chapter.
[28] Cf. Richard A. Krueger, *Planning Focus Groups*: Focus Group Kit 2 (London, UK: Sage, 1998), 82-83.
[29] Krueger, *Planning Focus Groups*, 52 ff.
[30] This was done either at the beginning of the session, or shortly before it. In the last case, participants were requested not to talk among themselves about the topics before the session, which they agreed to, in order to prevent them from influencing each other.
[31] They received a red pen to do so. The first time they filled in the forms this was done with a blue pen.
[32] The idea was based on the use of rating scales as described in Richard A. Krueger, *Developing Questions for Focus Groups*: Focus Group Kit 3 (London, UK: Sage, 1998), 64 ff.

Exhibit A. The Survey Issued Before or at the Start of the Focus Group Sessions

ASPECT	**Do not agree**	**Agree some-what**	**Agree**	**Agree strongly**	**Don't Know**	**Not appli-cable**
1.a. The goal of the seminary[33] is framed in terms of 'leader' and/or 'leadership' (or clear equivalents of these).						
1.b. The (stated) goal of the seminary has to do with the *missio Dei* and the place of the church therein.						
1.c. "I almost finished this program [*opleiding*]. Therefore I am a leader."						
1.d. "My interpretation of the term 'leadership' is partly influenced by scholarly theories about it."						
2. As students at this seminary you form part of a (Christian) community, of students and teachers together.						
3. The seminary gives attention to the spiritual formation of the student.						
4. "I recognize that the way in which the seminary is managed [*aangestuurd*] *qua* management [*beleidsvoering*] and organizational structures, has to do with the goal of the seminary."						
5. The seminary equips the student in the fields of management (e.g. working						

[33] The Dutch word that was used for 'seminary' is *opleiding*.

according to plans), and leadership (e.g. theories about leadership, vision forming, motivating people, conflict handling).						
6.a. The seminary is focused on actual cultural and societal developments and their importance for churches and Christians.						
6.b. As a student you constantly keep in touch with forms of 'fieldwork' (for example active involvement in a local church) during the program [*opleiding*].						
7. The way in which the education is taken care of (e.g., educational methods and assessment) is recognizably tailored to the formation of future leaders in the church.						
8. The competencies of the teachers are fitting for the education of (future) leaders of the church.						
9. The seminary consciously recruits students with leadership potential.						

10.1.2.1 Focus Group Analysis

All sessions were recorded with a digital voice recorder, listened to several times, transcribed in headlines, and analyzed.[34] The main goal was to understand in what manner and with what meaning the interviewees used the concepts 'leader' and 'leadership', what they thought about 'missional leadership', and how they evaluated their educational track as it concerns the leadership aspect. Their perceptions were then compared

[34] The source of what follows next is Richard A. Krueger, *Analyzing & Reporting Focus Group Results*: Focus Group Kit 6 (London, UK: Sage, 1998), 32-38.

with what was gleaned from written sources and with the outcomes of the earlier interviews. Furthermore, we attempted to find patterns, recurring themes, and 'big ideas', i.e. the most important findings that "emerge from an accumulation of evidence – words used, body language, intensity of comments – rather than from isolated comments."[35] To accomplish this, we considered the specific words or expressions that were used – and with what tone or emphasis – as well as the context in which they were made (i.e. what stimulated the response, taking into account interventions by the moderator). In addition, we paid close attention to the internal consistency of phrases and comments; the frequency of a comment (how often it was said); the extensiveness of comments (how many people said it); the intensity of comments (how strongly held the opinion or point of view was); the specificity of responses (how much detail was provided). Last but not least: what was *not* said was reflected upon as well.[36] Furthermore, we used field notes that were taken by the assistant moderator, which included seating arrangements, key points in the discussion, notable quotes, and important observations (e.g. group mood, moderator interventions, obvious body language, ironic or contradictory statements).[37]

10.1.3 Written Source

The most important of the written sources that we used for the preparation of the interviews and the focus group sessions were texts found on websites, and catalogues with curriculum descriptions.

When surveying the curricula, the endeavor was to identify descriptions of courses and modules concerning the following themes (regardless of the exact formulation that was used): church office and church law, leadership,[38] management,[39] administration,[40] and organization theory.[41] It was acknowledged that the topic of 'leadership' might be addressed not only in formal courses on the subject, delineated in course descriptions.

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[35] Krueger, *Analyzing & Reporting Focus Group Results,* 38.

[36] Cf. 10.1.1.1, above.

[37] Krueger, *Analyzing & Reporting Focus Group Results*, 48.

[38] Think, for example, of leadership definitions, theories, paradigms, metaphors, or philosophies; leadership roles, styles, skills; issues of power, authority, decision making, responsibility, accountability; topics like vision, group identity, meaning formation, and spiritual values; aspects of 'cultural' leadership, including community and team building, communication, dealing with diversity, group dynamics, and conflict; theological views on change; theological perspectives on personal calling/vocation and on church leadership (e.g. missional leadership, servant leadership, pastoral leadership, or spiritual leadership); mobilizing volunteers; and developing lay leadership, e.g. by personal or group mentoring.

[39] Think, for example, of policy making – including goal setting, planning, task allocating and delegating, implementation, consolidation, and evaluation; aspects of public relations and digital communication; dealing with conflict; teamwork.

[40] Think, for example, of stewardship, finance and fundraising; personal management skills, presiding skills, and practical aspects of church-related law.

[41] Think for example of open systems theory; complexity theory and organizations; organizational structures; organizational change; enhancing organizational adaptability and flexibility; the learning organization; or methods like Appreciative Inquiry.

There could well be relations between components of leadership and the classical subjects in theological education – biblical studies, church history, dogmatics (in particular ecclesiology and church law), and ethics. For example, a module on church history might give attention to the historical development of different conceptions or expressions of church leadership. In addition, during their theological education, students might receive opportunities to practice leadership that are not described in the curriculum, such as involvement in governance, worship planning and leading, or educational assistance in courses. Using interviews and focus groups was deemed to help uncover such important extra information.

Another category that we searched for was that of spiritual formation, seen as an umbrella term that may encompass different practices, such as (contemplatively) reading spiritual classics, going on retreats, receiving spiritual direction or mentoring, practicing *lectio divina*, and different forms of praying, both privately and corporately. Again, we hypothesized that much of the attention to spirituality and to spiritual formation might occur outside the classroom. That is the reason why we asked both teachers and students where and how spiritual formation receives attention – both inside formal courses (descriptions of which we then already had) *and* in other ways.

A final subject that received particular interest concerned cultural and religious developments – topics such as secularization, post-Christendom, late- or postmodernity, the rising interest in spirituality, globalization, etc. – and their possible relations to courses in missiology.

10.1.3.1 Document Analysis

While reading the course descriptions the following three questions were asked.

1. What goals or competencies [*doelen*, *eindtermen*, or *competenties*] are to be reached by the students? In other words, what is the desired 'end state' of students after completing a particular program. The aim was to find out what knowledge, attitudes, and skills were to be attained, because this indirectly conveys something about visions on leadership and church office.
2. What resources are used by students (e.g. articles, books, digital resources)?
3. How many credits do students receive for the required courses? Whether a certain leadership course counts for, say, 5 credits[42] (140 study hours) or whether it counts for 10 credits (280 hours) makes quite a difference to the level of proficiency that students will attain.

In addition to scanning the curriculum for the topics mentioned above, we were also on the lookout for remarks about teaching practices, including pedagogical strategies such as the use of portfolios of performance and self-reflection, or forms of cross-disciplinary, integrative and team teaching.

[42] The reference here is to the system of credits (ECTS) used within European higher education, where one credit counts for 28 hours of study. In this dissertation the abbreviation 'ec' is used.

Another research interest was the educational philosophy and theoretically grounded visions on learning. We were interested to see whether sources could be found that both addressed what theological learning is and gave attention to related topics such as theological reflection, understanding, and creativity; learning environments; learning to learn; learning styles and multiple intelligences, etc. We were also interested to see whether any document would explain what learning theory was deemed most appropriate (e.g. self-directed learning, transformative learning, or experiential learning), and why.[43]

10.1.4 Presentation of Data

In the next three sections, we first make some introductory comments about the institution that yielded the data. Then we give attention to the framework of questions as a whole. The main question here is: How did the interviewees or focus group participants react to this heuristic device? Subsequently, each of the nine questions is discussed separately, so that the emphasis in the presentation of the data is on content, rather than anything else. Direct quotations appear only when they are particularly apt or illustrative. Furthermore, synthesized or quoted viewpoints are not those of just one or two participants, but are more widely shared. If this is not the case, or if this is uncertain, a comment is added.[44] Sections 10.2-10.4 emphasize perspectives on leadership and practices of leader education, a limitation that had to be made for reasons of space.

10.2 Visions on Leader Education in the Protestant Theological University (PThU)

10.2.1 Obtaining the Data

As mentioned earlier, the PThU is aligned with the largest protestant denomination in the Netherlands, the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* [Protestant Church in the Netherlands], abbreviated as the PKN. The PKN was established in 2004 as a merger of three

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[43] Cf. Reg Wickett, "Adult Learning Theories and Theological Education," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 2, no. 2 (2005), 153-161.

[44] In Exhibit A, "The Survey Issued before or at the Start of the Focus Group Sessions," the exact responses of the students – i.e. where they put their X marks on the survey – will *not* be detailed below. Discussing these forms would require many additional methodological comments, but would not add anything substantial to the descriptions and conclusions that will be put forward. The following general comments may, however, be of interest: students from the PThU and TUK placed most of their X marks on the left side ('do not agree', or 'agree somewhat'), while students from the ETF, relatively speaking, placed their X marks more in the middle ('agree') or to the right of the middle ('agree strongly'). At the end of the sessions, when the students were asked to fill in the form again, their responses mostly stayed the same, but if a change *was* made, it was almost always to the left – as if during the session the student had come to the realization: "I now know better what I do not receive studying here." The one exception to this rule was the ETF. Some (but not all) students from the ETF went more to the *right* with their X marks (e.g. from 'agree somewhat' to 'agree') as if to say: "I now know better what I receive studying here."

former churches, the Netherlands Reformed Church,[45] the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands[46] and the fairly small Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The PThU was established in 2007, as a merger of the Theological University Kampen and the Theological Academic Institute.[47]

When the research for this chapter was conducted, the PThU had two MA-programs that prepared future pastors. Both programs had received a separate accreditation. One of these programs was offered in Kampen, the other in the cities of Leiden and Utrecht. In addition, practical training, retreats and permanent education modules for all students[48] were offered on an estate called Hydepark seminary, in the province of Utrecht. During this same period, however, the decision was made to move the PThU to two new locations. Starting on September 1, 2012 the PThU will be found in Amsterdam (VU University) and Groningen (University of Groningen). Moreover, the PThU decided to submit an accreditation request for just one MA-program with variants, instead of continuing with the somewhat strange construction of two educational trajectories within one institute for the same kind of occupation. The developments we have sketched have two important consequences for this section.

First, it is not always possible to speak of 'the' PThU in such a general way, because the MA-route for pastors in Kampen[49] and the one in Leiden and Utrecht each have their own characteristics when it comes to specifics – not only in terms of language (e.g. how competencies are formulated), but also in other respects. For example, the period of fieldwork for MA-students in Utrecht and Leiden is three months, while in Kampen it is fifteen months, although it is less intensive per week. According to the vision of 'Kampen', this longer period of part-time fieldwork facilitates the integration of theory and practice. This striving for integration is said to be typical of Kampen.[50] The influence that geographical particularities had on the interviews conducted consisted primarily of professors emphasizing that they spoke from their confined perspective, and not for the PThU as a whole. For students, it made quite a difference where they followed the MA-program, as will become clear later on.

Second, alongside the decision to move to Amsterdam and Groningen, a curriculum revision was embarked upon, if only because the two MA-variants (Kampen, Leiden/Utrecht) were to be merged into one. Thus, since 2010, it can be said that change has

[45] NL: *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*.
[46] NL: *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*.
[47] NL: *Theologisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut (ThWI)*, before 2004 known as the *Hervormd Theologisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut* [Reformed Theological Academic Institute]. The third partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, has had a seminary located in Utrecht (since 2000).
[48] In an e-mail message to the author on December 13, 2011, the secretariat of the PThU in Utrecht wrote regarding student enrollment in the year 2010/2011 that there were 51 students in the *predikantenopleiding* in Kampen, and 161 in Utrecht and Leiden combined.
[49] Kampen also has an MA route for Chaplain Spiritual Counselor [*Predikant Geestelijk Verzorger*], which is being relocated to Groningen in 2012. This MA program will not be discussed in this chapter.
[50] Source: interview held with a teacher of the PThU, location Kampen, November 23, 2010.

been endemic for the still young PThU.[51] Since the descriptions that follow below refer to the state of affairs before 2012, it must be acknowledged that they may be outdated at the time this thesis is published.[52] The conclusions are still relevant, however, and useful to the new curricula.

10.2.1.1 Interviews and Focus Groups

The research at the PThU took place between September 2010 and February 2011. It started with an interview with the Director of Education [*Directeur Onderwijs*].[53] During the session, he forwarded a report (with recommendations) of a strategic educational conference that had been held on January 14 and 21, 2010.[54] The director pointed out that, during this conference, 'leadership' had been a prominent theme in the discussions. This was partly because junior ministers who were asked to look back on their recently completed educational trajectory said that they found themselves insufficiently prepared when it came to organization, policy making and, more generally, providing leadership. During the conference, both the topic of 'spiritual leadership' and its relation to spiritual formation, and the subject of being a missional church [*missionair kerk zijn*] were discussed – the latter with some urgency.[55]

After studying the report mentioned above, the educational catalogue of the PThU,[56] and its website,[57] a professor who teaches practical theology was interviewed. While responding to the questions, he made this statement: "The pastor of the future will be a missionary pastor [*missionair voorganger*] by definition." Reflecting on this remark, we decided to use it in subsequent interviews, in order to observe to what extent his vision was shared among colleagues. This was in accordance with the methodological choice to be open to 'emergence' during the months in which the interviews were held (and later on, in which the focus groups were conducted), because "the openness and flexibility of a more emergent approach is one of the central defining features of qualitative research."[58]

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[51] It is telling that the name of the PThU website changed during 2010 from www.PThU.nl to www.PThUinverandering.nl (i.e. 'PThU-in-change').

[52] Note that students who started with their MA trajectory before 2012 will complete the 'old' curriculum, which is the one that is referred to in this chapter.

[53] The interview was followed up by an e-mail message from the *Directeur Onderwijs* to the author on May 2, 2011 that contained – *inter alia* – some updates and additional information.

[54] A.W. Baan, R.H. Reeling Brouwer, G. van Ek, H. de Leede, J.A.J. den Ouden, "Verslag van de Onderwijsconferentie PThU op 14 en 21 januari 2010, met aanbevelingen," [Report of the PThU Educational Conference held on January 14 and 21, 2010, with Recommendations] May 28, 2010 (21 pages).

[55] "Verslag van de Onderwijsconferentie," 3 and 9.

[56] https://osiris.PThU.nl/osiris_student_osiprd/OnderwijsCatalogus.do (last accessed March 4, 2011). A CD with this catalogue on it was used as well.

[57] http://www.PThUinverandering.nl/ (last accessed March 4, 2011).

[58] David Morgen, Collin Fellows, and Heather Guevara, "Emergent Approaches to Focus Group Research," in Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, eds., *Handbook of Emergent Methods* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008), 191.

After this interview, four more followed: one with a lecturer in practical theology; one with a coordinator of the professional formation [*beroepsvorming*] components; a double interview with two persons involved in the courses and training offered at Hydepark; and one with a practical theologian. The total time required for all the interviews was slightly more than seven hours, which resulted in forty pages of typed text.

The interviews were followed by two focus group sessions which were both held at Hydepark seminary, during a time that participants – who were there for training – were available. The first group consisted of two women and three men. They had started their first pastorate a few years earlier. During a busy schedule of post-initial education that they shared with other colleagues, they had one hour available to participate in the focus group session. The atmosphere was open, honest and thoughtful. The participants had pursued their studies in different locations: Utrecht (three), Groningen/Leiden (one) and Kampen (one).

The six participants of the second group were all men, five of whom were studying in Utrecht, and one in Leiden.[59] They were in the final phase of the MA trajectory, during which training sessions are provided at Hydepark seminary. The mood within the group was very lively and convivial – sometimes even frolicsome – but during the session, many serious remarks and frustrations were voiced as well. Some of these seemed to be deep-felt, especially considering some of the stark terms that were used and the emotional tones in which opinions were shared. According to the students from Utrecht, their views were fairly widely shared among others in their year group. Interestingly, the one student from Leiden – who specialized in practical theology – was much more appreciative of his MA route. Regularly, he provided a counterpoint to the others, which resulted in quite a fascinating dynamic. Certain relevant differences between Leiden and Utrecht that surfaced during this discussion will be discussed below.

10.2.2 Presentation of Findings

The Framework of Questions

The Director of Education and most teachers responded favorably to the framework of nine questions as a whole. In summary, their responses were twofold. (1) *Affirmative*: these are very important and strategic questions; we should be talking about this much more at the PThU; no important aspects seem to be missing. (2) *Slightly shocked*: do we have an answer to all these questions..., do *I* know the answers? Some interviewees made critical comments saying that they thought the questions were too broad or vague, or both. For example, it was not clear to some what was meant by 'institutional dimension/characteristics' (question 4a/b). The term '(internal) culture' used in question 2 also needed some clarification, as did the term '(cultural) context' mentioned in question 5. Furthermore, one respondent remarked that there seemed to be a rather com-

[59] Note that 'Kampen' was not represented in this group.

prehensive conception of leadership underlying the questions. While reflecting on this, she said, "It is possible to subsume everything that a minister does under the rubric of leadership." This statement was confirmed by the interviewer.

Only one interviewee gave a somewhat negative response to the framework of questions. This person found them too pushy [*dwingend*]: "as if a vision on leadership should be guiding for the whole educational trajectory; as if there aren't other educational objectives than leadership; as if it is clear what 'leadership' in the church is." Later on during the interview it became clear that the resistance to the questions might have to do with the accompanying letter. The interviewee had associated emerging churches with something like a performance based conception of leadership – that of an successful (male) leader who 'knows it all'. After it was briefly explained what the term Emerging Church Movement stands for – in all its variety – and how leadership is perceived in many emerging communities (i.e. process and team oriented, bottom up, inclusive, facilitative), it appeared that these preliminary assumptions were corrected.

Students in the focus groups found that the list was stimulating to reflect on, but they did not always know exactly what was hinted at, in particular, where the topics of 'internal culture', 'spiritual formation', and 'institutional characteristics' were concerned.[60] The responses to each of the questions are discussed next.

1a. What is the purpose of theological education at this particular institute (and in particular, the *predikantenopleiding* [=MA-route for pastors])?[61]

The purpose of the PThU as a whole is to educate academically qualified theologians. An emphasis is placed on the capacity to do solid exegesis based on the original Biblical languages. In addition, the so-called hermeneutic core competency occupies a central role in documents and discussions. This competency captures an essential part of what it means to be a leader in the PKN. It refers to the ability to connect the Bible, people's life narratives, and culture in a fruitful way. Hermeneutics, moreover, stands in a close relation to agogics. The purpose of the MA-route for pastors is to educate clergy as *generalists* who are capable in the fields of preaching, the pastorate, catechesis, and other tasks, and who have integrated in their role the three dimensions of church office, profession, and person.

Furthermore, students are educated for the *existing* church, i.e. the PKN as it is now, including its familiar structures. Teachers and students were in agreement on this point. However, students in both focus groups evaluated this in negative terms. "The church of the future will be different, and being a pastor as well – but these questions were not seriously reflected upon during our schooling," a young minister in the first focus group

[60] Evaluative comments on the questions that were used in the interviews and the focus groups follow in the concluding reflections in 10.5.

[61] Note that revised or new documents concerning the profile of a PKN pastor and the educational philosophy of the PThU were written and discussed during the months after the research for this chapter was completed.

remarked. "The urgency that the church is collapsing was not addressed," added another. A third said, "If leadership has anything to do with having a vision for the future, then..." He halted there, looked around the group and saw all participants in the group silently nodding. Apparently they agreed that their theological schooling itself had lacked the component of visionary leadership (the moderator did not intervene to check this interpretation). The speaker continued, "But as a pastor, people will look to you to provide direction." This preacher was not sure if he could live up to this expectation.

Students in the second group were critical on the same point. Five of them came out of the most conservative wing of the PKN, the *Gereformeerde Bond* [Reformed Union].[62] They did acknowledge that some congregations did not discern the need for change or being missional and that a minister in the Reformed Union could be expected to maintain the status quo. These same students emphasized, however, that things could well be different within – say – fifteen years from now. They also knew that outside the Dutch 'Bible Belt' many congregations are struggling, and that each year, thousands of people leave the PKN. What the students from Utrecht missed the most was how to form *vision* for the future of the church. "If only we had just *one* class about church planting," sighed one graduate. In Leiden, however, things seemed to be different, in particular for those students who specialized in practical theology. One student from Leiden who did so was very positive about a course called The Dynamics of the Missional Congregation (5 ec), but also about a class called Faith Communication (5 ec). In this module, students learned to make a connection between *Lebenswendepunkte* [life turning points] of people from within or outside the church, and opportunities for the congregation to act in terms of mission and diaconate.[63] The students from Utrecht listened to all this with a combination of great interest and good-humored jealousy.

1b. What are visions on leadership and church office?

* *Leadership as a function of the group and a task of the church council*[64]

Leadership is a function of the local church, more specifically the church council [*kerkenraad*]. This leadership function encompasses both a normative dimension (the church

[62] The one student who was not from the *Gereformeerde Bond* was involved in the Emerging-Missional milieu, both by reading (Emerging Church literature "saved his faith," he said) and by participating in a church plant that shares many EMC values.

[63] A technical note is required here. If a PThU student follows the full MA program of three years, he or she has to choose from one of three specializations: Biblical Theology (BT), Practical Theology (PT), or Systematic Theology (ST). These all count for 60 ec, which takes the duration of one full year to complete. This arrangement means that the great majority of PThU students do *not* take The Dynamics of the Missional Congregation [*De dynamiek van de missionaire gemeente*] because it is a module that has to be *chosen* out of sixteen other possible courses. Most students who are not specializing in PT do not choose it, while even those who *do* specialize in PT have other options. In addition to this was the issue of location. At the time of writing, this class was only offered in Leiden, which meant that students from Utrecht or Kampen had to travel regularly to Leiden during the twelve weeks that the course was being offered if they wanted to participate.

[64] What is described next is obtained from the interviews, unless otherwise specified.

council is supposed to provide leadership, according to church law) and a descriptive one (there are more leaders than just the minister, and leadership is a process of influence occurring within a group). Furthermore, 'leadership' is associated with (a) taking care that everyone in the community is happily involved in activities that fit their capabilities and that contribute to their personal development, and (b) providing vision, and trying to make this vision a reality.

* *The pastor as a leader*

The pastor is a *leader*; this should be his or her self-image. Sometimes, the word *co-leader* was used to emphasize the sharing of the leadership task with the consistory. A respondent added that the words 'leader' and 'leadership' were introduced only some fifteen years ago, and still do not resonate well with some teachers and students. Before 1995, the only concepts used were that of 'pastor' and 'teacher' [*herder* and *leraar*], and students received no leadership modules at all. According to one interviewee, the adoption of secular leadership terms has to do with the fact that the self-evident, office related status and authority of the pastor – as a servant and representative of the reign of Christ in the church, through the Word – has declined in many local congregations. Pastors, therefore, need to be able to "take in their position" as a leader if they want to be taken seriously. This means, *inter alia*, "mobilizing people to deliver a collective performance" and dealing with processes of change.

* *Leadership: 'pastoral', 'agogical', 'spiritual'*

During the interviews, the qualification 'pastoral' was often used; the pastor should exercise *pastoral* leadership. The ability to be a good listener was emphasized, as well as "taking the group seriously." This implied that a minister should be able to observe and analyze processes in groups and subgroups, including gender related communicative patterns. The *agogical* task, furthermore, consists of designing and helping to implement appropriate measures of policy in regard to underdeveloped practices of a local congregation.[65] Ministerial leadership does not preclude making one's presence clearly felt and even, if need be, adopting a directive style of leading. In addition, the pastor or leader should provide *spiritual* leadership. This concept was perceived in different ways. On the one hand, some participants accentuated theological sense making and the "theological reading of situations" (by making use of hermeneutical competencies). Other participants emphasized the importance of "keeping the way to God open," or more specifically, being a spiritual guide (by making use of agogical and mystagogical competencies). Preaching was also considered to be a means of providing spiritual leadership.

* *Missional leadership: a contested topic*

We mentioned above that our second interviewee stated that, as he envisions it, the PKN-pastor of the future will have to be a missional leader (see 10.2.1.1). This means that he or she has eye for persons and contextual factors involved in situations on the

[65] The agogical aspect, as well as the attention to gender issues, was particularly emphasized by interviewees of Kampen.

one hand, and for the deep, even vital significance[66] that the Gospel may have for these situations and persons on the other hand. Missional leadership, according to the professor we interviewed, entails that pastoral work, preaching, catechesis and other tasks all receive a missional character.

When other teachers were asked for their perspectives, it became clear that their ideas about ministers of the future being 'missional leaders' were less pronounced and emphatic, although this view did receive some sympathy. A few participants, however, had reservations concerning 'being missional'. This mostly had to do with the term itself, which they experienced as too normative. "Students live in an institute that is decaying," one teacher remarked. "I teach students how to accompany such processes. I find this more important than telling them: 'Things should change; we've got to go missional.'...Instead, I start with the situation such as it is. My foremost attempt is to illumine the tensions and choices that pastors will have to face as they begin their ministries."

During the interviews, it was suggested that in terms of character and temperament most theology students are not suited to be missional leaders, since they do not opt for deep change, are not entrepreneurs, and prefer to work within the given bounds. One additional observation was made, however: students from the evangelical wing within the PKN seemed much more intent on and capable of providing missional leadership.

In the first focus group, everyone agreed that in the near future, a pastor should play a role in missional leadership. It was added, however, that often, as a minister, "you are *not* particularly the right person for this, because you speak a language that is already complex for 'ordinary' church members, let alone for people who are unused to Christian thinking." Another participant called this "the curse of knowledge."[67] Participants in this group had experienced the last two years of their schooling, specifically meant to prepare them for the pastorate, as having a strong internal focus. Their common wish was that all the subjects taught would have a much clearer missional thrust and that missional ecclesiology would receive more attention (while, for example, church history could be partly reduced). Participants in the second focus group had similar responses, in particular the students from Utrecht. They added that, in their experience, most professors themselves seemed to lack a missional vision. The term 'missional' [*missionair*]

[66] The Dutch expression used by the interviewee was: *het levensbelang van het Evangelie*.

[67] This again calls for a technical note. The MA-route for future PKN clergy ends with students staying two weeks at Hydepark seminary, where they receive a training program that is labeled The Theologian Becomes a Pastor. One of the five competencies on which participants should show progress during this course is called the *missionaire competentie* [missional competency]. Interestingly, in the short description of the four different levels of proficiency, the word 'language' is consistently used: from "The student does not recognize missional situations and does not have a language for it" (level 1), to "Is capable to contribute creatively in missional contexts and is multilingual [*meertalig*]." This wording gives the impression that the PThU does have a 'language problem' in view. It appeared, however, that the *missionaire competentie* was only recently added; the students in focus group 1 were from an earlier year group. Also, the question remains as to what extent a program of only two weeks and with many different aims succeeds in compensating for the 'curse of knowledge' that was obtained in the years before.

was negatively associated with *evangelisch* (i.e. something like Biblicist evangelicalism or fundamentalism). The topic of leadership, the students emphasized, did not fare well among teachers either, because of connotations with 'America' and with 'Willow Creek'.

* *Church office: different emphases*

As to church office, teachers and students differed in how they emphasized this aspect of the pastorate: some had a 'high church' conception of it, others a 'low church' interpretation, while many found themselves somewhere in between these two poles. Students in Leiden and Utrecht follow a 5 ec systematic theological course called *Ambt, Kerk en Recht* [Office, Church and Law], in which various models are sketched. During their MA track, students are encouraged to develop and formulate their own vision on this topic, both during this course and during related ones,[68] and also when reflecting on their fieldwork: "With what interpretation of church office am I comfortable, and what does it mean for my practical functioning?" Notwithstanding different emphases, one thing became clear: students are not supposed to underestimate the importance of church office. In the words of one interviewee: "the students are preparing to occupy the institute called 'office' within the institute called 'church'."

2. What is the ideal or vision concerning the internal culture of the school, including the aspect of community, and what does this mean in practice?

Teachers and students were basically in agreement. There is no such thing as a faith community of professors and students, nor of the teaching staff among themselves. Of the three PThU-locations, this was thought to be most true of Utrecht. The architecture of the faculty of theology in Utrecht gives a formal, modern and bureaucratic 'message', which was thought to be typical of the general climate there. Kampen, on the other hand, knows something called *civitas*, which can be conceived of as an academic community. This means that there are, from time to time, common lunches, cultural activities, lectures, and liturgies around Christian feasts. Furthermore, the building in Kampen seemed to convey a warm and somewhat contemplative atmosphere. Still, these characteristics do not add up to anything like a Christian faith community. One interviewee from Kampen put it as follows: "There are nice statements put on paper, but I think that we do not succeed in turning these into reality." Later, the same person asked rhetorically: "How can you say that you educate students to being spiritually integrated while you yourself lack this same quality as a community?"[69] As to Leiden, while no references to *civitas* were made, it was emphasized that there was room for a

[68] In Kampen, students complete the three semesters that are specifically focused on preparing for the pastorate [*beroepsgerichte deel*] with a 5 ec theological position paper.

[69] With the intention of improving on this point, the PThU decided that the locations from September 2012 onward (i.e. Amsterdam and Groningen) would both have a chapel. PThU Director of Education, e-mail message to author, May 2, 2011.

mutual sharing of personal beliefs with individual teachers, especially within courses on practical theology.

Moreover, during the training programs in Hydepark seminary, the community aspect receives much attention. This was evaluated positively by the students. Other remarks made were the following. Focus group 1: theologians operate mostly in a solistic way, they are not team players. Focus group 2: the word 'community' is multilayered; it may denote community in general, Christian community, a community of students, a community of teachers, or one of both teachers and students. It was concluded that there are moments when something like a community feeling arises – sometimes even of a 'Christian' one – in particular among students.[70]

3. What is the vision concerning the spiritual formation of students and how is this vision implemented?

Generally speaking, the emphasis is not on spiritual formation but on what is called *habitual* formation: learning to deal with the three dimensions of office, profession, and person in an integrated way. Both the BA and the MA programs give some attention to spirituality and spiritual formation as a topic of theological reflection.[71] In addition, during his MA studies, a student can follow electives, such as A View on Reformed Spirituality (Kampen, 5 ec) or Pastoral Work and Spiritual Guidance (Leiden, 5 ec). Both teachers and students agreed that only in Hydepark seminary does spiritual formation receive attention in a much more experiential manner. This was still evaluated as insufficient, however. One student in focus group 2 exclaimed: "How is it possible to provide something like spiritual direction to persons if you yourself have never experienced such a thing?!" No one in the group had received spiritual guidance in any form.[72] One student in Utrecht shared the following story. When he had offered to say a prayer at the end of a certain evaluative meeting that was attended by both teachers and students, the professors reacted in a slightly embarrassed way, "This was not planned. We are not used to this. We will discuss your proposal at the next teacher meeting." So they did not pray. During the focus group session, this student reflected: "This kind of formalism is, in my view, one of the contributing factors to the on-going exodus from the PKN." This last remark received affirmative nodding from other participants in the group.

4a. What are the most important characteristics of the institutional dimension of the *predikantenopleiding* c.q. the school as a whole?

[70] Students from abroad, who are primarily found in Kampen, contribute to this feeling.

[71] In Kampen, for example, every student follows a 1,5 ec course called Spirituality. In the Practical Theology specialization, spirituality receives more attention, for example, in a course called The Spiritual Dimension of Pastoral Work, 5 ec.

[72] When the PThU was revising the curriculum, this topic of spiritual guidance or formation was much discussed. PThU Director of Education, e-mail message to author, May 2, 2011.

This question did not receive much attention. Interviewees emphasized that, within the PThU, the structure of the university is much influenced by government rules and regulations, which also pertain to the *predikantenopleiding*.

4b. How do these institutional characteristics relate to the goal of theological education, visions on leadership and church office, the ideal concerning the internal culture, and/or the spiritual formation of students?

The PThU as an institution resembles the characteristics of other state subsidized universities, not those of the church. "The university as such does not prepare a student for church life," asserted one teacher from Utrecht. His view was confirmed by a comment made by a student in focus group 2. After the moderator explained what was meant by 'institutional characteristics', he reflected tongue-in-cheek, "If we had to draw lessons for our future pastorate from the institutional characteristics of the PThU, it would be these: make decisions top down; communicate minimally; adopt bureaucratic and oblique procedures; be formalistic, and inflexible."

5a. What is the vision concerning leader education on the one hand and the relation to the cultural context on the other – both the local context and 'context' in a more general sense?

The general context is kept in mind by reflecting on societal developments in several modules, in particular those that are oriented around missiological themes.[73] The local context and its possible influence on a congregation receives attention in a practical theological course that is meant to help students answer this central question during their fieldwork: "How do culture and society permeate *this* congregation?"

In the experience of students, however, the link to leadership in the modules mentioned is only implicitly present, if at all. Moreover, very little is done in terms of vision development, such as grappling with a question like: "What do societal and cultural developments mean for the future of the church?"[74]

5b. In what ways are students put in touch with the extra-ecclesiastical cultural context, both theoretically and practically (for example, by way of fieldwork)?

The BA trajectory incorporates some form of exposure. For example, students from Leiden are required to spend a week in Rotterdam to experience how forms of diaconal

[73] For example, students are supposed to read the sociological report of Jos Becker en Joep de Hart, *Godsdienstige veranderingen in Nederland. Verschuivingen in de binding met de kerken en de christelijke traditie* [Religious changes in the Netherlands: Shifts in the connection with the churches and the Christian tradition] (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2006).

[74] It is the intention of the PThU to give particular attention to this question in the revised curriculum, particularly in Groningen. PThU Director of Education, e-mail message to author, May 2, 2011.

and pastoral work are conducted in a poor and multicultural quarter of the city.[75] In Kampen, this kind of exposure is a mandatory part of the MA trajectory. Furthermore, in the MA phase, the period of fieldwork of at least three months is considered to be important. The contexts in which it is done vary from rural-traditional to urban-experimental.

5c. In what ways are students put in touch with local Christian communities/ churches, including those that are to be found close to the educational institute?
The most noteworthy comment on this question came from the Director of Education. "The choice to move the PThU to the VU University Amsterdam as one of the two new locations," he explained, "was partly motivated by this consideration: we were looking for a context of 'plurality', such as is offered by the migrant churches in Amsterdam."

6. In what ways – including specific modules – are students prepared for a leadership position?
Several teachers indicated that students are more interested in leadership modules and capable of integrating the contents of these modules in their professional lives when they are already working in the ministry.[76] This is an important reason why the PThU places leadership training in the post initial phase, when students have already obtained some experience in the field. Two interviewees who offered training to students advocated a model of dual learning [*duaal leren*], in which practice and learning interact. In addition, teachers voiced a plea that during the so-called permanent education for pastors – which is a responsibility of the PKN, not of the PThU – obligatory leadership modules be offered.[77]

Participants within focus group 1, reflecting on their schooling in the light of their current pastoral situations, considered the lack of attention to management and leadership as the most important shortcoming. Since their graduation, however, some changes have been made in the curriculum. Among other things, students in focus group 2 had read portions of two books that were not available before 2004 and 2009, respectively:

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[75] According to the Director of Education, this module was also to be introduced in Utrecht (and, in due time, in the new locations at Amsterdam and Groningen). "We do not want students to be locked up within the internally focused perspective of the congregation."

[76] Also, in this respect there is quite a big difference between full-time and part-time students. Because of their more extensive life and work experience, part-time students are more responsive to courses that deal with leadership.

[77] Several courses are already offered at Hydepark for pastors on a sabbatical that cover aspects of (missional) leadership, such as New Chances for Being a Missional Church, Leading a Living Body, or Time Management. These modules are not mandatory, but perhaps this will change in the near future, when plans for the mandatory part of permanent education – i.e., 7,5 ec out of a total of 15 ec during five years – are finalized. PThU Director of Education, e-mail message to author, May 2, 2011.

De weg van de groep,[78] which focuses on a situational model of leadership, and *Voor de verandering*,[79] which emphasizes a linear methodological approach to change processes.

In general, students in both groups evaluated the amount of attention given to the leadership dimension as being 'too little, too late'. In particular, they deplored the lack of thought about *vision*, motivating volunteers, and theoretical approaches to leadership. However, the students also mentioned that they had learned some basic skills in conducting meetings and dealing with group dynamics. Training sessions at Hydepark seminary contributed significantly to this score.

7. What does leadership education entail for the educational methods adopted and, more generally, the educational philosophy?

According to the interviewees, some courses are heavily focused on academic issues and have little relation to the actual work of a pastor. Some teachers seem to lose sight of the fact that the goal of the MA route is to educate for a *profession*. That being said, there is a general trend toward using more inductive methods to obtain knowledge, with some regional differences (e.g. in Leiden these methods are used more regularly than in Utrecht). In addition, the PThU has adopted a competency approach, a form of assessment in which students are asked to show how they handle academic knowledge in a manner that is methodologically thought through and that fits the situation and the persons involved (the pastor included). However, the competency approach is not without its problems. The most important of these is that many professors find it difficult to teach in a way that is 'competency oriented'. This might be a reason why most module descriptions generally lack a specification as to what educational methods are adopted and why. An exception is the 5 ec module Leading and Giving Guidence [*Leiden en Begeleiding Geven*], offered in Leiden, which aims to use instructional materials, role playing and group feedback to contribute to leadership skills and to proficiency in *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*. Apart from this module, such varied and person-oriented educational methods are only adopted during the training weeks at Hydepark seminary and in forms of supervision or intervision during the fieldwork period.

Students acknowledge that they learned the most when a variety of educational methods were adopted. Still, they prefer having solid lectures rather than giving presentations themselves. They see this last method as an artificial form chosen by professors who know they are supposed to teach in a different way than before but are at a loss as to how to do so. The students also think that modules were only loosely connected, even when presented as 'integrated' or 'interdisciplinary'.

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[78] Jodien van Ark en Henk de Roest, *De weg van de groep. Leidinggeven aan groepen in gemeente en parochie* [The way of the group: Leading groups in the congregation and the parish] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2004).

[79] Sake Stoppels, *Voor de verandering. Werken aan vernieuwing in gemeente en parochie* [For a change: Working on renewal within the congregation and the parish] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2009).

8. What qualifications do the teachers have that are important for their role in the process of leader education?
Teachers are supposed to have had pastoral experience and didactic schooling. In the MA-route for pastors, the intention is to only appoint professors who have at least *some* capacity for personal coaching or mentoring, but the fact is that some teachers are solely academics and unable to function as such. Another tension is that the president of the PThU is primarily interested in attracting faculty who are excellent scholars, while the PKN needs faculty who capable of educating future pastors, and a scholar is not always a good team player or 'people developer'.

Students found themselves inspired by some teachers, especially if they showed zeal, vision and personal faith. Such teachers were considered good examples who contributed to leader education. Other teachers were evaluated negatively because of the content of their courses, or the educational methods they used, or both.

9. What does leader education mean for the recruitment and selection of students (also during their studies)?
In practice, everyone who wants to study at the PThU is welcome, but during the BA phase, those students who appear to lack the necessary capabilities are required to quit. The website www.domineeworden.nl (i.e. becoming a pastor) is supposed to help with recruitment.

Both teachers and students added that the PKN itself seems to lack a vision for and a policy on how to recruit young persons with leadership potential from local congregations.

10.3 Theological University in Kampen (TUK)

10.3.1 Obtaining the Data

The Theological University in Kampen (TUK) was established in 1945, in the wake of a split in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands from which the Reformed Churches (liberated) [*Gereformeerde Kerken* (*vrijgemaakt*)] originated. This church used to be characterized by a strong emphasis on correct doctrine and church order. From the 1990's on, however, the Reformed Churches (liberated) has become somewhat more pluralistic, due to influences from other churches and evangelical movements and by changes in the culture at large. Between October 2010 and January 2011, interviews were held with three persons within the TUK, a small institute that in 2010 enrolled approximately forty students in the *predikantenopleiding*.[80] In total this amounted to slightly more than five hours of interviews and twenty-one pages of transcript. Also, a focus group session was held with four male student volunteers who had almost finished the MA preparing

[80] Source: the Dean of the TUK, in a telephone call with the author, January 28, 2012.

them for the pastorate,[81] which lasted for more than two hours and had a calm and reflective atmosphere. A third source of data was the TUK-website,[82] including a prospectus with course descriptions and two documents that contained a profile of pastors in the Reformed Churches (liberated).[83]

10.3.2 Presentation of Findings

The framework of questions

In response to the framework of questions, one interviewee spontaneously said: "These are the questions that should be asked and on which we should have reflected much more. We have focused too little on cultural analyses. From the 1980's on we should have chosen leadership as a focus of theological education and research." Another respondent thought the questions implied that the interviewer was someone who knew what he wanted to talk about. Still, he felt he needed to know the precise meanings of some of the terms used before he was able to answer the questions. The students also noticed that some concepts could be interpreted in more than one way, in particular that of 'spiritual formation' (see question 4, below).

1a. What is the purpose of theological education at this particular institute (and in particular, the *predikantenopleiding* [=MA-route for pastors])?

The purpose of the TUK is the scholarly, spiritual, personal and practical formation [*vorming*] of future theologians and leaders of the *Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt)*.[84] Students added that, in their experience, being a 'theological expert' is considered the end goal of their MA trajectory.

1b. What are visions on leadership and church office?

* *The pastor is a leader*

According to one interviewee, "you are a leader from the moment you climb the pulpit or defend a policy proposal in a meeting of the consistory." In effect, then, a pastor is a leader, "someone who walks in front, someone who shows the way." This should be, or become, the self-perception of future pastors. Furthermore, he was of the opinion that "all education that helps future clergy in their functioning stands in a framework of 'leadership development'."

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[81] Two students – one female and one male – who planned to attend, called off shortly before the session.

[82] www.tukampen.nl.

[83] The most important document is called *Beroepsprofiel Gereformeerd Predikant* [Profile of the profession of a Reformed pastor] of March 2002. The second document is "Naar een herzien predikantsprofiel" [Toward a renewed profile of the pastor], of April/May, 2006. This paper was written by several practical theologians within the TUK. It contains a plea for specialization in tasks for pastors, because of the increased complexity of congregational life and of differentiation of talents.

[84] In official documents the expression used is *gereformeerd dienaar van het Woord* [Reformed servant of the Word]. Such a person has specific characteristics on the 'dimensions' of (1) spirituality; (2) convictions; (3) person; (4) competence [*deskundigheid*]. Source: *Beroepsprofiel Gereformeerd Predikant*.

Both teachers and students agreed that the TUK does not have a carefully thought through and integrated vision on leadership as such. Some aspects of a view on leadership were encountered during the research, however.[85] An important point that regularly surfaced in documents and discussions was that a pastor should have a *vision*, based on both biblical and theological convictions and on an analysis of what is happening in the congregation and its environment. It was recognized, however, that a pastor is likely to be more effective if he[86] also participates in activities – i.e. if he demonstrates things – instead of just trying to convey a vision. "The showing of good practices should receive much more attention."

A primary association that some of the students had concerning the word 'leader' was that of a charismatic, guru-like person who says: "This is what we are going to do, follow me." This picture did not resonate well with them. One student said that the word 'leadership' irritated him. The term *voorganger* [minister, pastor, vicar] appealed to him much more, especially because of its connotation of 'walking in front'. He was, however, not able to put into words what he thought the difference was between the concepts of *voorganger* and leader. The students all agreed that the topic of leadership – its diverse interpretations, connections with church office, other theological themes, and one's personal functioning – was hardly explained during their theological study, apart from when it was addressed during supervision.[87] They added that the focus group session made them more aware of this and also of what possible meanings are attached to the concept of leadership.

* *Spiritual leadership*

During the interviews, two interviewees emphasized that leadership in the church should not primarily be perceived as management or the presiding over meetings, but as *spiritual* leadership. This means: walking in front and being an example to provide direction for others in their spiritual life. It has to do with serving God and one's neighbor, following Christ, and being oriented towards the future and the second coming of Christ. More specifically, a pastor provides spiritual leadership by preaching, teaching or catechesis, and the way he handles pastoral situations. "Leadership is not an empty concept; ideally it is 'filled' by (ably) switching between the Word, the Reformed tradition, the wider church, and the life world [*leefwereld*]." But the third interviewee (the teacher of the leadership course), thought that talking about spiritual leadership was a bit hyped and that it did not really help to enlighten the processes of power and influence that occur in a congregation and the pastors' role therein.

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[85] Note that in in 2003, a practical theological PhD dissertation on leadership was completed at the TUK: Albert J. Remmelzwaal, *Actief en afhankelijk. Een praktijktheorie voor leiderschap in kerkelijke gemeenten* (Delft: Eburon, 2003). This exemplifies that leadership as a topic of scholarly research did receive attention in recent years.

[86] Within the Reformed Churches (liberated), the pastor is always a male.

[87] The course Leading in the Congregation [*gemeente*] of Christ – more on this below – did little to alter this general impression.

* *Missional leadership*

All the teachers interviewed thought that the pastor of the future should be 'missional',[88] meaning that he should help congregants become more missional [*missionair*]. He should come to think like this: "I do not live for myself, but I should share the Gospel with others, whoever they may be." Another respondent approached this topic from a different angle. He mentioned that missional leadership, if taken seriously, would entail that adjustments are made in the structuring dimension of a local congregation. Such proposed changes, however, could conflict with current church law.

The students did not remember whether, during their formal theological education, they had discussed or read about recent theological contributions concerning missional leadership or the missional character or vocation of the church. They were aware of the fact that, since 2009, the TUK has offered a MA specialization called Missional Congregation[89] for students from inside or outside the TUK. Their own trajectory, which prepared them for the pastorate, did not, however, include integrated theological and practical reflection on church and mission, nor on the pastor being co-responsible for mission. One student mentioned that he did not regret this, because he had no real interest in the topic. When asked to clarify, he replied that, over the last few years, he had gained the impression that many plans to evangelize or be a missionary church, etc. had not borne much fruit. Instead, they wore people out. Among the students, the word 'mission'[90] primarily conjured up pictures of missionary work in foreign countries, and this was also the focus in a module on missiology (3 ec) that they had followed. This course had also communicated the idea that *missio Dei*-talk was theologically suspect because of its 'horizontal' character.[91]

* *Church office*

Offices in the church are important, the interviewees affirmed. A favorite metaphor used within the TUK is that offices form the arteries, muscles, or sinew system throughout the whole body. The students remarked that the congregation is ruled by offices, but that they did not know how this theological conviction relates to questions of leadership.

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[88] Cf. the Introduction and Mission of the TUK, as described in the 2010-2011 Study Guide, in which the 'missional calling of the church' is mentioned.

[89] See http://www.tukampen.nl/pr/TUK%20Master%20Missionaire%20gemeente.pdf (last accessed April 12, 2011). This is a one year program.

[90] Or the word 'missiology', in the case of one student.

[91] The students did not refer to the goals and the contents of another MA course with a missional component, called *Evangelistiek* (3 ec). One of the goals of this course (as stated on paper) is for students to be able to reflect on their own attitude and role in leading a congregation, or a team of co-workers, in regard to its 'missional consciousness'. As to content, the module promises to offer an acquaintance with contextual forms of church in a missional context. Moreover, the student will "provide suggestions for the process of transformation [*metamorfoseproces*] of the church that is more-or-less traditional to a context-sensitive missional church." Given that the students did not mention this course, it seems that it did not make a lasting impression on them. The moderator did not, however, explicitly ask if this was indeed the case. Admittedly, this was a missed opportunity.

2. What is the ideal or vision concerning the internal culture of the school, including the aspect of community, and what does this mean in practice?

The TUK is a small institution. This allows for teachers and students to get to know each other to a certain extent, which enhances the experience of community. Weekly chapel services and communal lunches are organized to emphasize the aspect of community even more. This is in line with one of the starting points of the didactic learning concept that was formulated in 2003, i.e. to be a faith community, next to being a learn- and work community.[92] One student, however, indicated that he experienced the atmosphere in the TUK as somewhat stifling. This had to do with the fact that he himself is not a member of the Reformed Churches (liberated), and that he is an active participant in the Emerging-Missional milieu instead – something that he found to be all too rare in the TUK.

Students mentioned the TUK-library as a place that is inviting not only to study but also to share thoughts with others. They are also very positive about the few special weeks in the curriculum that are organized around certain themes – the so called *blokweken*. These one-week units, containing interdisciplinary courses with moments of reflection and discussion, enhance the sense of being part of a community of Christian learners.

3. What is the vision concerning the spiritual formation of students and how is this vision implemented?

One teacher interviewed mentioned that a few years ago, during an evaluative session, one student regretted the lack of spirituality during his theological studies, asserting that "even a pagan can graduate here." Since then, however, things have changed. One course on Spirituality is offered in the Bachelor (3 ec), and one on Ethics/Spirituality in the MA (4 ec). In addition to these theoretical modules, there are several times that teachers and students are together for liturgical worship, such as the weekly chapel services. Furthermore, opportunities are sought to allow future students to spend some days or perhaps a few weeks in a monastery so that they can study there while also participating in the services.

When asked to reflect on whether "The seminary gives attention to the personal spiritual formation of the student," the students' reactions were diverse. One reason for this diversity is that the term personal spiritual formation [*persoonlijke geestelijke vorming*] didn't seem to be familiar to some of them.[93] Their answers showed that they variously interpreted it to refer to personal growth, intellectual stimulation, and pastoral formation, but not to spiritual mentoring or learning how to pray. One student missed suffi-

[92] Theologische Universiteit Broederweg Kampen, "Onderwijsleerconcept" [didactic learning concept] (2003), 1. Cf. Bijlage "Onderwijsleerconcept: Uitgangspunten van het onderwijsleerconcept" (2003), 1.

[93] One student remarked that the particular Dutch expression that was used stood in the way. Instead of *persoonlijke geestelijke vorming* [personal spiritual formation], he proposed *spirituele vorming* [spiritual formation].

cient attention to spirituality and discipleship during his education. Another was more positive, asserting that his faith had been strengthened during his study of theology. Two students declared that they had almost quit their studies, because of the one sided accent on 'dry theory' that was disconnected from real life, especially during their BA.[94] All students were positive about supervision during their period of fieldwork, noting that it contributed to their personal development.

4a. What are the most important characteristics of the institutional dimension of the *predikantenopleiding* and, more generally, of the school as a whole?
This question was not discussed in a way that yielded any substantial results for this dissertation. The term 'institutional dimension' was seen as encompassing too wide a variety of aspects.

4b. How do these institutional characteristics relate to the goal of theological education, visions on leadership and church office, the ideal concerning the internal culture, and the spiritual formation of students?
This topic did not draw much attention either, but one moment is interesting to recount. One student spontaneously reflected that: "This means that if you want to prepare students for collaborating and working in teams, you should facilitate and promote collaboration and teamwork in the theological institution itself! Otherwise you say one thing, while communicating something else with your actions." This interpretation was confirmed by the moderator. The students knew of no intention of the TUK to act in the sort of consistent and intentional way that the student had just sketched.

5a. What is the vision concerning leader education on the one hand and the relation to the cultural context on the other – both the local context and 'context' in a more general sense?
This question was glossed over in the interviews. The opinions of the students can be summarized as follows. At first they indicated that they had been encouraged to reflect on some characteristics of and developments in Western culture and Dutch society. When asked for examples, one of the students mentioned the term 'postmodern(ism)', with associated concepts like individualism, and a general 'emphasis on feeling'. After some more probing, however, it appeared that the term 'cultural hermeneutics' was unknown to them. The general field of cultural philosophy had, so it seems, not been emphasized much. In addition, it became clear that during their six years[95] of theological study, the question what certain cultural characteristics and developments might mean

[94] Note that the BA program that the students refer to, differs from the more integrated program that is currently in operation (it started in September 2010).
[95] This is excluding a first year of language study (Latin and Greek) for some of the students and/or delays during their trajectory.

for the church, for local congregations, or for its leadership, was not addressed in a rigorous way. One student thought this was not a problem: he was confident that he could deal with this issue as a pastor. It did not become clear, however, on what basis he made this claim. Both the moderator and the assistant moderator noticed that students regularly said "I think that," or "I guess that," without providing arguments or linking their opinion to experiences obtained in practice. This might have something to do with the next topic.

5b. In what ways are students put in touch with the extra-ecclesiastical cultural context, both theoretically and practically (for example, by way of fieldwork)?
The TUK does not use forms of intentional exposure. The MA has two weeks of fieldwork in the second year, and ten weeks in the third and final year. During their previous BA trajectory, the fieldwork component had been negligible.[96] The students agreed that this didn't add up to much practical experience during six years of study. One of them thought this was fine. "This is an academic institute, not a professional school for pastors," he said. "The profession is not central; you are being educated to be an academic theologian." He implied that *either* a student is educated to be a theologian, which is done by reading books, writing papers and so on; *or* one is trained for a profession, by being involved in forms of fieldwork for substantial periods of time.[97] Another student, who had first completed a degree in a different discipline, attempted to correct him on this score. He suggested that it is possible to be academically trained while doing work in the field, obtaining data there, and subsequently reflecting on this in a theoretically informed way. This topic was further discussed and, in the end, all the students agreed that their study period would have been much more fruitful and relevant if they had been more explicitly connected to practice.

5c. In what ways are students put in touch with local Christian communities and churches, including those located close to the educational institute?
This topic was not addressed. From studying documents it became clear that students are required to do fieldwork (discussed in 5b), but this may take place far away from Kampen. There is no policy of stimulating a special relationship between local churches and TUK students. It is also true, however, that quite a few of the TUK graduate students are active in their own local congregation, and sometimes fulfill a church office.

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[96] In recent years, however, more attention has been given to practical experience in the BA.
[97] Interestingly, the paper "Toward a renewed profile of the pastor" (see n83) states that the traditional differentiation between academic theology on the one hand and professional education on the other hand should be redefined. This is necessary in order to be able to educate pastors who are hermeneutically competent. From the reaction of this student, it appears that the TUK has not yet succeeded in fully implementing this vision of integrating academic and professional forms of education.

6. In what ways – including specific modules – are students prepared for a leadership position?

Leadership receives some attention in courses on congregational studies [*gemeenteopbouw*], with a focus on the process of policy development and implementation. During the fieldwork period of ten weeks that follows after these courses, students are expected to spend twenty hours on this topic: reading policy statements of the congregation, interviewing some key players and writing a paper on their observations. In addition, students follow one explicit course on leadership, called Leading in the Congregation [*gemeente*] of Christ. The CD with scholarly articles on leadership that students receive[98] is up-to-date, as are the classes about different leadership topics.[99] The module is limited in its scope, however, because it is valued at only 1 ec, which is 28 hours. Moreover, insights that are provided during this course are not integrated with other programs in the curriculum or with field work assignments. During the last few years, however, the TUK has developed some leadership modules for the Permanent Education of Pastors (PEP). These are not yet mandatory, but that might soon change, according to the interviewees.

7. What does leader education entail for the educational methods adopted and, more generally, the educational philosophy?

During the interviews, empirical research was mentioned as an important method with a high educational value. At the same time, interviewees admitted that it is only used rarely. As one interviewee said, "The TUK has not yet developed an educational philosophy or educational methods that correlate strongly with praxis." For students, the emphasis is on hearing lectures, reading books and articles, and writing papers. Other forms of assessment, such as multi-media projects, radio scripts, or outlines for Bible study groups were not mentioned, nor encountered in documents.[100] Furthermore, when a product is produced by a group of students, the teacher comments on the content, not on the process of cooperation by which it was produced.

However, during their period of fieldwork, students had received ten supervision sessions. They valued these highly, but added that the kind of learning and reflection that occurred in these sessions was quite exceptional. A plea was voiced for more explicit integration of theory and practice within the rest of the curriculum.

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[98] One student said that he did not remember obtaining the cd.

[99] This conclusion follows from a survey of the Power Point presentations that were used in the classes belonging to this module.

[100] It is true, though, that the TUK states in its Didactic Learning Concept that the constructivistic view on learning, which is focused (among other things) on learning as an active process involving discovery, critical selfreflection, and learning with and from others, is deemed to be "very important." The practical consequences are not spelled out, however. Source: "Bijlage Onderwijsleerconcept: Uitgangspunten van het onderwijsleerconcept" (2003), 6.

8. What qualifications do the teachers have that are important for their roles in the process of leader education?

The basis for tenure lies in having academic qualifications in a specific field. Thus far, it is not the policy of the TUK to appoint those persons as teachers who have shown a more-than-average competence in the field of leadership during a sustained period of actual practice. Moreover, questions concerning the application[101] of students' knowledge of certain theological fields, such as dogmatics or church history, are left for the practical theologians to address.

Students observed that teachers devoted most of their long work weeks to activities that had little to do with actual church practice. This makes it harder to discern in what respects they are fit for and contributing to leader education in any direct sense. The competencies of the professors are primarily seen to lie in the intellectual sphere, as is their contribution to the education of future pastors – i.e. providing content that is related to theology. Two exceptions were mentioned a few times, however. The first pertained to those teachers who were involved in providing supervision, because this is an educational method which stimulates an integrated form of reflection (instead of just a cognitive or theoretical one). The second concerned a specific teacher who had the habit of starting with a disclaimer like "I am not a theologian, but..." – and who then continued to offer sharp and wise questions and comments that were related to the actual functioning of the church in general, or to that of a concrete congregation, including aspects of leadership therein.

9. What does leader education mean for the recruitment and selection of students (also during their studies)?

"We have a recruitment problem," one interviewee stated forthrightly. "We do not know how to interest the more 'adventurous' types of talented young people for the study of theology, or for the pastorate." Another respondent observed that it is no longer the case that students come to the TUK in order to become a pastor. "Mostly they come to study theology, and it is yet to be seen if they will become a pastor." Both remarks were confirmed by reactions within the focus group.

10.4 Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF)

10.4.1 Obtaining the Data

The Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF) is located in Leuven [Louvain], Belgium. Its roots stretch back to 1919, when the Bible Institute Belgium [*Institut Biblique de la Mission Belge Evangélique*] was established in Brussels with the goal of educating Belgian

[101] The term 'application' is important here, because the (potential) *relevance* of knowledge of church history and dogmatics was duly emphasized.

church leaders and evangelists. In 1975, the Bible Institute moved to a former Jesuit monastery and study centre in Heverlee,[102] where the ETF is still located today. In 1981, the ETF was founded under the auspices of the Bible Institute in order to obtain a license to provide academic degrees. This license was granted,[103] and from 2007 onwards the ETF has received some government funding,[104] although less than universities such as the PThU and the TUK. For its finances, the ETF is therefore also dependent on student fees (which are quite modest) and gifts (which are limited, too). This means that there are fewer paid staff members than at other institutions of comparable size and that not all teachers receive a salary for their services.

The goal of the ETF is to deepen and strengthen the international evangelical movement by educating future pastors, scholars and religious educators at an academic level. The student population of the ETF is around two hundred people, part-time and full-time students combined. In the MA program,[105] about half of the students come from abroad, as well as some of their professors. This is one reason why the MA program is offered in English.

To obtain data for the present chapter, we visited the ETF twice. The first time was in December 2010, when three staff members were interviewed. The interviews resulted in thirteen pages of transcript in total. The second visit was in March 2011, when a focus group session of almost two hours was held with six MA students, one female and five males. The moderator had not selected these students beforehand; they volunteered to participate in response to a request sent by the administration. As it happens, the volunteers constituted a very diverse group. The one female member studied in Religious Studies & Education. Three males specialized in Bible and Theology, while two others followed the program Church & Pastoral Ministries. This last specialization prepares more directly for the pastorate than does Bible and Theology. The atmosphere during the session was both lively and spontaneous, as well as thoughtful and nuanced.

Another source of data consisted of the following documents that were consulted: the Self-evaluation Report (June 2005); the Study Guide (version 2010-2011); a document on mentoring in the ETF (2010-2011), and some articles that are used in the module Models of Christian Leadership, on which more is said below.

10.4.2 Presentation of Findings

The framework of questions

Both interviewees and students thought that in general the framework of questions was important and pertinent, but there were two *caveats*. The first was the same as we saw

[102] Heverlee is a small village that is part of the municipality of Leuven.

[103] 1983: Licentiate and Doctor of Theology; 2003: Bachelor, Master and Doctor in Theology and Religious Studies.

[104] This is approximately one-third of the total ETF budget. Note that the ETF receives no subsidies for scholarly research.

[105] This two-year course is also referred to as a ThM program.

earlier, viz. that some of the terms can be interpreted in multiple ways and are multi-layered. The second concerned the character of the ETF. As we pointed out above, the goal of the ETF is not just to educate future pastors, but is more broadly defined. One of the first remarks made by the students was about this spectrum of different educational routes, because it influenced their interpretation of the questions. For example, one focus group participant was not planning to be a pastor, but to teach religion in a high school. Another pointed out that he already had quite some leadership experience when he started his education at the ETF. The framework of questions proved to be of use in bringing out these and other personal differences. It also stimulated a fruitful discussion.

1a. What is the purpose of theological education at this particular institute (and in particular, the *predikantenopleiding* [=MA-route for pastors])?

The purpose of the ETF is to equip leaders who are biblically grounded, well educated, culturally enriched, and prepared to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. On the website, the ETF vision statement is worded differently on its English and Dutch pages respectively. The English page uses the expression "We equip leaders,"[106] while the Dutch page replaces the word 'leaders' with 'people'. The reason for this variation has to do with the different cultural constituencies of the ETF: the idea of leader and leadership have much more appeal in the English-speaking world[107] than they do in Belgium and the Netherlands, where it is often associated with narcissism or arrogance, and not with a servant-like attitude.

During classes or other public occasions, students are regularly addressed as future leaders, whatever educational route they have chosen – Religious Studies & Education [*Godsdienst & Onderwijs*], Bible & Theology [*Bijbel & Theologie*], or Church & Pastoral Ministries [*Kerk & Pastoraat*].[108] This means, so it is explained, that their talk and walk will influence other people's hearts and minds. Moreover, during their student years it is emphasized that this process has already started. As we shall soon see, this emphasis does have an effect on the way some of the students see themselves.

1b. What are visions on leadership and church office?

Generally speaking, the concept of leadership in the ETF – which is not restricted to pastors or church leadership, as noted above[109] – is viewed through three theoretical

[106] http://www.etf.edu/en/over-ons/identiteit.html (last accessed May 2, 2011).

[107] One of the students and one interviewee put it this way: "Particularly in America, the reasoning goes like this, 'If you do not educate leaders, than what *are* you doing?!'"

[108] This last specialization is in particular focused on educating theologians in an ecclesiastical and pastoral context, without intending to comprise all elements of a full-fledged *predikantenopleiding*. Moreover, future pastors also study in the two other specializations.

[109] Note also that in 2008 the ETF erected an Institute of Leadership and Ethics (ILE) that is focused on Christian policy makers in business, politics, the European Union, and other non-church settings. http://christianleadership.be/ (last accessed January 31, 2012).

lenses. These are those of situational leadership, transformational leadership, and social identity.[110]

Approached from a situational perspective, a leader should be able to come up with adequate practical responses to problems that occur within or outside of the organization in which he or she works. This response should be fitting to the capabilities and cultural characteristics of the different persons or groups that are involved.

Seen from the transformational viewpoint, a leader needs to provide, *inter alia*, intellectual stimulation for followers. For the ETF, here, the focus is on hermeneutical competency. In practical terms, this means functioning as a sense-maker or opinion leader in answering questions such as "What are the christological or ecclesiological aspects of such-and-such a popular Christian model for congregational renewal?"

The lens of leadership and group identity focuses on how leaders and followers come to see each other as part of a common team or group, with shared values, beliefs, and habits that form its identity. An effective leader is supposed to be something like an 'entrepreneur in identity'. A leader – and this may well be a pastor – should start by asking questions like: "What is the current identity of this group? What is its cultural context? How can I help this group to form an identity that fits its environment?"

Several students recognized that leadership is an important theme in the ETF. While they had not embarked on their studies with leadership in mind – studying theology being their primary goal – they mostly did not hesitate to call themselves leaders, i.e. someone who influences other people. At the same time, students acknowledged that the leadership schooling offered is primarily theoretical. This means that important skills – such as coaching others,[111] or dealing with the gap between theoretical ideas and ideals and 'real life' situations – will have to be learned after graduation. For this reason, one student questioned if the ETF can, in fact, be said to equip leaders. He reasoned that while some graduates may, in due time, indeed become leaders, others will not. After reflecting on his arguments, the group as a whole agreed that occupying a leadership position, which conveys authority in a formal sense, does not automatically mean that someone actually exerts leadership.

The ETF does not have one particular view on church office, because its constituency is very diverse. The topic duly receives attention, though, for example, during modules on ecclesiology which are offered during the BA. Furthermore, although quite a few students and teachers come from a free church background, often with a concomitant

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[110] Leadership and social identity is considered in S. Alexander Haslam, Stephen D. Reicher, and Michael J. Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 2011). The views expressed in this book influenced one of the professors interviewed during his recently completed PhD research on leadership patterns in Pauline communities. He conceded, however, that some pertinent insights concerning leadership and social identity have yet to find their way into the curriculum.

[111] Note that one of the stated goals of the Church & Pastoral Ministries MA program is that students be "able to coach others." The focus group session gives reason to question if this goal is actually reached.

low and functional view of church office, within the ETF the students are encouraged not to underestimate the sacral aspect.[112]

2. What is the ideal or vision concerning the internal culture of the school, including the aspect of community, and what does this mean in practice?

Briefly put, the ETF aims at an integration of academics and spirituality. Faith and prayer are cultivated, while practical tasks are also engaged upon. Many students, especially undergraduates, live on the campus and form part of a cooking group, which enhances the community feeling. They also spend some 150 hours doing practical work each year, such as staffing the library, serving as a student-assistant to a teacher, or helping to prepare conferences or festivities. These extracurricular activities help to diminish financial costs, but are also meant to enhance the feeling of involvement in the ETF as a community, and to contribute to what is called 'social formation' [*sociale vorming*]. Furthermore, students and teachers participate in weekly chapel services, and they regularly share meals together. According to students, professors are also approachable for questions of a more personal nature. Moreover, even if the professors teach theoretical or 'dry' subjects, students see their Christian faith and motivation shining through.

3. What is the vision concerning the spiritual formation of students and how is this vision implemented?

If an ETF student expects to be spiritually formed, as in a Bible school, he or she is likely to be disappointed, one focus group participant reflected. That being said – all the participants agreed that, considering the limited possibilities for spiritual formation that the ETF as an academic institute has, it does an excellent job. For one, students are actively encouraged by the staff to participate in Bible study groups and in local churches. This kind of stimulation already shows that spiritual formation is considered important. For another, there is a special committee with a focus on spirituality. Moreover, mentorship is understood to be part of the academic and spiritual climate at the ETF. It includes the weekly chapels, student small groups, the course Spirituality in the BA program, spiritual moments in various courses and the personal contact between student and staff. Academic formation as such is also seen as contributing to spiritual formation. "We recognize a spiritual dimension in the classes that is inspiring," one student added. "Professors are idealistic, they believe they are sent here by God. They try to reach you as a person – even if they do not always succeed in this."

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[112] Cf. Patrick Nullens, "Het drievoudig ambt van Christus en geestelijk leiderschap in de vrije kerken," [The threefold office of Christ and spiritual leadership in the Free Churches] in Pieter Boersema et al. eds., *Gezag in beweging. Kerkelijk leiderschap tussen tekst en contex*t [Authority on the move: Ecclesiastical leadership between text and context] (Heerenveen: Protestantse Pers, 2008), 37-57. The book as a whole is the product of a joint effort by ETF teachers.

4a. What are the most important characteristics of the institutional dimension of the *predikantenopleiding* and, more generally, the school as a whole?

While this topic was not focused on in the interviews, students' reactions on this topic were diverse, because they defined the terms that referred to the institutional dimension in various ways. Their views may be summarized as follows. On the one hand, the opinion was expressed that the ETF does achieve what it aims for, i.e. nurturing academic excellence. Those who are directly responsible for this institute are to be credited for this. On the other hand, students perceive that there are some professors who are allowed to stay in their teaching position for years in a row, although this does not seem to be best suited to their educational capabilities. This is also interpreted as an aspect of the institutional dimension.

4b. How do these institutional characteristics relate to the goal of theological education, visions on leadership and church office, the ideal concerning the internal culture, and the spiritual formation of students?

In so far as students have direct contact with the board of directors of the ETF, they are seen as constituting a good example of what Christian leadership is about. This includes a servant-like attitude, as exemplified in – for example – the administrative director painting a wall himself, or in the rector helping with the dishes during the yearly Christmas dinner.

5a. What is the vision concerning leader education on the one hand and the relation to the cultural context on the other – both the local context and 'context' in a more general sense?

As to the local context, the staff tries to make the best use of the fact that the ETF is located in Leuven – an important center of scholarship and multiculturalism – and close to the city of Brussels, which has a comparable status.

Contextual issues in a broad sense receive much attention in the ETF. Many courses explicitly address current cultural and societal developments, and what these may mean for churches and Christians. In the focus group, the 5 ec module Postmodernism and Theological Hermeneutics was mentioned as just one example. The literature prescribed for courses of whatever variety seemed up-to-date and of a high academic level, judging from the content, the publishing houses and the standing of authors. In this way, students are exposed to a wide range of current scholarly approaches and insights. In addition, the ETF has students of more than thirty nationalities in its graduate programs. This is seen as an opportunity for students to learn how to appreciate other cultures, both inside and outside the classroom. As the Study Guide puts it: "We prepare teachers, pastors and leaders for a multicultural society."

5b. In what ways are students put in touch with the extra-ecclesiastical cultural context, both theoretically and practically (for example, by way of fieldwork)?
Generally speaking, education within the ETF is focused on acquiring theory and cognitive tools, while the connection to actual practice is indirect. However, in their final year, all undergraduate students are required to spend a period of three months (14 ec) in fieldwork. When students continue their studies with a MA trajectory, they participate in a 5 ec Field Study Project,[113] during which they conduct research in a church or other social environment (depending on their specialization). The data acquired during this field research is supposed to provide the basic information for the subsequent recommendations that students are to forward. In this module, there is thus an intrinsic connection between theory and fieldwork.

5c. In what ways are students put in touch with local Christian communities and churches, including those located close to the educational institute?
As mentioned earlier, students are encouraged to be involved with local churches. Many of the students who pursue their MA degree are, indeed, active in a local congregation.

6. In what ways – including specific modules – are students prepared for a leadership position?
MA students, regardless of their specialization, are all required to follow the 5 ec module called Models of Christian Leadership. The main professor for this module has worked in marketing and general management with an international company for twenty-five years. Students see him as inspirational and enthusiastic [*aanstekelijk*], because he clearly knows what he is talking about. However, they also think that the course is not really about 'Christian' leadership, but mostly about leadership in general. Students are, for example, required to study a book by Peter Northouse called *Leadership*,[114] which contains an overview of various approaches to leadership. Moreover, they are encouraged to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses in regard to different managerial or leadership roles with accruing competencies. Another assignment involves critically discussing a popular view of Christian leadership. In doing this, students are supposed to address theological issues – among other things. Practical theological courses also focus on the topic of leadership, for example, in a BA program on church development [*gemeenteopbouw*], 4 ec.

During the interview, one interviewee remarked that he personally regrets that there are, next to the PhD program, no postgraduate programs in Europe similar to the American Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program. Through such a program, graduate students could receive a double education. They would first receive an MA degree in 'classical'

[113] Note, however, that this course is *not* required for Bible & Theology students.
[114] Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, fourth ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007).

theology. Then they could pursue their studies in a more professionally focused trajectory, which could well be in the field of leadership.

7. What does leader education entail for the educational methods adopted and, more generally, the educational philosophy?

The Study Guide states as the 'didactic starting point' the concept of *learning in dialogue*: a theoretical basis is laid down with space for discussion of specific themes, both inside and outside the classroom. Resources such as classes, presentations, research assignments and internships are used to help integrate theory with concrete applications. This should "lead to the stimulation of students to an attitude of *lifelong and life-broad learning*."[115] A social-constructivistic approach to education is not adopted,[116] but it is not explained why this is the case.

During the interviews and the focus group session, the dominant picture that arose was that of a 'classical' educational model (although there are, to be sure, classes in which students' presentations and discussions are central): the professor is the knowledgeable expert, while the student is the recipient of a certain body of content. One respondent recounted how he had recently chosen a different approach (in a program on religious education in the church) by instructing students to research how local congregations give shape to religious education. He reflected that a classical model of education implicitly conveys a vision of leadership, viz. 'leaders are experts'. The consequence may be that an ETF graduate who becomes a pastor views himself as the prime theological connoisseur and the congregation as a small Bible school. He may thereby be prone to neglect taking the perhaps theologically unsophisticated views of congregants seriously, in particular those he does not agree with. This negligence, however, will probably hinder his ability to be a successful 'entrepreneur in identity'. Moreover, those congregants who show the most affinity to theology are likely to be given more positive attention and more interesting tasks – just like students with high grades. In this manner, brothers or sisters who have gifts that are not intellectual – or those with expertise in a different field than that of theology – may be overlooked.

During the focus group session, students used the metaphor of 'infusion' to illustrate the emphasis on conveying information and theory that is characteristic of many ETF courses. One participant added that he did not think that this method was particularly suitable for future leaders. "In my opinion, leaders are formed during – for instance – supervision sessions." Supervision, however, is not compulsory in the Church & Pastoral Ministries specialization. Another told about reading a student paper on the topic of homosexuality that had a solely conceptual approach. "Clearly, the author did not know

[115] See section 5.2, "Short Didactic Concept," in ETF Study guide: Academic Year 2010-2011, 175.

[116] It is explained that although there is attention to competences and learning outcomes in a broad sense, "that doesn't mean that ETF programs are structured according to the model of competency-directed learning based on a social constructivist vision of education (L. Vygotsky, J. Piaget, S. Papert, J. Brunner)." Ibid., 174n2.

any homosexuals. The pastoral dimension was out of view." All in all, the group agreed that the issue of educational and didactic methods should receive more attention.

8. What qualifications do the teachers have that are important for their role in the process of leader education?

The students acknowledged and appreciated that most, perhaps all, teachers have practical experience in the field of leadership, even if this might be from years ago. They also noted, however, that the impressive research capabilities of some professors are not always matched by their didactic gifts and their educational approach. Again, the point of educational methods was raised as one that needs attention.

9. What does leader education mean for the recruitment and selection of students (also during their studies)?

The ETF wants to recruit motivated students. An admission procedure which includes an intake is used to assist with this. Many students who start with one or more years at the ETF do not yet know where this will lead them. Students who pursue an MA degree have a much clearer view of what they would and what they would not want to do after graduation.

As to selection, when admitting to pursue a PhD degree, the doctoral committee also takes into account whether they are believed to have sufficient capabilities to occupy a leadership position in the future (in a broad sense of the term).

10.5 Concluding Remarks

The research of this chapter centered on describing views on leadership and practices of leader education within three theological institutes in the Low Countries. A framework of questions, based on the previously developed conceptualization of missional leadership, was adopted to assist in this task. The findings that we obtained in each institute showed that this framework, 'translated' into questions and statements that were used in interviews and focus groups, is a fruitful heuristic instrument for eliciting perspectives on leadership and leader education.

More generally, among both teachers and students, the questions effectively *stimulated awareness* of whatever views they held about leadership,[117] leader education, or the

[117] Research indicates that the default position concerning leadership, held by people of all ages, education, work experience and geographic locations, is predominantly that of a personal directive activity, the so-called 'command-and-control style'. J.P. Andrews and R.H.G. Field, as quoted in Gayle C. Avery, *Understanding Leadership: Paradigms and Cases* (London: Sage, 2005), 9. Moreover, there is a continuing "fascination with the personas of celebrity leaders and their experiences." Michelle C. Bligh and James R. Meindl, "The Cultural Ecology of Leadership: An Analysis of Popular Leadership Books," in David M. Messick and Roderick M. Kramer, eds., *The Psychology of Leadership: New Perspectives and Research* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 34.

Emerging-Missional milieu (which were sometimes default or uninformed). They also served to stimulate thinking about the goal of theological education in a fast-changing culture, and the importance of an active recruitment policy of candidates who are potentially suitable for ministry. During the interviews and focus group sessions there were some very stimulating discussions and we hope that readers of the present study will also be inspired, in turn, to engage in their own conversations as well. In this way, a prime objective of our research will be achieved, i.e. to form a bridge between Dutch traditional churches and their theological education on the one hand, and the Emerging-Missional milieu on the other hand.

This is not to overlook that the empirical research was quite severely limited in two ways. First, many of the professors of the PThU, the TUK, and the ETF were not heard, and most of their students were not consulted. Second, some of the key terms used in the interviews and the focus groups (such as community, spiritual formation, institutional structures, and indeed the term leadership itself) proved broad and possible to interpret in multiple ways. This may easily result in misunderstandings, a danger that is all the more acute if the data are used for comparative evaluative purposes. The main objective was to describe views and practices concerning leader education, not to give an overall evaluation as to how the PThU, the TUK, and the ETF pursue their task of providing theological education. Neither was it our goal to compare the three institutes in any substantive way, although we did find that, in the ETF, the themes of leadership and spirituality receive more explicit attention than in the other two institutes.

Furthermore, it appeared that the crucial importance of 'context' for learning is acknowledged in the ETF (e.g., the international student population interacting with each other in different ways) and in the PThU (e.g., by a mandatory 'exposure' experience in the BA trajectory, and in the decision to move to Amsterdam), but less so in the TUK. Although it is true that some TUK students are actively involved in church work next to their formal studies, we venture to ask the following, quite critical question: to what extent are future leaders of the Reformed Churches (liberated) prepared for 'the real world' if the context of their theological study is found, to a significant extent, in the provincial town of Kampen, and in quite an isolated environment (the university building and the library)?

With the necessary limitations in mind as to what we may or may not conclude, five final considerations – localized around *lacunae* – may be offered in closing. It is hoped that they will function as a catalyst for conversations with innovative potential.

First, the thrust of the education that is provided in the PThU and the TUK, and to a large extent in the ETF as well, is focused more on equipping scholars and theologians than it is on developing leaders. This was exemplified by teachers or students who were critical or suspicious of the use of the terms 'leader' and 'leadership'. They had a less developed, often heavily personalized, understanding of these terms. Moreover, they did not seem to be aware of current scholarship on leadership, nor of recent insights sugges-

ting that it is "critical for overall church effectiveness…to disconnect the role of the formal leader from the capabilities of the leadership necessary for the church as organization to be effective."[118] Furthermore, we did not encounter references to recent approaches to leadership that are reflected in the Organic leadership paradigm, such as adaptive,[119] chaordic,[120] decentralized,[121] emergent,[122] generative,[123] paradoxical,[124] participative,[125] post-heroic,[126] postmodern,[127] or shared leadership.[128] If what we argued in 7.7.4 is correct, namely that, in the near future, a different kind of leadership will be in great demand in churches[129] – one that is fluid, distributed, and collective rather than individual, and directly connected to social communication practices – there is a gap here that must be attended to.

Second, very few teachers and students appeared to have any deep (both experiential and theoretical) knowledge about what is currently going on within the Emerging-Missional milieu outside the Netherlands, including experiments with and reflections on missional leadership and leader education, community, spiritual formation, and worship. From the assumption that much can be learned – even while not everything should be condoned – from what is happening in this interdenominational milieu that highly values theological vision, mission, creativity, and innovation it may be worth asking whether the three institutes would consider taking a more pro-active stance in regard to these things. This could be exemplified in, for example, international conferences, advanced research programs, or joint publications concerning missional theology

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[118] Alice C. Stewart, "The Workplace of the Organised Church: Theories of Leadership and the Christian Leader," *Culture and Religion* 9, no. 3 (November 2008), 316.

[119] Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[120] Dee Hock, *One from Many: VISA and the Rise of Chaordic Organization* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005).

[121] Ori Brafmand and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York: Portfolio, 2006).

[122] Stephen J. Guastello, *Managing Emergent Phenomena: Nonlinear Dynamics in Work Organizations* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002).

[123] Goldstein et al., *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership*.

[124] Birute Regine and Roger Lewin, "Leading at the Edge: How Leaders Influence Complex Systems," *Emergence* 2, no. 2 (2001), 5-23.

[125] A well-known example is Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006.

[126] An early example is James P. Eicher, "Post-Heroic Leadership: Managing the Virtual Organization," *Performance Improvement* 36, no. 2 (1997), 5-10.

[127] William Bergquist, *The Postmodern Organization: Mastering the Art of Irreversible Change* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003). This book is quite often referred to in the EMC.

[128] Michael D. Kocolowski, "Shared Leadership: Is it Time for a Change?," *Emerging Leadership Journeys* 3, no. 1 (2010), 22-32.

[129] Fluid and distributed kinds of leadership are, in fact, already in use in certain congregations, but we question if this is done in a way that is theoretically informed and carefully reflected upon.

and ecclesiology, 'mission shaped' churches, the role of missional leadership, and the strategic importance of appropriate forms of leader education.[130]

Third, in these theological institutes and their constituencies, there appears to be, as of yet, little urgency about the active recruitment and selection of future missional leaders. Such persons are likely to be found in groups that sociologists call 'Innovators' or the 'creative class' (cf. 2.2.3 and 7.7.4). The reality is that, generally speaking, Christians who are highly talented and innovative in other fields than scholarship, often are not enthusiastic about the prospect of being educated for church leadership in the traditional sense of the word (cf. 9.3.1). It will take special effort to gain their interest, and to offer them programs that suit their talents.

Fourth, none of the three MA programs that we researched can be said to be very innovative in regard to how they deal with the challenges that the 'information revolution' has for educational approaches. Educating in a digital age may, for example, entail facilitating self-directed learning, the integration of many subjects to tackle single problems, visual-spatial information processing, and learning several things at the same time.[131] It is true that in recent years, the topic of teaching methods has received more attention than previously was the case in the three institutes. Still, there are more possibilities to explore regarding innovative teaching methods that are aimed at integrating theoretical reflection, learning from experience, and personal leadership development. In this and perhaps other respects, much can be learned from practices in the Emerging-Missional milieu and from secular quarters.[132] This topic of teaching methods will be revisited in the next chapter.

Finally, the educational philosophy of the PThU is difficult to ascertain,[133] while that of the other two could be unpacked more.[134] In all three cases it is unclear to what extent the educational philosophy is shared among the faculty or students. Since a prime

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[130] This should not be taken to mean that 'nothing is happening' on these points. It will be recalled, for example, that the TUK offers a special MA program on Missional Congregation, and that the PThU has courses on missional church and leadership in its permanent education program.

[131] Jerry Larsen, *Religious Education and the Brain: A Practical Guide for Understanding How We Learn about God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 123. This quote, though relevant, is still typical for the period of 'Web 1.0', which came to an end around 2004. Between 2005 and 2010, almost 4,000 publications focusing on Web 2.0 and learning and instruction have been published, while since 2011 the attention has shifted to Web 3.0 (also known as the Semantic Web), which has still more implications and possibilities for learning and academic education. See Dirk Ifenthaler, "Introduction: Is Web 3.0 Changing Learning and Instruction?", in: Pedro Isaias et al, eds., *Towards Learning and Instruction in Web 3.0: Advances in Cognitive and Educational Psychology* (Springer, 2012), xi-xvi.

[132] "Leaders across human enterprises have committed themselves to learning better strategies and skills for effective leadership," the Anglican theologian David Gortner observes. "The church proceeds at its own peril of foolishness if it ignores this body of learning." David T. Gortner, "Looking at Leadership beyond Our Own Horizon," *Anglican Theological Review* 91, no. 1 (2009), 121.

[133] This will change in the near future, as the basic points have been put on paper already. PThU Director of Education, e-mail message to author, January 21, 2012.

[134] E.g., for the ETF: what is the critique concerning the constructivist view of learning, and what is the alternative? And for the TUK: how exactly is the constructivist view on learning – which is said to be very important – 'translated' into practice?

goal of the education of future pastors is to get students not just to *know* certain things, but to *learn* (or to learn how to learn, cf. 8.10), we think that the topic of educational philosophy deserves more attention. This may help to prevent teachers operating out of default assumptions that may not be entirely appropriate.[135]

Three basic questions[136] that need to be answered in this regard are the following: (1) How do we define learning, and on what scholarly basis?[137] (2) How can this definition – and the theory of learning – be theologically thought through, and what are the consequences of this?[138] (3) What does this entail in practical terms for teaching methods and for teachers in the *predikantenopleiding*?[139] Still more challenges can be formulated on the basis of our research in chapter 9 and the present chapter. This is what awaits us next.

[135] For example, research indicates that *immersion in an experience* contributes much more to learning than does verbal instruction or reading texts. This reality is dealt with in the leader development programs within the Emerging-Missional milieu, but less so in the three institutes that we visited, especially the TUK. Cf. Larsen, *Religious Education and the Brain*, 130-133.

[136] For some additional questions and issues that should be dealt with, see chap. 9, n294. A question that is not explicitly listed, but that is presuppositional, is this: what do we want students to learn, and why?

[137] Peter Jarvis, "Religious Experience and Experiential Learning," *Religious Education* 103, no. 5 (October-December 2008), 553-567. Jarvis concludes after some decades of studying the subject that learning is "a very complex process and may be defined as the combination of processes whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical, and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses) – experiences a social situation, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively, or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the person's individual biography resulting in a changed (or more experienced) person." Ibid., 557-558.

[138] See for some reflections, Susan Schauffele and Ian Baptiste, "Appealing to the Soul: Towards a Judeo-Christian Theory of Learning," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 19, no. 5 (2000), 448-458.

[139] Larsen, *Religious Education and the Brain*, provides many helpful suggestions.

CHAPTER 11. *SEMPER REFORMANDA*: CHALLENGES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

11.1 Introduction

Our exploration of the EMC and the convergent lines within it concerning views on church and leadership (chapters 2-6, and especially 7) resulted in a formal conceptualization of 'missional leadership' (chapter 8). This provided the necessary input for developing a coherent framework of nine questions, which we subsequently used to describe aspects of leader education within the Emerging-Missional milieu (chapter 9) and in three theological faculties in the Low Countries (chapter 10). The present chapter seeks to outline challenges – seen as opportunities for improvement or development – for those programs in institutes of theological education that aim to educate future pastors and leaders of the church. In doing so, we face something of a dilemma about how to present our material. On the one hand, we wish to formulate challenges on a general level which are pertinent for the three institutes in which we did our empirical research, and which may also be relevant for other institutes as well, both in the Low Countries and internationally. On the other hand, we do not want to reiterate what we said in 10.5. Moreover, we think it is important to do justice to each of the three institutes.

Our decision for this chapter is once more to specifically refer to the PThU, the TUK and the ETF in a way that is interesting for a broader array of readers than just those who are connected to these institutes. In other words, we think it to be safe to assume that our discussion will encourage reflection and – *mutatis mutandis* – be relevant, not just for these three, but also for other institutes with comparable goals. In sum, the purpose of this chapter is to answer our final research question: *In the light of proposals for and practices of leader education as conceived of in the Emerging-Missional milieu and in recent scholarship, what challenges can be formulated for theological institutes in the Low Countries?*

While the research questions of the two previous chapters asked for a descriptive or hermeneutic approach, this question is clearly a normative one. It might be helpful to explicate at the outset three assumptions that underlie our discussion. (1) Theological education is a matter of *semper reformanda*, particularly in times of significant change such as at present.[1] (2) Strategic improvements can be made in the PThU, the TUK and the ETF by adopting aspects of the 'missional model' of theological education as conceived of in the Emerging-Missional milieu,[2] especially in so far as these are confirmed by insights in recent scholarship on theological education and leader development.[3]

[1] See chapter 4.
[2] See section 9.3.
[3] These insights were described in section 9.2.

In regard to teaching methods, much can also be learned from 'secular' models. This being said, we also assume that (3) much of the education that is going on in the PThU, the TUK and the ETF is already functioning well and need not be changed in a drastic way.

Our goal in this chapter, however, is not to give compliments but to formulate some pertinent challenges for each institute. In doing so, we draw from our research described in chapters 9 and 10, but in a more integrated way. Our comments are clustered around one theme: the purpose of theological education and its consequences for the curriculum (11.2) and for teaching practices (11.3). Some of the other topics (such as spiritual formation, or student recruitment or selection) will be referred to when we think this is relevant.

This chapter is – in essence – a critical discussion. A more general evaluation that incorporates our findings in this thesis as a whole will be offered in the final chapter.

11.2 The Purpose of Theological Education and Its Consequences

Chapter 9 showed that two 'wishes' frequently found in recent discussions about the purpose of theological education in international journals are: (1) that students be educated more intentionally for leadership; (2) that students be educated more explicitly for a post-Christendom context or for mission. In short, the call for *predikantenopleidingen* – if this is not already the case – is to consciously conceive of their purpose in terms of 'equipping missional leaders' (or something equivalent to this). Educational institutes in the Emerging-Missional milieu appeared to echo this in their mission statements and to give it form in practice as well. In other words, it became clear that today there are an increasing number of theological schools who strive "to produce specific cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes with the goals of equipping leaders with certain core professional competencies necessary for missional leadership in the world and church."[4]

Interestingly, publications that do not explicitly identify missional vision as a catalyst for change in the curriculum may still emphasize some of the same themes. For example, a 2007 study has indicated that recent graduates from a broad array of American theological seminaries were particularly concerned about three issues in their church work: personal or spiritual formation, ministerial or public leadership, and dealing with the cultural context. New pastors, however, appeared to be the *least* prepared by their seminary education for exactly these activities. The researchers conducting the study draw the obvious conclusion: "There is a discrepancy...between what theological schools are best at providing and what practitioners say is most crucial in ministry."[5] As discus-

[4] Clinton William Lowin, "Assessment of the Missional Model of Graduate Theological Education: A Case Study," (EdD thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 3.

[5] Barbara G. Wheeler, Sharon L. Miller, and Daniel O. Aleshire, *How Are We Doing? The Effectiveness of Theological Schools as Measured by the Vocations and Views of Graduates* (Auburn Theological Seminary: Auburn Studies, no. 13, December 2007), 22.

sed in chapter 9, these themes (personal or spiritual formation, ministerial or public leadership, and dealing with the cultural context) do receive a prominent place in leader education as provided in the Emerging-Missional milieu.

Against this background, we reflect on the main findings of our empirical research (described in chapter 10) and formulate some challenges for the PThU, the TUK and the ETF, respectively. As indicated in the introduction, however, we think it not farfetched to assume that some of the remarks pertain not only to the institute in question but to others as well.

11.2.1 Challenges for the Protestant Theological University (PThU)

This subsection submits four points to which the PThU might benefit from giving some attention. These are (1) adopting 'leadership' as an integrative focus; (2) accentuating 'leadership' in the curriculum; (3) thinking through the implications of educating for *missional* leadership; (4) spiritual formation. Some problems that are likely to be encountered are mentioned in closing.

11.2.1.1 'Leadership' as an Integrative Focus

Today it is often remarked that, generally speaking, students in seminary – *if* they know what they want to do after seminary – aim to be teachers, counselors and pastors, rather than leaders.[6] Furthermore, only a minority of pastors see themselves as leaders (in 1998, George Barna estimated a mere 5 percent).[7] As discussed in chapter 4, we currently live in times of rapid change and high complexity in society and culture. Since leadership is called for in such times, also in local church congregations, it certainly seems appropriate that – as we found in our empirical research – some of the teachers in the PThU intentionally use leadership language, arguing that it is important in the current cultural context that pastors see themselves as leaders, and function in such a role.[8] However, 'leadership' is not used as an umbrella term for the *predikantenopleiding* as a whole, nor as an integrative focus for the different competencies that are to be attained. It is likely that many professors and students think of the minister as being foremost a pastor and a preacher or teacher, and that they operate largely from a default position on the topic of leadership.[9]

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[6] Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships Between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 13. Long speaks from an American context. However, the Dutch practical theologian Sake Stoppels has the same message for the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Germany. See Sake Stoppels, *Voor de verandering. Werken aan vernieuwing in gemeente en parochie* [For a change: Working on renewal within the congregation and the parish] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum 2009), 18-19.

[7] George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998), 36.

[8] See 10.2.2, particularly question 1b. *What are visions on leadership and church office?*

[9] This interpretation is in line with the conclusions of Johan van Holten, *Rol & Roeping. Een praktisch-theologisch onderzoek naar de rolopvatting van aanstaande, beginnende en oudere predikanten gerelateerd aan hun roepingbegrip* [Role and calling: A practical theological research on the role conceptions of senior students, beginning and older ministers in relation to their role conception] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2009), cf. chap. 1, n87 and n88.

Faced with this outcome, the PThU as a whole might consider consciously and explicitly using 'leadership language' – if only because, as Ronald Heifetz surmises, "those who consider themselves 'not leaders' may escape responsibility for taking action, or for learning how to take action, when they see the need. In the face of critical problems, they say, 'I'm not a leader, what can I do?'"[10] Furthermore, if they do not consider themselves leaders, then it is unlikely that they will undertake self-initiated challenges to further develop the necessary leadership skills.[11] At the same time the somewhat ambivalent, or even negative connotations and feelings that the words 'leader' and 'leadership' have in the Netherlands should be reckoned with.[12] Intentional conversations about leadership between teachers themselves and between teachers and students may assist to uncover and deal with these connotations and feelings,[13] which may enhance his or her motivation to lead.[14]

11.2.1.2 'Leadership' in the Curriculum

Most PThU teachers who are involved in practical theology or training modules reflect on and teach about leadership and organization theory. This topic also receives attention at 'permanent education' courses offered in Hydepark seminary, some of which are related to missional church thinking as well. Furthermore, these themes have also caught the attention of an educational conference that was recently held.[15] While the topic of leadership is clearly in view, it should also be pointed out that in those modules which have leadership as an explicit focus, the general emphasis is on *situational* leadership, i.e. on different leadership roles, styles, and skills, and on aspects of policy making. While students do learn many important things from these courses, they appear to re-

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[10] Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 20.

[11] Patricia M.G. O'Connor and David V. Day, "Shifting the Emphasis of Leadership Development," in Jay A. Conger and Ronald E. Riggio, eds., *The Practice of Leadership: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 67. Boyatzis even claims that "adults will only develop characteristics of effective leaders if they want to be leaders." Richard Boyatzis, "Leadership Development from a Complexity Perspective," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 60, no. 4 (2008), 300.

[12] A cultural factor that may be involved is that the term 'leadership' – associated as it often is with themes like authoritarianism, dominance, formality, and/or high profile (male) personalities – does not square well with the egalitarian nature of the dominant culture in Dutch society. Cf. Jagdeep S. Chhokar, Felix C. Brodbeck, Robert J. House, eds., *Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007), 240. There may also be a 'sub-cultural' factor to reckon with: the fact that the terms 'leader' and 'leadership' do not refer to the theology or role of ordained ministry may already evoke ambivalent feelings among future theologians and ministers.

[13] Cf. one concluding comment of Chhokar et al., "anyone who works with others – from a different culture or not – should try to gain a deeper understanding of the other person's implicit and explicit theories about working together, leadership, followership, *and* of his or her own respective concepts." Ibid., 1080.

[14] We use the phrase 'motivation to lead' (MTL) in a specific sense here. According to researchers Kim-Yin Chan and Fritz Drasgow, MTL may be defined as "an individual-differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities and that affect his or her intensity of effert of leading and persisting as a leader." Kim-Yin Chan and Fritz Drasgow, as quoted in Brian Vann Miller, "Images of the Missional Church: Leadership, Culture, and Practices in Context," (DMin thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2011), 6.

[15] See chap. 10, n54.

ceive little – if any – schooling in recent sociological, psychological, theological, or missiological approaches to leadership and organization theory, including those from the viewpoint of complexity theory. Also, the topic of leadership and its connection to themes such as missional imagination and innovation, creativity, metaphor, or the arts, seems to be developed only implicitly.

Furthermore, although students do learn a lot about dynamics in the cultural context, the question of what cultural and contextual changes may mean for the church and her leadership in the future could be explored in greater depth, both theoretically and practically. It is especially on the point of *envisioning* (i.e., exercising theological imagination and discernment) that students challenge the PThU to provide more inspiration, theoretical equipment, and practical tools than it is currently doing, in particular concerning a missional vision for the church.[16] In sum then, the challenge for the PThU is to both broaden and deepen the attention that is given to leadership in the curriculum.

11.2.1.3 Missional Leadership and Its Implications

The primary focus of the PThU is to prepare students to function within the current operational structures of the existing institutional church. It is possible for a student to become a PKN pastor without having engaged the theme of 'missional leadership' in a substantial way.[17] Moreover, the topic is, as of yet, not prescribed in their trajectory of permanent education. This is not a problem according to some professors and students, but others express a different view.[18] Because the PKN is diminishing every year in terms of its constituency,[19] some students and teachers think that it would be helpful if this church, in partnership with the PThU, began to intentionally recruit, stimulate and equip students to participate in or start 'fresh expressions' of church, in addition to what

[16] We certainly do not expect the PThU faculty as a whole to agree on something like a 'missional vision', nor do we expect this of the varied Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN), of which they are members. However, we expect the leadership of the PKN to provide inspiration, vision, room and support for missional experiments and innovation on a *local* level. We warmheartedly support the various initiatives on this score that have already taken place in recent years.

[17] The PThU is not unique in this: "overall it is still possible to become a pastor in one of the Reformed (and most other) denominations in the Netherlands without much missiological training of any substance. Even now the curriculum reflects that mission is for those who are interested in it, for special people, 'practical' people – but not for 'real' theologians." Stefan Paas, "Prepared For a Missionary Ministry in 21st Century Europe," *European Journal of Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011), 126.

[18] Cf. also Johan van Holten, "In our view, secularization calls for ministers with a different attitude and with a different role conception compared with four decades ago. It calls for ministers who are no longer only concerned with internal church but have a much more external orientation. On closer consideration this aspect has everything to do with how ministers interpret their leadership." Van Holten, *Rol & Roeping*, 347.

[19] In 2010, the PKN lost 52,362 members; in 2009, 57,873; in 2008, 60,211. "Statistische Jaarbrief 2010 van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland" [Statistical Yearly Letter from the Protestant Church in the Netherlands], http://www.pkn.nl/5/site/uploadedDocs/AZ%2010-18%20Statistische%20jaarbrief1.pdf (accessed January 10, 2012).

it currently does.[20] In short, the challenge for both the PKN and the PThU is to recruit future ministers with leadership capacity,[21] and to foster their creative missional leadership skills.[22]

Two recent documents provide stimulating input for further reflections and discussions on this topic. The first is from the International Study Group on Theological Education from the World Council of Churches.[23] After mentioning the need for theological institutions and churches to "equip seminarians and pastors to develop the necessary skills for competence in leadership," they formulate the following key questions:

1. To what extent are criteria and procedures of selection in accordance with the core goals of theological education and ministerial formation?
2. To what extent do selection processes reflect a broad-based understanding of various types of ministries within the church, or is one type (of academically shaped full-time ministry) setting the tone for selection processes as a whole?
3. In what ways are the criteria of ministerial vocation, academic excellence, spiritual background, character formation and professional skills balanced with each other in any selection process, and how are these processes adequately related to the biographical situation of candidates, or alternatively simply dominated by market demands?

The second document is from the Anglican Church: "Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England."[24] It contains a *Criterion H: Mission and Evangelism*, which states that candidates should not only have a "knowledge and understanding" of mission and evangelism, but also a "personal commitment" to it. Future clergy in the Anglican Church are, moreover, supposed to have effective communication skills for mission and evangelism. They should be able to engage with contemporary culture

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[20] Cf. Bob Jackson from his Anglican context writes "The pastor-chaplain-theologian may be ill equipped to lead a newly mission-focused church. Dioceses and parishes that designate the prime task of the vicar to be the 'leader in mission' rather than the 'private chaplain to the flock' are already the ones that tend to be growing. This trend is likely to accentuate." Bob Jackson, *The Road to Growth: Towards a Thriving Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), 120.

[21] The need for "constructive conversations about the *qualities of leadership* [emphasis added] needed for effective ministry" is also recognized abroad, e.g. in the United States. Merv Mercer, "Formational Initiatives at Wycliffe College," *Theological Education* 39, no. 2 (2003), 64. Mercer points out that a determination to "call out such candidates and be resistant to settling for anything less" is growing. Of course the local congregation also has a special responsibility in this. Ibid., 65.

[22] Cf. the Church of England, where candidates should show potential for creative leadership. This may be evidenced, among other things, by showing initiative, drive and creativity in planning and implementing change, and being entrepreneurial – "forward looking, creative in their thinking and be able to grasp and run with new ideas." The Church of England, "Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England," September 2010, http://www.england.anglican.org/media/1274926/full%20criteria%20document%20for%20web.pdf (accessed July 22, 2011).

[23] Dietrich Werner, "Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education in the 21st Century: Pointers for a new international debate on theological education", Edinburgh 2010 International Study Group on Theological Education/WCC World Study Report, 2009, 23, http://www.oikoumene.Org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-theological-education-ete/edinburgh-2010-international-study-group-on-theological-education.html (accessed December 17, 2011).

[24] See n22.

and enable others in mission and evangelism. And last but not least: candidates "should have the potential for engaging in mission-shaped ministry," which includes being "creative, innovative and pioneering."

A pertinent question is, should the criteria mentioned also be required of future clergy of the PKN? Or, should the church *not* be looking for creative, innovative and pioneering leadership, rather than for ministers who help to conserve its classic identity, including its current structures?[25] In either case, what would the consequences for the PThU be? Conversations among the faculty and within the PKN might help to uncover and, in the process, adjust prevailing assumptions and perspectives that are involved in answering these (or related) strategic questions.[26]

11.2.1.4 Spiritual Formation

During the interviews and the focus group sessions it became clear that the connection between leader education and *spiritual formation* could be much improved. Although more attention is given to spirituality than was formerly the case, for the most part, PThU students are supposed to learn how to integrate academic learning and Christian spirituality during their first pastorate; it is not a central focus of their educational trajectory.[27] The risk is, however, that pastors become very occupied with their work while their own personal orientation to God slowly fades away. This may especially be the case if they have never learnt how to develop personal spiritual practices.[28] Moreover, the academic approach to theology may, in due time, diminish the student's commitment to participating in missional activities. As Paul Jensen concludes in his PhD re-

[25] Clearly this question goes against the message of recent publications, such as those written by Gerben Heitink and Gerard Dekker (see 4.6.1), which point out the need for the PKN to be drastically changed.

[26] An example of the kind of broad faculty conversation one could consider is provided by Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. It is introduced as follows: "Trinity's faculty has been working to revise its curriculum with a close look at the needs of the church and the characteristics of the world in which our graduates will serve. There is broad agreement that the church needs to become more missional, and that the seminary needs to be certain that it provides a mission driven curriculum consistent with its mission statement. For its 2009 pre-academic year retreat, the faculty of Trinity...each wrote a brief 'White Paper' addressing the questions: (a) 'What do I understand "missional" or "mission driven" to mean?' and (b) 'How will a curriculum with mission as its integrative theme affect my teaching? That is, what am I doing already that is missional and what do I need to change or better communicate to be explicitly so?'" Tim Huffman, ed., "A Faculty Goes Missional: By the faculty of Trinity Lutheran Seminary," *Trinity Seminary Review* 31, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2010), 79-91.

[27] On this topic, Arenda Haasnoot, the former vice-preses of the PKN, writes the following: "In the Netherlands, the form of and perspective on theology is limited. The programs are often one-sidedly oriented on cognitive knowledge, not on the experience of faith or on experiential knowledge. The personal faith has to be kept outside the lecture rooms and the content of the lectures is not meant to undergird or deepen the Christian faith....A communal sharing or celebrating of the faith is hard to find, let alone the practicing of it with each other." Arenda Haasnoot, *Neem je plaats in. In de tussentijd van kerk en koninkrijk* [Take in your place: In the in-between times of church and kingdom] (Amsterdam: Ark Media, 2011), 74-75. A word of caution is appropriate here: although Haasnoot does, in her assessment, refer to one recent (2011) source, her comments are coloured by her own experiences as a theology student (i.e. before the PThU was established).

[28] Cf. John Ackerman, "Spiritual Disorientation and God's Guidance," *Common Ground Journal* 6, no. 1 (Fall 2008), 100-104. http://www.commongroundjournal.org/ (accessed December 20, 2011).

search: "We need more plentiful time and space for God in solitary and communal spiritual practices in our...leadership development if we are to have a passionate spirituality adequate for a mission that transforms and heals lives, relationships, structures and cultures."[29] An encouraging conclusion from another PhD study is that giving more sustained and integrated attention to intentional spiritual formation during the training of future pastors may "heal and restore a number of potential dichotomies and divorces; the divide between the head and the heart, between affective and academic learning; the divide between the classroom and the chapel, between study and prayer, between *scientia* and *theoria*; between contemplation and action, withdrawal and engagement, between outward ministry and inner life or interiority."[30]

There are several ways in which the PThU could contribute to spiritual formation, some of which they might want to consider offering[31] (in so far as these are not yet currently used). These are, for example, prayer during classes;[32] forms of corporate worship,[33] including prayer and times of quiet and contemplation by the community as a whole; integrating spiritual disciplines as aids to concentrated learning; the use of *lectio divina* in connection with biblical courses; the presence of faculty members at retreats as participants; the use of classical spiritual disciplines and rituals in responding to events in the life of the community; the involvement of faculty and staff members in spiritual direction, along with students; artistic and visual aids (for example, symbols, icons, or a labyrinth) for contemplation on the campus; places of meditation and retreat on campus grounds; making the chapel available at all hours; rich resources in the library and bookstore; pastors and lay leaders on the campus speaking about how they integrate spiritual disciplines into their lives as ministers; and teaching students how to teach aspects of spiritual formation to others, particularly the laity.[34]

11.2.1.5 Possible Problems

We acknowledge that such efforts as mentioned in the previous subsections would probably not be applauded by everyone, for a variety of reasons. For one, theological education is so closely associated with personal beliefs and values that the potential for dis-

[29] L. Paul Jensen, *Subversive Spirituality: Transforming Mission through the Collapse of Space and Time* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009), 270.

[30] Andrew D. Mayes, *Spirituality in Ministerial Formation: The Dynamic of Prayer in Learning* (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2009), 176-177.

[31] We use the term 'offer' here instead of (for example) 'implement', because multiple *spiritualities* can, in fact, be discerned among both teachers and students, varying from pietistic-Reformed to evangelical, liberal, feminist, and other types. This diversity should be reckoned with.

[32] Brent Laytham, "Let Us Pray: Classroom Worship in Theological Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 13, no. 2 (April 2010), 110-124.

[33] Todd E. Johnson and Siobhán Garrigan, eds., *Common Worship in Theological Education* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009).

[34] This list was based on H. Frederick Reisz, Jr., "Assessing Spiritual Formation in Christian Seminary Communities," *Theological Education* 40, Supplement (2005), S37.

agreement and conflict is permanently present.[35] Metaphorically speaking, a theological school is not only a 'training ground' where individuals learn new skills to meet new challenges. Such an institute can also be compared to a 'carnival' where deep-seated values are dramatized or transformed, or to a 'jungle' "where beasts, herds and flora compete and struggle for survival."[36] It might well turn out to be the case – as Donald Juel and Patrick Keifert experienced – that even among scholars, fears and desires appear to have a more dominant say than rational arguments when it comes to impending changes.[37] This does not, of course, exclude the possibility of there being valid reasons for objecting to certain changes.

Another source of resistance might stem from the fact that missional leader education requires much collaboration – e.g. shared teaching, or shared participation in practices of spiritual formation. The reality, however, is that "Many who are excellent researchers prefer working alone....In addition, most schools have reward systems that encourage individual rather than collaborative work in scholarship, teaching, and professional service. It is unrealistic for faculty to add much-needed collaborative work on top of their other commitments."[38]

It has to be realized, too, that critical questions will have to be asked concerning the place of theory. If leadership development and spiritual formation were to be given more explicit attention than before, does the focus not become *too much* on praxis? The relationship between academic knowledge on the one hand and praxis on the other is, indeed, a topic of contention. As experienced at Luther Seminary, "maintaining a balance between scholarly readings (for example) and 'in the trenches' case studies was often like walking a curricular tightrope!"[39] Furthermore, there are, of course, various constituencies – such as the church denomination and local congregations – that have to be reckoned with, in addition to pressures from accreditation standards, financial limitations, and the already heavy workload of teachers.

It has to be acknowledged, moreover, that some faculty may have reservations about integrating spiritual formation into the curriculum.[40] All kinds of principal or practical

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[35] Once you make switches concerning the center(s) of a school's mission and curriculum, so-called 'turf battles' are bound to follow. See on this topic Kyle J.A. Small, "Missional Imaginations for Theological Education: Mixed Model, Exploratory, Action-Oriented Research Mapping the Theological Identity and Organizational Readiness for Change of Five Theological School Systems in the United States Originating after 1945," (PhD diss., Luther Seminary, 2009), chap. 5.

[36] T.E. Deal, as quoted in D.S. Finlayson, "School Climate: An Outmoded Metaphor?," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 19, no. 2 (1987), 171-172.

[37] Cf. Donald Juel and Patrick Keifert, "A Rhetorical Approach to Theological Education: Assessing an Attempt to Re-Vision a Curriculum," in David S. Cunningham, ed., *To Teach, To Delight, and To Move: Theological Education in a Post-Christian World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 287.

[38] Robert T. O'Gorman, Kathleen Talvacchia, W. Michael Smith, "Teaching from a Community Context: The Role of the Field Educator in Theological Education," *Theological Education* 37, no. 2 (2001), 18.

[39] Randy A. Nelson, "Learning Congregational Leadership in Context: A Case Study in Contextualization Theological Education," *Theological Education* 40 (Supplement 2005), 81.

[40] In 10.2.2, we heard students from Utrecht say that some of their professors reacted negatively to what they perceived to be as *evangelisch*. The term 'spiritual formation' might carry overtones that they likewise

questions may surface, which faculty may think should be answered first.[41] Furthermore, some PThU faculty might not feel competent to help students with their personal spiritual development and integration of faith and learning.[42] Research points out that among faculty in academic theological institutions, spiritual formation is often a sensitive subject, one that stirs "feelings of anxiety if not guilt."[43] This might also be the case in the PThU; at the least, it is a factor to reckon with.

Notwithstanding these and other possible problems, a missional focus could help reinvent and rejuvenate theological education within multiple organizational frameworks. Adopting a missional focus in no way necessitates expelling all that is sacred to the school's theological tradition.[44] It would be helpful, though, if the 'structuring dimension' of the PThU became less bureaucratic and impersonal than it is perceived to be by the teachers and students we interviewed. We challenge PThU staff members to regularly address this theological question together: how does God matter in the organizational life of the PThU, i.e. its traditions, structures, decision-making processes, and the ethos of faculty meetings?[45]

11.2.2 Challenges for the Theological University in Kampen (TUK)

From the interviews we learned that professors of the TUK who were involved in the field of practical theology viewed pastors as leaders[46] and said so explicitly, but four of their students who were just a few months away from their first pastorates were not inclined to define their future occupation in terms of leadership. Their comments gave the impression that they operated largely from a default position on this subject. That is to say, the TUK graduates who participated in the focus group did not appear to have reflected much on recent scholarly (including theological) understandings of leadership. It did not seem clear to them what these insights might mean for them personally, or how they might relate to current conceptions of church office and the actual function of those who bear church office. This is not surprising, considering the fact that the one explicit leadership module these students received consisted of only 1 ec, and was offe-

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are not comfortable with. They may also feel that (more) explicit and sustained attention to Christian spirituality promotes something like pietism, which understood perjoratively is "uncritical, privatistic, sentimental, and detrimental to authentic social and theological analysis and action." Edwards, Jr., "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools," 25.

[41] Questions that are likely to come forward are mentioned in 9.2.3.

[42] Cf. Tilden H. Edwards, Jr., "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools: Ferment and Challenge," *Theological Education* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1980), 27.

[43] Jackson W. Carroll, "The Professional Model of Ministry – Is It Worth Saving?," *Theological Education* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1985), 45.

[44] This is one of the conclusions of Small, "Missional Imaginations for Theological Education," 90.

[45] Cf. ibid., 4.

[46] Note that TUK teachers (and students as well) seem to operate out of a personalized notion of leadership. This is to say that when talking about leadership they primarily have a 'leader' in mind, not dynamic *processes* of influence that occur within a group and to which various persons contribute.

red by someone who did not officially belong to the TUK staff (he was 'flown in', so to speak).

Concerning the subject of *vision*, we again noticed a discrepancy between the teachers' perspectives and those of their students. The teachers thought that whatever a pastor does should have something to do with (what we call) the aspect of envisioning within the local congregation. Moreover, it would be helpful if pastors were actively involved in certain activities that require leadership and that are successful (so-called 'best practices'). Students, on the other hand, did not seem to hold the same view. They associated their education primarily with having achieved proficiency in academic theology and did not relate vision to their own future leadership tasks during the focus group discussion. We likewise noted that, while the teachers affirmed that the concept of missional leadership and the missionary vocation of the church are important topics, students did not recognize that they were addressed in any thorough, integrated (i.e. across modules) or stimulating way.

We think an important challenge for the TUK consists of remedying this state of affairs. The document that was mentioned in chapter 10, "Toward a renewed profile of the pastor"[47] could be a useful starting point for discussions about curriculum renewal. Ideally, not only the teachers of practical theology should be included in these deliberations, but also the rest of the educational staff, and – in addition – several pastors, theology students, and laypeople (both men and women), including those who are participating in promising missional initiatives. In the process, suggestions could be heard regarding the question of what educating future leaders for the Reformed Churches (liberated) entails for the different disciplines (e.g. how does the study of missiology relate to congregational studies?), for the concrete educational methods that are adopted, including 'immersion experiences' in challenging contexts, and for the educational philosophy of the TUK as a whole. A strategic choice, furthermore, would be to devise interdisciplinary courses on the topic of missional leadership. This would be a good thing not only during the formal preparation for the pastorate, but also in the required permanent education of pastors (PEP).[48]

11.2.3 Challenges for the Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF)

A first general conclusion that may be drawn from the empirical research is that the ETF has a clear vision and believes in it. This vision involves providing an evangelical theological education that is both academically robust and potentially fruitful in a spiri-

[47] See chap. 10, n83 and n97.

[48] Cf. these comments by three researchers: "Like with business leaders, education and training represent an important element in the pastoral leader's development, but the importance of *ongoing development* [emphasis added] in on-the-job experiences, during transitions, and in relationships tends to be underestimated." Robert B. McKenna, Paul R. Yost, and Tanya N. Boyd, "Leadership Development and Clergy: Understanding the Events and Lessons that Shape Pastoral Leaders," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 3 (2007), 187.

tual sense. This kind of theological education serves both local churches and the society at large. Students recognize that this vision is, indeed, what drives both the staff and the many guest teachers to work hard for little financial recompense. Furthermore, the way that the ETF aims to operate as a Christian community is connected to this vision, as is its admission procedure.

More specifically, the vision of the ETF has to do with leadership and is also associated with mission, broadly interpreted. 'Leadership' within the ETF is primarily understood as being influential as an academic by commenting on pertinent issues from a theological standpoint, i.e. with a focus on the knowledge of God and his revelation in the Scriptures, interpreted in an exegetically and hermeneutically responsible way. Educating persons who can provide such leadership within churches, schools, or in other settings is seen as a strategically important task. In this sense, the vision of the ETF has to do with mission. The commitment to the gospel and its actual relevance for both the church and the world is palpable when one reads documents of the ETF or speaks to its students and teachers.

A question that arises from our empirical research is to what extent it is acknowledged within the ETF, and reflected in the structure of the curriculum, that – generally speaking – *scholarship* and church *leadership* ask for different kinds of people and talents.[49] The emphasis currently lies on acquiring cognitive and theoretical capabilities, even in the Church & Pastoral Ministries specialization. A dominant line of reasoning seems to be that it is more convenient to educate someone as an academic, and later develop his or her leadership competencies, than it is the other way around.[50] It would be relevant to do some research on this score. Carl George of Fuller Theological Seminary, for one, suggested that "It's easier to give a theological education to a leader than it is to take a scholar and transform him or her into a leader."[51]

We submit that the challenge for the ETF can be formulated as follows: the ETF might strengthen its mission if different leadership concepts were thought through in an integrated way, with consequences for the curriculum and teaching methods. As said above, a primary connotation of the word leadership within the ETF has to do with 'influencing opinions'. This is what came out during the interviews and the focus group sessions. It is not farfetched to assume that the way in which a student in the Church & Pastoral Ministries stream is taught feeds his self-concept as a 'leader-as-expert'. This may, however, in some circumstances prove to be detrimental to his future ability to function effectively as a pastor.[52] It may, for instance, leave underdeveloped the readi-

[49] It might be true that some of the ETF staff are capable of excelling in both, but to our mind this is quite exceptional.

[50] This opinion was offered during the interviews.

[51] Carl F. George, *The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1995), 300.

[52] Cf. Whitsitt, "[There is a problem] with pastors giving in to the idea that they should be the resident church expert and consequently not effectively training and equipping congregations to fulfill their calling

ness to recognize that "innovation solutions to long-standing problems may *already be present* within the community...but remain hidden from key decision makers."[53] This is certainly not to suggest that theological expertise is insignificant – it has significance because it helps to see through forms of smug confessionalism or fideism on the one hand, and eclectic pragmatism on the other.[54] An emphasis on acquiring theological competence does not, however, mean that students could not also be assisted by developing a leadership concept that is more encompassing and that minimally includes people development (e.g., forms of coaching), facilitating processes of (missional) identity forming and change, and effective communication. It seems that students in the Church & Pastoral Ministries stream currently have insufficient practical opportunity to further develop their *habitus* and skills in this regard. Some more agogical elements could be of assistance in this respect, for example, mandatory supervision.[55] This need not even demand much extra time. As Bruce Avolio and his colleagues found, even five-minute interventions distributed over multiple points in time and focused on such things as enhancing self-awareness have a "more beneficial impact than a full day's worth of training."[56] The next section is specifically devoted to the topic of teaching practices.

11.3 Teaching Practices

Chapter 10 ended by concluding that the educational philosophy of the three institutes needs to be worked out further, both in connection to current scholarship on learning, but also from a theological viewpoint. We also formulated some topics for reflection in this regard, but no concrete suggestions were yet given about teaching practices. This section will provide some such suggestions, bearing in mind the premise that, although the content of what is being taught is obviously more important than methods of tea-

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to mission and ministry." Landon Whitsitt, *Open Source Church: Making Room for the Wisdom of All* (Herndon, VA: Alban, 2011), 128.

[53] Jeffrey Goldstein, James K. Hazy, and Benyamin B. Lichtenstein, *Complexity and the Nexus of Leadership: Leveraging Nonlinear Science to Create Ecologies of Innovation* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 130. Cf. Alan Roxburgh, "the imagination for a new future lies among the ordinary people of a church and in the relational networks that exist among them and in the community." Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 53.

[54] Cf. Lois Malcolm, "Teaching as Cultivating Wisdom for a Complex World," in L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, eds., *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 143.

[55] Because developing the skill of leadership involves the "enhancement of an individual's capacity to pay attention to communicative processes, to be fully present to the changing patterning of interactions as they emerge, as well as being fully present to the changing patterning of the silent conversation with oneself," a form of group coaching or supervision is advisable. The quote is from Michael Shiel, "Leadership, Learning and Skill Development," in Douglas Griffin and Ralph Stacey, eds., *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations* (London: Routledge, 2005), 183.

[56] Bruce J. Avolio, *Full Range Leadership Development*, second ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011), 211.

ching, methods should be seen as "a close second."[57] Our overall suggestion for the three institutes is to adopt additional educational approaches, especially those that stimulate the integration of theory and practice, and that train future leaders in such capacities as living with uncertainty, learning from mistakes, adaptability, and building trusting relationships.[58] This will become clearer in our discussion of some more specific challenges that are pertinent to each individual institute. Again, we first formulate some challenges for the PThU (11.3.1), followed by the TUK (11.3.2), and then the ETF (11.3.3).

11.3.1 Challenges for the Protestant Theological University (PThU)

The educational methods adopted in some specific PThU courses (e.g. fieldwork and supervision, training in Hydepark seminary) do explicitly have 'educating future leaders' in mind, but in other courses this is much less clear. One potentially relevant suggestion in this regard would be to implement special weeks in the curriculum, similar to those in the TUK, that are organized around certain themes – the so called *blokweken* – in which different teachers work together and students are challenged, both theoretically and practically. Such one-week units, containing interdisciplinary courses with moments of reflection and discussion, not only help with integrating different subjects, but also enhance the feeling of being part of a community of Christian learners, as students from the TUK emphasized. In the PThU, on the other hand, students and teachers did not feel like they formed such a community. Being part of a community is, however, extremely important for the formation of Christian leaders,[59] especially if the goal is that they not only grasp the truth in an intellectual way, but also learn to put it into practice. The reality must be dealt with that "there is an infinite distance between talking about prayer and praying, learning about worship and worshipping, knowing scripture and interpreting it in community, understanding despair and personally incarnating hope, analyzing social problems and feeding the poor in a church basement."[60] In addition to institutes within the Emerging-Missional milieu, the Free Church tradition of theological education may have something to offer here in terms of vision and refined practices as well.[61]

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[57] Jerry Larsen, *Religious Education and the Brain: A Practical Guide for Understanding How We Learn about God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 133.

[58] Cf. Peter Lewis and Roger Murphy, *Review of the Landscape: Leadership and Leadership Development 2008.* A review of what is known about effective leadership and leadership development (National College for School Leadership, August 2008), 7.

[59] Cf. 9.2.2.1, 9.2.3 and 9.2.8.

[60] Paul R. Kolbet, "Rethinking Ministerial Ideals in Light of the Clergy Crisis," *Ecclesiology* 5 (2009), 210.

[61] Calvin Redekop, "The Seminary as Participant Observer," *Theological Education* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1966), 203-212; Ross T. Bender, "Theological Education in the Free Church Tradition," *Theological Education* 9, no. 2 (Winter 1973), 112-122; Graydon F. Snyder, "Theological Education from A Free-Church Perspective," *Theological Education* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1981), 175-181.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, it is difficult to ascertain what the educational philosophy of the PThU is, and to what extent it is tailored to leader education. The use of competency language suggests that the aim is to educate for a profession, but it is worth asking if this is sufficient to enable the integration of academic schooling, learning from experience, and personal development that is needed to best prepare future clergy, to navigate between the poles of church office, profession, and personal life. In recent years, it is increasingly acknowledged that training for competencies is *not* at the heart of leadership development. Some of the problems with competency thinking that are mentioned in the literature on the subject are the following.[62]

1. It relegates persons to individual actors who play isolated roles within their community and are less able to create new behaviors and roles for their organization.
2. Competencies are often formulated in terms of measurable skills, while broad capacities to be creative and intuitive may actually be more important in certain contexts.
3. Competencies are formed from past or current procedures, with the assumption that they will serve well in the future. It could well be, however, that competencies do not provide a sufficiently rich and requisite foundation for the subtleties and complex challenges necessary for future productivity.
4. To a certain extent, competencies by their very nature can only articulate that which is objective, technical, and tangible, which fits technocratic aims, but little of the leadership realm could coherently be interpreted as being pertinent to competency criteria.

To develop leaders, the methods of assessment and teaching would best be experiential, interactive, situated, embodied, sustained and relational. The developmental approach in this framework focuses more on learning itself, on discovering questions, and on the constant creation of meaning. Perhaps adopting a full dual learning framework[63] – as advocated by some PThU teachers – is a possible way of better achieving this. If this were decided upon, the PThU would embark on a process of transformative change (this is certainly not to overlook the fact that this university is already in the process of a major transition).

11.3.2 Challenges for the Theological University in Kampen (TUK)

As observed in 10.4, the teaching methods within the TUK are mostly of a 'classical' kind. In addition, TUK students obtain but a little practical experience in the field before graduating. We suggest that students should be required to spend more time in the field. This would deal with the fact that the students participating in the focus group appeared neither comfortable nor confident in regard to leadership. An important step toward developing leaders (in whatever institution) is to help *increase familiarity*

[62] Skip Bell, "Learning, Changing, and Doing: A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Religious and Non-Profit Organizations," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2010), 103-104. Cf. also the criticisms mentioned in 9.2.7.1.

[63] Note that in the Kampen location this is already given form, to a large extent.

with leadership fundamentals. "Maximizing hands-on exposure to leadership so that participants can develop this familiarity is likely to be a crucial educational step. It is likely that familiarity breeds interest, opening the door for increased knowledge acquisition and opportunities to experiment with leadership concepts in a safe environment."[64] The focus of such field work (e.g. in a local church) would be on learning how to integrate, in different situations, theological insights, spiritual practices (e.g. diverse forms of prayer) and practical skills in the everyday function of the student as someone who is supposed to provide leadership.

In the process, the students would need to be coached (or mentored[65]) by a person who knows how to integrate theology, spirituality and practice, and who has substantial knowledge about leadership. The role of such a coach would be, among other things, to be a 'conversational partner' who would attempt to draw the students into different kinds of dialogue through which they can learn leadership skills.[66] The educational principle is this: if leading is viewed largely as meaning-making (and this is, indeed, a very important aspect, not only of missional leadership, but of leadership in general), then it would be helpful if at least some of the methods used to develop leaders reflect this assumption.[67] Coaching could be used as an instrument to achieve this purpose.

'Missional' coaches Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl state some reasons why they think that coaching is "the preferred approach for equipping leaders in the emerging culture."[68] These are the following eight:[69]

1. Coaching is *relational*, which is consistent with the postmodern value for relationship and community.
2. Coaching is *incarnational* because it is hands-on, person-to-person, face-to-face, and it functions in the realm of shared experience beyond knowledge.
3. Coaching is *practical* because it deals with the real and immediate issues in the life and ministry of the leader.
4. Coaching is *holistic* because it touches on the calling and character of the leader as well as the life of the faith community and its place in the culture.

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[64] Meredith A. Atwood, Jordan W. Mora, and Abram W. Kaplan, "Learning to Lead: Evaluating Leadership and Organizational Learning," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 31, no. 7 (2010), 590.

[65] As indicated in 9.3.7.1, mentoring in various forms, including coaching, is practiced in *all* the educational programs in the Emerging-Missional milieu that were researched for this dissertation.

[66] Cf. Michael Thomas Shiel, "Developing Leadership: Learning What Cannot Be Taught," (DMgt thesis, University of Herdfordshire, 2003), 68.

[67] Cf. Richard Cotton: "If we want our grads to lecture, we should lecture. If we want them to lead small groups, we must lead small groups. If we want them to integrate, we must integrate. The methods we use and the emphases we make repeatedly will probably dominate our learner's approach to ministry. Because learners are likely to reproduce the processes they go through, it is essential that they be led through the kinds of experiences appropriate for them to use with others." Robert A. Cotton, "Toward A New Curriculum for Theological Education," *Common Ground Journal* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2005), 3-4. http://www.Commongroundjournal.org/ (last accessed December 17, 2011).

[68] Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl, *TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008), 27.

[69] Ibid., 27-28.

5. Coaching is *contextual* because every coaching conversation starts and ends in the life and ministry context of the leader rather than starting from a specific model, or even from the coach's external point of reference.
6. Coaching is *missional* in that the coach helps the leader to understand and engage the culture through missional activity and significant personal relationships with secular people.
7. Coaching is *flexible* and is an especially useful approach to ministry during this time of changing paradigms. It is 'just in time' and can keep pace with rapid change.
8. Coaching is *cross-cultural* because it is centred in the context of the leader and not in that of the coach. It empowers the leaders to contextualize ministry principles to their own culture.

11.3.3 Challenges for the Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF)

The educational method used within the ETF is mostly of a 'classical' kind, just as in the TUK. This may have its advantages, particularly for future scholars (although changes are occurring in the field of scholarship as well).[70] However, those ETF graduates who are supposed to exercise leadership in a church setting will need to draw on much more than just intellectual resources. In order to develop their *phronèsis* (practical wisdom) and problem-solving skills, they might consider adopting forms of problem-based teaching. Some other teaching methods that help to develop critically reflective leaders are case study, critical incident, metaphor analysis,[71] role play, role reversal, and simulation.[72] These methods foster 'double loop learning', i.e., they stimulate the questioning of assumptions, viewing situations from various perspectives, comparing and contrasting paradigms, and seeking alternative ways of thinking and acting.[73]

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[70] According to Mark Taylor, "*What* faculty members teach will have to change as much as *how* they teach. Working in new ways with people not only across the university but also beyond the walls of educational institutions is required." Mark C. Taylor, *Crisis on Campus: A Bold Plan for Reforming Our Colleges and Universities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 100. One influential recent development is e-learning, of which is it claimed that it "is becoming one of the dominant paradigms for teaching and learning worldwide in the twenty-first century." Mary R. Lea, "Approaches to Learning: Developing E-Learning Agendas," in Robin Goodfellow and Mary R. Lea, *Challenging E-Learning in the University: A Literacies Perspective* (Berkshire, UK: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 9.

[71] Chapter 5 discussed the attention that metaphors receive in the EMC. We submit that metaphors are also important in the education of future church leaders, because of these characteristics: metaphors clarify and illuminate chaotic experiences; they are powerful tools for communicating experiences to people who do not know what we know; they serve to direct attention and rearrange value; they can effect physical and psychological health; they can help put experiences into perspective; they facilitate cognitive leaps, creative insight and intellectual growth; they gather and 'chunk' lots of information or an unwieldy experience into a whole that is more easily remembered and used; they are meaning building blocks that can stand in for full and 'complete' knowledge until the fuller knowledge is discerned. See Larsen, *Religious Education and the Brain*, 86-96.

[72] Cynthia L. Brown, "Double Loop Learning: Developing Critically Reflective Leaders for a Changing World," *Common Ground Journal* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2005). http://www.commongroundjournal.org/ (last accessed December 17, 2011).

[73] Ibid.

Furthermore, the integration of theory and practice can be enhanced by putting a greater emphasis on practical theological approaches to conducting research in combination with theoretical reflection.[74] For the Church & Pastoral Ministries specialization, this may be more important than acquiring still more knowledge of – for example – philosophy.[75]

The ideal situation, in our opinion, would be one in which there is a direct relationship between what is expected of those ETF graduates who are likely to function as leaders[76] in churches (and Christian organizations) on the one hand, and at least some of the teaching methods aimed at developing such leaders on the other. More concretely, we think it would be useful if the methods for teaching leadership reflected something of the ambiguity and complexity of leadership that future leaders are likely to face. One such teaching method which helps students directly *experience* what leadership is actually about is called case-in-point teaching.[77] In this teaching method, both the explicit and the underlying issues that surface in the group are connected to the course content. Everything that happens in the classroom is open to scrutiny – including the actions, inconsistencies, and blind spots of the teacher.[78] In contrast to 'teaching as telling', this more interactive approach fosters a discovery process. Essential features of adaptive leadership appear as observations, interpretations, concepts, images, metaphors, and stories that are woven into a case-in-point teaching process. Theory emerges from reflection on practice and an analytical framework takes form.[79] Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky from Harvard University have described leadership as 'an improvisational art', and their approach to teaching leadership is aligned with that perspective.[80]

Accordingly, "the learning milieu that is created in case-in-point teaching can be understood best as the combination of a traditional classroom (row upon row of a well-cultivated field) and a laboratory or studio (a less orderly but yeastly place)."[81] In the art

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[74] Cf. the suggestions in Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, eds., *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), parts 2-4.

[75] During one of the interviews it was suggested that a future curriculum change might involve a greater accent on philosophy; this was also hinted at in the Self-Evaluation Report.

[76] A difficulty in this regard is that the relation between following the Church and Pastoral Ministries specialization at the ETF and 'becoming a leader' is not so direct as in a regular *predikantenopleiding*. Moreover, it is fairly well possible that a student who chooses another specialization does, after graduating, end up in a leadership position.

[77] See chap. 9, n120.

[78] Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership* Can *Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2005), 7. In case-in-point teaching, it is recognized that students will almost inevitably model themselves to varying degrees after those with authority in the classroom. Students unconsciously take in the way a teacher resolves conflicts in class, solves problems, handles the introduction of deviant, innovative, troubling, or confusing points of view, and exercises authority, to name a few examples. Teachers therefore have an obligation to ask themselves: "If people model themselves after me, will they be acting according to the principles I want to teach them?" Case-in-point teaching makes it possible for unconscious modeling to become conscious rather than remaining unexamined. Ibid., 165, 233.

[79] Ibid., 71.

[80] Ibid., 208-9.

[81] Ibid., 48.

studio, teachers do not necessarily stand and students do not necessarily sit. Students observe each other's work, exchange insights, and return to their canvases to try again. Mistakes are not seen as failures; they are encouraged and rewarded as inevitable steps in an ongoing learning process that requires trial and error. Everything in the art studio seems to reinforce the student's responsibility to learn and to take risks,[82] in combination with improvising and being creative.[83]

Case-in-point teaching is quite a challenge for the teacher. It need not, however, be done in exactly the same way as in Harvard. For teachers who wish to adopt the strengths of case-in-point teaching while adapting it to suit their own possibilities, there are three basic requirements: First, a curiosity about how to practice a quality of leadership education that can more adequately address systemic change on behalf of the common good. Second, an informed respect for the process of human growth and development. Third, a willingness to take on a mode of working that challenges both their own and others' assumptions about how teaching and learning take place.[84]

This remark completes our discussion of challenges for theological education. A final observation concerns the interesting parallels that can be observed between churches that are confronted with the challenge of transformative change (see 8.9) and universities, more specifically research intensive academic departments such as theological faculties. From the point of view of complexity theory, transformative changes in either case requires *participative learning processes*, engaging in *collaborative reflection*, and leadership that consists to a large extent in *meaning making and pattern recognition*. "It means moving from linear design towards designing with intent and, building upon uncertainty by engaging in processes of interaction in a reflective and imaginative manner."[85]

A few more general reflections on the findings of our research follow in the final chapter, bringing this project to a close.

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[82] Parks, *Leadership* Can *Be Taught*, 49.

[83] Ibid., 106. See on this also Robert B. Denhardt and Janet V. Denhardt, *The Dance of Leadership: The Art of Leading in Business, Government, and Society* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006): "The studio is a place not primarily used for didactic instruction but for practice and creative experimentation. The studio setting brings the instructor and students together in a collaborative relationship in which all are involved in generating ideas, executing those ideas, and providing feedback to each other. The studio encourages, and in fact demands, a considerable amount of individual self-reflection." Ibid., 168.

[84] Parks, *Leadership* Can *Be Taught*, 170.

[85] Fabio Bento, "A Complex Perspective Towards Leadership in Academic Departments: Investigating Organizational Changes in a Norwegian Research-Intensive Academic Department," *International Journal of Complexity in Leadership and Management* 1, no. 2 (2011), 130.

CHAPTER 12. *CHURCH, LEADERSHIP, AND LEADER EDUCATION ON A CROSSROADS*: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

12.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to answer, in a concise manner, the research questions with which we embarked on this research project. In this way a summary of this thesis is provided that we hope is useful for the reader. In addition, we formulate our concluding reflections on the main findings of this thesis, which will include a few suggestions for further research.

12.2 What Is the Historical Background of the Emerging-Missional Conversation and What Are Its Main Theological Characteristics?

We coined the term 'Emerging-Missional Conversation' (EMC) for the purpose of this thesis to refer to a range of discourse about important beliefs and practices that are the common focus of interest, concern and conversation in two movements: the Emerging Church Movement and the Missional Church Movement. We comment upon these movements in the next two subsections, which together provide an answer to our first research question, and close with a few concluding reflections (12.2.3).

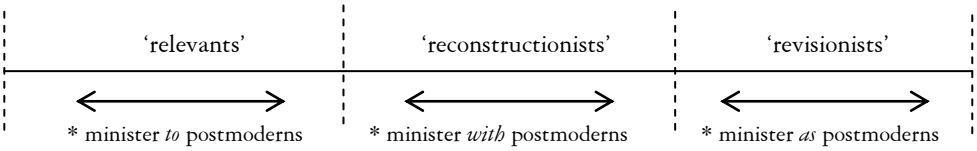
12.2.1 The Emerging Church Movement

Much of the focus and language and many of the programs of the institutional churches no longer connect with people in Western countries. Since the 1990s, creative and innovative Christians, propelled by a mixture of longing, curiosity and discontent, have been experimenting with different kinds of worship and Christian communities that are deliberately geared to a changing culture. These communities are variously called 'fresh expressions of church' or 'mission-shaped churches' (particularly in the UK); 'emerging missional churches' (in Australia and New Zealand); 'emerging churches', or 'missional churches' (in many Western countries, particularly in North America). 'Emerging Church Movement' is often used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide variety of persons and groups that meet each other in internet chat rooms, websites and blogs, at regional, national and international gatherings, through books, articles, CDs, DVDs, and so on. Within the Emerging Church Movement some groups and individuals are on a 'reactive' path. They react against the traditional church and are less focused on reaching the unchurched or post-churched. Many other persons and communities have embarked on a 'pro-active' path. They are particularly interested in mission and in the

question what being church means in a what is often called a 'postmodern', 'post-Christendom' society. Generally speaking, the groups in the Emerging Church Movement are dynamic and flexible, contextual and mission-minded, innovative and focused on relations and community. Typical of the movement is a relational ecclesiology in which the church is understood as a network of relationships.

It is not possible to describe *the* theology of the Emerging Church Movement. We may, however, roughly sketch a spectrum by using the 'ideal types' of relevants, reconstructionists, and revisionists.

Figure 1. Three Streams of the Spectrum within the Emerging Church Movement



'Relevants' minister *to* postmoderns, purposefully trying to reach postmoderns with the gospel. Relevants hold on to conservative evangelical doctrines, but at the same time, they are open to culture, including using advanced digital technologies. They see this approach as suitable for a pluralistic and diverse culture.

'Reconstructionists' minister *with* postmoderns. Their plea for reconstructing leadership, church structure, the role of a pastor, spiritual formation, how community is lived out, and related issues is more explicit than among relevants. N.T. Wright and Lesslie Newbigin are two influential theologians among reconstructionists.

'Revisionists' minister *as* postmoderns. They emphasize an experiential, socially activist, inclusive, pluralist, pilgrims-on-the-way, this-world affirming community, and a theology that is local, conversational, and temporary. The theologians Stanley Grenz and Jürgen Moltmann are often referred to in revisionists' writings, but the diversity in this third stream is large.

Differences among and within these three streams notwithstanding, many authors in the Emerging Church Movement emphasize that (a) God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world and (b) that this 'sentness' has all kinds of practical implications for church life, including its worship. Moreover, they speak of the church as a *missional church*, i.e. a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world. A missional church is open to innovation, experimentation, and creativity, because it is called to contextualize ('incarnate') itself within a specific setting. Authors in the emerging church converge with prominent opinion leaders in the missional church to the extent that they reflect first and foremost on God's presence in the world and in the midst of the church. In other words, we find a focal point of the Emerging-Missional Conversation there.

12.2.2 The Missional Church Movement and Its Shared Interests with the Emerging Church Movement

A comparable breadth to that which characterizes the Emerging Church Movement can be found in the Missional Church Movement, which has its roots in the American-based Gospel and Our Culture Network. From the early 1990's on, the activities of this network have been focused on cultural research (such as the impact of shifts from modernity to postmodernity and from Christendom to post-Christendom), theological reflection, and the church renewal necessary for the recovery of the church's missionary identity. In this context, the concept of a 'missional church' was introduced and the term 'Missional Church Movement' first began to be used. Generally speaking, many leading voices in the Missional Church Movement are academics belonging to mainline churches, who often stand at a critical distance from postmodern culture. Many contributors to Emerging Church Movement conversations, on the other hand, are low church Protestants – 'lay' practitioners rather than scholars – and people of action who are quite open to the cultural changes discernable in postmodernity.

These differences notwithstanding, the Emerging and Missional movements do have shared interests. The 'crossing' of the two movements can be discerned in the theological motif concerning the mission of the Triune God in and for the world, in which the church is called to participate in the form of incarnational, missional communities. Furthermore, opinion leaders in both movements agree that there is no 'model' congregation, nor a standardized policy, because the church is responsible to translate the good news of the gospel along with its organizational reality into every cultural context that it encounters. Consequently, they believe that leaders of missional churches need skills in spiritual formation and missional encounter as well as organizational development and management of complex systems. Thus, the missional vocation and identity of the church has clear implications for church structure and leadership, and, consequently, leader education.

12.2.3 Concluding Reflections

We submit our concluding reflections on the subject of the first research question in the following three points.

1. One of the main contributions of the EMC lies in its role as a catalyst for the worldwide church, for example, by stimulating joint conversations[1] and reflection on questions such as the following: is it biblically and theologically correct to see the church as missional, i.e. participating in God's mission, and what exactly do we mean by this? If it appears to be justified and, indeed, of strategic importance to define the church in 'mis-

[1] Cf. Stuart Murray, "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* [emphasis added] between inherited and emerging churches that enable each other to learn from the other and together find fresh ways of incarnating the gospel in a changing and diverse culture." As quoted in Michael Moynagh, *Emerging church.intro* (Oxford, UK: Monarch, 2004), 153.

sional' terms, what are the consequences for its structures, its leadership, and its leader education? And what does being missional entail, in various local contexts, for "ways of speaking, everyday acts of embodiment, the design of institutions, and desired aesthetics"?[2] In addition to stimulating dialogue, the EMC can help to bring about a crossover of vision, ideas and experiences. As David Boshart writes, "Collecting stories from situations of church planting domestically and internationally that speak to the issue of being hosted by a context could evoke imaginative learning for both developing and existing congregations in thinking about the nature of the church as sent rather than being a rooted institution."[3]

2. Communities who describe themselves in emerging or missional terms, or perhaps both, may be regarded as constituting an important 'Research & Development department' of the church.[4] We estimate that churches such as the Protestant Church in the Netherlands or the Reformed churches (liberated) may learn much from these communities, in particular in so far[5] as they represent the following:

* creative, experiential, flexible, missional, participative and spiritual worship practices[6] – with due attention for the spatial dimension[7] – and theological reflections on (missional) worship that undergird these;[8]
* forms of authentic, hospitable, inclusive, 'centred-set' community in which people are invited even before they are Christians, and which exemplify the biblical truth that "personal salvation is a community-creating event";[9]

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[2] James S. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 119.

[3] David W. Boshart, *Becoming Missional: Denominations and New Church Development in Complex Social Contexts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 147.

[4] Cf. the comment of the 'traditionalist' seminary dean David Johnson: "I believe that the emerging churches are onto something that is being missed by a lot of static churches at the beginning of the twenty-first century." David H. Johnson, "Emerging Churches: Reflections From A Traditionalist Seminary Dean," *Didaskalia* (Winter 2008), 174.

[5] This way of putting it leaves room for the gap between EMC ideals/rhetoric and the reality that empirical researchers may encounter in the Emerging-Missional milieu.

[6] One important facet concerns the (often weekly celebrated) Eucharist. See Janine Morgan, "Emerging Eucharist: Formative Ritualizing in British Emerging Churches," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008).

[7] Richard Giles, "Liturgically Informed Buildings," in Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby, eds., *Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (London: Canterbury Press, 2009), 116-136; William R. McAlpine, *Sacred Space for the Missional Church: Engaging Culture through the Built Environment* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Karyn L. Wiseman, "Grace Space: The Creation of Worship Space for the Postmodern/Emerging Church," (PhD diss., Drew University, 2006).

[8] The Dutch practical theologian Gerrit Immink, a professor at the PThU, recently wrote a book on worship, *Het heilige gebeurt. Praktijk, theologie en traditie van de protestantse eredienst* [The holy happens: Practice, theology and tradition of protestant worship] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2011). This publication does not contain any references to the worship practices in emerging churches nor to the rich reflections on worship such as can be found in the EMC. We consider this to be a missed opportunity.

[9] Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2009), 143.

* an holistic faith that is – both in prayer and action – centered on the mission of the Triune God, which leads to personal, communal, and social transformation,[10] and in which young people are enabled and encouraged to participate.[11]

3. A mixed economy, or in a more organic metaphor: 'mixed ecology', consisting of a close collaboration between existing and emerging churches may, in many contexts, be the best way forward. Such forms of collaboration may help new forms of church to develop both collectivist practices that allow for flexibility, responsiveness and meaning, and bureaucratic practices that afford fairness, efficiency, and stability. Without proper attention to this last dimension, many emerging churches may not be able to endure in the long term.

To these reflections we add three suggestions for further research.

1. The relations between emerging-missional communities and unchurched people are yet to be analyzed in detail in various sub-cultural and local contexts. A leading question in this endeavor could be what 'missional' means – in actual practice – for these relations.

2. We expect that relevant insights – in particular in regard to leadership, spiritual formation, and local mission – can be obtained by systematically comparing characteristics of innovative, team-led, mission-minded Roman Catholic parishes[12] or Small Christian Communities (SCC's)[13] on the one hand, and protestant emerging-missional communities in specific local or regional contexts on the other hand.[14]

3. Comparative case-studies may be conducted on how forms of collaboration between existing churches and fresh expressions of church are given form in practice in different contexts and what problematic and positive experiences are encountered in this endeavor.

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[10] For example, Brad Cecil observed the following five paths to transformation in his community called Axxess (Arlington, Texas): cognitive (studying the Scriptures), contemplative (practices like meditation and prayer), ascetic (service to others), expressivist (self-expression, e.g. through storytelling and the arts), and communitarian (shared lives). See Brad Cecil, "I Told You We Weren't Crazy," in Mike Yaconelli, ed., *Stories of Emergence: Moving from Absolute to Authentic* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan/YS, 2003), 176.

[11] Youth work in the Emerging-Missional milieu is focused on creativity, community, worship, holistic mission, mentoring, discipleship, and relationships. See Brian Kirk and Jacob Thorne, *Missional Youth Ministry: Moving From Gathering Teenagers to Scattering Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/YS, 2011); Tim Sudworth, with Graham Cray and Chris Russell, *Mission-Shaped Youth: Rethinking Young People and Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2007); Alison and David Booker, eds., *Young People and Mission: A Practical Guide* (London: Church House Publishing, 2007).

[12] Cf. Marti R. Jewell and David A. Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church: Emerging Models of Parish Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2010), chap. 7, n114 and n151, and chap. 8, n18.

[13] Cf. chap. 7, n19 and n88. On SCC's in the Anglican Church, see Jeanne Hinton and Peter B. Price, *Changing Communities: Church from the Grassroots* (London: Church House Publishing, 2003). In the Netherlands, there are – as of yet – only a few SCC's to be found. See Kees Slijkerman, "Tips en tools, methodes en literatuur," in Kees Slijkerman en Fred van Iersel, eds., *Kleine geloofsgroepen. Wegen naar een vitale parochie* (Heeswijk: Abdij van Berne, 2011), 102.

[14] A short comparison, that begs to be further unpacked, is provided in R.J.A. Doornenbal, "Emerging Churches, Small Christian Communities, en 'organisch' leiderschap," *Sophie* 1 (February 2012), 44-47.

12.3 What is Characteristic of the Discourse about Culture, Church, and Leadership within the EMC?

This question encompasses four sub-questions: How does the concept of paradigm function within the EMC? (12.3.1); What is meant within the EMC by the terms 'postmodern' and 'post-Christendom' and (how) are these terms appropriate to describe developments in Western countries in general, and in the Netherlands in particular? (12.3.2); What are the motives for using metaphors in the EMC, in what way are they used, and how is this to be evaluated? (12.3.3); In what way does complexity theory contribute to thought on church organizations and leadership, according to opinion leaders in the EMC and current scholarship? (12.3.4)

12.3.1 How Does the Concept of Paradigm Function within the EMC?

In the EMC, the term 'paradigm' is used, often implicitly, on three distinguishable levels: a general macro level, an intermediate meso level and a more specific micro level. On the macro level, the concept of paradigm basically overlaps with that of worldview, or equivalent concepts such as mental model, map of the world, or framework. On a meso level, the word paradigm refers to certain beliefs, values and commitments regarding subjects such as leadership, e.g., a new missional leadership paradigm. Paradigms at the micro level are concerned with concrete guidelines for action on specified subjects, such as adopting transformissional coaching as a new paradigm.

Furthermore, the term paradigm is used in descriptive and normative ways. A descriptive claim is that a major paradigm shift is underway or that it has already been effected, e.g. a shift from Christendom to post-Christendom. A normative claim is that a paradigm shift should be embarked upon, e.g. shifting from a Christendom mode of church to a missional church.

Some influential EMC writers indicate how a 'paradigm shift' impacted their own lives. Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, for instance, have felt the radical impact of a paradigm shift regarding the embracing, and the subsequent living out, of a missionary identity. And Alan Roxburgh describes a paradigm shift in his understanding of church leadership: from a phenomenon that can be thought of in terms of linearity, cause-and-effect, to a network of dynamic, noncontrollable interrelationships among ordinary people in local contexts where the Spirit is at work.

The literature of the EMC often contains sharp juxtapositions of old and new paradigms or worldviews. Here, an echo can be heard of the so-called incommensurability thesis of the first (1962) edition of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn suggested that the proponents of competing paradigms practice their trades in different worlds and that their different paradigms are 'incommensurable'. When this line of thinking is applied in the EMC, this can easily lead to people, groups, or institutions being categorized in terms of, for example, 'missional' or 'non-missional', which violates the more complex and dynamic reality. The first *caveat* concerning the function

of 'paradigm-language' within the EMC is the implicit suggestion of incommensurability. The second one is closely related: because paradigm thinking emphasizes dichotomies and tends to simplistically delegitimize opposing views as antiquated, it can lead one to give up on having a reasonable conversation with people who are perceived as holding onto another paradigm. In short, paradigm thinking easily gains ideological overtones. This is also the case within the EMC.

12.3.1.1 Concluding Reflections

Although speaking in terms of paradigms can have negative repercussions, as we argued above, it also has the potential to lead us to question the axioms, presuppositions, theories, or interpretative lenses which all of us use – often unreflectively – and through which we view the world, read the Bible, think about the church, and so on. One example that we think is particularly pertinent for protestant churches in the Netherlands concerns what we propose to call the 'preaching and preacher centered paradigm', i.e. the presupposition that the Sunday morning sermon is (or should be) the most important event in the week and that the person who delivers it, the preacher, *de facto* is the most important person in the church. Some of our critical questions and suggestions for further research in this regard are the following. To what extent and how is this paradigm indeed operative within Dutch protestant churches, and what factors are involved in this? Is this paradigm confirmed by Scripture when read with a missional hermeneutic?[15] To mention just one sub-issue on this topic: what are characteristics of the preaching of (among others) Peter and Paul and how does this compare to present day preaching in Dutch protestant churches such as the PKN or the Reformed churches (liberated)? Furthermore, what is the empirical evidence for supposing that the solution for the current crisis in the church consists in better preaching,[16] as is often suggested?[17] Without denying the relevance of excellent preaching, as *one* element of worship,[18] how can other elements been given more attention, such as holistic (i.e., involving the five senses) worship experiences, community (for example through the meal)[19], spiritual for-

[15] A fine product of such a reading is Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

[16] In her analysis of conversion narratives, the Dutch anthropologist and theologian Miranda Klaver "puts forward the importance of emotions, affects and bodily experience of (potential) converts, emphasizing the sensuous aspects of religion and the imaginations it cultivates, and acknowledging people's desires." Miranda Klaver, *This Is My Desire: A Semiotic Perspective on Conversion in an Evangelical Seeker Church and a Pentecostal Church in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Pallas Publications, 2011), 396. Klaver found out that, among other things, *music* proved to be far more influential in people's trajectories of conversion than sermons.

[17] Cf. Wim Dekker, *Marginaal en missionair. Kleine theologie voor een krimpende kerk* [Marginal and missionary: A small theology for a shrinking church] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2011), 101 ff. See also Immink, *Het heilige gebeurt*, which devotes many of its pages to the topic of preaching.

[18] Cf. Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 204 ff.

[19] Alan and Eleanor Kreider ask attention for the fact that worship services in the early church were meal-based. Alan and Eleanor Kreider, *Worship and Mission After Christendom* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009), 73-93. In contrast, "the meal-less, monological cultures of most churches [today] are disappointing

mation in small groups,[20] and mission?[21] We hope that this kind of questioning can facilitate the emergence of constructive conversations that are conducive of innovation and mission. In so far as paradigm language helps to achieve this, it is – to our mind – helpful.

The use of paradigm language can, in addition, assist in making sense of the cultural changes we experience,[22] and of the sometimes deep differences between people in how they evaluate these changes. It is also justly pointed out within the EMC that church leaders should be aware of their own paradigms, and that one of their tasks is to help uncover operating assumptions or mental maps – for example, about leadership – within the community that they serve. Negatively speaking, an ecclesial system's dedication to unexamined assumptions about leadership undermines its potential.

12.3.2 What Is Meant within the EMC by the Terms 'Postmodern' and 'Post-Christendom' and (How) Are These Terms Appropriate to Describe Developments in Western Countries in General, and in the Netherlands in Particular?

As to the term 'postmodern', two lines can be detected in the EMC. The first line focuses on postmodernism, i.e. on academic claims and discussions. Revisionists take over aspects of postmodern discourse much more than relevants or reconstructionists do, thereby generating interpretations that are not always satisfactory. For example, revisionists treat the Enlightenment without paying close attention to themes like difference, plurality, or internal tensions. This is ironic, because these are typical postmodern sensibilities. Another irony is that revisionists claim to be very critical of modernity. However, the thought that Christianity is a life, not a doctrine, which is promoted within the more progressive parts of the EMC, is itself a product of modernity.

The second line in the EMC deals with socio-cultural shifts within modern societies which cumulatively inaugurate a condition of 'postmodernity'. This term refers primarily to the popular level: pop music, shopping malls, television, the workplace, a consu-

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to many people who have completed the Alpha Courses." Ibid., 119. Cf. Henk de Roest, who considers the meal to be of "central significance" in new churches. Henk de Roest, *Een huis voor de ziel. Gedachten over de kerk voor binnen en buiten* [A home for the soul: Thoughts about the church for inside and outside] (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2010), 169. Interestingly, recent scholarship confirms that the meal was also central in the earliest Christian community gatherings: "the origins of the Christian sermon are probably lying in the conversations in the after-supper assemblies of Christians," and the word *homilia* that came to be used to designate preaching "has a connotation of intimacy and familiarity, of friendly converse and persuasive argumentation, with overtones of serious intent and instruction." Valeriy Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 185-186.

[20] Cf. the conclusion of Roger Gehring, "The worldwide ecclesial and missional contribution of a small group, be it a house church in the full sense or a home group for Bible study, fellowship, prayer, and/or social involvement, training for lay leaders, or evangelistic discussion, cannot be valued too highly." Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 309.

[21] Unfortunately, these elements do not receive serious attention (if any at all) in Immink, *Het heilige gebeurt*.

[22] Cf. the paragraph *Paradigmawisseling* [paradigm shift] in Dekker, *Marginaal en missionair*, 201-203.

merist mentality, and so on. This emphasis is seen especially in publications of relevant and reconstructionist authors. In the EMC, postmodernity is variously described as a consciousness, condition, environment, ethos, mindset, mood, sensibility, or *Zeitgeist.* Its influence is seen manifested in various ways, such as decentralization and fluid networks, pick-and-mix lifestyles, and eclectic approaches to spirituality. 'Postmodernity', then, functions as an umbrella term that covers various contemporary cultural and social processes in the Western world, the Netherlands included. Contemporary sociological research and theorizing, while using a variety in terminology, does affirm that the implications of late or postmodernity deserve to be taken seriously, as participants in the EMC attempt to do.

The following *caveats* are in order, however. (1) It seems safest to use postmodernity as a term defining a state of transition, rather than describing a set of boundaries marking an historical era. One reason for this is that there are many continuities between modernity and postmodernity, such as an emphasis on personal autonomy and authenticity. (2) Regional differences have to be taken into account. For example, in the Dutch Bible Belt, influences of postmodernity are probably less obvious than outside it. (3) The fact that churches and Christians are challenged by the shift from modernity to postmodernity or late modernity, does not mean that they themselves should 'become' postmodern, as especially revisionist voices are prone to suggest. It is unwise to equate the *missio Dei* with present historical developments.

Within the EMC, the shift from Christendom to post-Christendom has two descriptive senses. It refers, first, to dynamics in the socio-political domain: in Western Europe, generally speaking, the tight conglomerate of civilization, territory and ideology called 'Christendom' is crumbling. Secondly, it alludes to a changing mindset, one example of which is that Christianity gradually loses its predominant and familiar status, particularly among the younger generations. Presently, only a small minority of the people in Europe give their loyalty to the church.

In regard to the Netherlands, sociological research does confirm a shift from Christendom to Post-Christendom. As to the socio-political reality, the church no longer leads in the establishment of institutions and the formulation of laws – as in the days of Christendom; a plurality of religious and secular groups have taken her place. As to mindset, church and Christianity are of only marginal importance to most Dutch citizens. Perhaps more pointedly than the term 'secularization', the word post-Christendom focuses on the growing irrelevance of the institutional churches in the Dutch society, without thereby implying that Dutch people are becoming less religious (or 'spiritual').

12.3.2.1 Concluding Reflections

The interaction of gospel, church and culture is one of the central themes in the EMC. In this conversation, large scale cultural changes in Western society are described in terms of a 'shift from modernity to postmodernity', or 'from Christendom to post-Chris-

tendom'. With some *caveats* that we mentioned above, we think this description is justified, while in our estimation the term 'post-Christendom' is especially important because of its heuristic sense.[23] It may, for one, encourage us to be wary of uncritically identifying the Christian faith with current church forms. Moreover, in Christendom thinking, mission in the local context often receives little emphasis, because churches and ministers tend to concentrate upon the pastoral care of their people and the maintenance of their structures.[24]

That being said, we suspect that it might well be the case that most who participate in the Emerging-Missional milieu do not commonly think and speak in terms of 'postmodernity' with the exception of its opinion leaders and wellknown authors. Our understanding of this milieu would be improved if more empirical research were conducted on this point of day-to-day discourse.[25] This may result in more precise language to describe the characteristics of (parts of) the Emerging-Missional milieu.

Our second reflection concerns the fact that many EMC publications (sometimes implicitly) suggest that the social-cultural condition of postmodernity is somehow better than that of modernity, and that post-Christendom characteristics are to be preferred over Christendom ones. We think that the reality is more ambiguous. For example, the empirical research conducted by David Boshart made clear that a "post-Christendom worldview" entails – among other things – a "low sense of commitment to organized religion...that makes participation less than top priority."[26] Such a mentality can hardly be said to be conducive for the forming of an intentional missional community. Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged by sociologists that late modernity or postmodernity is characterized by 'consumerism', even more so than is the case with modernity. In such a cultural context, it is to be expected that many Christians today are easily attracted to a church that provides for their felt personal needs. A postmodern mindset – in so far as this denotes a consumerist mindset – may thus stand in the way of people's commitment to new, uncertain and possibly exacting missional initiatives.[27]

This brings us to the following suggestion for further research. We plead for more empirical studies on Christian groups in the Western world which strive after forming a community of generosity and simplicity (of 'enough') in a consumer world; a community of selfless giving in a world of selfishness and entitlement; a community of hope in a

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[23] It is regrettable that Immink's *Het heilige gebeurt* does not contain reflections on recent developments in Dutch culture and society (and those in the Western world in general). It might be true that the shift from Christendom to post-Christendom and the social and cultural developments in late or postmodernity do not, as of yet, have a great impact on the conservative Reformed constituencies in the Bible Belt (on which Immink's book focuses) but they are still felt, and, we submit should certainly influence thinking about worship today.

[24] Cf. Arenda Haasnoot, *Neem je plaats in. In de tussentijd van kerk en koninkrijk* [Take in your place: In the in-between times of church and kingdom] (Amsterdam: Ark Media, 2011), 61-62.

[25] A good example here is Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals*, which is focused on the American scene.

[26] Boshart, *Becoming Missional*, 80.

[27] Cf. ibid., 47.

world of disillusionment and consumer satiation; a community of justice in a world of economic and ecological injustice; and a community of joy and thanksgiving in a hedonistic world that frantically pursues pleasure.[28]

12.3.3 What Are the Motives for Using Metaphors in the EMC, and in What Way Are They Used?

One reason that EMC writers make abundant use of metaphors is their assumption that this kind of pictorial language is an optimal tool for communicating with 'postmoderns', who are supposed to be more open to non-propositional language. A deeper motive is that metaphors – as a form of pictorial, suggestive, and multi-interpretable language – are believed to fit the more humble epistemology they seek, which is tolerant of diversity and ambiguity and open to mystery. Furthermore, the fact that metaphors have an inherent characteristic of change, dynamism and movement fits the *Zeitgeist* of postmodernity as well as the predilections of many EMC participants themselves, as does the fact that the use of metaphorical language is related to creativity, allusiveness, and imagination.

An important way in which metaphor is used in the EMC is as an heuristic instrument to stimulate the imagination and evoke new perspectives on reality. Metaphors such as catalyst,[29] or jazz band leader,[30] may influence how we think about church leadership. Furthermore, some EMC authors acknowledge that some metaphors can affect not only someone's view but even his (future) actions. Examples of such metaphors in EMC literature are those that refer to chaos theory or to 'holistic' thinking.

In a critical discussion this chapter submits that some of the adopted metaphors in the EMC are quite banal, especially when they are used to disparage 'modern' forms of Christianity. However, many others – including metaphors that concern leadership, or the church – are arguably highly creative and original, and can thereby generate imaginative thinking or provide tools for deconstructing or questioning one's assumptions. Still other metaphors risk being used in an ideological way, as rhetorical tools that leave little room for other views or for correction. If EMC authors forget that metaphors are merely metaphors, their rhetoric may become reductionistic, with unfortunate ideological implications. Furthermore, EMC writers have yet to explain how they distinguish between true and false metaphors, and on the basis of what criteria.

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[28] Cf. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 208-211.

[29] Catalysts depend on trust, inspiration, collaboration, and emotional intelligence; their job is to create personal relationships. On catalyst leadership, see 5.3.1.

[30] Jazz is about – among other things – projecting personality and individuality in the context of a group. This last aspect includes listening and submitting oneself to the gift of another, which "requires humility, trust and discipline." Jeanne Hinton and Peter B. Price, *Changing Communities: Church from the Grassroots* (London: Church House Publishing, 2003), 27.

12.3.3.1 Concluding Reflections

Many writers in the EMC have a keen eye for the allusive nature of metaphor,[31] which leads us into the intermediate area between poetry and reality, between creative imagination and the world outside. Furthermore, they perceive correctly that new metaphors can change our way of looking at things, and that they can even affect one's worldview. The literature of the EMC, moreover, rightly emphasizes that metaphor is an important communicative device in leadership, for example in processes of sense-making (e.g., "What metaphor fits our community?"), envisioning,[32] or cultural formation.[33] Our proposal for those who are involved in theological education, therefore, is to give sustained attention to the 'metaphors we lead by.'[34] It is also relevant to analyze metaphors about leadership itself, since they influence how people think about the nature and purpose of leadership, actions associated with leadership activity, traits associated with effective leadership, or about their own leadership roles. More generally speaking, the facilitative role of metaphors in leader education is increasingly recognized.[35] In addition, it is helpful for teachers to be aware of the 'metaphors they teach by',[36] for example in regard to assessment, as well as to their metaphors for learning.[37]

In our opinion, EMC authors are also right to call attention to metaphors as a crucial conduit for communicating with 'postmoderns'. Particularly people who daily communicate by means of icons depicted on the various electronic devices they interact with at

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[31] See on metaphorical likening as a matter of *allusion* (i.e., a form of referential action at a distance): Catherine Z. Elgin, "Metaphor and Reference," in: Zdravko Radman, ed., *From a Metaphorical Point of View: A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Cognitive Content of Metaphor* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 66ff.

[32] For example, in a Roman Catholic parish in Tilburg, the Netherlands, the metaphor of the 'inn' [*herberg*] proved to be very inspiring for the policy makers, and later on, for many other parishioners as well. The parish-as-inn eventually turned out to be the key stone in the policy plan of this parish. Jan Hendriks, *Op weg naar de Herberg. Bouwen aan een open kerk* [On the road to the Inn: Building at an open church] (Kampen: Kok, 2002), 111-115.

[33] For example, 'Doing church like a river' is one of the central metaphors that the church staff of River Chapel, Missouri uses to describe their organization and the ideal relationships that members should have with one another. "More than any other metaphor, 'doing church like a river' captures the sense in which the people are encouraged to get onboard with the strategies and goals of the organization or move on to find another church." Kevin L. McElmurry, "Alone/Together: The Production of a Religious Culture in a Church for the Unchurched," (PhD diss., University of Missouri, 2009), 217.

[34] Mats Alvesson and André Spicer, *Metaphors We Lead By: Understanding Leadership in the Real World* (London, UK: Routledge, 2010).

[35] See, for example, Kathryn Singh, "Metaphor as a Tool in Educational Leadership Classrooms," *Management in Education* 24, no. 3 (2010), 127-131; Tom D. Taber, "Using Metaphors to Teach Organization Theory," *Journal of Management Education* 31, no. 4 (August 2007), 541-554. Cf. also chap. 11, n70.

[36] Alicia J. Batten, "Metaphors We Teach By: The Language of 'Learning Outcomes'," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 15, no. 1 (January 2012), 16-28.

[37] Cf. Sami Paavola and Kai Hakkarainen, "Metaphors of learning not only help one to explain processes involved in learning, but they can also serve as tools to improve and understand the quality of learning and transforming the educational system. Thus, the metaphors of learning should also guide students, teachers, and researchers to develop new practices of learning and instruction to cope with all the cognitive, social, and motivational challenges of the emerging knowledge based society." Sami Paavola and Kai Hakkarainen, "Knowledge Creation Metaphor – An Emergent Epistemological Approach to Learning," *Science & Education* 14 (2005), 548.

work or at play, may respond more favorably to forms of 'iconic' language and symbolizing (for example through metaphorical artwork)[38], than to propositions. This is an additional reason why the topic of metaphor deserves to be taken seriously.

As to further research, it would be interesting to study how forms of pictorial language function in the day-to-day discourse among participants in emerging churches, in their worship services (and artwork), in their communicating with unchurched or post-church 'postmoderns', and in leadership processes. Furthermore, the use and function of non-linguistic metaphors – such as in sculpted artifacts or pictures – in the Emerging-Missional milieu is yet to be described and analyzed.

12.3.4 In What Way Does Complexity Theory Contribute to Thought on Church Organizations and Leadership, According to Opinion Leaders in the EMC and Current Scholarship?

Complexity theory can be described as the study of the dynamics of so-called 'complex adaptive systems' that are non-linear and have self-organizing attributes and emergent properties. Within the EMC the relevance of complexity theory – including theories of emergence – is perceived to lie on three terrains in particular.

1. Complexity theory – the expression 'new sciences' is sometimes used in the EMC – is connected to an alternative worldview that is holistic in nature. An holistic worldview emphasizes imaginative reason, the use of metaphor, and thinking in terms of change, and it underlines the interdependency and connectivity in our world. Concurrently, in the church and elsewhere, the aspects of relations, community, conversation, and cooperation are emphasized.
2. Complexity theory provides attractive and fruitful perspectives, and appealing metaphors, on what the church is perceived to be: a self-organizing, complex, adaptive, self-regulating system, with an inherent capacity for 'environmental', i.e. contextual adaptation. *Change* is seen as a continuous and existential process in which all elements of a Christian community – which is conceived of as a complex adaptive system – participate.
3. Complexity theory gives a clue about the role of leaders in churches that emerge, viz., *not* to plan and subsequently announce change, but to resource it, by facilitating free information flows and intensive communication between all members of the commu-

[38] One moving example of this is recounted by the atheist writer Nick Croston, who is a regular visitor of the emerging faith community of Wicker Park Grace, Chicago. On Good Friday, they had gathered a group of artists to retell the story of the passion in the form of Stations of the Cross. Croston reflected afterwards, "On the day we opened the Stations of the Cross...the music, light, and contemplative quiet of the exhibit impacted me in a way that no religion ever had before. A I walked and looked at the Stations, I let my atheism simmer as the *highly metaphorical artwork* [emphasis added] made me think, for the first time, about how Jesus must have felt....I was speechless." Nick Croston, as quoted in Nanette Sawyer, "The Imperative of Imagination," in Phil Snider, ed., *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity Is Re-Traditioning Mainline Practices* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2011), 77-78.

nity. In addition, church structures should help increase adaptability and flexibility, and above all, the sense of responsibility of each individual for the community as a whole.

We argue that EMC authors rightly perceive the potential of complexity theory for thinking about aspects of church organization and leadership in dynamic contexts, although they do not clearly acknowledge the limitations of this approach, and the way in which the terminology of complexity theory should (not) be applied. Some authors offer normative statements that could even prove to be damaging when put in practice.

Complexity theory nonetheless has the potential to significantly contribute to thinking about church and leadership in three additional ways to those described above.

1. Complexity theory can make us aware of our existing mental and theological models ('paradigms') about church, change and leadership, thereby posing the question whether these are appropriate in the twenty-first century.
2. The adoption of a 'complexity framework' of thinking – with its notions of change and interconnectivity – by members of a missional community may in practice lead to positive results, such as more participation in decision making, working within networks, the nurture of relationships, the sharing of information, and the creation of meaning.
3. Complexity theory can contribute to the understanding of radical organizational change – including change in church communities – and of the role of leaders in such circumstances. Generally speaking, leaders in communities that show emergent, self-organizing behavior are seen to destabilize the organization, facilitate mutual interactions, encourage innovation, and interpret change (i.e., sense-making).

12.3.4.1 Concluding Reflections

One of the most well-known thinkers about missional leadership today, Alan Roxburgh, points to the importance of the interconnections and interrelationships between members of a congregation. He expects new maps for missional life to emerge out of these "diffuse, noncentralized nodes of energy and creativity."[39] Empirical research on this point is in its infancy. It would be worthwhile if future researchers would analyze the processes, the "transformative potential",[40] and the eventual effects of conversations that are held within a specific missional community by using insights from complexity theory. This could be accompanied by a theological approach that focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit, who as "God's empowering presence"[41] can be believed to be especially

[39] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 179.
[40] Ralph D. Stacey, *Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations: Learning and Knowledge Creation* (London: Routledge, 2001), 177.
[41] Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

concerned with, among other things, creativity, insight, wisdom, discernment, relations, leader emergence,[42] and, indeed, forms of 'energizing'.

Another interesting research question concerns what leadership processes can be described in a church community that aims to engage an adaptive challenge, thus embarking on a path of nonlinear change. Most of the current books on church leadership are focused on the person of the leader, or on 'how to' approaches to forms of linear change. There is a lack of empirical research, conducted in different contexts, that spell out what nonlinear change in Christian communities consists of, how this differs from linear change, and why and how this requires different leadership interventions.

A third research question is about the relation between complexity theory and theology in the EMC. For example, what are resemblances and differences between discussions in the EMC and those in Anglican circles in the 1920's?[43] And to what extent, and how, do adherents of the new science in the EMC acknowledge and deal with the theological implications of the emergent-evolutionary worldview that is behind it, for example in regard to hamartiology and theological anthropology?

12.4 What Views on Leadership Exist in the EMC and How Can These Be Interpreted in a Larger Theoretical Framework?

EMC writers seldom define their exact understanding of leadership. They do, however, use various leadership 'labels' and metaphors that provide clues as to what is deemed important in respect to leadership. According to EMC literature, leadership is, or should be, characterized by (in alphabetical order) being adaptive, apostolic, authentic, catalytic, collaborative, community-led, connective, creative, cultivating, curating, discerning, dispersed, distributed, enabling, emergent, empowering, equipping, facilitative, flexible, hubbing, implicit, incarnational, innovative, inspirational, interpretative, intuitive, kingdom-like, missional, moral, networking, nonlinear, organic, passionate, permission giving, participative/participatory, pioneering, post-Christendom-style, postmodern, plural, relational, representational, responsive, sense-making, serving, shared, spiritual, shared in a team, transformational, and visionary.

The most important leadership metaphors are the following: amateur/learner, apologizer, catalyst, change agent, cultivator, cultural architect, (symphony) conductor, dancer, empowerer, entrepreneur, environmentalist, ethical steward, fellow journeyer/fellow traveler, friend, gardener, includer, information alchemist, jazz band leader, listener, midwife, narrator, poet, quest creator, seeker, spiritual artisan, spiritual guide, spiritual

[42] Julianne R. Cenac, "Leader Emergence and the Phenomenological Work of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 123-135.

[43] Cf. W. Mark Richardson, "Evolutionary-Emergent Worldview and Anglican Theological Revision: Case Studies from the 1920s," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2010), 321-345.

entrepreneur, spiritual sage, team builder, systems thinker, traffic controller, and tribal story teller.

In addition to leadership labels and metaphors, we obtained the following findings on different aspects that have to do with leadership.

1. *Church structures*. The way that a Christian community should be structured depends on the particular 'ecosystem' in which it is located. In order to fit in the emerging post-modern context – seen as a fluid, shifting environment – church structures need to be open to change and centered on a clear purpose. Ideally, these structures have the characteristics of a self-organizing system: i.e., being conducive to conversations, decentralized, dynamic, flat, flexible, fluid, highly relational and network-based.
2. *Authority and power*. Authority and power are not institutional, positional, or based on credentials. Leaders are accorded authority because of their character, demonstrated competence, gifts, and moral or spiritual authority. The aspiration within emerging churches is that power is shared among multiple persons, with the implication that accountability is high for both leaders and followers. This entails the importance of having a shared core identity and shared values.
3. *Decision making*. Churches need a platform where important decisions are made and where accountability is located – something like a leadership team or staff. Within such 'communities within the community' mutual decision making and mutual agreement ('consensus') are sought after.
4. *Leadership roles*. The emphasis is on diversity, since this is an asset in a pluralistic culture, and different people have different gifts. On both theological and sociological grounds, leadership teams are deemed indispensable.
5. *Leadership tasks*. These primarily have to do with (1) helping in the processes of envisioning and sense-making; (2) empowering people and tending to relations, e.g. creating a climate of trust, mutual support, and learning, and stimulating spiritual formation; (3) building appropriate organizational structures and networks that facilitate the emergence of new things.

It appears that many of the preferred characteristics of leadership, as referred to in the EMC, match with the so-called Organic leadership paradigm that has recently come to the fore in leadership scholarship. An overall characteristic of this paradigm is that *leadership* – thought of as the interactions of reciprocal influence among people – is central, instead of the *leader* as a person. Leadership, then, is not necessarily vested in particular individuals. Although there might be formal leaders in various roles (including that of a teacher or a mentor), in the Organic paradigm authority and power reside in the collectivity of the organization. In this way, the commitment, accountability and responsibility of members increase. In addition, a diversity of opinions is valued. Reaching decisions often requires extensive communication and negotiation, however. An additional leadership role in this regard is dealing with conflicting interest groups.

In the Organic paradigm, furthermore, members need to orientate themselves on shared values and a common vision, because there is little control or direction from above. The source and protector of these need not be one particular leader, however; vision and values emerge out of the intensive and continuing interactions among participants.

Organizations that are characterized by a form of Organic leadership often are network-based, with a simple and flexible structure ('adhocracies'). This has to do with the emphasis on continuous and fast change – both within and outside the organization – and on flexibility, creativity and innovation. In the Organic leadership paradigm, people have a clear awareness of the dynamic environment – the social, cultural and physical milieu – in which they are located. An important goal is to stay organically connected to this environment. The very low affinity in the Organic paradigm with hierarchy and bureaucracy is related to some specific cultural factors: Organic organizations are low in power distance equality, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity. Furthermore, individualism is discouraged in favor of a form of 'in-group collectivism'. Finally, the underlying philosophy is based upon the new science perspectives of unpredictability, self-organizing systems, complexity, uncertainty, and focus on the whole system, rather than just on its parts. Rather than bringing order and control, an Organic leader's role is to contain the anxiety of its members as they operate on the 'edge of chaos' where they are creating and discovering a new future that is difficult to foresee.

The overall conclusion is that the Organic paradigm (or model) matches the main perspectives on leadership within the EMC, which is helpful to better understand and evaluate them. Seven insights in particular may be gained from this comparison. These can be summarized as follows.

First, the Organic leadership paradigm has only recently come to the fore, and it is likely that it is not widely known (or used) yet. Second, thinking in terms of leadership paradigms helps us to realize that mental models of leadership held by church members will determine who or what is seen as (adequate, benevolent, effective, etc.) 'leadership'. Third, the emergence of this paradigm is directly related to the fact that many organizations today are facing very dynamic and complex environments. By enabling people to interact freely, share ideas, experiment with new strategies and learn from the outcomes, Organic leadership promotes the variety and creativity that is necessary for the next adaptation to emerge. Fourth, organizations operating within an Organic leadership paradigm often have a structure that is organic, 'project-like', or networked. In a network structure, the leader's role is different from in a more bureaucratic one. Fifth, Organic leadership is particularly to be found in organizations in which creativity and innovation are highly valued. A parallel can be noted here with participants in the EMC who belong – at least to a large extent – to the sociological category of the 'creative class'. Sixth, reaching decisions in an 'organic' church often requires extensive communication and negotiation. There may be more politics involved in emerging churches than meets the eye. Seventh, the Organic paradigm fits the reconfiguration of authority that

is the result of the ascendency of digital technologies. If the cultural impact related to the new mobile and digital social media further increases, churches will need many persons who are willing and able to contribute to leadership in an Organic paradigm. Leaders within the Emerging-Missional milieu are among the pioneers in this field.[44]

12.4.1 Concluding Reflections

Leadership is important in every organization, including churches – today perhaps more than previously was the case. As Russell L. Huizing suggests, "Even a cursory review of ecclesiology over the past 100 years shows the tectonic changes that have shifted ecclesial leadership responsibilities far beyond anything imagined by a vast majority of pastors in times past."[45] The topic of leadership, however, is not always a subject of deep reflection in Christian congregations and church councils, or among pastors. By putting forward, in effect, an Organic leadership paradigm, the EMC challenges Christians and churches to ask important questions such as: What is *our* (perhaps unacknowledged) 'leadership paradigm', and what do we perceive the consequences to be for various aspects of leadership such as authority and power, leadership tasks and roles, organizational structures, and decision making procedures? What cultural influences were involved in its emergence and what sub-cultural aspects are influential in how it operates today? Who has to gain by our leadership paradigm remaining what it is, and what is the 'price' we pay for not considering alternatives? What Scriptural principles can we discern in regard to various leadership aspects and what would they mean for our own sub-cultural context?

On this last point we also have a question for the EMC, which may be worthwhile considering for further research. In the EMC, a form of team leadership is generally advocated, with the theological argument that the Trinity itself functions as a team. As humans created in God's image, EMC leaders seek to follow this divine model (cf. 2.4.1). We think that this is an attractive interpretation, but that it carries with it associations with Western democratic thinking. The model in the Scriptures, however, is not that of a democracy, but "that of leaders delegating authority and empowering those appointed to lead."[46] Most importantly, "both the authority to delegate authority and the means of empowerment find their ultimate source in the leader's own delegated

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[44] Cf. Carol Merritt, pastor at Western Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.: "Technology and social media have become a way of being for us. They have become extensions of how we think, communicate, and form community....When we do something as simple as hold our smartphones in our hands, we know that the culture is shifting in an exciting and sometimes terrifying fashion....Within our denominations, it is often the hyphenated Christians who experiment and explore in the midst of these changes." Carol Howard Merritt, "Net-A-Narratives: The Evolution of the Story in Our Culture, Philosophy, and Faith," in Snider, ed., *The Hyphenateds*, 68.

[45] Russell L. Huizing, "The Seasons of Ecclesial Leadership: A New Paradigm," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 87.

[46] Perry W.H. Shaw, "Vulnerable Authority: A Theological Approach to Leadership and Teamwork," *Christian Education Journal* 3, no. 1 (2006), 121.

authority from God."[47] Our question is where and how exactly this 'ultimate source' finds expression in emerging churches, especially in those that are not denominationally affiliated and that therefore may lack a theology of ordained leadership.

The topic of authority in emerging churches, in our opinion, deserves to be researched more in-depth, for example by using Max Weber's well-known ideal types of basic origins of authority: *traditional* (authority rests "on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them"),[48] *charismatic* (authority rests on the exemplary or extraordinary character of the leader), and *legal/rational* (authority is based on rational values and rules, a typical example being the bureaucratic organization). The interesting point is that authority within communities in the Emerging-Missional milieu does not seem to particularly fit within any of these types; it is a much more hybrid phenomenon. We think it is useful to get this sharper into view, both empirically and in theoretical terms.

Another research topic is this: What exactly do people in different congregations expect from their leaders when they are confronted with rapid and complex contextual changes; how do they view their own role and responsibility, and in what respects do these expectations and views match with the Organic leadership paradigm?

12.5 How May Perspectives on Leadership within the EMC Be Conceptualized within a Definition of 'Missional Leadership' and What Does This Stand for?

In the EMC, as elsewhere in the Christian world, definitions of leadership focus primarily on 'influence', or certain personal leadership traits. We do not want to suggest that these approaches are wrong (for one thing, leadership surely has to do with influence), but we do think that a more encompassing definition – one that is also informed by theology – can be helpful for pastors, theological educators, and others who are involved in leadership. We propose that the following definition of missional leadership is appropriate to capture EMC views on leadership and church practices: *Missional leadership refers to the conversational processes of envisioning, cultural and spiritual formation, and structuring within a Christian community that enable individual participants, groups, and the community as a whole to respond to challenging situations and engage in transformative changes that are necessary to become, or remain, oriented to God's mission in the local context.*

This definition helps to discern three interacting leadership dimensions that have to do with (1) vision, (2) people and relations, and (3) organization that are operative in any Christian community. In this sense the definition is descriptive. The characterization is prescriptive in that it proposes a specific way for envisaging leadership in churches that

[47] Shaw, "Vulnerable Authority," 121.

[48] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, transl. A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947), 328.

aim to be mission-shaped. Its main terms can be explained in a summary fashion as follows.

Missional. The adjective 'missional' is chosen instead of – for example – emerging, organic, or participative, because missional leadership directs the attention to the focus on mission, which is what we found to be emphasized within the EMC.

Conversational processes of... The expression 'conversational' calls attention to the fact that conversations are thought to be important in the EMC, in particular for the leadership dimension that has to do with 'envisioning'. The term 'processes' encourages us to observe the different ways in which people within a Christian community exercise leadership without being in a formal leadership position.

Envisioning. The term 'envisioning' can be interpreted as a communal exercise of theological imagination and discernment, in which Bible study and prayer play a central role, in order to identify the identity and calling of the congregation.

Cultural formation. Cultural formation entails community building, providing for core religious and pastoral functions and rituals, and acting on the community's culture in such a way that the missional vision of the community is facilitated.

Spiritual formation. Spiritual formation has to do with furthering a missional spirituality within the community. Participants are to be equipped for interpreting and engaging culture, and to live the gospel in word and deed in their own contexts and workplaces.

Structuring. Structuring refers to aspects of organizing and management, but also to the task of analyzing the chosen structure(s) from time to time and suggesting adjustments to keep the focus on the mission and vision of the community.

Within a Christian community. In the definition, the term 'community' is used because this is seen as essential in the Emerging-Missional milieu.

Individual participants, groups, and the community as a whole. The conceptualization of missional leadership focuses not just on individuals, but also on groups, i.e. specialized subsystems that do – or do not – accomplish some aspect of the community's purpose. The 'community as a whole' refers to the dynamic entity that consists of, but is greater than, the sum of its constituent parts.

That enable...to respond...and to engage. Missional leadership 'enables', i.e. it facilitates individuals and groups to act and, more specifically, to respond and to engage. Missional leadership is particularly focused on responding to challenging situations, in distinction from technical problems. As mentioned earlier, conversations within the community are thought to be important in this regard. The verb 'engage' refers to the sense of deep involvement and inner motivation that is necessary for the concrete activities that will have to be carried out – which include prayer, and studying the Bible together – if the community wants to become, or remain, oriented to God's mission.

12.5.1 Concluding Reflections

Leadership is a many sided, complex phenomenon that no definition can be expected to fully capture. The definition of missional leadership that we offered above does not, then, claim to be 'definitive'. We do think, however, that it provides a useful lens to bring into focus what is going on in a Christian community, and that it can help to shape the acts of leadership that are necessary in a certain context. To make this more concrete: our conceptualization entails that in an 'ideal' missional church it will be the shared vision and values, as well as the perceptions of God's agency, that motivate people and that help them to make decisions on their course of action. The organizational structures facilitate, and the cultural dimension – for example the experience of belonging – supports. Of course, the reality mostly will not conform to this ideal. Rather, there may be many churches today in which the order is the opposite: the structures (and the people who manage these) dominate, while there is no shared vision, hardly any expectation of God to act, and little sense of community.[49] The definition of missional leadership may help to draw attention to this reality. At the least, then, it may function as a useful heuristic instrument.

When missional leadership functions as described in the definition, it is a process that leaves no individual or group in a specific community untouched. Clearly, missional leadership is not just something that is only relevant for those in positions of formal leadership.[50] We do think, however, that formal leaders (ordained or not) have a special responsibility for monitoring the dynamics between the three poles of vision, culture, and structure; to act upon one or more of these dimensions according to their personal calling and gifts; and to provide input for the processes of spiritual formation.

Moreover, we think that it is necessary for churches aiming to be missional to develop into a *learning community*, in order to mature and effectively fulfill their mission to the world. Rather than stressing permanence, uniformity and stability, a learning community cultivates impermanence and change (albeit not on core values or vision). It expands its capacity to explore and clarify its purpose; it nurtures new and expansive patterns of thinking; it modifies behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights; it sets free collective imagination and aspiration; and it is proactive in the building of relations, also with individuals, communities and organizations outside its own community.

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[49] Cf. Haasnoot, *Neem je plaats in*, 50-55.

[50] Cf. the interesting musings of Philip Clayton, whose understanding of Christian leadership has been "turned upside down" after a conversation with the emerging church leader Spencer Burke: "Today, the leaders who influence our faith and action are those who convene (or moderate or enable) the conversations that change our life – or the activities that transform our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our God. It could be an older Christian who convenes discussions at a church, a house, or a pub. It could be Shane Claiborne leading an activity at The Simple Way on Potter Street in Philadelphia – perhaps gardening in the communal garden – that gives you a sense of community that you've rarely had but always longed for. It could be a website or a blogger that you frequently go to, where you read others' responses and add your own thoughts." Philip Clayton, "Theology and the Church After Google," *The Princeton Theological Review* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2010), 15-16.

This last point deserves some extra comment. Generally speaking, in order for learning to occur, we need to be confronted by someone, or something, beyond the horizon of what we know already. In other words, there needs to be *distance*, and difference. Paradoxically, however, for learning to happen, the other person, object, or idea needs to come *close* as well, in order that we may discern truth, and 'take it to heart'.[51] To apply the principle to the church that aims to be a missional learning community: it needs to conceive of itself as a 'borderland church'.[52] That is to say: boundaries need to be crossed[53] and relationships with others (e.g. non-Christians, or adherents of other religions) need to be established – which indeed is characteristic of many emerging churches. Stated more formally, the cultivation of relations within the polarity of *distance/foreignness* and *closeness/familiarity* is what characterizes many communities in the Emerging-Missional milieu, which have "created safe places for people who are...seeking diversity and 'encounter', instead of homogeneity and familiarity, where they are amongst people who do not share similar beliefs or identities, but still in the process find community: *difference* + *closeness*."[54] Participants in this milieu embark on conversations with the other and thereby "lean into awkwardness"[55]; they talk about these experiences, and learn from them. This means (we submit) that even if we disagree on theological points, we can still learn from participants in the Emerging-Missional milieu *how to learn*.[56]

Strategic venues for further research are those that focus on – preferably longitudinal – descriptions of processes within missional communities in different contexts and the role of leadership therein. Some questions to be asked are these: What is the behavior of (informal or formal) leaders in such a community and how does this compare to that of

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[51] Cf. Parker Palmer, "truth involves entering a relationship with someone or something genuinely other than us, but with whom we are intimately bound." Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: The Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: HarperCollins 1983), 31. Parker provides a captivating reflection on the etymological connection between 'truth' and 'troth' (as in the ancient vow "I pledge thee my troth"): "To know something in truth is to enter troth with the known, to rejoin with new knowing what our minds have put asunder. To know in truth is to become betrothed, to engage the known with one's whole self, an engagement one enters with attentiveness, care, and good will. To know in truth is to allow one's self to be known as well, to be vulnerable to the challenges and changes any true relationship brings. To know in truth is to enter into the life of that which we know and to allow it to enter into ours. Truthful knowing weds the knower and the known; even in separation, the two become part of each other's life and fate." Ibid.

[52] Cf. Gary Nelson, "In a global world, the borderlands are...the places where 'Christian faith, other faiths, and unfaith intersect'." Gary V. Nelson, *Borderland Churches: A Congregation's Introduction to Missional Living* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2008), 5.

[53] "No matter how well we understand the times we are in, it is impossible to be effective as the church without crossing boundaries of comfort, culture, and convenience." Ibid., 4.

[54] Lloyd Chia, "Emerging Faith Boundaries: Bridge-Building, Inclusion, and the Emerging Church Movement in America," (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2010), 234.

[55] Chia, "Emerging Faith Boundaries...," 335.

[56] Interestingly, the dialectic between the different and the familiar highlights another aspect of the metaphors that are so much used in the EMC: they can assist in learning processes, because "metaphorical speech maintains itself precisely in this tension between *familiarity* and *foreignness*" [emphasis added]. Ben Vedder, "On the Meaning of Metaphor in Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Research in Phenomenology* 32 (2002), 206.

leaders in traditional churches? What does the behavior of followers[57] consist of, and how can the interactions between followers and leaders[58] be described? What is characteristic of the dimension of culture in various missional churches and how is this dimension acted upon by leaders? What insights can be gained from an analysis of how 'furthering a missional spirituality' is given form in communities with different local contexts? How does a specific missional community develop into a *learning* community and what does this entail for individuals, groups, and (formal) leaders?

12.6 What Are Salient Views and Practices Concerning Leader Education within the Emerging-Missional Milieu?

In order to equip leaders for missional churches, in recent years, Missional Leadership programs (sometimes other names are used) have started, leading to degrees such as Doctor of Ministry, Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, Master in Mission, or to various specified certificates.[59] By reflecting on the different aspects of our conceptualization of missional leadership, in combination with the use of scholarly literature about (theological) education, we developed a framework of nine questions. We then used this framework to give a coherent description of leader education that is given form according to EMC ideals, as found in representative literature and in the course catalogues of the institutes that we mentioned above. The outlines of this description can be sketched as follows.

1. *Vision/purpose*. Theological education has a clear purpose, which is shared by the faculty, staff and students and which determines the mission, culture, structures, and curriculum of the school. Generally speaking, in Europe/in the West the proposed purpose

[57] The term 'follower' is used here in a technical sense – it is not an expression that is commonly used in the EMC. Although the word may carry associations of conformity, weakness, and passivity, research points out that followers can contribute substantially to the effectiveness and cohesion of the group they belong to, e.g., "by maintaining cooperative working relationships, providing constructive dissent, sharing leadership functions, and supporting leadership development." Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, sixth ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 135.

[58] In particular from the viewpoint of (social) psychology, this is highly important question. It needs to be acknowledged in this respect that leadership is "not necessarily an interaction between leaders and followers as individuals but rather between leaders and followers as group members. What leaders need to do…is to get people to think in terms of the collective interests. By the same token, what they need to do is to be seen to act in the collective interests." S. Alexander Haslam, Stephen D. Reicher, and Michael J. Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 2011), 44

[59] These programs are, among other places, offered in Australia: e.g. at The Australian College of Ministries, and Forge Mission Training Network; in Canada: e.g. at Tyndale Seminary; in the Netherlands, at the Theological University in Kampen (TUK); in Switzerland, e.g. at IGW International; in the United Kingdom, e.g. at the Centre for Missional Leadership, and at Cliff College, Cranmer Hall, the Cymru Institute for Contemporary Christianity, Ridley Hall, Springdale College, St. John's College, and Wycliffe Hall; and in the United States: e.g. at George Fox University, Luther Seminary, Northern Seminary, Northwest University, Rochester College, The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology (formerly called Mars Hill Graduate School), and Western Theological Seminary.

for the twenty-first century is to equip leaders for a missional church in a postmodern, post-Christendom context.

2. *Cultural formation*. The culture of a theological school is that of a learning culture, with all that this entails, including fitting physical (i.e., architectural) arrangements. In addition, students are part of an intentional holistic community that is personally supportive and spiritually enriching.

3. *Spiritual formation*. The spiritual formation of students has been made a priority of the school, and is integrated in the curriculum as a whole. It is given form in and outside the seminary community, by both students and faculty.

4. *Institutional dimension*. The curriculum, educational philosophy, and teaching practices have consequences for the structures of a seminary. As is recognized in Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnosota), for example, a theological school is not only an organization for learning, but also a learning organization. Furthermore, in some of the educational institutes, such as Western Theological Seminary, the processes of organizing and decision making are characterized by concrete attempts to apply aspects of a missional theology, such as sufficient time to listen to each other and to God.

5. *(Local) context*. Theological seminaries which offer Missional Leadership programs work closely with local churches, particularly with transforming, missional congregations. The *missio Dei* and, consequently, the people of God in their mission form the center of and provide perspective for theological studies. Leaders-in-formation are trained by the theological school and an actual missional community *in tandem*.

6. *Curriculum*. In the curricula of all the institutes that we researched, four subjects receive serious attention (next to modules on Biblical Studies, and other subjects): missiology or missional theology; culture or context; leadership; and spirituality or spiritual formation. Furthermore, modules are often multi-, inter- or cross-disciplinary, and have a cross-cultural or international scope. Also, as is characteristic of the curriculum, theory is in service to praxis.

7. *Teaching methods and educational philosophy*. Forms of experiential and inductive learning are emphasized, rather than 'imparting information' in a secluded environment. The background reasoning is that people learn best when they are actively involved in a challenging context, and then receive the appropriate personal support (coaching or mentoring) and the necessary knowledge or theory. Instead of individualistic learning and competitive performance, collaborative learning is central. While these and other aspects of educational philosophy receive attention, theological reflections about the underlying experiential and constructivist learning theories and their naturalistic assumptions are not critically dealt with.

8. *Teachers*. The appointed teachers are themselves (missional) leaders and able team players; they model Christian character, and integrate their personal faith and scholarship.

9. *Students*. It is acknowledged that good candidates for leadership are hard to find. Local congregations take special responsibility for recruiting potential students. Young people with leadership skills, passion and vision are identified and given a task, accompanied with coaching or mentoring. If found suitable, they are subsequently challenged to continue their studies in a seminary or in some other way.

12.6.1 Concluding Reflections

Influential voices within the EMC think that not only churches, but also seminaries need to change their paradigms and practices thoroughly: from maintenance to mission, from church at the center to a kingdom framework, and from equipping managers to equipping spiritual directors and leaders. We agree that in many instances, theological education – in so far as it is meant to educate for leadership – needs to be re-envisioned in the light of recent societal and cultural changes, and that a focus on missional theology is important. We are therefore of the opinion that EMC proposals such as articulated in Robert Banks' *Reenvisioning Theological Education*[60] should be a topic of study and conversation among theological educators in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Moreover, in our estimation, the various programs on Missional Leadership that have been developed in recent years constitute forms of *avant garde* theological education from which much can be learned, also by institutes that do not focus on educating missional leaders. For those seminaries that would choose to start doing so, this would likely entail a process of adaptive rather than mere technical change. The reason for this is that the different aspects of theological education – varying from how its purpose is conceived of to how students are recruited – are highly interrelated. This brings us to our next evaluative remark.

Based on our framework of questions we think that it is crucial for a theological institute to have a clear – preferably theologically grounded – and shared vision on what exactly its purpose and mission is. Furthermore, it is important for theological administrators and educators to – from time to time – systematically review to what extent the internal culture (including the aspects of community and spiritual formation), the organizational structures and decision-making procedures, the contacts with the local context, the curriculum, the teaching methods and educational philosophy, the selection of faculty, and the recruitment of students are all in alignment with the purpose and mission of the school.[61]

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[60] Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

[61] The point is that mission statements alone do not lead to a clear sense of purpose. "The mission needs to be operationalized in a way which leads to the elements of the mission influencing all aspects of organization practice." Graham Peeke, "Mission, Education and Change: The Concept of Institutional Mission and its Application to the Management of Further and Higher Educational Organisations," (PhD diss., Cranfield Institute of Technology, 1992), 251 and 167.

On the topic of missional leader education much research needs to be done, for example, on the following questions. Are there any differences between church leaders who have had substantial schooling on the subject of missional leadership and those who have not, and if so, what are these differences? What conclusions can be drawn from this comparison? What can theological educators and church leaders learn from programs such as provided by Spiritual Leadership Inc[62] that provide not only *leader* education – which is focused on the individual (e.g. the future pastor) – but also *leadership* education, thus encompassing teams and the general culture of a specific church?

Another topic on which we plead for more research, concerns the educational philosophy that is adopted in the Emerging-Missional milieu, especially in so far as it is informed by experiential and constructivist learning theories. Although we do not question the legitimacy of these theories as such, they are often based on pragmatic reasoning[63] and naturalistic assumptions in which thinking is the attempt to bring the individual (bodily) into accord with the environment,[64] and knowledge and ideas are seen as important because of their evolutionary value, not because they are true in any 'ultimate' sense.[65] Such convictions also shine through in popular concepts such as the 'learning organization'.[66] We are interested in research that deals with the ontological, epistemological, anthropological, ethical, and theological questions that come up in this respect.

12.7 What Are Salient Views and Practices Concerning Leader Education within Three Theological Institutes in the Low Countries?

Chapter 10 centers on discovering, describing and analyzing views on leader education in the Protestant Theological University (PThU), located in Kampen, Leiden and

[62] SLI coaches work with teams or groups of people within an organization to discover, develop, and deploy spiritual leaders to bring greater missional effectiveness to their organizations and thereby transform their communities. Bryan D. Sims, "Complexity, Adaptive Leadership, Phase Transitions, and New Emergent Order: A Case Study of the Northwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church," (PhD diss., Regent University, 2009), 34.

[63] Our intention is not to disqualify pragmatic (philosophical) reasoning, but there is an important issue that needs to be addressed. It is well put forward by Louis Menand: "There is a sense in which history is lit by the deeds of men and women for whom ideas were things other than instruments of adjustment. Pragmatism explains everything about ideas except why a person would be willing to die for one." Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 375. Menand refers in this context to, *inter alia*, Martin Luther King.

[64] Robin L. Zebrowski, "Mind is Primarily a Verb: An Examination of Mistaken Similarities Between John Dewey and Herbert Spencer," *Educational Theory* 58, no. 3 (2008), 316.

[65] Cf. Deborah Seltzer-Kelly, "Deweyan Darwinism for the Twenty-First Century: Toward an Educational Method for Critical Democratic Engagement in the Era of the Institute of Education Sciences," *Educational Theory* 58, no. 3 (2008), 297. See also chap. 9, n97.

[66] Cf. Sherrie Bartell, "Today more than ever before, survival of the fittest means survival of the 'fittest to learn'. The popular term used to describe this regenerative organizational species is the 'learning organization'." Sherrie Myers Bartell, "Training's New Role in Learning Organizations," *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 38, no. 4 (2001), 354.

Utrecht;[67] the Theological University in Kampen (TUK), and the Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF) in Leuven, Belgium. The focus was on those MA programs that are meant for future pastors and leaders of congregations, the so-called *predikantenopleidingen*. We used the same framework of questions as we did in our research on leader education in the Emerging-Missional milieu, albeit with a few minor alterations to make it suited for semi-structured interviews with teachers and for focus group sessions with fulltime students. The empirical research done in the three universities was limited in scope, and our methodology was not designed to compare the three institutions in a very thorough way. What follows is a short summary of our findings.

1. *Vision/purpose*. The purpose of the PThU and the TUK is to educate future pastors and leaders of the church, while the ETF somewhat more explicitly states that its purpose is 'to equip leaders'. In the experience of students in all three institutes, the emphasis in their educational trajectory is especially on theological scholarship and their being schooled as theologians, and less on leadership development.

2. *Cultural formation*. Few students and faculty of the PThU, especially in Utrecht, feel that they are part of an intentional holistic community that is personally supportive and spiritually enriching. The TUK and the ETF fare better on this score.

3. *Spiritual formation*. Spiritual formation is not characteristic of the PThU curriculum that we researched, except for the few programs that are offered in Hydepark Seminary.[68] It receives more attention in the TUK, and is even more in focus in the ETF.

4. *Institutional dimension*. The institutional dimension of the PThU is thought to be bureaucratic and formalistic, especially in its Utrecht location. The TUK and the ETF, which are both much smaller, are not characterized in this way.

5. *(Local) context*. The importance of the (local) context for learning is acknowledged in the ETF and in the PThU, but less so in the TUK.

6. *Curriculum*. The curricula of the three institutes are mostly structured along the 'classical' model. This means that few programs are offered in which the disciplines of Biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, and practical theology are thoroughly integrated. The topic of leadership receives some serious (albeit primarily theoretical) attention in the ETF, less so in the PThU, and little in the TUK.

7. *Teaching methods and educational philosophy*. The teaching methods most often used are lectures by teachers, with students writing papers and holding presentations on certain topics. The three institutions characteristically do not make much use of innovative teaching methods that are aimed at integrating theoretical reflection, learning from experience, and personal leadership development. As to the educational philosophy of the PThU, the TUK and the ETF, we found that (a) 'competency' language is especially emphasized in the PThU; (b) the TUK appears to be more appreciative of a constructi-

[67] From September 2012 on: Amsterdam and Groningen.

[68] In the new curriculum, the element of spiritual formation has been strengthened. PThU Director of Education, e-mail message to author, January 21, 2012.

vistic vision on learning than the ETF, at least on paper; (c) all three institutes are challenged to explicate their educational philosophy in more detail.

8. *Teachers*. Being excellent scholars is a prime requisite of the faculty. Being a good teacher or having a solid record in regard to leadership or spiritual formation is secondary.

9. *Students*. No traceable efforts are found concerning the active recruitment and selection of future missional leaders – individuals who are likely to be found in the sociological category called the 'creative class' (Richard Florida).

12.7.1 Concluding Reflections

Our first conclusion is that the thrust of the education that is provided in the PThU and the TUK, and to a large extent in the ETF as well, is focused more on equipping scholars or theologians than it is on developing leaders, although the intention is to do both. It may be helpful to conduct solid empirical research concerning the question what exactly is needed to develop the leadership skills of (future) pastors who are more comfortable with scholarship than with leadership.[69] Furthermore, the attention that is being given to the topic of leadership in the curriculum does not have the insights of complexity theory nor the Organic leadership paradigm in view. If it is true that in the near future a different kind of leadership will be in greater demand in churches – one that is shared and collective, geared to a dynamic context, open for innovation, and connected to digital social communication practices – there is a gap here that needs to be attended to.

Second, only a few teachers and students appeared to have any deep – both experiential and theoretical – knowledge about what is currently going on within the Emerging-Missional milieu outside the Netherlands and Belgium, including experiments with and reflections on missional leadership and leader education, community, spiritual formation, and worship. We think that this milieu deserves more attention, because much can be learned from it (cf. 12.2.3).

Third, in these theological institutes and their constituencies there appears to be (as of yet) little urgency around the active recruitment and selection of future missional leaders. We plead for a change on this score, although it will take special effort to gain the

[69] In our research, we didn't find scholarly studies on this question, although such sources can be found in other fields than that of theology. For an example, see Nicole Annette Sawka, "From Scientist to Manager: Developing Leadership Skills for Early Career Scientists," MA thesis in Leadership and Training (Royal Roads University, 2006). One of her conclusions is that *mentoring* is of crucial importance. This is confirmed by Margaret Inman, who mentions also the following strategies: encouraging the formation of networks and providing guided critical reflection on practice, whilst promoting opportunities for collective articulation and sharing of experiences. See Margaret Inman, "The Journey to Leadership: A Study of How Leader-Academics in Higher Education Learn to Lead" (EdD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2007).

interest of persons who suit the profile of a missional leader, and to offer them programs that match with their talents.[70]

Fourth, neither of the three MA programs that we researched can be said to be very innovative in regard to dealing with the challenges that the 'information revolution' puts to educational approaches. Also, we think it would be an improvement if more teaching methods are adopted that are aimed at integrating theory, experience, and personal development. In this respect much can be learned from practices in the Emerging-Missional milieu, or in secular quarters.

Fifth, it is difficult to ascertain the educational philosophy of the PThU and the ETF, and to what extent it is shared among the faculty (or students). The TUK does have a more extensive didactic learning concept worked out on paper, but all three institutes have, as of yet, to answer the following three basic questions: (1) How do we define learning, and on what scholarly basis? (2) How can this definition – and the theory of learning – be theologically articulated? (3) What does this entail in practical terms for teaching methods and for teachers in the *predikantenopleiding*?

Finally, while much scholarly research is going on in the PThU, the TUK, and the ETF, these institutes are not used to being an object of research themselves. We noticed however that the interviews and the focus group sessions did not only help us acquire the needed data, but that they also stimulated the reflection of both teachers and students on – among other things – the topics of leadership and leader education, and on what is currently happening within the Emerging-Missional milieu. We therefore think that those institutes who want to foster forms of 'double loop learning' – in which assumptions are questioned, situations are viewed from various perspectives, paradigms are compared and contrasted, and so on – might do well to encourage researchers to come and investigate their own educational programs.[71] This would include Roman-Catholic seminaries, which fell outside the scope of our research.

[70] Suited teachers should be recruited, too. As Stefan Paas notes, most theology professors have been educated within the Christendom paradigm. "This means that they have loads of experience in the field of preaching (for Christians, that is), pastoral work and church politics, but very little in social justice advocacy, leading Alpha courses and creative evangelism. As a consequence, they speak with confidence about matters that concern the inner life of the church and hesitantly, abstractly and without much inspirational force about mission." Stefan Paas, "Prepared For a Missionary Ministry in 21st Century Europe," *European Journal of Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011), 126.

[71] We therefore think that it is regrettable that the Theological University (Apeldoorn) of the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the seminary of the Restored Reformed Church (Amsterdam) did not want to participate in our research (see 10.1).

12.8 In the Light of Proposals for and Practices of Leader Education as Conceived of in the Emerging-Missional Milieu and in Recent Scholarship, What Challenges Can Be Formulated for Theological Institutes in the Low Countries?

Chapter 11 is as a whole devoted to formulating the challenges that are hinted at in our final research question. There is no point in merely repeating what we already spoke about above. Bearing chapter 11 in mind, then, the main challenges, i.e., opportunities for development that are – to a greater or a lesser degree – relevant for the PThU, the TUK, and the ETF, and perhaps for other theological institutes as well, can be summed up in five points:

1. Adopting 'leadership' as an integrative focus of the *predikantenopleiding*.
2. Accentuating the topic of leadership in the curriculum.
3. Thinking through the implications of educating for *missional* leadership.
4. Giving more sustained attention to spiritual formation.
5. Adopting a larger variety of teaching methods that may help to develop critically reflective leaders, such as case-in-point teaching and coaching.

The overall challenge for theological institutes in the Low Countries – and the final statement of this thesis – can be formulated as follows. We think that the EMC – despite the sometimes disturbing rhetoric that a few of its proponents tend to adopt – justly emphasizes that deeply influential changes in Western culture and society place the church, its leadership, and its institutions for leader education at a *crossroads*. This means that strategic choices will have to be made concerning vision and mission, in relation to what communally may be discerned, through the leading of the Spirit, regarding God's will and agency.

Being familiar with both milieus, we intend with this thesis to stimulate a 'crossing of the roads' for participants in innovative communities in the Emerging-Missional milieu and those who belong to the milieu of 'inherited church'. With all our substantial differences, we may recognize (in the rich sense of the French word *reconnaissance*[72]), enrich and support each other as brothers and sisters, belonging to the same kingdom, in the light of grace, love and reconciliation that shines down from the cross of Christ.

[72] While the dictionary provides more than twenty different meanings for *reconnaissance*, Paul Ricoeur distinguishes three main ones: the establishment of *knowledge*, recognition in a *reflexive* sense, and acknowledgement in the sense of *gratitude*. All three meanings are appropriate for the kind of recognition that we plead for. Paul Ricoeur, *Parcours de la Reconnaissance* (Paris: Stock, 2005).

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SAMENVATTING {SUMMARY IN DUTCH}

Vertaald in het Nederlands luidt de titel van dit onderzoek: *Kruispunt. Een exploratie van de Emerging-Missional conversatie, met speciale aandacht voor 'missionair leiderschap' en de uitdagingen hiervan voor theologisch onderwijs.* Deze dissertatie stelt in twaalf hoofdstukken de volgende, samenhangende onderwerpen aan de orde: de roeping van de kerk in de 21e eeuw; (missionair) leiderschap; en leiderschapseducatie. Dit gebeurt vanuit een overkoepelende vraagstelling die wordt geïntroduceerd in het eerste hoofdstuk – zie beneden – en in gesprek met actuele internationale discussies over deze zelfde thema's, zoals zal blijken uit de onderstaande samenvatting.

Hoofdstuk 1 opent met de stelling dat de zich voortzettende trend van ontkerkelijking, in combinatie met culturele ontwikkelingen in de richting van pluralisme, consumentisme en postmoderniteit, een zogeheten *adaptive challenge* vormt voor Nederlandse kerken. Een dergelijke 'uitdaging' ontstaat wanneer diepe overtuigingen worden bevraagd, de waarden en oplossingen van voorheen niet meer blijken te werken, en zich andere legitieme perspectieven opdringen. De *Emerging Church Movement* en de *Missional Church Movement* gaan proactief in op de uitdagingen zoals die zich op vergelijkbare wijze als in Nederland aandienen in onder meer Amerika, Australië, Canada, Groot-Brittannië, en Nieuw-Zeeland.

De Missional Church Movement heeft zijn wortels in het Amerikaanse *The Gospel and Our Culture Network*, dat sinds de jaren tachtig van de vorige eeuw een antwoord probeerde te formuleren op de vraag van de anglicaanse zendingsbisschop Lesslie Newbigin: '(Hoe) kan de kerk in het Westen weer een missionaire kerk [*missional church*] worden, gezien het feit dat haar context een missiegebied is geworden?'

Terwijl theologen hierover discussieerden in academische platforms, ontstonden in Engeland, Australië, Nieuw-Zeeland en Amerika in laagkerkelijke kring *grassroots* gemeenschappen die zelfbewust 'contextueel' waren, zowel cultureel als geografisch gezien. Hier liggen de wortels van *alternative worship*, en van wat vandaag in Groot-Brittannië bekendstaat als *fresh expressions of church*, *mission-shaped church*, of (dankzij Amerikaanse import) als *emerging church*. Andere termen, zoals *borderlands church*, *missional church*, of *simple church*, worden eveneens gerekend tot het discours binnen wat we aanduiden als het Emerging-Missional 'milieu'.[1]

Dit proefschrift zoomt in op de punten waar de Emerging Church Movement en de Missional Church Movement – met al hun theologische en regionale verschillen – elkaar aanvullen en 'ontmoeten' rondom gemeenschappelijke vragen, in het bijzonder waar het gaat om kerk-zijn in een veranderende cultuur, leiderschap, en de (theologische) oplei-

[1] Deze term omvat ook organisaties en praktijken daarbinnen. De nadruk in dit proefschrift ligt echter op de Emerging-Missional *Conversation*, dat wil zeggen op vormen van 'gesprek' zoals gevoerd via publicaties.

ding van leiders.[2] De term *Emerging-Missional Conversation* is bedoeld om deze keus expliciet te maken. Deze uitdrukking staat voor vormen van 'gesprek' – zoals voornamelijk gevoerd via artikelen, boeken en blogs – die convergeren als het gaat om theologische visievorming rondom kerk en leiderschap in de 21e eeuw. Dit zijn belangrijke thema's in de praktische theologie, zo wordt uitgelegd.

De overkoepelende vraagstelling van deze dissertatie is deze: *Welke uitdagingen kunnen er worden geformuleerd voor protestantse instituten die beogen toekomstige leiders op te leiden – uitdagingen die zijn gebaseerd op een verkenning van de Emerging-Missional Conversation en van visies daarin aangaande missionair leiderschap en het opleiden van leiders?*

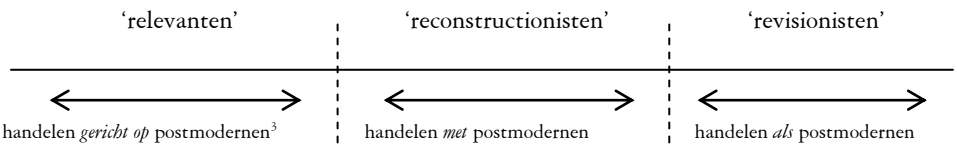
Deze vraagstelling valt uiteen in zeven hoofdvragen die zijn verdeeld over de drie delen van dit proefschrift. Deel A exploreert de EMC; deel B gaat specifiek in op leiderschap; deel C behandelt leiderschapseducatie.

Het proefschrift eindigt met een samenvatting van de antwoorden op de hoofdvragen, vergezeld van reflecties op de uitkomsten en enige suggesties voor nader onderzoek (hoofdstuk 12).

DEEL A: Exploratie van de Emerging-Missional Conversation

Hoofdstuk 2 gaat in op de historische achtergrond en theologische kenmerken van de EMC. Beargumenteerd wordt dat de term *missional church* in de komende jaren waarschijnlijk vaker gebruikt zal worden dan *emerging church*, vooral vanwege het feit dat de Emerging Church Movement in toenemende mate theologisch heterogeen, en daardoor in kringen van (behoudende) *evangelicals* steeds controversiëler is geworden. Na een historische schets van de wortels van de Emerging Church Movement volgt een poging deze theologische diversiteit inzichtelijk te maken door het schetsen van een (ideaaltypisch) spectrum van drie substromingen in deze beweging:

Figuur 1. Drie substromingen in de Emerging Church Movement



[2] Op diverse plekken onderkent deze dissertatie dat de termen 'leiderschap' en 'leider' in Nederland niet vanzelfsprekend positieve associaties oproepen, terwijl dit in bijvoorbeeld de Verenigde Staten anders ligt – al komen we juist in de EMC vergelijkbare weerstanden tegen jegens het zogeheten 'heroïsche' leiderschapsmodel dat ook in Nederland irritatie of vervreemding oproept.

[3] Eng.: 'minister *to* postmoderns'. De twee daaropvolgende, eveneens moeilijk in het Nederlands te vertalen uitdrukkingen zijn 'minister *with* postmoderns' en 'minister *as* postmoderns'. 'Postmoderns' [*postmodernen*] is een uitdrukking die een EMC perspectief wil vertolken; ze staat voor mensen die zich wegens diepgaande sociaal-culturele veranderingen vervreemd weten van traditionele expressies van kerk en christelijk geloof.

De pijlen en de open schotten tussen de diverse stromingen impliceren dat er sprake is van levendig 'grensverkeer' en dynamiek, en dat geen van de drie substromingen qua theologie (of anderszins) gemakkelijk op één noemer kan worden gebracht. Met deze *disclaimer* in het achterhoofd geven we de volgende typologie.

'Relevanten' zijn qua dogmatische opvattingen behoudend en staan tegelijkertijd open voor hedendaagse cultuuruitingen en -vormen, zolang deze naar hun besef niet botsen met wat de Bijbel leert en behulpzaam zijn om postmoderne tijdgenoten te bereiken met het Evangelie.

'Reconstructionisten' staan relatief wat dichter bij postmodernen dan relevanten (vandaar de uitdrukking 'handelen *met*…'); vaak zijn zij beïnvloed door bepaalde postmoderne accenten in hun epistemologie en kritiek op de moderniteit. Kenmerkend is vooral hun pleidooi voor een grondige 'reconstructie' van leiderschap, kerkstructuren, de rol van een predikant of voorganger, spirituele vorming, hoe gemeenschap vorm te geven, en hieraan gerelateerde zaken.

'Revisionisten' benadrukken een sterk ervaringsgerichte, sociaal en maatschappelijk betrokken, inclusieve, pluralistische 'pelgrim'-gemeenschap, en een theologie die lokaal, conversationeel en tijdelijk is. Veel revisionisten zijn dusdanig beïnvloed door postmodern gedachtegoed dat zij handelen *als* postmodernen.

Bij alle onderlinge verschillen blijken de drie substromingen toch ook een gemeenschappelijke basisovertuiging te hebben. Deze laat zich als volgt samenvatten: (a) God is een 'zendende'/missionaire God die de kerk de wereld in zendt; (b) dit gezonden-zijn heeft allerlei praktische implicaties voor het kerkelijk leven. Deze overtuiging, zo wordt uitgelegd, is ook een essentieel kenmerk van de Missional Church Movement. Een convergentiepunt in de *Emerging-Missional Conversation* is derhalve het theologische motief van de missie van de Drie-enige God in en voor de wereld, waarin de kerk geroepen is te participeren in de vorm van incarnationele, missionaire [*missional*] gemeenschappen.

Het hoofdstuk betoogt vervolgens dat deelnemers in de EMC de lokale kerk zien als een *missional church*, dat wil zeggen als 'een gemeenschap van Gods volk die zichzelf definieert als een agent [*agent*] van Gods missie in de wereld, en die haar leven organiseert rondom dit eigenlijke doel'. Een missionaire kerk is open voor innovatie, experimenten, en creativiteit. Er bestaat geen algemeen, kopieerbaar model van een missionaire kerk, omdat de kerk is gehouden het Evangelie – *inclusief organisatorische aspecten* ervan – te 'vertalen' in elke culturele context die zij tegenkomt. Verder benadrukt men in de EMC dat leiders in missionaire kerken vaardigheden nodig hebben op het gebied van spirituele vorming en missionaire ontmoetingen, alsook op het gebied van organisatieontwikkeling en het leiding geven aan complexe systemen.

Als afsluiting volgt een kritische ondervraging van de retoriek in de EMC rondom drie thema's – kerk en instituut, de zogeheten sociale Triniteitsleer, en gemeenschap [community] – die alle van invloed zijn op visies omtrent kerk en leiderschap.

Hoofdstuk 3 vraagt aandacht voor het feit dat er in de EMC vaak wordt gesproken over de noodzaak van een 'nieuw paradigma' ten aanzien van (onder andere) kerk-zijn, leiderschap, en het opleiden van leiders. Dit leidt tot de vraag op welke manier het begrip paradigma fungeert in de EMC.

De term paradigma wordt – vaak impliciet – gebruikt op drie niveaus: macro, meso, en micro. Op macroniveau overlapt de term paradigma grotendeels met *worldview* (wereldbeschouwing), of equivalenten daarvan. Zo is er bijvoorbeeld sprake van een 'modern' of een 'postmodern' paradigma of *worldview*. 'Paradigma' op mesoniveau verwijst naar bepaalde opvattingen en waarden over thema's als leiderschap, zoals in de uitdrukking 'een missionair leiderschapsparadigma'. Paradigma's op microniveau hebben betrekking op handelingsvoorstellen op specifieke terreinen, zoals het aannemen van *transformissional coaching* als een nieuw paradigma.

Vervolgens wordt opgemerkt dat de term paradigma op zowel descriptieve als normatieve manieren wordt gebruikt. Een descriptieve claim is dat zich in de westerse wereld een grote paradigmaverandering voordoet (of dat deze zich reeds *heeft* voltrokken), bijvoorbeeld een verandering van *Christendom*[4] richting *post-Christendom*. Een normatieve claim is dat zich een paradigmaverandering *dient* voor te doen, bijvoorbeeld van een Christendom model van kerk-zijn naar een missionaire kerk.

De literatuur in de EMC bevat vaak scherpe tegenstellingen tussen oude en nieuwe paradigma's. Hierin klinkt de echo door van de eerste editie (1962) van *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* van Thomas Kuhn. Dit invloedrijke boek suggereert dat aanhangers van botsende paradigma's hun vak uitoefenen in verschillende werelden en dat hun paradigma's 'incommensurabel' (niet met elkaar te verenigen) zijn. Als deze manier van denken wordt toegepast in de EMC, dan leidt dit er gemakkelijk toe dat mensen, groepen of instituties worden gecategoriseerd in termen van, bijvoorbeeld, 'missionair' of 'niet-missionair', wat geen recht doet aan de complexe en dynamische realiteit. Een ander mogelijk nadeel van het denken of spreken in termen van paradigma's is dat dit dichotomieën benadrukt en ertoe neigt om botsende meningen in diskrediet te brengen door deze als 'achterhaald' voor te stellen. Dit kan tot gevolg hebben dat een redelijk gesprek met mensen die er een ander paradigma op nahouden niet meer wordt nagestreefd.

Hoofdstuk 4 beantwoordt de vraag hoe de begrippen 'postmodern' en 'post-Christendom' fungeren in de EMC en in welke opzichten ze van toepassing zijn om ontwikkelingen in westerse landen te beschrijven, inclusief Nederland. Wat betreft de uitdrukking 'postmodern' zien we twee lijnen in de EMC literatuur.

[4] We laten de Engelse term Christendom onvertaald (vandaar de hoofdletter), omdat de Nederlandse begrippen 'christendom' of 'christenheid' net niet exact dezelfde betekenis of connotatie hebben. Een toelichting op de uitdrukking post-Christendom volgt in de samenvatting van hoofdstuk 4.

De eerste lijn benadrukt het postmodern*isme*: hierin gaat het om academische discussies, bijvoorbeeld over interpretaties van de Verlichting of over kennisleer (epistemologie). Binnen de EMC zijn het vooral revisionisten die hun aandacht richten op het postmodernistische gedachtegoed en die zich hierdoor laten beïnvloeden in hun theologiseren.

De tweede lijn belicht het fenomeen postmodern*iteit*: deze term verwijst vooral naar aspecten van *popculture*, zoals zichtbaar in muziek en kunst, televisie en film, informatietechnologie, de consumentencultuur en dergelijke. Meerdere toonaangevende sociologen bevestigen dat de maatschappelijke en culturele veranderingen in onze postmoderne, laatmoderne, hoogmoderne, hypermoderne (of nog weer anders genoemde) samenleving, ingrijpende implicaties hebben voor alle instituties – kerken niet uitgezonderd. Dit geldt ook voor Nederland, met de nodige *caveats*: zo zullen 'postmoderne' invloeden minder duidelijk aanwezig zijn in de Nederlandse Biblebelt dan daarbuiten.

Binnen de EMC wordt er ook gesproken over de verandering [*shift*] van Christendom naar post-Christendom. De term Christendom staat voor een conglomeraat van beschaving, territorium en ideologie, met een daaraan gekoppelde mentaliteit waarin kerk en christelijk geloof tot de vanzelfsprekendheden behoren. De uitdrukking post-Christendom suggereert dat zowel de genoemde sociaal-politieke realiteit als de daarbij behorende *mindset* op zijn retour is. Dit geldt ook voor Nederland: de kerk is niet langer leidend in het publieke domein. Daarnaast blijkt voor de meeste Nederlanders kerk en christelijk geloof slechts marginaal van belang te zijn. Duidelijker dan de term 'secularisatie' duidt de term post-Christendom op de groeiende irrelevantie van de institutionele kerken in de Nederlandse samenleving, zonder daarbij te impliceren dat Nederlanders minder religieus (of 'spiritueel') worden.

De kerk in een postmoderne en post-Christendom setting, zo argumenteert men in de EMC, dient een andere, missionair gerichte focus te hebben, en een flexibele, netwerkvorm van organisatie.

Hoofdstuk 5 gaat in op het opvallend frequente en intentionele gebruik van metaforen in de EMC. Wat speelt hierin mee? Als eerste valt op dat veel opinieleiders en schrijvers binnen de EMC, met name die in de Emerging Church Movement, artistiek geinteresseerd, creatief en expressief zijn, en betrokken op hedendaagse cultuuruitingen, variërend van blogs tot films. Deze 'romantische' aanleg maakt hen open voor meer poëtische, evocatieve uitdrukkingen, zoals metaforen bij uitstek zijn. Hier komt bij dat metaforen, als transportmiddelen (Gr. *metaphorikos* = transportatie), veelal uitnodigen tot het denken niet in termen van 'zijn', maar van 'worden': de connotatie is er een van actie, beweging, relaties, transformatie en dergelijke. Dit dynamische karakter van metaforen past bij een postmoderne *Zeistgeist* en sluit ook goed aan bij veel schrijvers in de EMC, die immers *verandering* in de kerk hoog op de agenda hebben staan. Hierbij komen overwegingen van missiologische aard: het optimaal willen communiceren met postmoderne

tijdgenoten, onder meer door af te zien van vervreemdend taalgebruik: "De kerk betreedt nu een wereld waarin verhaal en metafoor het hart van spiritualiteit raken" (Leonard Sweet).

Vervolgens spelen ook epistemologische overtuigingen een rol: als een vorm van multi-interpretabele en suggestieve beeldtaal passen metaforen bij een 'bescheiden' epistemologie die tolerant is ten aanzien van diversiteit en ambiguïteit, en die het mysterie van het Evangelie en het geloof zo veel mogelijk wil respecteren.

Tegelijk wordt onderkend dat een metafoor of krachtige beeldspraak een belangrijk instrument is voor leiders om mensen alternatieven te bieden voor hun denken en handelen, alsook in processen van betekenisverlening [*sense-making*], zo wordt gesteld in de EMC. De grootste nadruk in de EMC lijkt te liggen op nieuwe en creatieve metaforen die betrekking hebben op de kerk (zoals de kerk als 'dj') in een snel veranderende maatschappelijke context. Hierbij komen we ook allerlei leiderschapsmetaforen tegen (zie hoofdstuk 7).

Hoofdstuk 6 bespreekt het feit dat in sommige invloedrijke EMC publicaties bepaalde begrippen vanuit de zogeheten complexiteitstheorie een grote rol spelen, bijvoorbeeld wanneer schrijvers de kerk typeren als een complex adaptief systeem (CAS). Kort gezegd staat dit begrip voor het volgende. Binnen een 'systeem' – een verzameling van agenten [*agents*, bijvoorbeeld moleculen, mieren, of mensen] die onderling van elkaar afhankelijk zijn, een gezamenlijk belang en doel hebben, en die in een open verbinding staan met andere systemen in hun leefmilieu – is er sprake van connecties (onderlinge relaties, verbindingen, contact). Naarmate die contacten duurzaam en gevarieerd (d.i. 'complex') genoeg zijn, kan uit de onderlinge interacties nieuw gedrag ontstaan voor het systeem als geheel. Met andere woorden, het systeem is 'adaptief' als het in staat is om informatie te verwerken vanuit zijn omgeving en zich vervolgens aan te passen. Volgens de complexiteitstheorie is het veelal niet mogelijk om de interacties tussen de agenten in het systeem en de daaruit resulterende 'emergente' orde precies te voorspellen: de interacties zijn non-lineair. Dat houdt in dat er niet altijd een logische relatie bestaat tussen oorzaak en gevolg, input en output. In een complex systeem kunnen kleine veranderingen gevolgen met zich brengen die buitenproportioneel groot zijn. Samengevat houdt de complexiteitstheorie zich bezig met de dynamiek van complexe adaptieve systemen. Kenmerkend voor een CAS is dat deze zelforganiserend en lerend/ adaptief is en dat hij zich niet-lineair gedraagt.

Wat is nu de betekenis die complexiteitstheorie heeft binnen de EMC? Drie zaken zijn hierin van belang.

Ten eerste verschaft deze theorie een holistische wereldbeschouwing (of macroparadigma) die een beter alternatief vormt, zo wordt betoogd, voor het 'moderne' mechanische, newtoniaanse denken. Een holistische wereldbeschouwing benadrukt creativiteit, het gebruik van metaforen en denken in termen van verandering, en ze maakt attent op de

onderlinge afhankelijkheid en 'connectiviteit' in onze wereld. De implicaties voor de kerk is dat hierin gemeenschap, relaties en conversaties centraal (moeten) komen te staan.

In de tweede plaats biedt complexiteitstheorie aantrekkelijke en vruchtbare perspectieven en aansprekende metaforen die betrekking hebben op de kerk als een zelforganiserend en -regulerend, complex, adaptief en levend organisme, met een inherente capaciteit voor aanpassing aan de omgeving. Vanuit deze optiek bezien is *verandering* een natuurlijk, voortdurend en existentieel proces dat iedereen aangaat. Dit wordt ook theologisch onderbouwd: waar God werkt, is er sprake van verandering.

Ten derde geeft complexiteitstheorie aanwijzingen voor de rol en taken van leiders in *emerging/missional* gemeenschappen. De rol van leiders, zo wordt betoogd, is meer op de achtergrond dan het geval is in de meeste traditionele kerken. Hun taak is niet om veranderingen te plannen, maar om deze te *voeden*, door te zorgen voor vrij informatieverkeer en intensieve communicatie en interactie tussen alle leden van de gemeenschap. De organisatorische structuren die worden gekozen, moeten helpen om aanpassingsvermogen en flexibiliteit te bevorderen, en bovenal: een besef van de verantwoordelijkheid van elk individu voor de gemeenschap als geheel.

Het hoofdstuk vervolgt met een kritische bespreking, waarvan de conclusie is dat inzichten vanuit de complexiteitstheorie kunnen helpen processen van diepgaande verandering en innovatie in plaatselijke gemeenten te begrijpen. Innovatie doet zich met name voor waar er sprake is van veel onderlinge relaties en interactie, zowel onderling als met actoren buiten de gemeenschap. Leiders in dergelijke contexten werken niet met (top-down) *vision statements* of andere voorschriften voor verandering. Wat zij wel doen, is vernieuwingen stimuleren en faciliteren, en patronen ontdekken en benoemen in de veranderingen die zich voordoen; de leiders fungeren als zingevers en betekenisverleners. Deel B (bestaande uit de hoofdstukken 7-8) gaat dieper in op het thema leiderschap.

Deel B: Leiderschap

Hoofdstuk 7 schetst in hoofdlijnen hoe men in de EMC denkt en schrijft over leiderschap. Het blijkt dat slechts weinig auteurs een definitie verschaffen van wat leiderschap eigenlijk is. Wel komen we tientallen 'labels' tegen die iets aangeven van wat leiderschap idealiter dient te zijn, variërend van adaptief, apostolisch, en authentiek tot spiritueel en visionair. Ook zijn metaforen populair, bijvoorbeeld de leider als cultureel architect, jazzbandspeler, spiritueel ondernemer, of 'verhalenverteller van de stam' [*tribal story teller*].

Na een bespreking van hoe men in de EMC denkt over diverse thema's die te maken hebben met 'leiderschap' – structuren, gezag en macht, besluitvorming, en rollen en taken van leiders – wordt beargumenteerd dat hierin opmerkelijk veel overlap is te vinden

met het zogeheten 'organische leiderschapsparadigma', dat vanaf ongeveer de eeuwwisseling wereldwijd in opkomst is in allerlei organisaties en bedrijven. Vergeleken met drie andere modellen van denken over leiderschap (die bekendstaan als 'klassiek', 'transactioneel' en 'visionair') betekent het organische paradigma een radicale verandering in het denken over leiderschap, volgelingschap en de aard van organisaties. De belangrijkste drie kenmerken van dit paradigma zijn de volgende:

1. Niet de leider staat centraal, maar de interacties van wederzijdse beïnvloeding tussen mensen; leiderschap wordt dan ook gezien als verspreid over de hele organisatie en niet als gebonden aan specifieke posities en rollen. Leden van een organisatie nemen wisselend deel aan het 'proces' van leiderschap, als leden van een jazzband.
2. Visie en gedeelde waarden zijn heel belangrijk; deze worden echter niet bedacht en bewaakt door één daarvoor aangestelde leider, maar ze komen tot stand door intensieve en voortdurende interacties tussen de leden. De basis van organisch leiderschap is communicatie, veelal gericht op betekenisverlening.
3. De nadruk ligt op continue en snelle veranderingen, zowel binnen als buiten de organisatie, alsook op flexibiliteit, creativiteit en innovatie. Organisaties waarin organisch leiderschap voorkomt, zijn vaak klein en hebben het karakter van een netwerk. Het doel is om organisch verbonden te blijven met het 'milieu' – de sociaal-culturele en fysieke omgeving – waarin de organisatie is geplaatst.

Het hoofdstuk eindigt met zeven aandachtspunten, waarvan de laatste luidt dat kerken in de nabije toekomst veel leden (inclusief formele leiders) nodig hebben die in staat zijn om bij te dragen tot een 'organische' vorm van leiderschap: bijvoorbeeld het faciliteren van informele gemeenschappen waar mensen hun eigen ideeën kunnen inbrengen, in interactie met anderen. Leiders in *emerging churches* behoren tot de pioniers op dit terrein.

Hoofdstuk 8 beoogt een leiderschapsdefinitie te bieden die rekening houdt met zowel toonaangevende visies op leiderschap in de EMC als met huidige wetenschappelijke inzichten op dit terrein. Deze definitie is onder meer bedoeld om een focus te verschaffen voor het opleiden van leiders, een onderwerp dat centraal staat in deel C. In vertaling ziet zij er als volgt uit: *Missionair leiderschap heeft betrekking op conversationele* [conversational] *processen van visievorming, culturele en spirituele vorming, en structuurvorming in een christelijke gemeenschap die individuele deelnemers, groepen, en de gemeenschap als geheel in staat stellen om antwoord te geven op uitdagende situaties en om transformatieve veranderingen aan te gaan die nodig zijn om georiënteerd te raken, of te blijven, op Gods missie in de lokale context.*

Kenmerkend voor deze definitie is dat ze een theologische focus en inhoud heeft – meer dan andere leiderschapsdefinities (inclusief die van sommige christelijke auteurs) die over leiderschap spreken middels niet nader ingevulde uitdrukkingen zoals 'invloed uitoefenen' en/of zich vooral richten op specifieke persoonlijke kenmerken van *leiders*. De centrale begrippen in de conceptualisering zoals voorgesteld in dit hoofdstuk – 'mis-

sionair' [*missional*]; visievorming; culturele en spirituele vorming; Gods missie, enzovoorts – zijn gekozen om EMC-visies over kerk en leiderschap samen te vatten, terwijl aspecten van het in hoofdstuk 7 besproken organische leiderschapsparadigma ook indirect zijn verdisconteerd. Dit blijkt onder meer hieruit, dat niet de eigenschappen van individuele leiders centraal staan, maar dat leiderschap wordt opgevat als een *proces* waaraan meerdere mensen deelnemen, dat visie en (daarmee) gedeelde waarden cruciaal zijn, en dat openheid jegens een veranderende context is verondersteld.

Een ander kenmerk van deze definitie is dat ze zowel descriptieve als normatieve elementen bevat. De centrale begrippen erin – in het hoofdstuk worden ze uitvoerig toegelicht – zijn *descriptief*, in deze zin dat elke christelijke gemeenschap dimensies kent (op verschillende niveaus) die te maken hebben met (theologische) visievorming (bijv. 'wij willen een gastvrije kerk zijn, omdat…'), cultuur/klimaat (bijv. conflicten worden in de regel niet uitgepraat) en spiritualiteit (bijv. wanneer ervaart men iets van God?), en organisatie/structuren (bijv. 'wie neemt besluiten over wat?'). De definitie kan derhalve gebruikt worden als een heuristisch instrument. Tegelijk – zo wordt beargumenteerd – is de voorgestelde definitie theologisch *normatief* geladen: überhaupt is het spreken over 'missionair' leiderschap al normatief, en de verwijzing naar de oriëntatie op 'Gods missie' is dit uiteraard ook. Niettemin is er bewust ruimte gelaten voor verschillende interpretaties en invullingen van deze termen, alsook voor de keuzes ten aanzien van de benodigde ('transformatieve': te onderscheiden van 'technische') veranderingen, en de rol van – al dan niet formele – leiders hierin, om hiermee recht te doen aan de theologische en culturele diversiteit die nu eenmaal kenmerkend is voor de kerk wereldwijd.

De conclusie van dit hoofdstuk is dat de essentie van de inspanningen rondom missionair leiderschap te maken heeft met het bewust aangaan van leerprocessen, en dat een christelijke gemeente zich idealiter zou moeten ontwikkelen tot een leergemeenschap [*learning community*] om te groeien naar volwassenheid en om effectief haar missie in de wereld te kunnen vervullen. Dit impliceert dat de mensen die deel uitmaken van een gemeenschap – en in het bijzonder de leiders ervan – zelf 'lerend' in het leven moeten staan. Wat zijn de implicaties hiervan voor het theologisch onderwijs, voor zover dit beoogt toekomstige (kerk)leiders te vormen? Deze vraag staat centraal in deel C.

Deel C. Het (theologisch) opleiden van leiders

Hoofdstuk 9 tekent de contouren van de vigerende visies op en praktijken rondom het opleiden van leiders in het Emerging-Missional milieu. Een eerste stap hiertoe is het ontwerpen van een raamwerk van negen vragen, waarin huidige discussies over leiderschapseducatie en theologisch onderwijs zijn verdisconteerd, en waarin de diverse dimensies van de eerder gegeven leiderschapsdefinitie terugkeren. Dit raamwerk dient ertoe om tot een beschrijving te komen die veelomvattend en coherent is. Nadat is beargumenteerd welke vragen relevant en onmisbaar zijn, worden deze ingezet om diverse

EMC bronnen te ondervragen. Deze variëren van artikelen en boeken tot specifieke cursusbeschrijvingen zoals aangetroffen in catalogi van instituten in Australië, Canada, Groot-Brittannië, de Verenigde Staten of Zwitserland die opleiden tot een mastersgraad in Missional Leadership, of een equivalent hiervan. Kort samengevat zien we de volgende kenmerken van visie en actuele praktijken (m.n. de punten 6-7) rondom het opleiden van (toekomstige) christelijke leiders:

1. *Visie/doel*. In het algemeen is het doel om leiders toe te rusten voor een missionaire kerk [*missional church*] in een postmoderne, post-Christendom context.
2. *Cultuurvorming*. De cultuur van een theologische school is die van een zogeheten 'leercultuur' [*learning culture*]; daarnaast maken studenten deel uit van een intentionele holistische gemeenschap.
3. *Spirituele vorming*. De spirituele vorming van de student is een prioriteit van de opleiding.
4. *Institutionele dimensie*. De theologische school kan worden gekarakteriseerd als een 'lerende organisatie'.
5. *Lokale context*. Theologische opleidingen die programma's aanbieden op het terrein van Missional Leadership werken nauw samen met lokale kerken, in het bijzonder met missionaire gemeenschappen.
6. *Curriculum*. Naast andere vakken, zoals Bijbelvakken, zijn er vier onderwerpen die in elk geval diepgaand de aandacht krijgen: (1) missiologie/missionaire theologie; (2) cultuur/context; (3) leiderschap; (4) spiritualiteit/spirituele vorming.
7. *Onderwijsmethoden en onderwijsfilosofie*. De nadruk ligt op vormen van ervarings- en inductief leren.
8. *Docenten*. De docenten zijn zelf ook zo veel mogelijk actief (geweest) in vormen van missionair leiderschap, en het zijn goede teamplayers.
9. *Studenten*. Lokale kerkelijke gemeenten dienen (jonge) mensen op te sporen met bepaalde talenten, passie en visie, en hen te ondersteunen in een specifieke taak. Bij bleken geschiktheid worden deze individuen gestimuleerd om hun leerproces voort te zetten via bijvoorbeeld een theologische studie.

Hoofdstuk 10 is vergelijkbaar met het vorige hoofdstuk, al draait het nu om visies op en praktijken rondom het opleiden van (toekomstige) christelijke leiders in drie opleidingen in de Lage Landen. Omdat er weinig schriftelijke bronnen voorhanden waren, is een – qua omvang beperkt – empirisch onderzoek uitgevoerd in de voltijdse predikantenopleidingen van de Protestantse Theologische Universiteit (PThU), de Theologische Universiteit Kampen (TUK) en de Evangelische Theologische Universiteit (ETF) in Leuven.[5] Twee andere instituten die waren verzocht om te participeren – de Theologi-

[5] De internationaal en interkerkelijk gerichte ETF kent geen specifieke predikantenopleiding zoals de PthU en de TUK die wel verzorgen, maar de specialisatie *Church & Pastoral Ministries* lijkt er wel op, al zijn er ook studenten die via de MA *Bible & Theology* route uiteindelijk predikant of voorganger worden.

sche Universiteit Apeldoorn (TUA) en het Hersteld Hervormd Seminarie in Amsterdam – kozen ervoor dit niet te doen; daarom vallen ze buiten dit onderzoek.

De introductie van het hoofdstuk legt uit welke onderzoeksmethodiek is gehanteerd om aan gegevens te komen: interviews, *focus groups*, schriftelijke documenten, en het (weliswaar op details aangepaste) format van negen vragen dat in hoofdstuk 9 zijn nut had bewezen. Daarna volgt per instituut een bespreking van de resultaten, waarbij de keus is gemaakt vooral aandacht te besteden aan de visies op leiderschap en leiderschapseducatie. Andere aspecten, zoals de visies van studenten en docenten op de institutionele dimensie, zijn hierdoor relatief onderbelicht gebleven. Het hoofdstuk eindigt met een aantal evaluatieve en concluderende opmerkingen, waarvan de vijf belangrijkste zich als volgt laten samenvatten:

1. De nadruk in de drie onderzochte instituten ligt duidelijk meer op het opleiden van theologen in de zin van academici/wetenschappers dan op het toerusten van toekomstige leiders.
2. Heel weinig docenten en studenten blijken te weten wat er de laatste jaren gaande is in het Emerging-Missional milieu buiten Nederland, inclusief experimenten met en reflecties over missionair leiderschap en het opleiden van leiders, gemeenschapsvorming, spirituele vorming, en *worship*.
3. Binnen de onderzochte opleidingen en hun (kerkelijke) achterbannen lijkt er vooralsnog weinig besef van urgentie als het gaat om het rekruteren en selecteren van toekomstige missionaire leiders.
4. Qua onderwijsmethoden lijkt er vooral een lacune te bestaan wat betreft methoden die specifiek gericht zijn op het integreren van theoretische reflectie, het leren van ervaring, en persoonlijke leiderschapsontwikkeling.
5. De onderwijsfilosofie van de drie instituten kan nog nader worden geëxpliciteerd.

Het hoofdstuk eindigt met de aankondiging dat behalve deze uitdagingen er nog andere zijn, die in het volgende hoofdstuk aan de orde komen.

Hoofdstuk 11 draagt de titel *semper reformanda*, hetgeen al iets suggereert over de focus ervan. Het doel is te formuleren in welke opzichten protestantse theologische opleidingen idealiter dienen te veranderen, in het licht van zowel recente wetenschappelijke inzichten als van visies op en praktijken van leiderschapseducatie in het Emerging-Missional milieu die hiermee sporen. Gekozen is om wederom per opleiding – PThU, TUK, ETF – commentaar te geven, met daarbij de verwachting dat de besproken thema's en concrete suggesties *mutatis mutandis* ook relevant kunnen zijn voor andere instituten die eveneens beogen toekomstige leiders (voorgangers, predikanten) op te leiden.

Tegen de achtergrond van de sterk toenemende vraag, onder meer geuit in internationale theologische tijdschriften, om een duidelijker focus in opleidingen voor predikanten en voorgangers op (a) het thema leiderschap en (b) het opleiden voor missie in een con-

text van post-Christendom, worden – samengevat – de volgende vier uitdagingen geformuleerd voor de PThU:

1. Hanteer 'leiderschap' als een integratieve focus van het curriculum. Onderkend wordt dat dit weerstanden zal oproepen – alleen al vanwege de terminologie, alsook omdat men niet vertrouwd is met recent wetenschappelijk onderzoek over leiderschap.

2. Geef inhoudelijk meer aandacht aan het thema leiderschap, bezien vanuit sociologische, psychologische, theologische en missiologische invalshoeken, alsook vanuit inzichten uit de complexiteitstheorie en organisatietheorie, en in verbinding met thema's als missionaire verbeelding en innovatie, creativiteit en kunst, en metaforisch taalgebruik. Wat bovenal aandacht behoeft, is theologische *visievorming* voor de kerk in de 21e eeuw en de implicaties daarvan voor leiderschap in de kerk.

3. Neem het thema 'missionair leiderschap' en de consequenties daarvan serieus, onder andere voor wat betreft de rekrutering en selectie van toekomstige (creatieve, innovatieve, en pionierende) leiders in de kerk; opgemerkt wordt overigens dat dit vooral een taak is van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN) zelf, in samenwerking met de PThU.

4. Geef meer aandacht aan spirituele vorming, bijvoorbeeld rondom de vraag hoe academische kennis te integreren met persoonlijke spiritualiteit, zoals de beoefening van het gebed.

Na deze vier aanbevelingen volgt een bespreking van mogelijke problemen en weerstanden waarmee moet worden omgegaan als de PThU daadwerkelijk zou besluiten om genoemde punten te implementeren.[6]

Voor de Theologische Universiteit Kampen is de uitdaging om het curriculum en de onderwijspraktijk meer consequent vorm te geven conform wat er in eerdere jaren op papier al aan visie en doelen is geformuleerd. Verder wordt de TUK opgeroepen om *immersion experiences* te bieden aan hun studenten, dat wil zeggen uitdagende leeromgevingen die de student uit zijn comfortzone c.q. uit de universiteitsbibliotheek haalt, waardoor er extra zinvolle leereffecten kunnen optreden.

De Evangelische Theologische Universiteit in Leuven geeft zowel in haar visie en missie als in het curriculum expliciet aandacht aan leiderschap, al is vanuit het empirische onderzoek wel de indruk verkregen dat – vooral wegens het hoge academische gehalte van de opleiding – binnen de ETF de nadruk ligt op de 'leider-als-expert', met name op het gebied van theologie. Zonder iets af te doen van het belang van theologische expertise, wordt als uitdaging voor de ETF geformuleerd om breder in te zetten als het gaat om het thema leiderschap, in het bijzonder wat betreft de persoonlijke leiderschapsontwikkeling van studenten.

[6] Overigens betekent dit niet dat men hier helemaal geen aandacht voor heeft: de PThU is in verandering, en dit betreft ook de genoemde thema's.

Het hoofdstuk eindigt met een onderdeel over onderwijsmethoden, waarvan eerder (zie hoofdstuk 10) al was opgemerkt dat hierin nog verbeteringen mogelijk en wenselijk zijn.

Hoofdstuk 12 beantwoordt in kort bestek de onderzoeksvragen van deze dissertatie zoals die vermeld werden in het eerste, introducerende hoofdstuk. Aansluitend volgen er rondom elk van de besproken thema's concluderende reflecties en suggesties voor nader onderzoek. Aangezien deze voorstellen voor verder onderzoek vooral van belang zijn voor academici, laten we ze weg uit deze – voor een breed publiek geschreven – samenvatting. We sluiten af met het formuleren van een drietal, gecomprimeerd geformuleerde, algemene aandachtspunten die ons inziens in het bijzonder van belang zijn, doordenkend op de uitkomsten van dit onderzoek.

1. Een van de voornaamste positieve bijdragen van de EMC ligt hierin dat deze 'conversatie' vruchtbaar kan uitwerken op gesprekken en theologische reflectie in de wereldwijde kerk, in het bijzonder waar het thema's betreft met betrekking tot missionaire theologie en ecclesiologie. Dit geldt met name voor die vormen van discours in de EMC die niet worden ontsierd door vormen van ideologisch taalgebruik, een *better-than-thou* houding richting traditionele kerken,[7] een gebrek aan zorgvuldige theoretische of theologische onderbouwing, of te weinig besef van een mogelijk hiaat tussen retoriek en de geleefde realiteit van alledag. Gelukkig zijn dergelijke bijdragen ruimschoots voorhanden – meer dan critici van de EMC soms lijken te beseffen.

2. Gemeenschappen die zichzelf beschrijven in *emerging* en/of *missional* termen of equivalenten hiervan kunnen worden getypeerd als een belangrijke Research & Development afdeling van de kerk waarvan veel valt te leren, met name voor zover er hierin aantoonbaar sprake is van de volgende kenmerken die overeenstemmen met EMC-visies en idealen:

a. innovatieve, participatieve en contextueel afgestemde vormen van liturgie [*worship*];
b. christelijke gemeenschapsvorming waarin gastvrijheid en (leren van de) ontmoeting /conversaties met andersdenkenden – inclusief aanhangers van andere religies of van geen religie – een belangrijke plaats hebben, zonder dat dit ten koste gaat van de eigen identiteit;
c. een holistische vormgeving van het christelijk geloof die, verwachtingsvol gericht als deze is op het actuele handelen van de Drie-enige God in diens voortgaande missie, leidt tot de transformatie van individuen en groepen, alsook tot positieve sociale veranderingen in de lokale context;
d. creatieve en eigentijdse vormen van (missionaire) communicatie, met gebruikmaking van digitale media en van metaforen die tot de verbeelding spreken;

[7] Ons inziens lijkt in veel contexten een nauwe samenwerking [*mixed ecology*] tussen bestaande en nieuwe vormen van kerk-zijn de beste weg voorwaarts; daarbij passend is een lerende en kritisch 'waarderende' houding van *beide* partijen.

e. missionair leiderschap en alles wat daarbij komt kijken, zoals gerichte aandacht voor processen die te maken hebben met theologische visievorming, intermenselijke relaties en aspecten van de 'gemeenschapscultuur', of spirituele vorming; alsook voor het identificeren, ontwikkelen en ondersteunen van nieuwe (jonge) leiders, en voor het 'leren' door de gemeenschap als geheel.

3. De EMC legt terecht de vinger bij het strategische belang van het open en eerlijk onder de loep nemen van onze 'paradigma's' ten aanzien van de identiteit en roeping van de kerk (en de rol van leiderschap hierin), en om dit óók te doen ten aanzien van de *vorming/opleiding* van toekomstige leiders zoals die plaatsvindt in theologische instituten. Daar blijft het niet bij: in het Emerging-Missional milieu zijn er ook allerlei concrete en – naar het zich laat aanzien – vruchtbare praktijken te vinden rondom de theologische, persoonlijke en spirituele vorming van christenen die hun plek willen innemen in leiderschapsprocessen in missionaire gemeenschappen in een sterk veranderende cultuur. Het lijkt ons zinvol als Nederlandse opleidingen tot predikant en voorganger diepgaand kennisnemen van dergelijke onderwijspraktijken, niet het minst waar deze gebruikmaken van innovatieve didactische methoden.

De kern van dit proefschrift, kort gezegd, is de overtuiging dat wegens allerlei complexe maatschappelijke en culturele ontwikkelingen waar de EMC terecht de aandacht op vestigt, veel kerken en kerkelijke opleidingen in westerse landen zoals Nederland zich op een historisch kruispunt [*crossroads*] geplaatst zien, waar strategische keuzes zullen moeten worden gemaakt ten aanzien van de te volgen richting. Onze bedoeling is geweest om de contacten tussen participanten in de EMC enerzijds en die in meer 'traditionele' kerkelijke kringen anderzijds te bevorderen, vanuit de overtuiging dat we veel van elkaar kunnen leren, en elkaar kunnen bemoedigen en bijstaan. Dit zal in het bijzonder het geval zijn als ons gemeenschappelijk oog gericht blijft op het licht van genade en verzoening dat afstraalt van het kruis van Christus.

Churches in many Western countries are faced with an *adaptive challenge*. Adaptive challenges arise when deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the solutions that once worked well become less appropriate, and when legitimate, yet competing, perspectives emerge. Adaptive problems will not go away by ignoring them, or by making technical adjustments. Many churches in the West need to change their vision and practices thoroughly, in order not to become contextually obsolete and irrelevant. Since this has to do with innovation and change, it will require leadership.

Change seems to be especially necessary in the areas of theological envisioning; worship, spirituality and (local) church culture; and organizational structures. These areas have a direct impact on leadership, while also having consequences for leader education.

This study aims to describe and analyze views on these topics in the so-called 'Emerging-Missional Conversation' that is currently under way in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, among other countries. Based on an exploration of this 'conversation' and views therein on missional leadership and leader education, challenges are formulated for protestant institutes that aim to educate future leaders of the church.

This ground-breaking book is essential reading for anyone wanting to reflect on the identity and calling of the church in the twenty-first century, and be involved in working this out in reality. This includes ministers and other leaders in the church, particularly those working in theological education.

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