

THE COMMON CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS DETERMINING THE MISSION IMPACT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Results from an analytical study

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1. The 21st Century Scenario

There exists an interesting phenomenon in the universal Church as it steps into the new millennium. On the one hand, internationally acclaimed statisticians like Patrick Johnstone and David Barrett (2001:24) clearly indicate phenomenal global Church growth. In a recent publication by Johnstone, *The Church is bigger than you think*, he indicates that the growth of the so-called Evangelicals are higher than any other religious grouping in the world (1998:112). It is clear that the efforts of ecumenical, mission-minded movements like *AD2000 and Beyond* had a tremendous impact on purposeful strategies to reach the unreached with the Gospel.

In spite of this inspiring facts, it is also a tragic reality that many congregations and Churches are not involved in the process of expanding the Church via missionary activities. This view is supported by Prof. Dons Kritzinger in a report, “*Betrokkenheid van lidmate by sending*,” [Involvement of members in mission] on the mission involvement of members of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa at the general synod of the Church in 1994 (Sinodical agenda:1994). It can be accepted that Prof. Kritzinger’s comments are not just applicable to the DRC.

It is therefore clear that the missional involvement of local churches span a quantum ranging from vibrant impact to stony passiveness. It can rightly be asked: What makes the difference? Are there common factors to be determined in Churches actively and successfully involved in the missionary task? If it exist – are these only spiritual factors or can measurable aspects also be determined? Knowledge and understanding of such critical success factors (CSF’s) may benefit the Church at large in its functioning. The identification of such factors could answer the burning question in the hearts of church and mission leaders today – how to involve the uninvolved majority of Churches to evangelise the world? – and in the process, becoming the Church-on-Mission.

2. Basis for a new paradigm

This question gives birth to the research problem which was addressed by a recent study: “What are the common critical success factors enabling Churches, involved in mission, to impact creation in order to experience growth in God’s Kingdom?”

This study was based on a threefold research approach:

- Firstly a thorough investigation of the Old and New Testament was done to determine if there is a firm scriptural base for mission. The conclusion is that the Church-on-Mission find its missional mandate and reason for existence firmly based on a holistic, contextual interpretation of Scripture.



Figure 1 - Scriptural base

- Secondly an in depth study was made of the ecclesiastical implications of this Scriptural mandate. Scripture not only supports the mission mandate, but the whole essence of being Church, its reason for existence is derived from God’s word. From this essence, character and being of the Church flow certain identifiable critical elements, called Critical Success Factors. These factors form building blocks for the development of a Biblical paradigm for the Church-on-Mission.



Figure 2 - Critical Success Factors derived from Scripture

- Thirdly an empirical study was done on five churches known to have a substantial mission impact. They were researched without any reference to previous results or scriptural expectations. The methodology used, can be described as a zero-base

approach. Through this empirical study the Scriptural insights were tested and compared with the existing situation in the selected local Churches.

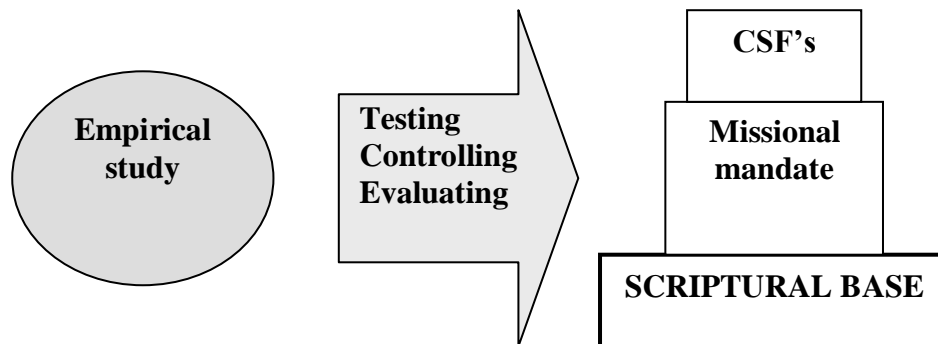


Figure 3 - Empirical study testing results of Scriptural insight

We briefly focus on the outcome of this threefold approach before the research results are integrated into a final model around the identified Critical Success Factors for the Church-on-Mission.

2.1 Basis for a new paradigm: The Bible

The origin and basis of a mandate have a significant influence on the execution thereof. This statement is just as applicable to the mission mandate of the Church. If the mandate is not Scriptural based, it is understandable that Churches will view it as an optional activity. If the mandate is non-negotiable, there should be an urgency and seriousness to be determined.

The foundation of mission is even more important when we consider those millions of dollars, thousands of workers and the vast infrastructure, which are invested every year towards the cause of reaching the world with the Gospel. Can the involved Church justify this investment in resources scripturally? Can the rest of the Church justify their lack of involvement scripturally?

In his article “The Bible in World Evangelisation”, (in Winter & Hawthorne, A3-A9) Stott concludes that the mandate for mission is the whole Bible. The whole Scripture breathes God’s concern for His creation and the Nations. God’s plan for salvation is already revealed in Genesis when Abraham is confronted with God’s commission and His promises. The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will

show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:1-3).

The Great Commission is not an unexpected, isolated, New Testament phenomenon. Right through the Scriptures, God reveals Himself as the God of the Nations. Charles van Engen (1986:36-37) refers to David Bosch's statement: "Our conclusion is that both Old and New Testaments are permeated with the idea of mission. ... But not everything we call mission is indeed mission ... It is the perennial temptation of the Church to become a 'religious club'. ... The only remedy for this mortal danger lies in challenging herself unceasingly with the true biblical foundation of mission."

Bosch puts it clearly that there can be no doubt about the necessity for the Biblical basis of mission. The need is logical in both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles (1979:44).

We must take cognisance of the hermeneutic dangers when we work with the Biblical foundation for mission. God reveals himself in the whole Scripture as the One who takes care of the underprivileged and those who are downtrodden and cast out by society. In a study of the scriptural foundation for mission we will come across this revelation of God's grace and love rather than missionary contact between the covenant people (Israel) and surrounding nations. Therefore Verkuyl describes every meeting between Jesus and pagans as a vibrating, impatient expectation of the day when salvation will be preached to all nations (in Bosch 1979:59).

Van Engen (1986:35) points out that civilisation brought with it a degree of blindness to questions of purpose, design, and intention when we examine the biblical text. We need to ask the missiological questions regarding God's intentions and purpose. Thus Arthur Glasser calls for a deeper missiological reflection on the biblical message: "All Scripture makes its contribution in one way or another to our understanding of mission. ... In our day evangelicals are finding that the biblical base for mission is far broader and more complex than any previous generation of Missiologists appears to have envisioned.... In our day there is a growing impatience with all individualistic and pragmatic approaches to the missionary task that arise out of a proof-text use of Scripture, despite their popularity among the present generation of activist evangelicals." Johannes Verkuyl advocates a similar change in hermeneutic approach: "In the past the usual method was to pull a series of proof-texts out of the Old and New Testaments and then to consider the task accomplished. But more recently biblical scholars have taught us the importance of reading these

texts in context and paying due regard to the various nuances. ... One must consider the very structure of the whole biblical message." (in Van Engen 1986:35-36)

Thus, Verkuyl warns against the use of merely a few scriptures from the Old and New Testament. He calls this the "*biblicistische*" method. He states that it is imperative to interpret within the structure of the whole message of the Bible - "*zullen moeten letten op de structuren van de gehele bijbelse boodschap*" (1975:123).

The God who calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the OT and who reveals Himself to Moses as YHWH, is the God of the whole universe. This is the powerful statement of Johannes Verkuyl when he discusses the relevance of mission in the OT (1975:124). He states that "in choosing Israel as segment of all humanity, God never took His eye off the other nations. Israel was the *pars pro toto*, a minority called to serve the majority. God's election of Abraham and Israel concerns the whole world" (Van Engen 1991:55).

Brueggemann (1997:229) emphasises that Yahweh testifies through his actions to Israel who in response replies. This dialogue has implications for the whole world and lays the foundation for mission in the sense that Yahweh is the living God, that He himself testifies to that and that Israel replies to His self-revelation.

To what extent can the missionary task be founded in the four Gospels and by implication, in the ministry of Jesus?

In spite of different approaches and accentuation, we find in all four Gospels, in fact in the whole NT, an unmistakable, fundamental witness with regard to the basis of missions. The Church is busy fulfilling the time by its missionary involvement in the world (Bosch 1979:73).

The Gospels as well as Acts give the same mission mandate to the Church. In each one the command is given by the risen Lord, that the disciples must complete the task which He started. This mission started with Christ and has no limits or boundaries (Steyne 1992:261). The content of the Christ Hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 and the pronouncement in 1 Timothy 1: 16 refer undoubtedly to the truth that mission in the NT is a predicate of the Christology (Bosch 1979: 84).

The NT is from beginning to end a mission book (Verkuyl 1975:141). The apparently small role of the mission command in the latter books of the NT and the fact that Acts 1:8 is rather a creational statement instead of a command, underlines this fact. Mission in the NT is more than obedience – it is the result of an encounter with Jesus. To encounter Him, necessarily implies involvement with the global task of mission. Mission is a privilege in which the believer can share. Paul sees mission as a logical result of his encounter with Christ on his way to Damascus (Bosch 1979:84).

God's interest in the nations, as communicated to Israel in the OT, is unchanged in the NT. In Jesus He reveals His passion for the peoples of this earth (John 3:16). Truly, He "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

In his book *Mission on the way*, Van Engen refers to the mission from "above" and "below" (1986:37-38). He states that "one of the most common linkages between the Bible and mission involves a "theology from above." In Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant denominational mission alike, this has involved using Church tradition as the link. The Church interprets the Scriptures, and through its teaching authority or its denominational mission structures it derives missional action from what it sees in Scripture. The extension of the institutional Church and its agendas becomes the heart of mission."

If we study the Old and New Testaments in isolation we step into a minefield of problems. One of these askew viewpoints is that mission in the OT is the exclusive responsibility of God and in the NT *vice versa*. This dangerous interpretation of exclusiveness implies that the activities of God and man exclude each other – God and man becoming opponents (Bosch 1979:81).

Bosch warns against a narrow perspective of Biblical mission. The Biblical concept of mission encompasses much more than the verbal proclamation of the Gospel (Bosch 1979:81). It is critical to understand that the whole Bible underlines the fact that God Himself is the subject of mission. This is a prominent characteristic of Bible centred mission – it involves *missio Dei*, God's mission. The *marturia*, the witnessing role through word and deed is not founded in the witness but in God Himself. Although the witness is still important – God is still the author (Bosch 1979:78).

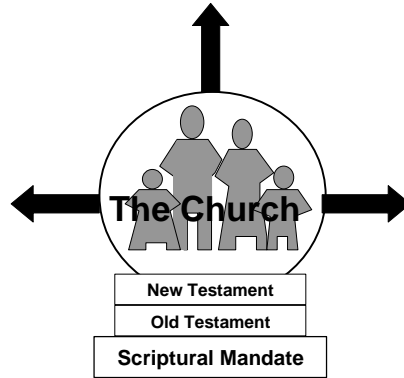


Figure 4 – The mandate for the Church-on-Mission; firmly based on Scripture

Dr John Piper, is one of the leading mission leaders and writers of our day. For him the most critical aspect of mission is the centrality of God. Mission is not central but God is. This truth is the driving force behind our mission activities (1993:14). Hawthorne makes the same statement when he concludes that he has heard so few Christians explain their motive for evangelism and missions according to the purpose of it all: that God would be glorified in every people by a movement of obedience and worship to Christ (Hawthorne 1998).

Our passion for God leads to mission involvement. Our commitment to follow Him, to serve Him and to live for His glory is more important than mission. But it will also *inter alia* be the impetus for mission (Piper 1993:14). Throughout scriptures we find continuous reference to the fact that God’s glory is the central theme for our mission proclamation (Psalm 96:3, Isaiah 12:4) (Piper 1993:34).

Through all the ages, nothing has changed. The motif for mission is still the same – God’s honour. God calls the elect (like Israel) to proclaim His glory between the nations, to be a blessing unto others so that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:9).

Brueggemann describes the unfinished task of mission as an “evangelical conversation of how our life, our bodies, and our imagination can be weaned from the deathliness of the world to the newness of life in the Gospel. That conversation is difficult and unfinished. It is a conversation that promises our life shall come together in wonder, love and praise. What news!” (1993:141).

The Bible, therefore, gives a firm mandate for the Church to be on mission. In fact, various theologians state that ignoring the Great Commission strips the Church of being Church. If the Church does not accept the missiological reason for its existence it is dramatically diluting its Biblical character and nature. If we want to adjudicate the missiological impact of the local congregation we can set only one norm for departure - the Biblical perspective.

Anderson describes the Church as a connecting link between the Gospel and mission. The mission of the Church is grounded in the Gospel as its “source and authority.” The apostolic mandate is the Gospel mandate by which the Church comes into existence and through mission it extends its own life into the world. “The Church is not the end result of the Gospel by virtue of its own existence - it exist so that the Gospel can be carried out in mission to the world” (Anderson 1986:6).

The Church (Elmer & McKinney 1996:28) is the institution through which God provides for the redemptive development of human beings - particularly of the ones who are called by His name and through them, all mankind. Therefore, we constantly need to ask questions about where we are in relation to His will and what is happening to the Church in our time: What is its social context, within itself and within its larger human circumstances?

"The Church on earth is by its very nature mission, since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit." The breakthrough embodied in this statement locates mission at the very centre of what the Church is called to be and to do. It echoes the words of Emil Brunner; "The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning" (in Frazier 2001:9).

A recent statement of the Roman Church declares that “if the Church of Christ itself is fully present in local Churches, so also must be the full responsibility for bringing the Gospel to the world.” The Secretariat for Non-Christians was following this simple logic when it declared that "every local Church is responsible for the totality of mission" (Frazier 2001:10).

The Church is a participant in, and a result of the mission of God. It is both a result of and a co-partner with God in the process of effecting the Kingdom of God here on earth (Dayton, Edward R & Fraser, David A. “Mission and the Church” in Winter & Hawthorne, D17-D25).

Guder (1998:80) accentuates another perspective of the local Church. He points out that recent theology has made a rediscovery by bringing to light the implications of the Trinity for ecclesiology. It has recognised that the interpenetrating among the persons of the Trinity reveals that "the nature of God is communion." From this point of view, the Church is learning that it is called to be a "finite echo or bodying forth of the divine personal dynamics, a temporal echo of the eternal community that God is."

The so-called "sentness" describes another perspective of the essential character of the local Church. The word made flesh through Jesus Christ (John 1) contains the concept of sentness – His incarnation was a sending forth into the world as a light into darkness. The Church is an apostolic community "in constant, dynamic movement, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of light in the midst of the kingdom of darkness." Johannes Blauw states that "missionary work is not just one of the activities, but the criterion for all the activities of the local Church" (in Van Engen 1991:79).

Taking into consideration the different perspectives of the local Church, it is imperative that creating a new paradigm for the Church-on-Mission should be firmly based on Scripture – there can be no other point of departure. The reformation credo, *Soli Scriptura*, should focus us in understanding what the Church is meant to be.

The Church "emerges from its Centre, Jesus Christ, moves toward the world and there finds dynamically described its marching orders for its missionary presence in the world" (Van Engen 1991:84).

A synoptic view of the Church reveals the following about its character, nature, intention and essence:

- The Church exist for, and to serve others
- The Church is being sent
- The Church is a witnessing community of believers
- Growth – character and nature of the Church

The Pauline view of the Church in Ephesians supports a threefold missional perspective:

- The Church has a mission in holiness (Ephesians 1:1-14; 4:17-5:5; 5:6-6:20; 3:14-21)
- The Church has a The Church has a mission in unity (Ephesians 4:1-16)

- mission to all (Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:1-22; 3:1-13)

The mission of the Church is the unifying, sanctifying, reconciling and proclaiming activities of Jesus Christ in the world. This is the essence of being Church. Mission is not something separate or different. The essential nature of the local congregation is mission – or else the congregation is not really the Church (Van Engen 1991:70). This statement does not support the viewpoint that “everything the Church does is mission,” because “what the Church does internally without intention to impact the world outside itself is not mission.”

“The Church is a people, a community of people, who owe their existence, their solidarity and their corporate distinctness from other communities to one thing only - the call of God” (Stott 1968:17). “Such is the Church, God’s people, called out of the world to Himself, called to holiness, called to mission, called to suffering, and called through suffering to glory” (Stott 1968:19). And this calling of the Church is the calling of the “whole Church, and of every member of the Church, without any distinction or partiality” (Stott 1968:20).

The Church should continually evaluate where it stands in proximity to the dynamic, living essence of being Church. Van Engen states that the Church lost the objectivity to “maintain a constantly-reforming ecclesiology.” Thus modern Ecclesiologists questioned the one nature viewpoint of the Church. They started to view the Church as “both human and divine, organism and organisation, fellowship and institution.” The *notae ecclesiae* and protestant marks are therefore perceived as both gifts and tasks (Van Engen 1991:65).

This approach lead to a new dynamic, vibrant view of the Church. Relying on “the old order of the established and organised Church, relying on structures and traditions instead of the renewing of the Spirit of God, will not do.” David Watson continues that “the formularies and creeds of the Church, devoid of spiritual life, will never satisfy those who in their own different ways are searching for the living God.” (in Van Engen 1991:67). Van Engen accentuates the fact that this view of the essence of the Church propels it to “reach out beyond itself.” It becomes truly turned “inside out” according to Hoekendijk - it becomes the Church-on-Mission (in Van Engen 1991:67).

The primary reason for the Church’s existence should be deducted from scripture. Van Engen refers to four reasons or pillars for the Church’s “reason-for-being in the world”:

- *Kerygma* – “Jesus is Lord” (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3).

- *Koinonia* – “Love one another” (John 13:34 - 35; Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 1:22).
- *Diakonia* – “The least of these my brethren” (Matthew 25:30, 45).
- *Martyria* – “You shall be my witnesses; be reconciled to God” (Isaiah 43:10, 12; 44:8; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20) (Van Engen 1991:89).

The impact of the Church should therefore be manifested through these pillars. “Through loving *koinonia* fellowship, through confession that Jesus is Lord, and through actions of diaconal service. God’s missionary people are to be a reconciled community who witnesses to the possibility of reconciliation in an alienated world. The work of bringing God’s reconciliation to the world is the heart and soul of the Church’s witness” (Van Engen 1991:97 - 98).

Finally, the process of evaluation in the Church-on-Mission should be to compare what we actually see with what we confess. The evaluation of our goals, strategies, leadership, membership and administration should cause us to ask how close we are to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic community of Word and sacrament, gathered around Jesus Christ (Van Engen 1991:190). Churches need to evaluate their life and effectiveness as an eschatological, emerging reality. There need be no fear of failure here, for evaluation measures progress toward becoming - not arrival (Van Engen 1991:191).

“Through the on-going spiral of reflection on the Church’s essence, goals, people, administration and evaluation we will experience the way Jesus Christ builds His Church against which the gates of Hell themselves will not prevail” (Van Engen 1991:192).

Creating a biblical paradigm for the emerging Church-on-Mission presents a multi-angular perspective. From the various perspectives briefly discussed above it is clear that we are not working with a single dimension but rather a multi-dimensional view or perspective.

Only by allying itself with the Spirit can the Church live in fidelity to its Lord, who himself was allied to the Spirit in his mission. It is as the body of Christ and the "face" of the Spirit that the Church discovers its mission in the world. In its mission the Church is committed to combat the forces of death and enhance the emergence of life. Mission in partnership with the Spirit might reveal depths to salvation that human minds could never come to by themselves (Bevans 1998:102-105).

The biblical essence of the missionary congregation becomes multifaceted when the prism of the analytical process breaks up the single, sharp biblical light in its multifaceted reality. Through this we become aware of the complex but exciting implications of the local Church finding meaning and purpose in becoming what it is supposed to be!

2.2 Basis for a new paradigm: Empirical study

Can common factors be consistently identified in Churches actively and successfully involved in the task of mission? Are these factors to a lesser or no degree demonstrated in Churches uninvolved in the mission task? If they do exist, can these factors be isolated and described in order to assist us in developing a model to enlarge the mission impact of the local Church?

The aim of the empirical study and the nature of the research variables logically lead to a decision to use qualitative research as the basic methodology. There are however certain aspects of the Church's involvement in mission that can be quantitatively measured. To be able to integrate the effects of these realities in the final outcome of the study, it was imperative to include some elements of survey (quantitative) research.

In some way the research focused on the “marks of a healthy Church” as seen by Lyle Schaller. Two of the approaches described by Schaller were implemented in this study:

- using certain congregations as models for others – the Model Church approach; and,
- taking into consideration the Biblical examples, injunctions and truths about the Church (in Van Engen 1991:16).

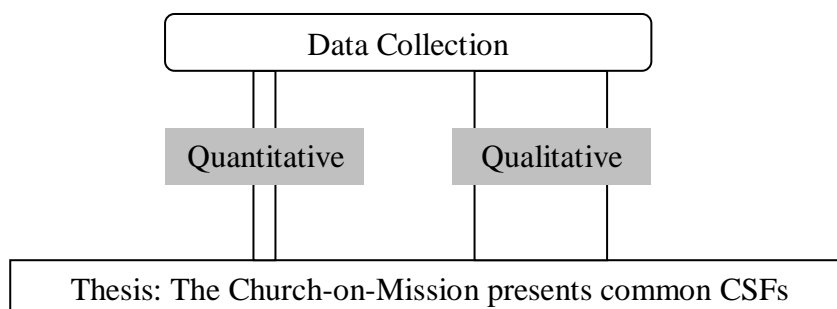


Figure 5 - Research methodology

The decision to primarily employ qualitative research, or fieldwork, is further derived from the need for first-hand, face-to-face participation and experience in the naturally occurring social settings of Church life.

The basic assumption imbedded in the thesis is the fact that certain critical factors have a deterministic and causal effect on the mission impact of the Church. Determinism lies at the base of a causal approach to understanding in social science. Determinism means that all social phenomena are the result of prior causes and that these causes themselves are the product of prior causes. I support the belief of most social scientists that all human actions and thoughts are not determined – I also accept the reality that causal patterns are not simple. Therefore it is necessary to take note of probabilistic causal models.

The existence of a National Mission Mobilisers Network in South Africa and my involvement with this network as co-chairman created valuable inputs from mission mobilisers consulting with local Churches across the country. These professional people are the best source of information for identifying the Churches having a significant mission impact. I also included people closely involved with the publication of data for the Church in South Africa, for example the South African Christian Handbook.

From these sources a list of Churches actively involved in mission was drawn up. From this list a shortlist was produced to ensure a representative sample of social, demographic and denominational backgrounds.

All the selected Churches were contacted and their willingness to take part in the research program requested.

The following local Churches took part in the research programme:

- DRC Lynnwoodrif;
- DRC Moreleta Park;
- AFM Witbank;
- Lewende Woord; and,
- DRC Bergsig.

3. Validating research results

CSFs cannot rigidly be measured or its influence mathematically connected to the Church's impact in the world. Although the relationship is not a linear equation, it is imperative that if the factor is not firmly imbedded in the being of the Church it will have less influence on the outcome of mission involvement.

The following four figures illustrate this statement. Among other things, leadership style can vary between dynamic/pro-active and passive/re-active. From the research it is clear that Churches involved in mission, experience the propelling influence of a dynamic leadership style. This cannot be illustrated by drawing a linear equation, but it is clear that a dynamic style has a more positive influence than a passive one (Figure 6).

In the same way some leaders have a positive effect on their followers, inevitably motivating them to follow. Such a leadership influence will contribute towards success while a negative influence have the opposite effect on followers (Figure 7).

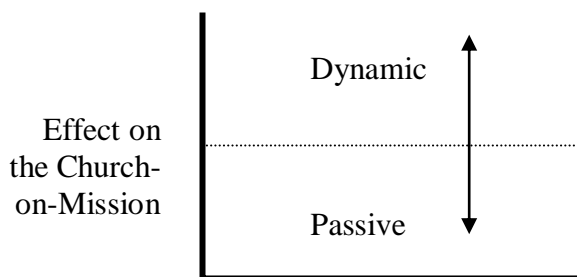


Figure 6 - Leadership Style

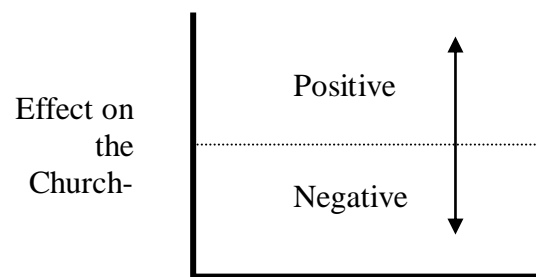


Figure 7 - Leadership Influence

A sensitive ecumenical view will necessarily lead to a broader Kingdom perspective – focusing wider, planning broader and crossing denominational barriers. Lack of this view will ultimately lead to an inward focused self-centeredness. Mission impact would be trivial when such a narrow ecumenical view exists (Figure 8).

Throughout the field-study the existence of factor Beta was described as a Critical Failure Factor. If the Church does not succeed in mobilising most of its members, mission impact would be less than expected – in spite of all the other positive factors. Although impossible to couple direct relations to

this statement, research shows that less of factor Beta has a positive influence on mission impact (Figure 9).

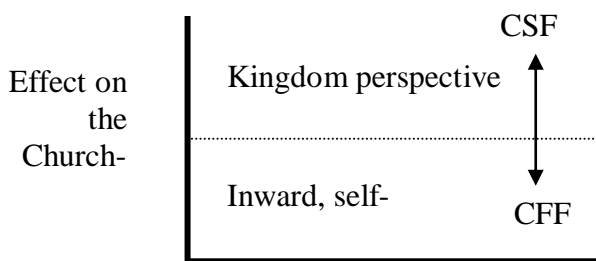


Figure 8 - Ecumenical View

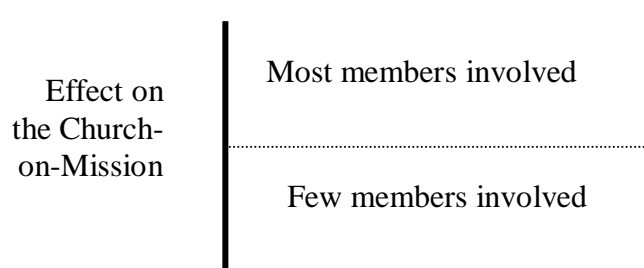


Figure 9 - Factor Beta

All CSFs should be viewed from the perspective illustrated by figure 1.6. The stronger the CSF is developed, the larger the influence on the Church’s mission impact. These CSFs also have mutual effects on one another – leading to other complexities and prohibiting simplistic interpretations.

It is crucial to understand and to consider the relativity of CSFs. Churches with little mission impact do also present some or all of these CSFs. All Churches have leadership – leadership is therefore not the critical aspect, but the type of leadership is of paramount importance. Passive leadership can actually be depicted as a Critical Failure Factor (CFF). As leadership develops towards the dynamic end of the scale, the influence becomes more positive to the point where it becomes a critical contributor towards mission impact. Figure 6 illustrates this point.

As the effects, contributions, impact and influence of the CSFs differ, so they also differ in terms of complexity and content. They can for instance be spiritual or physical. Spirituality is a loaded term with vast and complex nuances and theological implications while growth is easier to define and to evaluate.

When we interpret and apply the results of this study, the inherent relativity of factors should therefore be accepted and considered.

If the empirical results could not be reconciliated with Scripture, we would be forced to question the results. It will be pointed out however, in developing the final model, how Scriptural and empirical data compliment and support the model.

4. Developing a model of CSFs for the Church-on-Mission

The model resulting from the study has three major focus points. God, the cosmos (or world in a narrower sense) and the Church. The triune God is ultimately and sovereignly involved with and in His creation. He does this through His Church, but also in other ways, according to His sovereign will. Because the local Church forms the basis for this study we are concerned with God's working through His Body, the Church, to impact His creation.

The Church is His missionary people, mandated to proclaim the Gospel in a broken cosmic reality.

4.1 The mission mandate, motive and involvement are firmly based on Scripture (CSF 1)

Throughout Scripture the mission mandate and motive form the very basis for the existence of His missionary people. His covenant people Israel, the New Testament Church and the 21st century Church find meaning and missional reason for existence in God's word.

The Church's holistic, balanced mission responsibility is soundly based on the whole Scripture. This understanding prevents the Church from diluting its responsibility to mere evangelism or limited geographical involvement. A clear understanding and interpretation of Scripture create a missional perspective through which mission and the Church are defined correctly. This forms a Biblically sound base for the mission involvement of the Church – ensuring that it is not caused by secondary motives. Understanding the true Biblical mandate and content of mission allow for continuous, lasting impact in the world – prohibiting event-like, cyclic mission interventions.

This view and insight are brought about through continuous, focused preaching on the subject of mission, trusting that the Holy Spirit will bring about a transformation in the understanding, attitude and actions of the local Church. Through preaching and training Church members are continually sensitised to understand the true being and essence of the Church. True preaching and teaching on the Scriptural base of mission includes emphasis on the *missio Dei* – Church members must understand that mission is ultimately God at work.

Mere cognitive understanding does not thrust the local Church out of an inward focused existence. Preaching and teaching also emphasise the responsibility to be “doers of the word.”

4.2 Its missiological character permeates the whole being of the Church (CSF 2)

Missional involvement is not perceived as an “event” in the Church’s program. The missional intention of the Church permeates its whole being and finds utterance through its whole existence. Mission involvement is not an exclusive, ad hoc event, taking place through a few dedicated Church members. From the Scriptural foundation the local Church understands and manifests the fact that its missiological character penetrates and saturates the whole essence of being Church.

This entrenched missiological character of the Church influences all ministries and its whole being. If mission is seen as an activity or theological subject to be accommodated it will never penetrate the essence of being Church.

The missiological character of the Church leads to practical impact through all other ministries. This does not imply that a skew view of being Church exists - there is more to being Church than to be involved with the Great Commission. A balanced understanding of the Churches mission responsibility is determinable in the very character of the local Church.

4.3 Its Kingdom perspective propels the Church outward; taking the whole Gospel to the whole world (CSF 3)

The Church is a co-partner with God in the process of effecting the Kingdom of God by proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of light in the midst of the Kingdom of darkness. Throughout the Gospels the central aspect of the teaching of Jesus is that concerning the Kingdom of God. Jesus appeared as the one who proclaimed the Kingdom; all else in his message and ministry serves a function in relation to that proclamation and derives its meaning from it. The Kingdom perspective forms a cornerstone of the Church-on-Mission.

The Kingdom perspective prohibits the local Church from reverting to a self-centred, congregational or even denominational perspective. The Church-on-Mission understand and appreciates its own unique role within the wider perspective of God’s expanding Kingdom and manifests the ability to interpret its responsibility within a broader ecumenical framework. This view enables the local Church to have a broader, deeper and ecumenical insight of the Church. This understanding turns the Church “inside out,” realising the implication of the “whole Church” impacting creation. Such a realisation also creates understanding, acceptance and appreciation for

the existence, value and role of para-Church organisations when they support the local Church in the execution of its missionary task.

It is clear that lack of this ability is often grounded in a perception of being “threatened” by the rest of the Body of Christ. Lack of ability to work within a Kingdom perspective reflects back to a lack of understanding the one-ness of the Body of Christ. Such an attitude comes into direct opposition with the unity to be presented by the body of Christ (John 17).

4.4 Yearning for and working towards growth in God’s Kingdom so that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (CSF 4)

The Church-on-Mission has an ethos of proclaiming the Good News and through that they experience how God brings sinners through His reconciling love into a relationship with Himself. The Church is not content with the *status quo* and cannot be apathetic towards growth - in this way ignoring the essence of God’s living Body.

Because the local Church is not geographically confined, Church planting and duplication are on the agenda of the Church-on-Mission. The local congregation who stagnates in a “survival” existence has lost the very dynamic substance of vibrant, contextual impact in the world.

4.5 The balanced spirituality of the Church is soundly based on a living relationship with Jesus, the Head of the Church (CSF 5)

The dialectic tension that exists between the “from above” and the “from below” are discussed in chapters 1 and 4. The Church is always becoming what it already is through faith, but it exists in a broken reality. Through God the Son, the Head of His Church, the Church is commissioned to impact the cosmos. The Church (from below) is constantly under obligation to interpret and execute the will of God (from above) to be effectively the Church-on-Mission. This obligation implies a balanced and sensitive spirituality through which the Church “seeks the mind and the will of God.”

The Church is not just confessing verbally, but is also living out its faith that Jesus, as the Head of His Church, is practically leading, directing and equipping them to effectively and uniquely impact

creation. The missional Church understands, accepts and encounters God's unique calling and purpose.

The local Church accepts the God-given variety of spirituality. This variety, wisely accepted and integrated into Church-life creates the spiritual environment in which the multi faceted blessing of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are optimally utilised to build up the Body and to impact creation. Through this they truly experience that "they receive power" to be His witnesses.

The Church-on-Mission believe that God speaks to His Church in relevant, specific ways and reveal the faith to interpret and execute His will. They understand and experience the reality of a living relationship with the Head of the Church – permanently and intently focused on His will. This implies an active prayer life – even if the theological and spiritual nuances of prayer are difficult to understand – the Church-on-Mission is praying "without ceasing."

4.6 Assertive, visionary and servant leadership enthuses, direct and empower people to effectively invest their gifts and talents to impact creation (CSF 6)

If Church leadership does not understand, accept and drive the mission involvement of the local Church – a noticeable impact is hardly possible. Leadership has the biggest influence on the Church – therefore the continuing Biblical emphasis on the responsibility of the leaders. The impact of leadership by example motivates members to be practically involved in mission. This example encompass a willingness and passion to see the Good News spreading to "the uttermost parts of the earth" and a commitment to personally make a difference.

Leadership creates opportunity and empowers members to impact the world with the Gospel and therefore creates, builds and maintains vision in the Church. They also understand the Biblical perspective of leadership and laity, facilitating dynamic growth and impact through a servant attitude. The management style allows for members to develop their own ministries and to be guided, facilitated and mentored by leadership - accepting that leadership does have a significant influence on member involvement.

4.7 Enthusiasm, direction and essence is founded in an effectively communicated, God-given vision (CSF 7)

The empirical study emphasises vision as a powerful influencing factor in mission involvement. The vision of the Church-on-Mission is credible, understandable as well as effectively and continually communicated. Therefore the vision unites and propels the Church towards fulfilling its impact responsibility – indicating direction and generating dynamic momentum.

Without a well-formulated vision, the Church can lose focus and urgency, in some cases even contact with its reason for existence.

4.8 Effective, dynamic, strategic and operational management supports and accelerates the missional impact of the Church (CSF 8)

The “from above” perspective finds practical execution where the people of God develop and verbalise mission, strategies, structure and goals. By doing this, the local Church translates the statements of faith about the Church into statements of purpose. This points towards the Church becoming what it is supposed to be - the emerging Church. In this way, Church leadership and management, succeeds in reconciling the “from above” and the “from below” – interpreting God’s sovereign will for His Body through strategic and operational management.

Strategies, structure and goalsetting are part of the very existence of the Church-on-Mission. It does appear as if small group structures and the implementation of sending cells for missionaries largely support the missional character of the Church-on-Mission. Although structure is not a goal in itself, it is the supporting means to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Effective strategic and operational management will not lead to missional impact if the people filling the structures are not equipped for and dedicated to their calling. Because structure supports strategy, structure is indicative of the importance of certain strategies in the local Church. The missional character of the local Church should therefore manifest through strategic and operational practices.

4.9 Invest every effort to create, develop and sustain loving and co-working relationships within the Body of Christ (CSF 9)

The relational basis of the Gospel finds meaning through the vertical and horizontal expression of relationships. The Church-on-Mission cannot be a “bearer” of the Gospel of love without

demonstrating and living the same truth. The Church cannot “deliver” what it does not “posses.” Scriptural exhortations accentuating positive relationships underlines the responsibility of Christ-like relationships in the missional Church.

4.10 Mandate and vision are effectively translated into practical outcomes impacting creation (CSF 10)

In Scripture the Church finds its missiological purpose through *Kerygma*, *Koinonia*, *Diakonia* and *Martyria*. These missiological purposes inevitably lead to practical outcomes.

The study of the Gospels also reflects the importance of practical outcomes. If the local Church accepts its Biblical mandate but fails to interpret this mandate in a way to practically impact creation, it loses the ability to be “salt” and “light” in a world desperately in need.

The Church-on-Mission is practically involved in living and proclaiming the Good News. This practical involvement manifests through the sacrificial investment of resources. If this CSF does not realise in Church life, there would be no impact in the world. Through its incarnational responsibility the Church demonstrates its sentness in a world desperately in need of a transforming impact.

The Church does initialise, develop and execute innovative ways in which their ability to impact the world is strengthened – faithfully trusting God to lead and guide them in doing this. They demonstrate a character of servanthood – following the example of their Master.

The Church creates opportunity for its members to get involved in mission in various ways. Special attention is given to ensure a broad movement of involvement – accommodating the different interest, social and age groups in the Church. Also implying effective mobilisation through the use of all human senses – to evoke involvement, mission must become “reality” – the Church must create a window through which the world to be impacted, becomes “visible.”

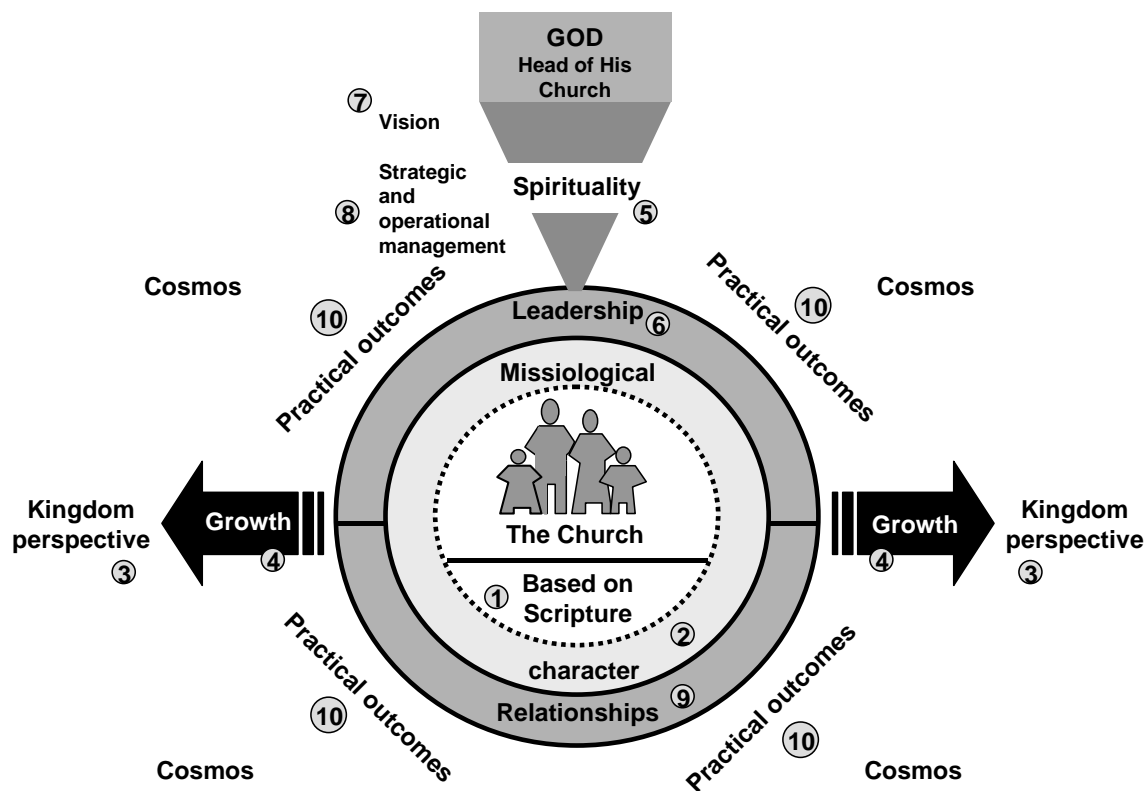


Figure 10 - The Church-on-Mission practically impacting the cosmo
(numbers refer to corresponding critical success factors)

5. Closing remarks

Finally, the process of evaluation in the Church-on-Mission should be to compare what we actually see with what we confess. The evaluation of our goals, strategies, leadership, membership and administration should cause us to ask how close we are to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic community of Word and sacrament, gathered around Jesus Christ (Van Engen 1991:190). Churches need to evaluate their life and effectiveness as an eschatological, emerging reality. There need be no fear of failure here, for evaluation measures progress toward becoming - not arrival (Van Engen 1991:191).

“Through the on-going spiral of reflection on the Church’s essence, goals, people, administration and evaluation we will experience the way Jesus Christ builds His Church against which the gates of Hell themselves will not prevail” (Van Engen 1991:192).

We must view and evaluate the actions and activities of the Church-on-Mission continually by asking the following questions formulated by Lindgren (in Van Engen 1991:192).

- What are the goals toward which the activity is supposedly moving?
- Are these goals in harmony with the nature and mission of the Church?
- Will the activity actually contribute to achieving the goals?
- Is the activity in conflict with any other equally valid project of the congregation?
- Are sufficient personnel and resources available to carry out the activity? Or will the congregation be overburdened by it?
- Will all the techniques employed bear examination in the light of the Gospel?
- Is there a danger that this activity as a means to an end, will become an end in itself, thus obscuring the real goal by its very “success”?
- Are there other basic goals that require prior attention?

Creating a biblical paradigm for the emerging Church-on-Mission presents a multi-angular perspective. From the various perspectives discussed in this chapter it is clear that we are not working with a single dimension but rather a multi-dimensional view or perspective.

Only by allying itself with the Spirit can the Church live in fidelity to its Lord, who himself was allied to the Spirit in his mission. It is as the body of Christ and the "face" of the Spirit that the Church discovers its mission in the world. In its mission the Church is committed to combat the forces of death and enhance the emergence of life. Mission in partnership with the Spirit might reveal depths to salvation that human minds could never come to by themselves (Bevans 1998:102-105).

The biblical essence of the missionary congregation becomes multifaceted when the prism of the analytical process breaks up the single, sharp biblical light in its multifaceted reality. Through this we become aware of the complex but exciting implications of the local Church finding meaning and purpose in becoming what

It is also notable that one of the world's most acclaimed mission statisticians, Patrick Johnstone, made relevant comments in a recent publication – supporting the results of this study. He (1998:193-196) developed certain questions that should be addressed by the local Church in its endeavours to impact the world. He asks the following questions:

- Is there a clear vision statement on mission?

- Is the leadership committed to a global vision?
- Is there a mission structure within the Church?
- Is mission an integral part of the Church's being?
- Is there a commitment to regular prayer?
- Is there a good balance in mission involvement?

These questions refer directly to the CSFs identified. We can therefore state emphatically that Scripture, empirical research and other resources support the crucial importance of the CSFs.

The March-April 1998 issue of *Mission Frontiers* focuses on "The Six Spheres of Mission Overseas." The article gives particular attention to a growing trend in mission endeavour: by Congregation-Direct Missions (CDM) - direct involvement of the local congregation. According to Mike Phillips, a board member of the Antioch Network (an association linking CDM Churches), Churches today are simply "not content with just giving money and reading mission updates prepared by people they hardly know." Once they're caught by the vision, the people in the pew want more active involvement. Dr. Ralph Winter, as well, has recognised this "massive trend of initiative at the local, congregational level." We can therefore rightly deduct that there is nothing less than a surge of enthusiasm at the local Church level across the globe.

Rev. Steve Hughey, Director for Mission Partnership and Involvement in the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, sums up the story of their missions program expansion as "the decentralization of global mission," recognising that people today are no longer willing to "just give their money and walk away." Indeed, today's local congregation wants a more active part in world missions (Winter 1998).

Supporting this growing involvement by the local Church, Paul Borthwick accentuates the primary role of the local Church in a recent article by highlighting four truths:

- the local Church is primary in world missions because Jesus said it is;
- the local Church is primary because the body of Christ is there;
- the local Church is primary because it affords us training and care;
- the local Church is primary because it is both the beginning and the end of missions (Borthwick 1999)..

With a new acceptance of the local Church's mandate, responsibility and privilege to impact creation, the outcome of this study is very relevant. The results of this study can have a major impact on the holistic, Biblically sound involvement of the local Church in world mission.

Accepting the Scriptural basis for missions; understanding the essence and nature of "His missionary people" the Church and integrating empirical results with that, led to clearly identified Critical Success Factors. A balanced, holistic and soundly interpreted knowledge of these factors can sensitise and equip the local Church to be more effective in bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world.

The mission mandate of the local Church is deeply rooted in Scripture. The growing acceptance of congregations to take up their Godly ordained responsibility leads to acceleration in the expansion of Christianity. A growing sensitivity for the mission responsibility of the local Church is stimulated by this growth. My prayer is that this research result will contribute significantly to transform the missionally uninvolved Churches to become the Church-on-Mission.

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