MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUP PRAXIS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

by

PIETER RETIEF VAN DER MERWE

submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

in the subject

MISSIOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF J N J KRITZINGER

NOVEMBER 1996

SUMMARY

MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUP PRAXIS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The contention of this study is that *missiological cell group praxis* is an appropriate vehicle to mobilize the local church for world evangelization — centrifugally reaching from "Jerusalem" and "Judea and Samaria" to the "ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Methodologically it follows the *pastoral circle* of Holland & Henriot and investigates the *missiological praxis* of various small faith communities. The principles of the cosmological framework of *Calvinism* (Kuyper, Dooyeweerd) are brought to bear on the missionary endeavours of the local church, with reference to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. It argues for a missiologically integrated Cell Church, based on a definition of mission and evangelism, which is aimed at overcoming the fragmented missiological situation in mainline churches. This study argues that these small groups function as the *basic cells* of the local and universal Church, and shows how these communities come into existence and function as missiological outreach groups.

Title of dissertation:

MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUP PRAXIS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Key terms:

pastoral circle, small groups, cell groups, Basic Christian Communities, mission, evangelism, Dutch Reformed Church, church planting, sphere sovereignty, modality structure, transition, local church, social justice, discipleship, spirituality.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Relevance

Cell groups, in mainline Cell Group Churches in South Africa, are not missions-oriented from their inception. This causes a ministry vacuum when the missions thrust[1] of the local church is put into action. There is therefore a fragmented missions awareness in the congregation. The other side of the coin is that, if there is a missions awareness, the local congregation seems unable to recruit and train these potential missionary leaders effectively and to nurture new converts in a faith community. If cell groups and consequently cell churches[2] can operate in a missiologically integrated way, the following is achieved: Churches, consisting of small faith communities will be empowered to reach out centrifugally from their own Jerusalem to the ends of the earth[3], mediating the Kingdom of God in all spheres of life. This study reflects on the missiological[4] praxis of cell groups[5] in the local church with special reference to the

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[1] The "missions thrust" of the local church is the multiplication of cell groups locally, and the spreading of these faith communities, by transplantation and translocation, to the ends of the earth.

[2] "Cell Group churches" are those churches striving to integrate all ministries *into* cell groups, and to direct all church activities *from within* cell groups. Hence a church that has cell group communities (*paraklesis, kerygma, koinonia, diakonia, martyria, leitourgia*) at the core of its local-church-being and functions as a community of communities in its largest and corporate ecclesial sense (cf. Prior 1993:88-94, O'Halloran 1991:10, Simpson 1993:185). It is possible to have a church *with* cell groups, which does not function as a cell church. The cell groups are but one of the ministries of the church.

[3] This process template is found in the Book of Acts and especially in Acts 1:8 "... and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. " Mission starts in the congregation's Jerusalem, the pivotal point of the whole construction and centrifugally and simultaneously reaches out to their Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Jerusalem (Acts 1-7) — the same area and language/culture where the local church finds itself, Judea and Samaria (Acts 8) — a different language/culture and probably the crossing of a provincial border; and to the ends of the earth (Acts 13) — crossing a language and culture border as well as a continental border. For a study on this cf. Legrand (1990:91-106). Cf. Meiring's (1995:408) comments to the Kwazulu-Natal DRC Synod.

[4] I deliberately choose the term "missiological" and not "missionary". According to Costas 1977:90, missiology has to do with the witnessing engagement of Christians in the concrete situations of life. It is a critical reflection that takes place in the praxis of mission. It is an analytical interpretation, evaluation and projection of the meaning, effectiveness, obstacles and possibilities of the communication of the Gospel in the world. Missiology is the handmaid of mission, but mission is not always missiological. Mission becomes missiological when it is accompanied by a process of critical reflection. By opting for this term — which may look like a departure from its traditional role of understanding missiology as an academic subject — I relate to the missiological reflection as it is done in the lands south of the Rio Bravo and include Africa,

Dutch Reformed Church.[6]

The thesis of this study is: At this time in the history of the Church in South Africa, missiological cell group praxis is an appropriate vehicle to mobilize the local church for world evangelization — centrifugally reaching from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

I speak of "missiological" instead of "missionary" cell group praxis because the life of these groups is accompanied by a process of critical reflection. According to Costas (1977:92), missiological literature of the North — which can also include the westernized Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa — is still oriented to the questions facing the Church "there" rather than "here". This is so because missiology has been linked to institutions that have been created for the support and promotion of the missionary enterprise and its offspring, the Church in the countries of the Third World — which can also include the DRC's pursuit in establishing its black "daughter" Churches, the former Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and Dutch Reformed Mission Church. This study focuses on the church's mission[7] "here" (in Jerusalem) as the spontaneous fountain for its mission "there" (Judea and Samaria). "Missiological"

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[4](...continued)
which differs stylistically from its counterpart in the North. According to Costas (1977:91), missiology in the North usually appears as a carefully thought out, written reflection. In the South it is mostly an oral popular reflection, which is done "on the road", as it were, promoted by a significant event or specific issue.

[5] "Cell Groups" is a term that refers to a specific type of *Basic Christian Community* emerging in these mainline churches in the South African context and is to be distinguished from small group activity in general. A cell group is a missiological faith community consisting of up to 14 members, gathering weekly for fellowship including worship, edification, and missionary service-outreach (*koinonia — leitourgia, diakonia, kerygma, paraklesis, didache, marturia*) (cff. Neighbour:1990; Potgieter: 1995; Collins 1988:114; Kasdorf 1976:99-103; Simpson :1992).

[6] With which we group the Afrikaans Reformed (DRC), Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Congregational, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches together as "mainline " churches. cf. Hendriks & Buchanan (1995:24).

[7] In this study we will distinguish mission (singular) from missions (plural) in the following way. According to Bosch (1991:10; 370; 389-393) "Mission as *missio Dei* is God's self revelation as the one who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news — that is, that God is a God-for-people. " The *missiones ecclesiae* refer to particular forms, related to specific times, places or needs, of participation in the *missio Dei*. See also Davies (1966:33); Rütti (1972:232); Hoekendijk (1967a:346). Mission (singular) deals with God's indicative mission to the world, while the imperative missions (plural) arises from the indicative and concerns itself with the *missiones ecclesiae* — the church's mission (cf. Scherer 1987:244 for a different view). In this study "missions-oriented" denotes the church's totally integrated Christ-like presence and involvement in the world. It starts with the felt needs of its immediate community, reaching out to the ends of the earth.

includes "missionary", but is something more than merely missionary. It is like praxis[8], which integrates both theory and action in a constant dialectical relationship.

I am a Dutch Reformed pastor, a member of the presbytery (circuit) of Vryheid. This presbytery is part of the regional synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in Kwazulu Natal. The Natal synod is a regional synod of the DRC in South Africa. I am one of the two full-time pastors in the service of the Dutch Reformed Church in Vryheid. As a Dutch Reformed pastor I have been concerned about the seeming decline in the ability of our denomination to disciple professing Christians[9], and to help convert and then disciple the unchurched. We seem to be unsuccessful in leading people into a saving relationship with God and into a strong fellowship experience in the church of Jesus Christ. Over the years the church has developed into a *domineeskerk* (pastor's church), where the pastor has the functioning responsibility for almost everything that should happen in the church.[10] The ordinary church member is more a spectator in the church's everyday life than an active participant in the church's mission in the world.

It is my conviction that the Dutch Reformed Church can regain its earlier credibility and effectiveness, if it can establish a network of laity-driven, dynamic

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[8] This concept of *praxis* was developed by Paul Freire in his classic, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Theron (1995) reflects on Freire's relevance for theological education and summarizes Freire's view of *praxis* in regard to critical consciousness and liberation as follows: "It must lead to *praxis*, reflection and action, which will result in the transformation of society. The praxis must involve the denunciation of an unjust reality and the announcement of a new just reality through word and action. Praxis is reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it " (Freire 1972:28). Reflection involves the distancing from the object (reality) in order to view it, to reflect on it. Action is the turning back towards the object to transform it: "Praxis is only possible where the objective-subjective dialectic is maintained " (Freire 1970:54). Reflection and action take place simultaneously and cannot be divided. If they are separated, and the one is emphasised at the cost of the other, then we will end up with either activism or verbalism (Freire 1972:60). According to Baranowski (1988:68), praxis means "'reflection on life'", which is "learning by doing and learning from what we are doing... It is reflection and action combined... is a way of learning that begins by inviting people to reflect upon their own life experiences."

[9] I literally echo the same words as pastors of other mainline churches (such as Methodism), cf. Richard Bordin (1990:4).

[10] *Dominee* is the Afrikaans for Reverend, which means the pastor of the church. Loren Mead (1991:32), states: "In the Christendom Paradigm, the role of clergy was clear. It was strong, central, and unquestioned. It was a high-status role, carrying authority. Clergy were *the ministry.* "

small groups operating within the local church[11] and its community, discipling new Christians and reaching[12] out into the surrounding community to introduce others to Jesus Christ.[13] To see these missiological faith communities reaching out from their own Jerusalem (see figure 1.1) to their respective Judea and Samaria communities,

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN MISSION AT DIFFERENT STAGES (ACTS 1:8)

MISSIOLOGICAL FAITH COMMUNITIES WITNESSING IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS IN THEIR OWN JERUSALEM

MISSIOLOGICAL FAITH COMMUNITIES WITNESSING IN THEIR JUDEA AND SAMARIA

MISSIOLOGICAL FAITH COMMUNITIES WITNESSING TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH
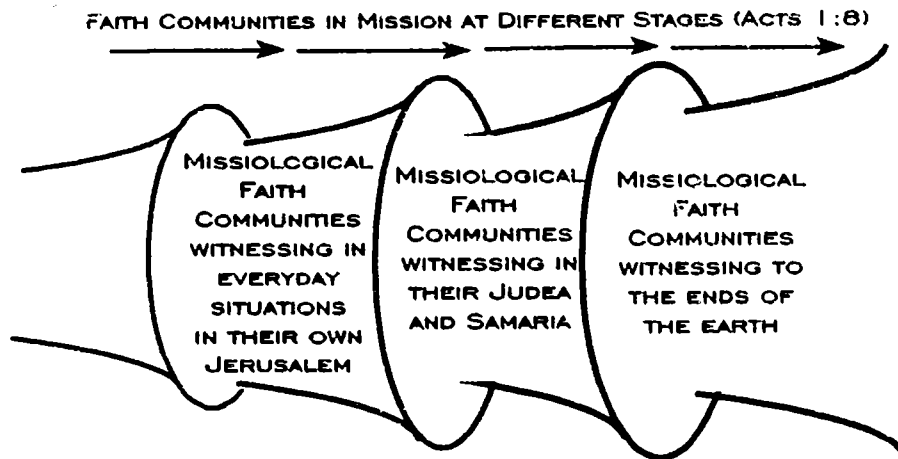
FIGURE 1.1

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[11] Collins (1988:135-136) says: "Ecclesiologists commonly recognize in these small groups the vital *cells* of the contemporary church. Their focus is on prayer and the study of Scriptures, on the one hand, and engagement in the local missions of the church, on the other... practically, they are a useful means — one that is perhaps indispensable at the present time— whereby the church fulfils its mission in the world."

[12] By "reaching out", we mean the loving and servant attitude towards the community — to find a need and fill it, to find a hurt and heal it, to find a problem and solve it. To bring the redemptive message of Jesus Christ into everyday life. The Lausanne Movement's *The Future of World Evangelization* (1984:87) shows that at least four theological issues continue to be at the forefront of the contemporary debate on world evangelization: 1) the meaning of salvation, 2) the nature of our mission — the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility, 3) the relationship between culture and evangelization, and 4) the people group concept as an effective "tool" for evangelization.

[13] Hendriks (1995) says that there is no doubt that the Dutch Reformed Church will inevitably and continuously be confronted with the house and cell church movements. In the South African context besides other utilizations of small group ministries, the cell models of Neighbour (1990) and Potgieter (1995) are now the leading proponents as far as congregations are concerned — for a summary of Malan Nel's critique of Neighbour's *Where do we go from here?* see van Niekerk (1995). Small Christian communities are always characterized by some kind of mutual need existing in their community. It is either oppressing them, enslaving them, robbing them of their spiritual gifts, or excarberating their loneliness. A variety of factors (cf. Hendriks & Buchanan 1995:28-30) is causing the Westernized Dutch Reformed Church to increasingly come into this category.

and to communities of the ends of the earth[14]. This experience and analysis calls for reflection on the cell group praxis to reach possible responses to the problem.

1.2 Purpose

This study is not unique in acknowledging the existence of cell groups as such. It is unique in its search for a missiological praxis for cell groups in the Dutch Reformed Church. In this way, we believe that the local church can step into a new missionary vitality[15]. Loren Mead (1991:1) believes that the church:

> Now meets the world in the lives of the laity — rather than in the far-off lands of foreign mission. Denominations, once structured to deliver resources to the old boundaries, must now encounter the mission field in the lay person's workplace. In a post-Christendom era, the old assumptions don't work, and our institutions are breaking down. Thus, the church needs to be reinvented for the new mission.

As a full-time pastor of a church, I cannot isolate myself from this. Therefore, my heart radically agrees with the words of the missionary pioneer C.T. Studd, "Some folk prefer a quiet place within the sound of Church and Chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell. "[16] And as Michael Novak (1983:3) expressed in *Confessions of a Catholic*, "I want an account of my faith written in the presence of God, which can be sized up by myself and others."

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[14] Donald Mc Gavran in *Church Growth and Group Conversion* (1973:1-20) argues that "people group " evangelism (tribe, caste or clan) is replacing the "mission station " evangelism, and that it grows through the conversion of small, well-instructed groups. That is community evangelism done by communities.

[15] According to Charles van Engen (1991:20), "To develop a congregational missiology for the Church is no longer optional. Contrary to some predictions in the 1960's, local congregations are here to stay. But their quality of life is in jeopardy. They will either limp along struggling to maintain what they have, or they will rise to new life because they catch a vision of their unique purpose and mission within their individual context. Local congregations the world over will gain new life and vitality only as they understand the missiological purpose for which they alone exist, the unique culture, people, needs of their context, and the missionary action through which they alone will discover their own nature as God's people in God's world. "

[16] C.T. Studd, the Cambridge Cricket hero, who became a pioneer missionary in China and Africa, made this one of his mottos. Cf. *C.T. Studd, Cricketer and Crusader*, Kathleen White, (1985:83).

The small group phenomenon is a worldwide movement and a recurrent theme in Christian history. According to O'Halloran (1980:3), "The history of the basic Christian community is, in fact, as old as the Church and as recent as the supermarket. Insofar as its fundamentals go back to the Gospel, the basic community is as old as Jesus Christ. Insofar as it is a model of Church, it is freshly-refined gold"[17]. Eleven years later O'Halloran (1991:5) adds: Among the early Christians, the Church expressed itself in a variety of ways. If we consider the foregoing models, we shall realize that the modern small Christian communities resonate in a special way with some of them. With the coming of the Roman Emperor Constantine (288?-337) the church ceased to be persecuted and Christianity become the favoured religion of the Empire. It was fashionable to be Christian and the Church greatly increased in numbers. However, it lost the momentum of a Church that had until then been lean, persecuted and more committed. The edge of witness became blunted. In the mid fourth century bishops were installed as public officials. This engendered a Church model that was both hierarchial and instititutional, a model which prevailed as the communitarian vision faded. The neighbourhood community, or house church (oikos), ceased to be and the focus came to be placed on parish and diocese. With the departure of the small neighbourhood community, a dimension which gave the Church much of its vitality was gone. But in our day ordinary Christians are reclaiming their heritage, as small Christian communities increase in number around the world.

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[17] While small Christian communities are an entirely new experience of Church, it is possible to identify them in a special way with some New Testament communities. The American Scripture scholar, Raymond Brown (cf.1984:11 in O'Halloran 1991:3), has made us aware that even in the New Testament times the Church expressed itself in diverse forms. He points to seven distinct models of Church among early Christians. They are the following (1) The heritage that Paul leaves us in his pastoral epistles of Titus and 1 and 2 Timothy. This model emphasizes Church organization. Authority is important and, consequently, the role of presbyter-bishop is stressed. (2) The model that considers the Church as Christ's body to be loved. This can be found in Colossians and Ephesians and is also traced to Paul. (2) From the Gospel of Luke and Acts we get a third Pauline model, namely the Church and the Spirit. This highlights the presence and action of the Spirit. (3) In 1 Peter we find the Padrone heritage of the Church seen as people of God. This is a model that makes one feel a strong sense of belonging. (4) There is the tradition of John in the Fourth Gospel. This tradition shows people as a community of disciples personally attached to Jesus. (5) And finally there is the heritage of Jewish-Gentile Christians in the Gospel of Matthew.

These small communities are often called by other names[18], and they differ in their social awareness and involvement in the everyday lives of their members and their respective communities (cf. Healey 1986:24-25). Although the groups differ in this, they are in one sense or another, a community among communities.[19]

The purpose of this study is to reflect on the missionary praxis of these groups in the Dutch Reformed Church, and to suggest an integrated grassroots missionary involvement. The Cell Church Movement is a realistic and contextual expression of a paradigm shift in missions and Gemeindebau[20] in the local church.[21] The Cell Group Church praxis is a practical vehicle to respond to the current mission challenge.[22] This challenges Practical Theology to be even more practical — that is missionary — in its approach.[23] It is my conviction that the challenge to the local church is the equipping

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[18] This phenomenon is called by different names: *Communidtdes ecclesias de base*, *Small Christian Communities* — respectively in the Latin American and African Roman Episcopal contexts (cf. Healey 1986, Lobinger 1986 for a comparison of the two), the *Classroom Meetings* in the Wesleyan tradition, *Pastoral Care Groups* in the Westernized context, *Africa Independent Churches* in the South African context, and for this study, we trace some of its roots in the *Parochial ward meetings* and in the emerging of other types of *caring* and *cell groups* in the South African Dutch Refor ed tradition and other churches of the Reformation (cf. Lobinger 1986:34).

[19] The Lumko Institute — which has developed lay training courses for tne RCC in the South African context — works with the ideal of the church as a "communion of communities" (cff. Lobinger:1986; Prior:1993).

[20] We use the German *Gemeindebau*, for technical purposes for it is a better translation of the Afrikaans *Gemeentebou* than congregation- or church building, which is not to be mistaken for "Church Growth". *Gemeentebou* includes the total coordinated functioning of the local congregation, which may include church growth (cf. Nel 1994:10). We make ample use of the literature of this movement and differentiate between *Gemeindebau* and "Church Growth".

[21] Faith communities are the church at grassroots level where people learn by helping each other and sharing their gifts. Faith communities are motivated by faithfulness to the Lord and to people in need.

[22] "Mainline denominations decline and small-group churches grow" (Hendriks & Buchanan 1995:26)

[23] Charles van Engen (1991:17) says boldly: "Pastors, missionaries, mission executives and church planters all are involved in calling churches into existence... Unfortunately, mission practitioners, mission executives, national and international church planters, and church growth specialists too seldom ask the difficult prior questions regarding the nature of the churches they are organizing. *The more I have pursued this investigation the more convinced I have become that the Church is a marvellous, mysterious creation of God that takes concrete shape in the lives of the disciples of Jesus as they gather in local congregations and seek to contextualize the gospel in their time and place. My thesis is that as local congregations are built up to reach out in mission to the world, they will become in fact what they already are by faith: GOD'S MISSIONARY PEOPLE."* (italics mine). cff. du Preez (1990) and Hendriks (1995b) for two somewhat

(continued...)

of E1 missionary faith communities to work in the local church's "Jerusalem", and sending of E2 and E3[24] missionary faith communities to their respective "Judea and Samaria" and to the ends of the earth — the 10/40[25] window and other unreached people groups.[26] Pastoral internship in the Cell Group Church is an answer to the leadership need in the local church and for the equipping of these missionary faith communities. The hostile closing of countries that were until recently still open to the gospel creates the need for a spiritual community — a Cell-Group based church. That is doing missions at home and spontaneously flavouring and leavening adjoining communities. Thus, centrifugally reaching communities to the ends of the earth.

The focus of this study is the missiological life of cell groups. It does not intend to study small groups in its widest sense,[27] but rather the cell group as an essential building block for a global strategy of church growth and church planting. The main thrust of this

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[23](...continued)
different South African Practical Theological opinions on this issue.

[24] Ralph Winter (1981:B160-172) distinguishes between three kinds of evangelism, E1, E2 and E3. E1 evangelism is intra-lingual and intra-cultural. In our context it means a White Afrikaans speaking Afrikaner evangelizing another Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaner. If this Afrikaner crosses a language and or culture barrier to a sister language and/or culture and evangelizes an English or Zulu person, then it is E2 Evangelism. If the same Afrikaner crosses a national border and moves to a totally strange language and culture, for example to Japan, then it is E3 evangelism.

[25] The "10/40 window" concept was first introduced at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (1989). According to this there are some twelve thousand unreached people groups, defined by dialect and subculture, which need to be reached with the gospel. Most of these people groups live in a belt in the Northern Hemisphere (from 10 degrees to 40 degrees latitude, that extends from North-West Africa across to Asia). This includes the great Muslim bloc, the Hindu bloc, and the Buddhist bloc. And in 1981, only seven out of every one hundred American missionaries were working among these peoples cf. Bush (1981:D-43).

[26] In accepting this challenge we intend to focus the scope and parameters of "frontier missions" (Winter 1992b:181) on the 10/40 window. It is a possible venue for the establishing of missiological faith communities, and not the sole target of mission. Frontier missions is although not to be translated solely in terms of the 10/40 window and as a triumphalistic approach to the year AD 2000. We should not minimize and reduce the missionary task of the church to mere evangelism — "reaching" does not mean "evangelizing", but more comprehensively "making disciples" in the Biblical sense, and to the 10/40 window (cf. Corwin 1992:118-123).

[27] Alfred Darmanin (1985:1-16) argues that small groups have a raison d'être that emanates not simply form the datum of experience in a particular moment in time, but which derives intrinsically from the nature of the Church itself. They owe their validity not merely to the contingent upsurge at different times and places but to the theological understanding of their role. His thesis is that besides psychological, social and cultural explanations of small groups, there exists a solid theological basis for their justification and hence valid pastoral applications.

study is to point out that missions-oriented cell group praxis must be part and parcel of the cell church's life. If this does not happen, then cell groups are reduced to back scratching, ingrowing and infertile clusters; just assimilating nominal Christians into church structures. Small groups are then reduced to an instrument of revitalizing an existing church. It then becomes a sterile church growth strategy instead of an archetype for imitating a living spiritual community in a world that is in need of the total gospel.[28]

The purpose of this limited research project is to indicate that missions-oriented cell group praxis can empower the local church to develop as an integrated missiological faith community. With this strategy it will be able to reach out to its own community and subsequently other communities to the ends of the world. The compartmental missiological character of churches causes them to stay missiologically sterile. This problem can be reversed by mission-oriented cell group praxis.

1.3 Method

In this study we integrate three widely divergent theological approaches. The "contextual theology" *method* of Holland & Henriot, the cell group *praxis* of the Basic Christian Communities and Cell Groups (cf. Hebblethwaite 1994, George 1991,1994, Neighbour 1990, Potgieter 1995), and the *conceptual cosmological framework* of Calvinism (cf Dooyeweerd 1953-8, Kuyper 1931,1956). In other words: We are *looking at* ("doing an operation on") cell groups, through the *glasses* of a philosophical framework, while the *instrumentaria* we take to hand is that of a contextual theology. Visualization as complementary to communication is a basic characteristic of our approach.

The study is organized along the lines of a specific method of (1) experience, (2) analysis, (3) reflection, and (4) planning (cf. Holland & Henriot:1980). A literature study of cell groups/base communities in different continents and church settings is done in

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[28] According to Darmanin (1985:13); growth groups risk becoming closed, exclusive, turned in on themselves instead of reaching out to the world with all its social ills. Clinebell (1977:148) ironically remarks "growth groups need not be used as psychological fiddling while the world burns. "

order to specifically trace their missiological praxis. While doing this, we reflect upon our own experience and analysis of cell groups. This research is done from a Reformed theological background, which values the priesthood of the believer and the fourfold Reformation doctrines: *solo Christo, sola gratia, sola fide,* and *sola Scriptura.* According to Hart (1995:1), the notion of the Biblical creation-fall-redemption is central to Calvinism and he illustrates these essentials as follows: "Using the image of a nation, we can say that the creed which undergirds the Calvinistic worldview confesses the following biblical articles: (1) The cosmos is a constitutional monarchy *(God is sovereign but not a despot — Pss 19, 29, 47)*; (2) In the earthly *(not in the heavenly)* realm of the cosmos man is appointed viceroy; (3) Man lost his real power and attempted *coup d'etat (Gen 3)*; (4) The monarchy has been restored *(Col 1:15-20)*; (5) Man has been re-instated (Heb 2, Ps 8); (6) Man's task is that of a member of the salvation army *(Eccl 12:13; Ex 19:5-6)*." Although it is not a theological framework, the cosmological framework[29] of Calvinism forms the conceptual framework through which the author looks at reality and reflects on the praxis of church life. Different aspects[30] of this cosmological and philosophical point of view will be highlighted during the

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[29] Kuyper (1931) regards Calvinism (see Chaplin 1995:117) "not primarily as a theological but a cosmological framework. It generates a distinctive worldview which has implications for every area of life and thought. His aim is to articulate these implications, urging the construction of a comprehensive vision as broad as that of both Catholicism and "Modernism". He rejects the Catholic distinction between natural and supernatural ends. Grace does not perfect nature, it radically restores it to its original perfect created purposes. Nor is the mediation of the institutional church necessary in order to allow grace to redeem the world". For the essential contours of Kuyper's (1837-1920) thoughts: cff. Kuyper (1956a): *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring* which appeared in 1880 ; Kuyper (1956b); Skillen (1991), which was delivered in 1891 as *Het sociale vraagstuk en de Christelijke religie*; and Kuyper (1931), which were lectures given at Princeton University in 1898 and Vanden Berg (1978) — a biography aimed at the general reader.

[30] Kuyper's theories were subsequently developed systematically to a high level of philosophical sophistication by *Herman Dooyeweerd* (1894-1975), professor of law at the Free University of Amsterdam. According to Chaplin (1995:119), Dooyeweerd grounds his political and social thought on a systematic ontological framework rooted in the notion of divine sovereignty. God orders creation through law in two dimensions, the "modal" and the "individual". Creation is structured according to a series of modal aspects all of which condition every discrete entity (e.g., spatial, biotic, logical, social, ethical), or "individuality structure". There are three basic categories of such structures: Things,events, and social relationships. Each "functions in", either as object or subject, all the modal aspects: a tree, for example, displays physical and biological aspects subjectively, and psychic, social, economic, juridical, and faith aspects objectively (i.e., as an object to human psychic, social and economic functioning). Social relationships — a category including every kind of community, institution, association or inter-personal, relationships — also function in all these aspects, and exist as individuality structures, each with their own "structural principle" which determines their distinctive nature. For introductions on Dooyeweerd's thought see Skillen (1974); Kalsbeek (1975); McIntire (1985). The most accessible of Dooyeweerd's English works are Dooyeweerd (1979; 1986, and his magnum opus: 1953-8). My own thought was decisively formed and influenced by Strauss (1978) who is a South African philosopher standing in this Dooyeweerdian tradition.

course of the study as it is applied to the missionary praxis of the DRC — and hence to the *Missiological cell group praxis*. The Christian ground motive[31] of creation-fall-redemption in the cosmological framework of Calvinism (cf. Spier 1950:9) is the point of departure for this study[32].

The relationship between theory and praxis forms another cornerstone of this study, even more so when we use the pastoral circle of Holland & Henriot (1980). Since one of the contexts of the small Christian communities we study, are the Basic Christian Communities — as they developed in Latin America with its Liberation theology — it is apt here to define our position towards them. Cassidy[33] (1989:507) says that liberation theology profoundly challenges any Christian and we may benefit from it, but he has a reservation:

> Liberation theology's insistence on starting with the context bothers me. For those of us who seek to make the Bible our final authority in all matters of faith and morals, there is a problem in starting with the context and then moving to the Bible rather than vice versa. As far as I can see, without the finally authoritative word of the Bible there is little possibility of evaluating so-called 'praxis' on the basis of a norm outside the praxis itself. The way surely easily opens for the justification of any praxis as long as it works. The danger is of the end justifying the means.

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[31] "Religious ground motives" (*religieuze grondmotieven*), according to Dooyeweerd (1979:9) are "a spiritual force that acts as the absolutely central mainspring of human society. It governs all of life's temporal expressions from the religious centre of life, directing them to the true or supposed origin of existence. A spirit is directly operative in the religious ground motive. It is either the Spirit of God or that of an idol. Man looks to it for the origin and unshakable ground of his existence, and he places himself in its service. He does not control the spirit, but the spirit controls him. The religious ground motive can never be an object for a special science (social psychology, for example). Scientific analysis and explanation never penetrate to the spiritual root and religious centre of communal life. They address only life's temporally distinct expressions. "

[32] It is impossible here to do justice to the complexity and sophistication of this conceptual framework. This Christian philosophical construction permeates the author's worldview and it is employed as a diagnostic instrument to probe the philosophical roots of the current mission and evangelism debate and the missionary praxis of the DRC. By doing this, not to plunder this philosophical framework but to probe a new avenue on missiological thinking. I am convinced that it may contribute to the clarification of the debate and has fundamental implications for the missionary praxis of the DRC.

[33] Michael Cassidy, a South African by birth, is the founder of Africa Enterprise, a multi-racial, continent-wide evangelistic association. He played a major role behind the scenes during the turbulent years of Apartheid in the 80's to voice a reconciliatory voice and bring Christians together in an effort to bring a worthwhile solution to the revolutionary deadlock at that time.

Rhodes (1987:174) gives clear guidance on this issue when he discusses Karl Barth's view on the base communities. He argues that Barth and the base communities disagree fundamentally about the order of knowing and the order being operative in Christian faith: "Barth begins with the praxis of God in Jesus Christ and the base communities with the praxis of the ecclesial community as it follows Christ. "[34] Rhodes (1987:176) suggests "self correcting " dimensions in both the Barthian and base community traditions:

> Those who incline towards Barth's deep commitment to God's gracious election of humanity in Jesus Christ need to examine carefully the dynamics and roots of despair and fatalism in social praxis, particularly as it relates to developing nations. Such a position can benefit, I believe, from a greater attentiveness to sanctification as a human process. I am more convinced than ever that the church (and especially those in the Reformed tradition in the United States) would benefit from mcre attention to the 'practice-ladenness' of its theological and moral pronouncements. If there is a crisis in the authority of the modern church, a substantial source of this crisis may be attributed to the absence of its witness to the kingdom through praxis. Those who wish to follow the example of the base communities will do well to consider the epistemological limits of human (even if ecclesial) praxis. Human praxis cannot posit its own authority, that is, if it claims the enlivening authority of Jesus Christ. *If Barth needs to learn about his own 'practice-ladenness, the CEB's need to learn about their own theory-ladenness and the limitations which attend it.'* (italics mine)

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[34] Rhodes (1987:175) argues that they — Barth and the base communities — "utilize different starting points in their epistemologies and ontologies, and that these different starting points have given rise to differing conceptions of the order in which the church is to proceed in the reflection upon and response to the gospel. Barth begins with the praxis of God in Jesus Christ and the base communities with the praxis of the ecclesial community as it follows Jesus Christ. Barth's order of knowing moves in its logic from the divine praxis revealed in the Bible to human hearing, to human reflection, and finally, to human action. The base communities start with the cycle of ecclesial action and reflection and draw conclusions about the Word of God from their praxis with the assistance of the scriptures. For Barth, Christ is the centre and central meaning of reality. For the base communities, reality refers to the human experience of suffering and the praxis which rises to address it as it is illuminated by Jesus Christ. " Cf Scott 1978 for a discussion of Barth's Theology of mission.

The backdrop of this short dissertation on *Missiological cell group praxis* is both practical and theoretical. In this study — concerning the relationship between praxis and theory — we will argue in ways similar to Rhodes's abovementioned point of view.

1.3.1 Practical backdrop

This study is practical in the sense that the author is a pastor in full-time ministry and has been exposed to a variety of courses and seminars given by local lecturers and ones from abroad. Being in a Third World country in Africa and part of the mainline church decline, we are sometimes overexposed to other people's success stories from their respective homes abroad. They are trying it in Africa and we go overseas to see them do it "at home". This growing tendency of sharing successes with each other is more to our benefit than to theirs. Unfortunately, this also causes us to be the African guinea pigs of methods conceived in laboratories alien to our circumstances[35]. Amid this overflow of riches we have to find our own way of doing things and being practical Christians and therefore effective pastors and responsible theologians. Therefore, this study is written against the experience of a full-time ministry of initiating and experiencing Cell Group growth in a South African context. It is also interwoven with substantial overseas experience as far as Cell Groups are concerned. Meaningful practical experience and theoretical insights were gained during a month's stay in Singapore during the Third World Conference of Cell Group Churches (July 1994). This was hosted by the Faith Community Baptist Church in Singapore, which is a pure Cell Group Church. My practical experience also includes attendance at four intermittent week-long workshops over a full year (1995), conducted in South Africa by Dr Ralph W. Neighbour, on how to transition a traditional programme-driven church into a pure cell group church. I was also fortunate to attend a seminar on nominality, conducted by

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[35] As Herbert Kane (1981:5) says, "Things are changing, however. The Third World is on the march and the church in that part of the world has come of age. The problems we now encounter are more subtle and therefore more difficult to solve than those of the nineteenth century." As indicated elsewhere (at this stage chap 2) in this study the *Africa Independent Churches* in South Africa constitute the largest part of Christianity in South Africa. They are growing while the mainline westernized churches are declining. Bosch, (1991:188) in discussing the influence of Thomas Kuhn's (1970) paradigm theory on Theology, agrees with Küng (1987:214-216) that the West has lost its dominant position in the world as the millennial home of Christianity. The coming of age of "Peoples in all parts of the world [that] strive for liberation from what is experienced as the stranglehold of the West", and poses to be a major paradigm shift not only in Theology but also in Missiology."

Dr Eddie Gibbs in 1995.

1.3.2 Theoretical backdrop

This study is by definition also a theoretical study in the sense that it explores the depths of scientific thinking on this subject. How we see a problem is how we respond to it.[36] We relate closely to the way Holland and Henriot (1980:7) "see" a problem and their method of responding to it:

> A social analysis that is genuinely pastoral can be illustrated in what we can call the 'pastoral circle'. It is the looking at the reality from an involved, historically committed stance, discerning the situation for action. It involves close relationships between four elements: 1) *experience*, 2) *social analysis*, 3) *theological reflection*, and 4) *pastoral planning*.

This circle is frequently referred to as the "circle of praxis" because it emphasizes the ongoing relationship between reflection and action. It is related to what has been called the "hermeneutic circle", or the method of interpretation that sees new questions continually raised to challenge older theories by the force of new situations[37]. In line with Segundo (hermeneutical circle) and Holland and Henriot (pastoral
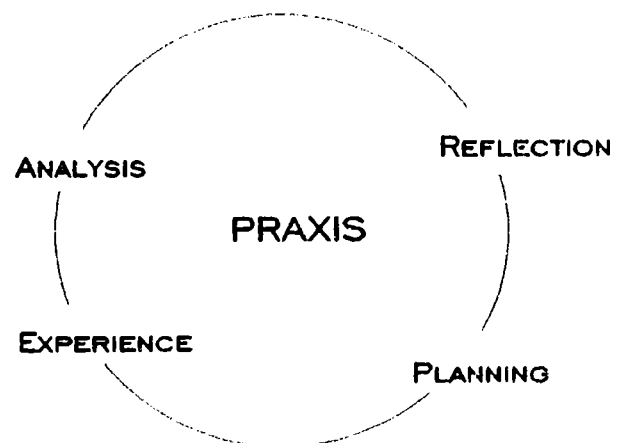
FIGURE I.2

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36 This is the first question asked by Holland and Henriot (1980:1) in the construction of their 'pastoral circle'. According to Hebblethwaite (1993:35-41), this pastoral cycle was developed early this century by the movement called Catholic Action. Joseph Cardijn popularized this "See-Judge-Act" cycle as the basis for the group meetings of Young Catholic Workers and Young Catholic Students. The Latin American basic communities in the late 1950's and 1960's added another two steps after "Act": "Evaluate" and "Celebrate".

37 This method is explored in Juan Luis Segundo's (1976), *The Liberation of Theology.*

circle) our method is also circular[38] (see figure 1.2).

We employ this "pastoral circle" (Holland & Henriot 1983:8ff), and expand it as a method to structure this study[39]. The first moment in the circle — and the basis for any pastoral action — is *experience*. The lived experiences of individuals and communities must be the foundation for all pastoral responses. What people are feeling, what they are undergoing, how they are responding — these are the experiences that constitute primary data. These experiences must be understood in the richness of all their interrelationships. This is the task of *analysis*, the second moment in the circle. Analysis examines causes, probes consequences, delineates linkages, and identifies actors. It helps make sense of experiences by putting them into a broader picture and drawing the connections between them. The third moment is *reflection*, an effort to understand more broadly and deeply the analysed experience in the light of living faith, scripture, church, social teaching, and the resources of tradition. The Word of God brought to bear upon the situation raises new questions, suggests new insights, and opens new responses. Since the purpose of the circle is action, the fourth moment in the circle is crucial: *planning*. In the light of experiences analysed and reflected upon, what response is called for by individuals and communities? How should the response be designed to be most effective? In our exposition of the problem and purpose of this dissertation we argue similarly.

1.4 Overview of the following chapters

In chapter one we have started with our own personal experience or insertion and set the table with the instruments and method we are employing in this study. In chapter

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[38] Cf. de Beer, Venter and Kritzinger (1996:55), who applied this method in a different context.

[39] In Latourette's *The Christian World Mission in our day* (1954:1-12) we find him using a similar method in his study on missionary challenges lying ahead for the church. He argues that: 1. We must seek to understand the situation in which we find ourselves and to devise and carry through the ways of meeting it. We must try to see the main features of the age which is now yesterday, the one immediately preceding that into which we have been ushered, and the manner in which the Gospel was brought to bear upon the world of that day. 2. We must next go on to describe the main features of our day, pointing out the contrasts with yesterday, the major forces which are operating, their bearing upon the Gospel, and the achievements of the world mission thus far in our age. So far the task is one of analysis. 3. Then follows the framing of feasible and wise procedures for the years ahead, procedures which should be in accord with God's thoughts and ways.

two this insertion is focussed on cell groups in the body ecclesial and flows over into analysis. The analysis examines causes for the current fragmented missiological praxis in the local congregation regarding cell groups, and probes the consequences of a fragmented church life and hence congregational theology. It describes linkages between the local DRC church and its other church structures such as Circuits and Synods and the DRC's mission policy and praxis. Finally, drawing a handful of conclusions to be reflected upon theologically in the subsequent chapter.

In chapter 3 the reflection unfolds according to five themes. The analyzed experience regarding the missiological praxis of cell groups is reflected upon from the perspective of living faith, scripture, church, social teaching and the resources of tradition. The five themes are (1) the ecclesial position of cell groups in the local church as a fundamental church-like grouping representing the basic building blocks of the church and their functioning as basic ecclesial communities, (2) the existing ward system in the DRC and the emerging cell system and the possible conflict arising from it, (3) cell groups as authentic expressions of mission, evangelism and social awareness. Indicating how these components function in the local congregation's small group life and the challenges flowing from it, and finally (4) the mission/evangelism debate. The principles of Herman Dooyeweerd's modality structure and Abraham Kuyper's sphere sovereignty, are brought to bear on this longstanding debate. (5) Out of all this I develop a proposal of how to integrate mission and evangelism from local to global level in the church's missionary endeavours which positions cell groups as an appropriate vehicle to bring this proposal to life. Chapter 4 is the final chapter and deals with the response called for by individuals and communities with regard to the experiences reflected upon in chapter 3. It suggests a spirituality that is needed to address the paradigm shift in being church. Since it represents the dimension of planning in the pastoral circle, strategic suggestions are made with regards to starting cell groups, transitioning wards into cells, utilizing a cell group as a mission team, and church planting by means of cell groups without skipping over Jerusalem to the 10/40 window. This presents a strategy for world evangelization utilizing cell groups, which start in Jerusalem and reach out centrifugally via Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth.

CHAPTER 2

CELL GROUPS AND THE BODY ECCLESIAL

This chapter deals with the second component of the pastoral cycle — *analysis*. Analysis examines causes, probes consequences, delineates linkages, and identifies actors. It helps make sense of experiences by putting them into a broader picture and drawing the connections between them. In this chapter we will analyse the mission praxis of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) from two perspectives. The missiological praxis in existing small groups in the local congregation is analysed, and secondly the missiological praxis of DRC Circuits and Synods is examined. In doing this we will lay bare fundamental issues, which will then be reflected upon theologically in the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Cell Groups and Missions in the local congregation

In my analysis I have found that congregations who focus their ministry on small groups usually fall into *three categories* as far as missionary outreach is concerned. While analyzing, I discovered that in most cases the missionary purpose and activity of the congregation — locally and globally — is not integrated into the cells' life and therefore not integrated into the church's life.

2.1.1 Churches *with* small groups[1]

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[1] About this method of analysing the small group situation: I was first introduced to this concept of a congregation functioning *with* small groups, or *through* small groups, by Ralph Neighbour (1990), while I attended the Third International Conference on Cell Group Churches in Singapore in July 1994. With this concept in mind, and committed to the study and implementation of cell groups in our DRC congregation in Vryheid, Kwazulu-Natal, I started analysing the Church scene for this particular application of the small group system. Knowing that a pure cell group church operates solely *through* integrating cell groups, it was obvious that all programme-based churches were operating *with* small groups. Coming back from Singapore I started to develop a strategic instrument — which includes a leadership retreat for the church leaders — to assist our congregation in the transition process to a pure cell group. Since then we have conducted this retreat in various other congregations all over the country. In every congregation we observed the same practice. We implemented the cell system in our congregation. We had a strong Evangelism programme with EE3, and have a vibrant missions programme of conducting at least four intermittent Jesus Film outreaches all over the country every year. We soon discovered that there was a fragmentation concerning the integrating of these ministries into the cell groups in our congregation. The analysis in 2.1 and 2.2 is an account of real-life experiences in the ministry the past four years. This view on small groups was further clarified and strengthened when I discovered the Lumko Institute's writings (cf. Prior 1993:88-94) — characterizing five different types of Roman Catholic parishes as qualified by their

In this kind of church, small groups and the small group ministry are but one of the activities of the congregation. Small groups are one type of ministry amid a multitude of other ministries. It is a church *with* small groups, and the purpose of the small groups is to establish caring of any sort in the church. The reaching (serving) of non-Christian communities locally and further, or for that matter a nominal Christian community around them, is not an explicit goal of the group. In the Dutch Reformed Church we traditionally have a ward ("wyk") system, whereby the parish is divided into geographical wards. Each ward is supposed to be represented by an elder and a deacon on the church council. The average percentage of vacancies in the church councils in the Vryheid circuit differ from 12 and 20 percent. According to circuit reports, between 17 to 38 percent of wards are active — that is, have a ward meeting once a month and frequent visitation by the council members. The ward system in the DRC aims mainly at maintenance rather than mission. The spiritual needs of existing church members are supposed to be addressed by the elder and the deacon in turn, collects the tithes every month. The mission work of the congregation is not part of this maintenance mode although these wards are, in a certain sense, the grass-roots communities of the church.

Various DRC's have already ventured into experimenting with cell groups and introducing them into the congregations. These cells are addenda to all the other types of groups in the church. These groups are not regarded as church in the true sense of the word. Traditionally, the real church is where the clergy officiate and where the sacraments are celebrated, which is usually at the Sunday services. One of the first objections to the introduction of cell groups, then, is: "Who is going to explain (preach) the Word if the pastor isn't there?" Secondly, the official ministering of the Eucharist in small groups complementing the celebrating in the full service (cf. NGK Natal:156) is against the law of the church.[2] In this approach the cell groups are therefore relegated

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different accents on small group life. It was almost identical to our situation.

[2] *Die Kerkorde* (1994:78), which is the "constitution" of the DRC, states that the Eucharist can only be ministered by the clergy, and can only in very special circumstances (*"behalwe by hoë uitsondering)* be ministered outside a full church service — which is usually in a church building. The church council has to evaluate every case on merit, the Word has to be preached, the true meaning of the Eucharist has to be

to something *of* the church, instead of being recognized as a micro and authentic expression of the real church.

2.1.2 Mission *is done* by a certain group in the church

In this model small groups are the focus of the whole church and all activities are defined in terms of group activity, such as Bible studies, discipleship groups, intercession groups, caring groups or parochial ward meetings (*wyksbyeenkomste*). The missionary activity of the church depends solely on the missions department or on the missionaries, who are financially supported by the church. Evangelism is conducted by a group of specialists in the church. These evangelism groups are trained with a multitude of evangelism programs, such as EE III[3], Faithful Witnesses[4], Four Spiritual Laws[5], *Dinamiese Gemeentebou* (Dynamic *Gemeindebau)* [6], and many more. The evangelism in the church is done by a group of specialists.

Apart from the fact that in this way an artificial dividing wall is erected between missions and evangelism, missionary and evangelistic activities become the task solely of one church department or one group of church members. For this argument we still refer to evangelism and mission separately[7].

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explained, and the pastor has to be accompanied by an elder/deacon (cf. NGK:1994) .

[3] Cf. Kennedy, J. (1971). *Evangelism Explosion.* This training programme is still in use in over 150 DRC congregations. In *Evangelism,* (cf. Towns 1985:320-327) Kennedy explains it from a growth perspective. He concludes that the programme only works effectively if it is done in a discipleship manner. Unfortunately, the EE3 programme encourages evangelism, sometimes without the existence of a faith community before or after the conversion has taken place.

[4] Cf. Armstrong (1979). In reaction to the somewhat rationalistic EE3 method, whereby a memorized Gospel presentation is delivered to the person to be evangelized, this non-confrontational method of Armstrong gained a considerable following.

[5] Cf. Campus, (1965). *The Four Spiritual Laws* booklet of Bill Bright is still widely used.

[6] Cf. Bybelkor (1985). For many years this programme was the official evangelism strategy of the Dutch Reformed Church. Cf. Britz and Erasmus (1994) for a discussion of the development of the *gemeentbouteologie* over twenty-four years since 1970 in South Africa, and the variety of programmes utilized in the DRC.

[7] A reflection on this observation and experience will be given under a subsequent heading in chapter 3. It deals with the confusion in local congregations concerning what is to be understood as missions and what as evangelism, and where involvement in the basic needs of the community fits in.

In his *meta church* theory, Carl George (1991; 1994) distinguishes between six types of groups or grouping categories. He places the missionary component of the church in one of the groups (the "orange zone") because they "do not necessarily *directly* contribute to the numerical growth of that local church" (1994:113). Delegating missions — the *raison d'être* of the church (cf Bosch 1991:9) — to a certain group in the church causes a disembodiment[8] of the missionary task of the church. The groups specializing in these tasks are usually suspected of spiritual élitism — as if they are "extraordinary" Christians.[9] The quest for missionary integration of the church and the accompanying preparation of God's people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11) is often seen by members as the pastor or priest trying to let the *people* do the job for which they hired *him*.

In both these types of small group activity, we find the missionary activity of the church confined to one of the many programmes of the church. In other words, it is neither the calling of every believer nor the *raison d'être* of the church.[10] It turns the words of Emilio Castro (1978:87) upside down: "Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life... Our life in this world is life in mission."

There may even be a strong mission thrust in a congregation of this type, which gains momentum during mission weeks and conferences, but it remains predominantly a specialized activity done by one department in the church. The ordinary member of the church only needs to take notice of it, support it financially or chime in when the church's missionaries are on furlough and visiting home. Mission and evangelism are again reduced and restricted to "another world" in the church — which is not the world

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[8] The missionary task — the *raison d'être* of the church as the body of Christ — is alienated from the body, of which it is supposed to be the heartbeat. It is not done by the body as such, but by an external addendum to the body.

[9] According to Kritzinger J.J. (1990:141) "For more than a century now there has been a significant pietist tendency within the Dutch Reformed Church. The missionary activity of the church was (and still is) primarily undertaken by people from these circles."

[10] Andrew Murray (1979:125-136) argued that the key to the missionary problem is a personal one — every believer is a missionary.

of the ordinary church member.[11]

2.1.3 Cell groups with no missions thrust

The third type is a church in which most of the small groups function as cell groups, ministering to each other as well as to nonbelievers and nominal Christians.[12] The cell groups reach a point in their life when they can multiply and give birth to new cell groups, but they give birth to two types of hybrid cells.[13]

The one hybrid cell spends the whole of its cell life cycle assimilating *existing* church members. These members queue to participate in this faith community because it answers their need to be cared for. The second hybrid succeeds in *developing a heart for the lost* but the process stops here. They never become effective in reaching out as servants to unbelievers. Their imitation of Christ is confined to the cell meeting, and their being Christians is a venture that is meeting-oriented. The reason: In the inception phase of the cell, evangelism and mission were taught in some kind of seminar or through endless missions preaching; but they were never modelled in a discipleship manner. The practicality of reflecting the image of Christ in everyday situations was never taught in a relational way. If it is done in a relational and discipling manner, the system seems unable to assimilate new believers into a caring system that will nurture them from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity in Christ.

Because of this, we find that body, friendship or lifestyle evangelism — and thereby

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[11] According to Reapsome (1988:117), the situation in America is similar; "For the most part, in many churches, missions is still seen as the hobby of relatively few enthusiasts — like the bird watchers and the backpackers. Missions is not seen as the heart and soul of the church. It is not seen as the responsibility of every church member"

[12] In an effort to enliven the church in general and to help the local congregation engage in its missionary responsibility, some DRC's have started cell groups, alongside the ward groups.

[13] According to *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary* (1980:314), a "hybrid" is a biological term used for an animal or plant produced by a male or female of different species, varieties, or breeds. A "hybrid" in this sense is a deviation from or mixture of a given original. In this context we use it to denote that certain (cell) groups start as basic communities — that is, edifying each other, meeting felt needs, reaching out to unbelievers, and producing leaders — but produce offspring (hybrids) that are not basic anymore, but a mixture between a basic community and some other kind of group that does not actively pursue a discipleship methodology and caring service in its praxis.

multiplying missionary discipleship — is never really established in the church (cff. Adeney 1992:D-281-287; Smit 1989:88; Armstrong 1979). It remains merely one of the programmes of the church, but is prevented from giving real life to people in their felt needs. The missionary *gestalt* of the church never becomes integrated into the lifestyle of the cell groups. The church as a whole, then, does not operate as an integrated missionary body. Cell groups are ultimately used only as a church growth[14] instrument, not always succeeding in providing deep healing for the wounds of its members, and therefore cannot succeed as a church planting strategy. As a church growth[15] model it only succeeds until all existing church members are assimilated in cell groups. This cell group does not equip members to become the leaven of Christ in the lives of non-Christians.

Here the tension between what is understood as evangelism and what is understood as missions becomes evident. The perception arises that cell groups work locally and do evangelism — if they ever get to do it. They have nothing to do with the missions strategy of the church which takes place far away. Underlying this, and clear from the above perception, is the confusion and misconception among members in the South African context of the nature of evangelism and mission and their relationship to social responsibility.[16] This misconception has been structurally established in the church over years (cf. Kritzinger J.J. 1988:288).

According to this view, the White church does evangelism and the Black "daughter"

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[14] With this we do not intend to discredit the Church Growth movement, but indicate that the cell group strategy can easily be implemented for the sake of numerical church growth. Fortunately, a small group system nourishes church growth (as seen in the next footnote) but, according to Bosch (1984:176), "a preoccupation with ecclesial ingathering at the expense of the wider mission of the Church may, however easily turn evangelism [by the cell groups] into a mechanism of institutional aggrandizement."

[15] Donald McGavran (In Towns 1985:284-294); gives five reasons why some churches in America are growing: 1) They believe that God wants churches to grow, 2) Growing churches intend church growth, 3) Growing churches recognize social realities, 4) Growing churches create multitudes of substructures of belonging, and 5) Growing denominations plant multitudes of new churches. Church planting is one of the key denominators in church growth. Although church planting is essentially a missionary enterprise it cannot be isolated from the growth of the local congregation.

[16] Cf. Meiring (1995); He addressed the synod of Natal at its 1995 meeting on this topic.

church is a "mission church" and a missionary object[17]. When evangelism and missions as activities of the local church are placed on a par with each other, a "conflict" emerges. This conflict concerns the respective "objects" and geographical "targets" of mission and evangelism. Unfortunately, this is the frame of mind traditionally held in the DRC — if not in theory, then in praxis in the local congregation. As far as the "objects" of ministry are concerned, mission works with the "not-yet-Christians", while evangelism works with the "no-longer-Christians". Missions is predominantly directed at Blacks, and evangelism at Whites (cf. Bosch 1979:16; Bridston 1965:12-19; Kritzinger J.J. 1990:141). As far as the geographical target is concerned, evangelism works locally, while mission works globally (cf. Bosch 1991:409).

The past ten years has also seen a growing trend of evangelism awareness in many DRC congregations. Although this was received favourably by members, it was used as a good excuse to abstain from a wider missions responsibility. This view suggests that the church's first responsibility is at home, and only when that is finished may we proceed into "mission". A conflict of interests arises in church councils when the "missions" budget is under discussion. Mission and evangelism are reduced and restricted to "another world" in the church — which is not the world of the ordinary church member. This is not only true of local congregations but also as far as DRC Circuits and Synods are concerned.

2.2 DRC Circuits and Synods in mission

As indicated above, the local DRC missionary enterprise is usually confined or relegated to one of several commissions on the church council. The same procedure

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[17] According to Kritzinger J.J (1990:140), "The NGK (DRC) has a history of enthusiastic outreach into Africa. It is proud of the fact that its mission work resulted in the establishment of a score of 'daughter' churches in a number of African countries. Even the converts in the South African communities were eventually organised into 'mission' churches and nurtured separately from the established congregations among Afrikaans-speaking Whites. All this was mission. 'Mission' was however not regarded an appropriate term to use for a gospel outreach to those Whites who had backslidden or were non-Christian. 'Evangelism' was the term used for this ministry".

is followed at Circuit[18] and Synodal[19] level (see figure 2.1). Besides giving policy

THE CIRCUIT
CONSISTING OF TWO
REPRESENTATIVES
FROM EACH
CONGREGATION

THE LOCAL
CONGREGATION WITH
A CHURCH COUNCIL
AND DIFFERENT
COMMISSIONS

THE REGIONAL SYNOD
WITH REPRESENTAIVES
FROM EVERY
CONGREGATION

FIGURE 2. I
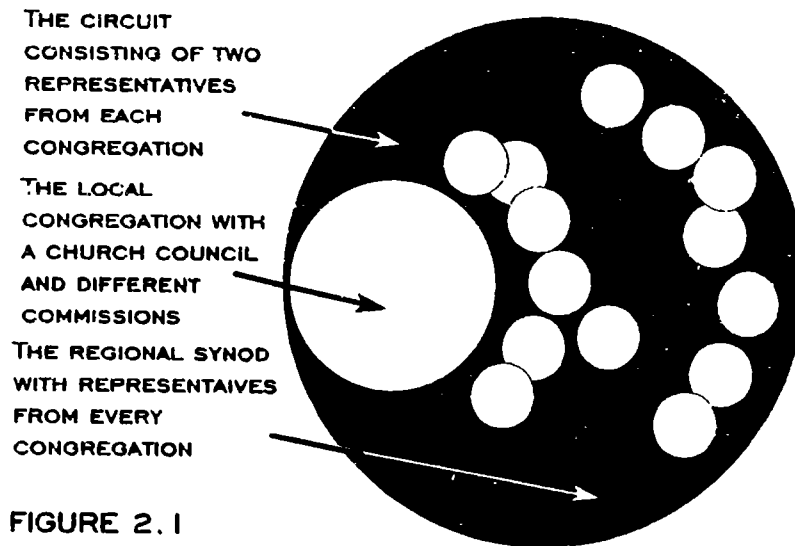
direction, the Circuits and Synods seek to find joint projects into which the respective Circuits and Synods can venture. Circuits — for example the Vryheid Circuit — may employ a white missionary pastor to accept responsibility for the missionary activities amongst the Black population living in the Circuit's geographical area. If the Circuit has the resources, it can do this by itself, or else the regional synod — the Kwazulu Natal synod in this case — may contribute to the expenses. A Synod may also accept responsibility for a specific venture. For example, the Synod of the Free State "adopted" the people in the Caprivi strip, northern Namibia. The DRC General Synod may also venture into its own sponsored mission projects — until recently it had a pastor dedicated to mission in the communist countries. This practice — although meant as complementing the local church's ventures — unfortunately strengthened the

[18] A "Ring" (Circuit/presbytery/diocese) in the DRC consists of pastors and elders from neighbouring congregations in a certain geographical area, drawn up by the regional synod. A Circuit meeting may consist of between 5 and 10 pastors, each one accompanied by an elder, officially delegated by the respective church councils, cf Coertzen (1984:16-22).

[19] A synod in the DRC in South Africa may refer to a regional or general synodal gathering. The regional synod includes all the congregations via the Circuits of a certain provincial area. A regional synodal meeting, which meets annually or bi-annually, may consist of between 70 and 200 pastors, each accompanied by one eider. The general synodal meeting assembles every four years and consists of delegates from each regional synod.

idea in the local congregation that missions is predominantly the work of the respective Circuits and Synods. The only obligation of the local congregation is to contribute financially to these ventures. The finances are in most cases used to pay the missionary's salary — and with that the job is regarded as done.

The institutionalizing of mission by local congregations, Circuits and Synods has recently started to take on another face.[20] Due to various factors, predominantly the lack of finances, Synods are reducing the number of full-time staff — including missionaries. The result is that the missionary responsibility of the church is slowly shifting towards the local congregations and Circuits[21]. As far as the Circuits are concerned, political polarization[22] and other financial reasons within the DRC have caused some congregations to withdraw their financial contributions to the joint ventures of the Circuits.[23] It is a known fact that on circuit and synodal level the participation of local congregations in missionary ventures has practically been reduced to mere financial sponsorship.[24]

Missions are becoming the responsibility of the local congregation again (cf. Mead 1991:1). That is mission on the doorstep, accompanied by the emergence of the laity in the local church as a missions workforce. Churches who do not function as effective

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[20] This tendency is an observation from a local DRC point of view and needs to be researched further.

[21] The Synod of Natal is planning to terminate the duties of a full-time minister, currently employed by the Synod for the furthering of missions, in four years time, and has requested local congregations to make missions congregational-centred (gemeentegesentreerd) NGK (1996:345).

[22] See footnote 26 following.

[23] It happened in the circuit of Vryheid in Kwazulu Natal that, because of the difficult financial situation of some congregations and the political affinity of others, the circuit's missionary is increasingly becoming the responsibility of one congregation.

[24] An organisation, World Thrust under the auspices of Dr Bill Boerop (Atlanta, Georgia) has recently (1994) started missionary seminars in local congregations. These seminars, besides giving central attention to the fact that God's heart is a heart for the world, stress the importance of the local congregation in the mobilization of missionaries. The local congregation provides directly the emotional and financial supporting system for the missionary. The congregation sustains the missionary by its continuous prayers and support. Although this is a good start, missions in the local congregation are still institutionalized — via the missions department— and grass-roots involvement by basic Christian communities is still non-existent.

missiological dynamos, are slowly being replaced by a new way of being church. The new church is birthed by believers without formal seminary training, and it is happening from the bottom up, not from the top down.[25] Mead (1991:6) argues in *The Once and Future Church*, that three things are happening around us simultaneously:

> First, our present confusion about mission hides the fact that we are facing a fundamental change in how we understand the mission of the church. Second, local congregations are now being challenged to move from a passive, responding role in support of mission to a front-line, active role. The familiar roles of laity, clergy, executive, bishop, church council, and denominational bureaucrat are in profound transition around us. Third, institutional structures and forms developed to support one vision of our mission are rapidly collapsing. I argue that we are being called to be midwives for a new church, working to help our present forms and structures give birth to forms appropriate for the mission of the church.

Part of this is already happening in the South African context. This study is written in a post-apartheid South Africa where the Afrikaans-speaking Reformed tradition has lost its credibility in a large part of the community. It is marginalized[26] in the workplace both by its apartheid history and by the growing *volkskirchliche* sentiment in the Afrikaans-

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[25] According to Hendriks (In Hendriks and Buchanan 1995:31), "It seems that mainline denominational structures, often backed by theological institutions, have to a certain extent overplayed their hand, lost credibility and become out of touch with the people. They still try to dictate from above instead of serving from below, as their agenda differs from that of the people at grass-roots level. While seminaries are turning out candidates after six years of study, the tendency at grass-roots level is that Christians without seminary training are "taking over" the ministry." At the time of writing there are hundreds of theological candidates (*proponente*) waiting to be called to congregations.

[26] Hendriks (1995:3-10) argues convincingly that the mainline church denominations have since 1980-1990 experienced a constant decline in their "market share". Market share denotes the percentage of Christians in a specific denomination/group compared to the total Christian population. Betw.. en 1980 and 1990 the market share of white Christians declined from 91.7% to 77.9%. That of coloured Christians has declined from 87% to 64.4%, while the black Christian component has risen from 75% to 77%. This amounts to 5.6 million Christians, which is more than the total white population.

speaking church community[27]. The church is seen by the older members as the last outpost of Afrikaner exclusivism: "Everything may change, but not the church; it is supposed to stay as it is and provide stability in times of change." Among the younger generation — in age and spirit — on the other hand, there is a growing frustration with the church's inability to adapt to change — wanting not cosmetical changes but fundamental reformation.

This creates a need for facilitators in local churches to help them manage change. Kennon Callahan (1990:3) says boldly: "The day of the professional minister is over. The day of the missionary pastor has come." This tendency puts tremendous pressure on mainline professional-driven churches. They have little or no experience of how to manage change and how to facilitate the transition of their respective congregations into a new paradigm. They seem unable to facilitate meaningful change, and realise that those who change the course of history are the gradualists, in whose hands the fabric of events does not tear (cf. Solzhenitzyn [S.a.]). Seminaries do not create and train spiritual leaders in management and vision casting.[28] According to Barna (1992:35), "The future belongs to the visionary pastors because they will define the future. It is the power of God working through churches led by visionaries that causes that image of the future to become reality." Church development in Africa exposes the existing vacuum in church leaders and the inadequacy of seminary training. We urgently need methods to bridge the gap between the theological seminary and the local church. Theron (1995:55) says, "A new model for theological education, which

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[27] The Dutch Reformed church is becoming more polarized. On the one hand, we have those who want to resurrect *Apartheid* in a *Volkskirche* inside the DRC but also outside the church (almost 20 000 members left the church to form the conservative, and exclusivistic *Afrikaanse Protestante Kerk* between 1987 and 1993). On the other hand we have those who are striving to unite with the now uniting traditional pre-apartheid black and coloured Dutch Reformed daughter churches (URCSA) and by so doing reform constantly. It is a given fact that the Dutch Reformed Church has been stripped of its privileged position as *the* church of the apartheid era. Disillusioned people are searching for a kind of *safe lager* in the church. (cf. Hendriks 1995:7; Tucker 1990:66-85; Burger 1995). In *Membership Trends in South African Churches* (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990:196-235) the researcher compares South African tendencies to those in America. Since the late eighties South Africa has been experiencing the same as the Americans experienced in the sixties. It was the watershed years for America, the era of the hippies, the anti-Vietnam campaigns and above all the Civil Rights Movement.

[28] Cf. George (1992:135-139), for a discussion on vision casting in the local congregation, and Marais 1995:52-95) for the utilization of vision casting (*visionering*) as a strategic tool.

functions within the missiological paradigm of the *missio Dei* and which is based on a philosophy derived from Freire's educational philosophy, enlightened by the Bible, will enable theological education in Africa to fulfil its mission, namely to equip and empower the church, God's people, to participate in God's mission and so transform society into the kingdom of God"[29]

Bearing these factors in mind, I am convinced that the Dutch Reformed Church has reached its Masada — either die in traditionalism or live by conviction, that is, re-form constantly and by so doing leave a legacy. For the DRC that can also mean organisational death in the end. Loren Mead (1991:5) says appropriately: "The energy supporting the institutional infrastructure evaporated."[30]

2.3 Conclusions from this analysis

Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the mission praxis of the DRC. They have been grouped into four categories:

(1)   The ecclesial position of cell groups and the priesthood of all believers:

▸   Cell groups are viewed as add-ons to the church, they are not in themselves expressions of authentic church. The exposition of the Word and administration of the sacraments are reserved for the professional clergy, making it technically impossible for the cell groups to really function as authentic parts of a larger body of Christ. The ecclesial position of cell groups will have to be addressed head-on by the church.

▸   The lack of finances, which causes numerous seminary candidates to be without parishes, is forcing the DRC to re-evaluate its view on the priesthood of all

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[29] Theron (1995:45-56) studies Freire's educational philosophy and suggests that: "Theological education should be *spiritual formation*. It should overcome the false dichotomy between spirituality and academic learning by fostering a creative tension between the two (52). It should be *community based*, serving the needs of the community that forms its constituency, by being in constant dialogue with that community, evaluating and providing it with contextual theology and contextual forms of ministry (53). It should be *leadership training*, equipping people with *leadership, communication and management skills*, enabling church leaders to be servant leaders in order to provide effective leadership and responsible stewardship in all ministries of the church by working effectively with groups and managing projects (55)."

[30] More and more regional Synods of the DRC are rationalizing their Synodal infrastructure. Full-time Synod-sponsored clergy are increasingly becoming under pressure to get back into local congregations.

believers since many congregations can no longer afford to employ a full-time trained pastor.

(2)   The existing ward and emerging cell group system:

▸   The traditional small group system of the DRC — the ward system — is unable to prepare and equip the church for its present missionary challenge, locally and globally.

▸   The present functioning of the ward system in the DRC, as primarily a maintenance machine, causes a ministry vacuum in addressing the needs of the rest of the community adjoining it. Evangelism and mission are to be done by specialist groups in the congregation. This may even be true of other churches — besides the DRC — that are utilizing cell groups.

▸   Where cell groups exist in a local congregation, they tend to continue to endorse the institutionalizing of mission and evangelism in the local church. The cell system without a missiological rootedness can end up being just another revitalizing fad for a dying church.

(3)   The perception in the DRC concerning mission and evangelism and social awareness:

▸   The average DRC member has a distorted perception and view of what is to be understood as mission and evangelism — namely that mission and evangelism are linked to race. The remnants of *Apartheid* within the church and the Afrikaner backlash after political reforms were introduced, enhances the growth of a *Volkskirchliche* sentiment within the DRC. This strengthens the resistance to embracing the missionary task of the church.

▸   The current financial situation of the church as a whole and its low credibility in the macro-community are forcing institutionalized church structures to decentralize their missionary ventures to local congregations. The local congregations seem ill-equipped to act on these circumstantial incentives.

(4)   The corporate character of local missionary ventures and the emphasis on world evangelization:

▸   Arising from the above, is the privatization of missions — to local congregations predominantly — which causes congregationalistic or independentist tendencies

as opposed to the presbyterial ones, to come to the fore. This has to be translated in terms of its influence on the uniting process of the DRC with its former "daughter" churches.

▸   The enthusiasm for world evangelization in certain congregations — with the 10/40 window focus of this study — must be balanced with a local integrated missions involvement. World evangelization from a South African point of view should never become a romanticized cover-up for the reluctance to address the vast South African "mission field".

Having completed an *analysis* of the missiological cell group praxis in the DRC, we now need to move on to the third moment in the pastoral circle, namely *reflection*. It is an effort to understand more broadly and deeply the analysed experience in the light of living faith, scripture, church, social teaching, and the resources of the Reformed tradition. The Word of God brought to bear upon the situation raises new questions, suggests new insights, and opens new responses. In the next chapter we will be reflecting theologically on the analysis done in this chapter. It will open new responses and create a fresh avenue for thinking on the missiological praxis of cell groups in the Dutch Reformed Church.

CHAPTER 3

MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUPS — A NEW WAY OF BEING THE CHURCH

This chapter discusses missiological cell group praxis in terms of the third element in the pastoral circle — *reflection*. In this chapter we reflect theologically on the experience and analysis of the previous chapters. We structure this chapter according to the issues pertaining to the subject as they were raised in the analysis in chapter 2. We address these themes under subsequent headings, but not as isolated items on a menu, that is, as separate entities. The whole reflection, though containing distinctive elements, is treated as an integrated whole with a continuous backward and forward movement.

The final (fourth) element in Holland and Henriot's pastoral circle — *planning* — follows in chapter 4. It is during the planning phase in the pastoral circle that appropriate strategies are devised and executed. Although Freire (1972:60) does not formulate his understanding of *praxis* as a *fourfold* circle, his twofold circle of action and reflection is very similar, with *action* corresponding to insertion and planning, and *reflection* to analysis and reflection. According to Freire, reflection and action take place simultaneously and cannot therefore be divided. If they are separated, and one is emphasised at the cost of the other, we will end up with either activism or verbalism. As will be clear from this chapter, planning and action flow spontaneously from this reflection.

3.1 The ecclesial position of cell groups and the priesthood of all believers

In this section we continue the backward and forward movement in the pastoral circle, and reflect on the first category of conclusions made in chapter 2. This concerns the ecclesial position of cell groups and the priesthood of all believers in the praxis of the DRC.

3.1.1 Cell Groups — The Basic Building Blocks of the Church[1]

The small group phenomenon is a worldwide movement and a recurrent theme in Christian history, often called by other names[2]. With each different name comes a different tradition and community, into which a specific type of basic community is born. The common denominator of all these missiological faith communities is that they are the *basic cells* of the church[3]. According to Collins (1988:120;135),

> In the midst of all the diversity, some unity can be found. It is found in the fact that the small group unit has been a vital cell of ecclesial survival, renewal and expansion throughout the ages of its existence. Ecclesiologists commonly recognize in these small groups the vital cells of the contemporary church. Their focus is on prayer and the study of the Scriptures, on the one hand, and the engagement in the local mission of the church, on the other... practically, they are a useful means — one that is perhaps indispensable at the present time — whereby the church fulfils its mission in the world.

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[1] When we use the capitalized word *Church* — except in quotations used otherwise — we are talking of the universal church as it manifests itself as the body of Christ all over the world through all the ages. When we use the lowercase *church*, we are talking of the local congregation or worshipping community (cf. van Engen 1991:26). The word *church* always refers to people, not their place of worship, which is the *church building* or *church facility*. The term *congregation* is used in two ways, as the above-mentioned and as a gathering which is" bigger than a cell but smaller than a celebration" — which is a church-wide gathering of all cell groups (George 1992:14, 61).

[2] This phenomenon is called by different names: The area of the world best known for basic Christian communities is Latin America (cf Torres:1981), which is predominantly Spanish-speaking. "Basic Christian Community" (or BCC) is the term more often used to translate the Spanish *comunidad eclesial de base* (or CEB pronounced "seb"), or the Portuguese *cominidade eclesial de base* (also CEB, but pronounced "sebee"). The more literal translation, according to Hebblethwaite (1993:17), of the Latin American term is "basic ecclesial community" (or BEC). In Africa the prevalent term for the same kind of community is "small Christian Community" (or SCC). According to Hebblethwaite (1993:18), this referst o exactly the same concept as BCC or BEC. With a few exceptions, the terms BCCs, BECs and SCCs are used interchangeably. The same grassroots small group phenomenon is found in the *Classroom Meetings* in the Wesleyan tradition, the *Pastoral Care Groups* in the Westernized context, the *cell groups* in George's (1992, 1994) meta-church theory (cf. also Neighbour 1990), *African Independent Churches* in the African context, and we trace some of its roots in the *Parochial ward meetings* and other types of *caring and cell groups* in the South African Dutch Reformed tradition (cf. Healey:1986 and Lobinger:1986 for a discussion on the relationship between BECs and SCCs).

[3] This was said at the epoch-making meeting of Latin American Bishops at Medellín in 1968: "The basic Christian community is the first and fundamental ecclesial nucleus... It is the initial cell of the ecclesial structure" (cf. Hebblethwaite 1993:19).

George (1994:69) says in *The coming Church Revolution* "this entire book, continually speaks of small groups (or cells) [sic] as the primary building block of the church of the future". According to him, a cell is "a place where people have enough social reference points to find themselves sustained emotionally and spiritually".

The name *cell* is a biotic[4] analogy[5] of the Biblical body metaphor. Just as a human body exists and comes into existence through the interaction of cells, so does the church as the body of Christ. The body is made up of millions of living cells, reproducing and renewing themselves, and joined together to form the whole expanse of living flesh. So we are saying that the church is a body, and that the smallest unit that goes to make up that body is a basic ecclesial community. According to Hebblethwaite (1993:19),

> The cell is the very material of which the body is composed, the cell is alive and changing: old ones die and fall away, and new ones are born out of division of existing cells, which grow large enough to reproduce. So too in the body of Christ the cells are always changing. Base communities go out of existence and new ones come into being all the time.

Ralph Neighbour (1990)[6] calls his basic ecclesial communities interchangeably "cell

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[4] Cf. Chaplin (1995:120) "The significant point about an individuality structure is that its distinctive identity is determined in particular by its "qualifying function", which is the key to its structural principle. This notion of individuality structures each with their own qualifying function is a development of Kuyper's notions or "laws of life" each governing a particular sector of reality. All social relationships have qualifying functions. A family, for instance, is "qualified" by the ethical aspect, while a church is "qualified" by the faith aspect" Thus a cell group is qualified by the biotic aspect.

[5] Besides the uniqueness of every *modal aspect* (Chaplin 1995:120), such as the numerical, spatial, biotic, juridical etc, there is also a common moment of coherency (*samehangsmoment*) with and between other aspects, it refers from one aspect to another. There is a similarity in the difference, Strauss (1978:25) *(verskil in die ooreenkoms)* This is an analogy. "Die term analogie is 'n beter-bruikbare term as die uitdrukking: samehangsmoment."

[6] Ralph Neighbour has invested a lot of time in leadership courses on the Cell Group Church "movement" in South Africa. In its initial phase the courses were attended by approximately 1000 church leaders, of whom only seven were DRC churches. The Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa, representing a major part of the Pentecostal movement, ultimately attended his *Year of Transition* weeks as a whole corporate body — it became official praxis. His laboratory is Faith Community Baptist Church in Singapore, which tops the 7000 member mark.

groups" and "shepherd groups". Potgieter[7] (1994) calls his basic communities the "selgemeente" (cell-gemeinde)[8]. The cell group is a descriptive term for a certain type of base community. It calls to mind the body metaphor that the church is the body of Christ, and that this body is alive and consists of a multitude of sub-groupings — cells — which are fundamental[9] to its existence.

3.1.2 Cell Groups — a Fundamental Church-like Grouping

As indicated, the name "cell" is a biotic analogy of the Biblical body metaphor. Therefore the cell group is an anticipation (cf. Strauss 1978:26;33) from the biotic aspect of creation to the social aspect of creation. This explains the word group in cell group.

Neighbour (1990) also uses shepherd group, besides the term cell group (Potgieter 1994). That means that this type of small group — a shepherd group — is an analogy of the Biblical Shepherd metaphor. The Chief Shepherd (Jesus Christ) is shepherding his flock. This is an anticipation from the fundamental ethical aspect (love) to the social aspect. From this it is clear that the various small groups are interpreted by means of different aspects of reality, and we find the social aspect in the affix group. Ward

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[7] Marius Potgieter (1994) developed an indigenous base community model in the Dutch Reformed Church. In the Eastern Cape they are flourishing in various congregations, and pastors from all over the country attend their leadership training clinics. It is not in the scope of this study to probe the similarities and differences between the Neighbour and Potgieter models. It is currently researched in a doctoral study by Rev. Manus Olivier — DRC Swakopmund, Namibia.

[8] Ralph Neighbour (1990) distinguishes between a threefold step-up in the organizational functioning of a cell group church, whereby the church is subdivided into three groups. The lowest level is the cell/shepherd groups with 3 to 13 members. The second level/group when 5 to 20 cell groups gather together(75-250 members), he calls it a congregation. It is about the size of an average congregation of approximately 250 members. When all the cell groups in a cell group church come together it is called a celebration. Eddie Gibbs, (1982:275-279) the father of this construction, points out that the cells are characterized by individuals, the congregation with tasks and the celebration with events. The relationships in the cells are very personal — "heart to heart"— in his words. In the congregation it is "face to face", and in the celebration it is "neighbour to neighbour" When Potgieter opts for selgemeente and we translate it as cell-gemeinde, it is bearing the abovementioned in mind — and not into cell congregation. Cf. Hendriks (1990:99-108) — Komplementerende koinonia-verbande.

[9] According to O'Halloran (1991:8), both Paul V and John Paul II have insisted that the small Christian communities are cells of the church. They can say this precisely because the communities have the characteristics of the universal Church and make available, or incarnate, the saving will of God in history.

groups are qualified spatially (geographically), caring groups (*omgeegroepe*) are qualified ethically (loving). George's *care groups* (1994:221) are qualified ethically (caring and shepherding).[10] In his meta church theory he distinguishes between six types of groupings and views cell groups as the common denominator between all the groups. Cell groups — as such — do not fall into any of the above group categories, but are the foundational building stone of all of them. Cell groups are the modus whereby the *ecclesia* functions in and through other groups/basic communities (cf. George 1994:112ff and Barnard 1979a:132ff). In this sense we can talk of a cell group as a basic Christian community and, vice versa, of a basic Christian community as a cell group.

Hebblethwaite (1994) summarizes the features of such a base community concisely: It is small, it is for all cultures, it is for everyone in the church, it values the individual, it is a process with ups and down, is not the building or the clergy but the people, is in communion with the universal Church, and is a Eucharistic community. The base community is about the basics of Christianity. It brings together faith and life, it is about love and sharing, it is about the ultimate love — martyrdom, it is about mission, it is about reading the Bible contextually, it is about celebration and symbol. Marins (1989:29) says that the basic-ness of these communities has different meanings. It is basic in the *sociological sense* and "means popular, grassroots, closer to the people. It signifies also those at the lowest level of society: the poor the humble and the marginalized." It is basic in the *theological sense*, "the fundamental Christian principle, the level at which the Church is truly a salvific event for people as individuals in the world today. This community is truly basic because it is made up of the essential elements of the Church — the People of God." It is basic also in the *descriptive sense*, in its point of origin: "It means working from the bottom-up. It describes the vital network that is the Church at the point where it becomes actively present in the world as leaven, salt, light, and as a basic cell of the larger society." In the *strategic sense*, "basic refers to the fact that every institution has a vital need to create a network at the grassroots

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[10] George (1994:200) mentions other groups, which are also terminologically qualified in terms of care: *Tender Loving Care Groups* (Dale Galloway); *Serendipity Groups* (Lyman Coleman); *Covenant Groups* (Roberta Hestenes) and *Home Groups* (John Vaughan).

level in order to be constantly in touch with the ever-changing life-processes and to co-ordinate effective action. It means keeping channels of communication and action open, in order to mobilise the masses and to be alert to any significant changes which are taking place in society." Marins says that the term basic "embodies all four of the above meanings, and signifies a level of Church not in opposition to the diocesan and universal levels but merely different from them and in intimate communion with them."

3.1.3 Cell Groups — Basic ecclesial communities

Are these basic communities church in the full sense of the word? Or in the DRC context: Are the cell groups competent and do they have the authority to take the Word of God in hand, and administer the sacraments?[11] We have seen that the contrary is true in a DRC congregation *with* small groups (see 2.1.1). To reflect on this we address the *ecclesial* character— or otherwise — of cell groups in two ways. First , generically and secondly, from the point of the Biblical notion of *ecclesia*.

Potgieter (1995:50) opts for *selgemeente* ("cell congregation") rather than *cell group* as Neighbour (1990) does. Potgieter refrains from calling these basic communities, *groups*; although they are groups in their social functioning. Both the words *group* in *cell group* and *gemeente* in *selgemeente* are qualified by the social aspect of reality, but in addition to the *group* in cell group—being socially qualified — we find in Potgieter's *selgemeente* a further qualification: In the term sel-*gemeente,* we find it implied that this group is a gathering of the *ecclesia* — the called-apart-ones (Küng 1968:86). Strauss (1987:252) says:

> Selfs wanneer die woord *ekklesia* verband hou met 'n byeenkoms van gelowiges [in hierdie geval 'n selgemeente byeenkoms] , kan die sin van uitgeroep — of saamgeroep — wees ten diepste nie dui op menslike *organisasie* nie, want ons (uit-) geroepenheid in Christus is onafhanklik van enige menslike organisasie

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[11] This is an issue in more mainline churches than just the DRC. An Anglican clergyman, McCoy (1993:7) asks this same question as one of the fundamental issues to address in his dissertation on the local church in missiological perspective.

of aktiwiteit.

The gathering of the *ecclesia* is fundamentally not a gathering of a group out of own consent, but by being called out[12] by Christ. It is the body of Christ gathering, which differs fundamentally from any other *group* — which can consist of any people who gather for any purpose.[13]

On the lifestyle and the activities of the *ecclesia*, the New Testament scholar T.W. Manson (1960:71) says:

> Historically the *Kahal* as the *ecclesia* is not primarily a prayer meeting or a religious gathering. It is the people of God, *functioning as people in the full exercise of all their communal activities and not just in their religious observances in some sacred edifice*[14] (italics mine).

This means that by opting for *selgemeente*, Potgieter (1995:50) is describing a certain type of gathering of the *ecclesia* — a gathering of the people of God, brought together by the grace of God and not human efforts — and which is in itself authentically church although they are not gathered in a church building[15]. O'Halloran (1991:8) gives a

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[12] Getz (1988:80) says appropriately: "Why the church exists in the world is clear! God is calling out a people to His very own. Someday Jesus will return to take the church to be with Himself."

[13] O'Halloran (1980:14) argues; "...what we understand by community in a secular sense...: a group of people with a common interest; a group of people with a common goal; an active neighbourhood group with a common goal... or a human group with a common trait. Where pastoral work is concerned community is variously used to describe: groups joined together through friendship and activity; the laity as distinct from the clergy; assemblies for sharing; entities that are part of something greater; followers of a charismatic leader, and even people who mix informally. What makes a basic Christian community: At Medullin in 1968, the Latin American Bishops were clearcut. The basic Christian community is the core group, the most reduced expression of the Church: the grassroots assembly that reflects all the characteristics of the universal church. The basic community is not just any agglomeration of people: it is a gathering of those who share the same faith."

[14] To be a Christian is to be part of God's *ecclesia* in every sphere of life. cf. Manson (1960:69-86) and Olthuis in *Out of Concern for the Church* (1970:105-125)

[15] Nazir-Ali (1991:133) says boldly: "*Ubi Christianus, ibi Christus; ubi Christus ibi Ecclesia*"— Where a Christian is, there is Christ: Where Christ is, there is Church. Strauss (1987:252) says "Indien die *kerk* of, desnoods met 'n hoofletter, *Kerk*, gebruik word om die nuwe Israel aan te dui wat onder meer gestalte aanneem in die institusionêre kulties-godsdientige aktiwiteite van lidmate in 'n Christelike

helpful analogy of the small Christian community possessing all the characteristics of the universal church:

> In a loaf of bread we find a variety of ingredients: flour, salt, water, yeast. Just so, the small Christian community has all the ingredients — characteristics — of the universal church. We are talking really of a group that is an integral part, a living cell of the church.

The cell group is authentically and fully church, not only because of its *ecclesia*-ness, but also because of its *cell*-ness. Strauss (1987:157) says:

> Op hierdie punt moet ons weereens die teorie van 'n enkaptiese struktuurgeheel baie duidelik onderskei van die tradisionele [universalistiese] skema van die geheel en sy dele. Slegs ten opsigte van die *sel-organisme* is daar sprake van 'n egte bioties gekwalifiseerde geheel-dele verhouding (die *hele* sel-organisme wat in 'n tipiese strukturele gesentreerdheid verskillende *deel*-organe besit).

Marins (1989:29) says that the world *ecclesial* "signifies that the basic motivational force for the basic ecclesial community (BEC) is faith in Jesus Christ, the desire to live his commandment of love and to carry out his mission by the power of the Holy Spirit in communion with the local, the diocesan and universal Church. In so doing, the BEC manifests and accomplishes integral salvation. The BEC is not merely a sociological or psychological community but rather a theological one. It is the 'socialisation' of the mystery of the Trinity and represents the seed of the new pilgrim People of God on the way to fulfilment."

Thus, the term cell group — as English equivalent for *selgemeente* — denotes a gathering which is fully church. But it constitutes also in itself that it is part of a larger body. Biotically a cell cannot exist by itself, neither can a cell in the body of Christ

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geloofsverband (in onderskeiding van ander gestaltes), dan is dit volkome in orde om nie alleen *ekklesia* nie, maar ook die ander aanduidings van die nuwe Israel te bestempel as *Kerk.*"

without the rest of the body[16].

In Afrikaans we opt for the term *selgemeente* for these basic communities, without disqualifying all the abovementioned retro- and anticipations (care groups, support groups, Bible Study groups, etc). On this matter Boff (1986:8-10) says:

> The basic community has a permanent future, provided it can understand itself in counterpoint to the church as institution. It dare not seek the utopian impossible, and delude itself into believing that it can exhaust the community in its own being, in such way that no other group or formation can exist. It dare not present itself as the only way of being church today."[17]

As far as the DRC is concerned, I believe that *selgemeente* is a better Afrikaans term for describing the basic ecclesial communities than mere *selgroep*. It will help the DRC to free itself from the ecclesiological absolutism which judges that a cell group is not authentically church. It provides a correction to the opinion of Reformed theologians[18] that *ecclesia* refers exclusively to the organized gathering of the early Christians in the first phases of forming an *institutional* church (cf Strauss 1978:251) and that the Word, sacraments and church discipline cannot function officially in small Christian communities. Robert Banks (1980:84) argues convincingly that in the early church the eucharist was celebrated in the house. It was more a meal than a cultic celebration. In fact, according to Banks, the cultic significance of the eucharist never functions in the

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[16] It has been contested that basic Christian communities would fragment a parish community. Stetter (1982:83) contests it from an African perspective; "Our experience is quite the contrary. Due to their increased involvement in parish affairs, parishioners know each other much better. Christian communities in urban parishes have the advantage that they live in the vicinity and are not scattered over more remote outstations. Members of different small Christian communities meet almost on a daily basis in their choir, the Christian Workers' groups, the pastoral council, the Sunday liturgy and many social occasions on parish level." There are a variety of similarities between the cell church movement and the "house church" movement of the 1970's, but they differ fundamentally on this point of being part of a larger local church. The house churches tend to be overly independent and to not submit in organisation to a local body — they sometimes reach this independent state by splitting off from an existing church (cf. Heyns 1993:170-191).

[17] This study does not intend to remedy every possible ailment in the church by proposing missiological cell groups as a utopian solution — and thereby excluding all other forms of community in the church.

[18] On this matter Barnard (1979:125; 143), for example, says that small groups are part of/subservient to the service of the congregation, but not church in itself.

Pauline literature. In the Old Testament the passover celebration centred on the family unit and it was a special meal for the Israelites on the verge of the exodus. The main significance of the eucharist being celebrated in the base community is the celebration of Christ's redeeming work. This trancends the issue of celebrating the eucharist either in the small group or in the service in the church premises. I believe there must be place for both.[19]

In these cell groups, missiological praxis (cf. Nel 1994:28) can embody or express itself comprehensively. The missions department is no longer the sole owner of the congregation's missions endeavours, but every cell group is a missionary team in its own right. Besides the fact that evangelism and mission in the DRC are done by separate groups or departments — which do not include the ward system, it was also indicated that this practice is accompanied by the perception that the more pious members engage themselves in the evangelism and mission activities of the church. In this we see the same fundamental misconception mentioned when we dealt with the ecclesial authenticity of a cell group, namely that one is only part of the ecclesia when one gathers officially with other church members on Sundays. Then we end up with the classic division of the world into sacred and profane domains. The gathering of the ecclesia in the Bible was an integrated one. If you are part of the kahal of God, you belong to it in every sphere of life.

In her terminological notes on basic communities, Hebblethwaite (1993:17) points out that, besides the interchangeable use of the terms CEBs and BECs in the Roman Catholic world, she found that:

> In the Philippines a distinction is common between "basic ecclesial communities" which are more church-controlled reflection groups — and "basic Christian

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[19] The DRC has officially decided to include children in the celebration of the eucharist during the Sunday services, and it is in the process of working it out practically over the next four years. To my mind, this only partially addresses the issue. The family group, as covenant unity as well as the small group as spiritual family group (the oikos principle) is the foundation pillar of celebrating the eucharist, not whether children should partake or not — that is a bilblical principle through the Bible. Cf. NGK:1995:355 for a proposal made by the author in this regard at the synodal meeting, and Lubbe (1986:35-43) for a South African case study on the praxis of the DRC and the current movement in the former daughter churches in this regard.

communities" — which are more involved with sociopolitical questions and with community organization.

It seems as if these groups are mutually exclusive: the one working in a more secular, and the other in more sacred way. This is contradictory to the Biblical meaning of *kahal* and *ecclesia*. As indicated in the previous chapter, this is also the situation in DRC congregations *with* small groups (2.1.1; 2.1.2). The ward system does the "ordinary" maintenance and the missionary enterprise is done by *certain special groups* inclined to the missionary task. The groups specializing in these tasks are usually suspected of spiritual élitism — as if they are "extraordinary" Christians.

In this *structural and organisational praxis* in the church, concerning mission and evangelism, we find the remnants of the Greek philosophical and dualistic ground motive[20] of form and matter (*vorm en materie*)[21]. This ground motive was later refined by the Thomistic dualism of nature and grace/supernature (*natuur en genade*).[22]

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[20] According to Dooyeweerd (1979:15), the development of Western culture has been controlled by several religious ground motives. These motives acquired their central influence upon the historical development of mankind via certain cultural powers, which, over centuries, successively gained leadership in the historical process. The most important of these powers have been the spirit of ancient civilization (Greece and Rome), Christendom, and modern humanism. (cf. Dooyeweerd, 1979:9rf.). The religious ground motives according to Dooyeweerd, in the development of western civilization are the following:
1. The "form-matter" ground motive of Greek antiquity in alliance with the Roman idea of *imperium*.
2. The Scriptural ground motive of the Christian religion: Creation, fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ in communion with the Holy Spirit. (cf. Potgieter 1995:204).
3. The Roman Catholic ground motive of "nature-grace", which seeks to combine the two mentioned above.
4. The modern humanistic ground motive of "nature-freedom", in which an attempt is made to bring the three previous motives to a religious synthesis concentrated upon the value of the human personality.

[21] The Greek philosopher, Aristotle first developed the distinction between form and matter into a central philosophical framework, and this ground motive controlled Greek thought and civilization from the beginning of the Greek city-states. It originated in the unreconciled conflict with Greek religious consciousness between the ground motive of the ancient nature religions and the ground motive of the more recent culture religion — the religion of the Olympian deities. For a comprehensive discussion on this ground motive cf. Dooyeweerd (1979:16-22). This motive continued to operate in both Roman Catholicism and Humanism, and we find their roots in our own church praxis via Reformed scholasticism. This ground motive saturated all human behaviour and had the following consequences, according to Dooyeweerd (1979:20): "It is understandable that the Greeks observed the ancient rites of nature religions in private but worshipped the Olympians as the official gods of the state in public. This also explains why the deeper religious drives of people became oriented to "mystery worship", for in this worship the questions of life and death were central".

[22] Thomas Aquinas built on the Greek motive for his philosophy of *nature-supernature*. For a discussion on this, see Dooyeweerd (1979:115ff). His two worlds — one holy and the other less holy —

According to Strauss and Visagie (1985:17), these are reformed-scholastic[23] remnants of the original Roman Catholic ground motive of nature and grace. According to this, a person has either *in puris naturabilis* — a natural virtue and earthly destination — or gifted with the *donum superadditum* of the image of God — a heavenly destination (cf. Venter 1973:51-56). As a result of this view we find that mission and evangelism end up being the job of the more holy among us, which prevents missionary integration of the church and the accompanying preparation of all God's people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11). In this process, the pastor in the *domineeskerk* is often seen by older members as the only person gifted with the *donum superadditum* of the image of God. As "ordinary" Christians they are *in puris naturabilis* — with an earthly destination and of no "heavenly" use. This is possibly the highest hurdle for the DRC to overcome in its Reformation. It exposes the deep-rootedness in the Roman Catholic ground motive (*nature and grace*) of the church's praxis concerning the priesthood of the believer. This praxis may also lay bare the natural lethargy of human nature, which prefers to leave religion to a few "specialists", a feature which is also found in other religions. This was elaborated into a theological doctrine by some Catholic theologians, but seem to be more deep-seated than that. Arthur Glasser (Cook 1990:back cover) says: "The grassroots lay communities (*communidades de base*) are being used of [sic] God to transform static, clergy dominated, sacramentalist structures into living, spontaneous movements of loving service and evangelistic concern" or in the words of Hoekendijk (in Bosch 1993:427), "It is, in fact, not *they* (the laypersons) who have to 'accompany' those who hold 'special offices' in the latter's mission in the world. Rather, it is the *office bearers* who have to accompany the laity, the people of God."

This repositioning of traditional markers is also occurring in the Latin American Roman

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permeate and influence our thoughts and praxis, sometimes without our being aware of it. In his *Selgemeente: 'n nuwe Bybelse lewenswyse*, Potgieter (1995:206) clearly finds these roots in our church praxis. That is, to do Christianity on Sundays and business as usual during the rest of the week. Sundays are "holier" than other days of the week. This causes a disintegrated spiritual community.

[23] *Scholasticism* originally sought a *synthesis* between Greek thought and Christian religion. It was thought that such a synthesis can be successfully achieved if philosophy — with its Greek basis— is made subservient to Christian theology. Reformed scholasticism is the process of trying to find a synthesis between the Christian ground motive of creation, fall and redemption and the Roman Catholic ground motive of nature-grace (cf. Dooyeweerd 1979:114).

Catholic Church. Leonardo Boff (1986:2) comments on this ecclesial renewal and the breaking down of the clerical-laity barriers, both brought about by basic Christian communities:

> Although the great majority of basic church communities owe their origin to a priest or a member of a religious order, they nevertheless basically constitute a lay movement. The laity carry forward the cause of the gospel here, and are the vessels, the vehicles of ecclesial reality even on the level of direction and decision making. The shift of ecclesial axis contains, in seed, a new principle for 'birthing the church', 'for starting the church again'. It is a transposition that bids fair to form the principle of a genuine "ecclesiogenesis". We are not dealing with the expansion of an existing ecclesiastical system, rotating on a sacramental, clerical axis, but with the emergence of another form of being church, rotating on the axis of the Word and the laity. The basic Christian communities are generating a new ecclesiology, formulating new concepts in theology.

On the South African scene, Bosch (1991:473) comments as follows: "A striking example of lay ministry is to be found in the phenomenon of 'base' or 'small' Christian communities which, having begun in Latin America, are today spreading the entire globe, even in the West. It takes many forms: house church groups in the West, African Independent Churches, clandestine gatherings in countries where Christianity is proscribed, etc." He quotes Bühlmann (1977:157) in saying that this contribution can be even more significant than the theology of liberation, and that the significance of these groups lies particularly in the fact that here the laity have come of age and are missionally involved in an imaginative way.

3.2 The existing ward system and the emerging cell group system

As indicated in 2.1.1, only between 17 and 38 % of the wards in a given DRC circuit are active. This seems to be true of various congregations in the wider DRC (cf. van der Merwe 1996). Elders and deacons struggle to get members of the wards to attend the monthly meetings and if members do attend it, is difficult to sustain their involvement. Among the various reasons for this we have already discussed the Thomistic dualism

concerning the evangelism and missionary involvement of the wards and *other groups*. Van der Merwe (1996:12) mentions that the reason is not that the ward system as a type of small group ministry. In fact, "Teologies en gedragswetenskaplik sou 'n mens grondig kon aantoon dat kleingroepe 'n noodsaaklike deel van die struktuur van 'n gemeente se bediening moet uitmaak... die nuwe samelewing waarin ons staan, soek na verdiepte verhoudings as belangrike boustene vir lewe." Neither is it the inefficiency of the ward system caused by inadequate leadership skills. In fact, "Uit teorieë oor leierskap, en die profiel van leierskap wat vandag gevra word, word dit duidelik dat leierskapgedrag relatief maklik aangeleer kan word, gegewe 'n roepingsbewustheid en regte verhouding van die betrokke persoon en die intensiteitsvlak van leierskap wat hier ter sprake is." The main reason is to be found in the processes leading up to the rigoristic formation of the geographical wards and the appointment of their leaders — to which I add: appointed from the top down at a church council meeting, and focused on functions rather than relations and interests.

Ward leaders are appointed to maintain a certain category of caring — instituted in the offices of elder[24] and deacon. Over the years this caring has been reduced from intimate relational involvement to a functional relationship. The deacon has to collect the tithes — which are supposed to be brought to the "storehouse" (Mal 3:10) by the members. He or she is supposed to care for the needy — but the welfare of the needy has been delegated to the church's welfare department. Furthermore, by the time the deacon gets word of the need in his/her ward, the damage has already been done. When he eventually gets to the people in need — with whom he has no intimate relationship — they experience this "help" from the church as degrading and condescending. The elder, on the other hand, has to shepherd his flock spiritually, being involved in their lives in a very special relational way. This has been reduced to one call (*besoek*) per month — if possible — and once every quarter before the Eucharist is celebrated in the church building. The result is that the ward system has

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[24] Van Eck (1991) discusses the state of the current debate concerning the 'office' of the elder and presents his view that the position of the 'elder' in the New Testament must in the first place be seen as a *pater familias*. He bases this hypothesis on two pillars: "firstly on the fact that the Jesus-movement in the New Testament happened to exist as house churches, and secondly on the fact that the terms in the New Testament used to describe the *pater familias* are also used to describe the function of the 'elder'.

been reduced to the functional maintenance of "our members", and predominantly a "management" system instead of a caring system. The management concerns maintaining a reasonable functional level of well-being amongst "the members of our parish". Evangelism and mission from within the ward system is non-existent — that is the task of specialist groups. The addressing of social issues in the community is not a priority[25] — in fact, it is experienced as a threat by the average member.

In studying religious communities as agents of change, Kritzinger J.N.J (1995:369), says the following: "Every religious community has the desire to 'win' *the next generation* to the faith. Every religious community must therefore engage in some form of mission. In this regard, Frick (1928:51) emphasises the close connection between expansion ('Ausbreitung') and preservation ('Beharrung') in religious communities. He makes the point that the urge for expansion is the only thing that keeps preservation from turning into stagnation." He draws a helpful diagram (see figure 3.1) of a "continuum stretching from a weak to a strong sense of mission, or (put differently) from

FIGURE 3. I

'centripetal' to 'centrifugal'. This is a helpful analogy for part of the thesis of this study is to see missiological cell groups reaching out centrifugally from their own Jerusalem

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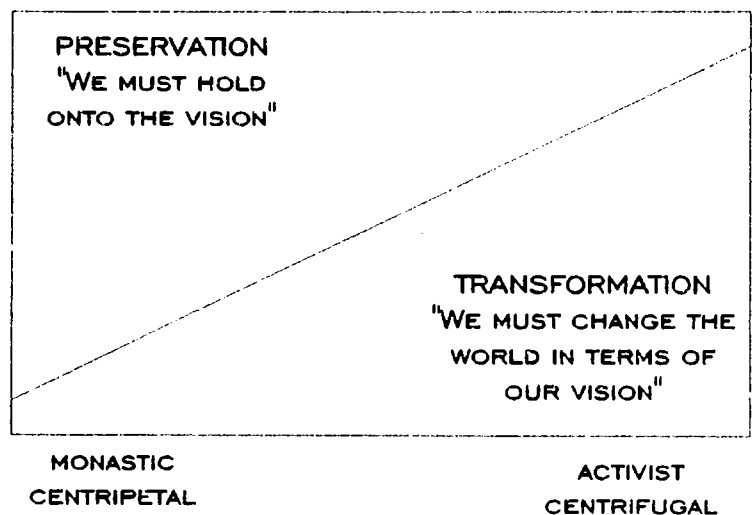
[25] In the four years of ministry in Vryheid we have seen drastic demographical changes in the geogr. phical area of the congregation. Within three years, the Black families residing in the predominantly White neighbourhood have risen from a few exceptions to almost 200 families. For a town with 14 000 White inhabitants, that is a remarkable influx. In the past in a given street almost every second or third home was a member of the DRC or of a mainline church. Now it is not strange to pass four or five homes to meet a member of the local DRC congregation. Besides more Black residents, nominality has risen dramatically (cf. Gibbs:1993 for the problem of nominality). These changes, which create new challenges to the church, are viewed with apathy and often met with rhetoric such as "Pastor, what has happened to our church, things are not like in the old days when we carried in chairs during the Sunday services. It's probably because of all the changes you guys have been making in the church recently."

to the ends of the earth. This seems to be in conflict with the more maintenance oriented ward system. We apply this diagram to the present ward system and emerging cell group system. Kritzinger J.N.J (1995:369) explains it as follows:

> Every religious community bases its sense of identity and calling on the fact that it has received truth. The difference lies in the ways in which the religious communities understand their relation to this received reality: is it sufficient to preserve it, or must it be passed on actively and deliberately, in order to effect change in people or in society at large? On the left hand side of the diagram there are religious communities like monastic groups, sufi orders and gurus, who do not actively canvass members but attract new members nevertheless, through the perceived spiritual power they possess and through the way people gossip about their knowledge or abilities. To speak in a generalising way, one could say that Judaism and African Religion are at this end of the continuum. At the other hand end of the diagram, there are activist groups like the Jehovah Witnesses, the Ahmadiyya and the Hare Krishna Movement, who place far greater emphasis on human responsibility to convey the message and to establish a new reality in society. The well-known Christian rhyme expresses this attitude rather aptly: 'Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today; he has no feet but our feet to lead men in his way'.

If we apply this diagram to the ward system and emerging cell group system in the DRC it looks as follows (see diagram 3.2).

The cell system focused on TRANSFORMATION and rapidly growing

The ward system focused on PRESERVATION and diminishing

FIGURE 3.2
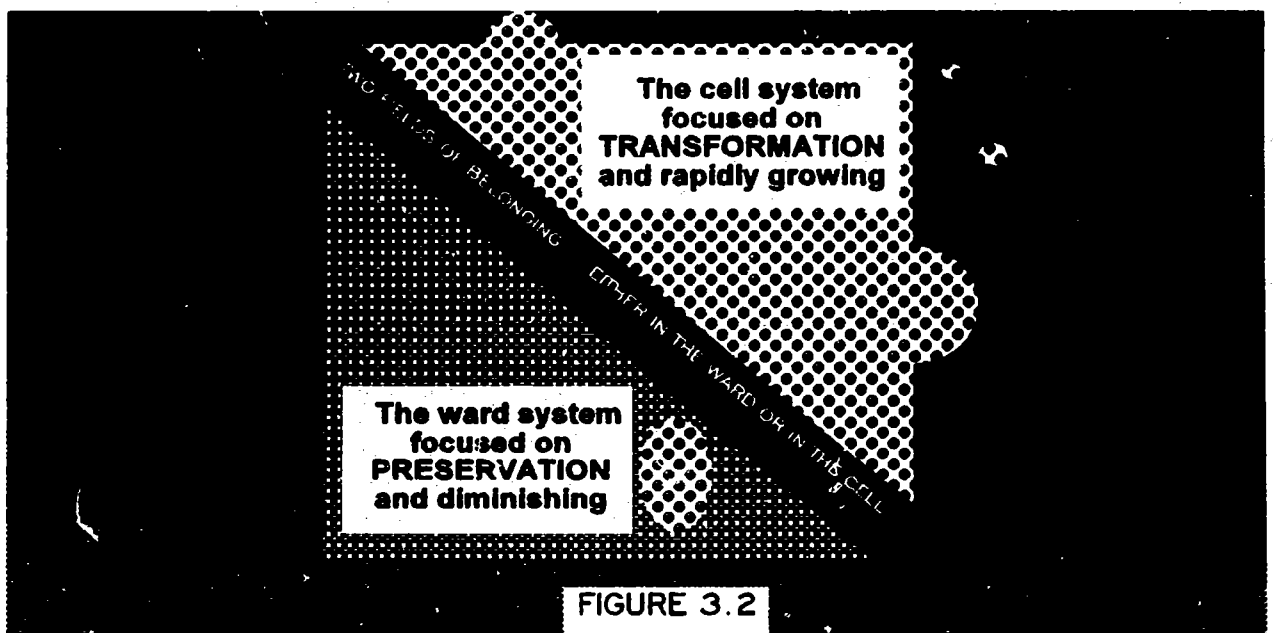
The diagram illustrates the geographical (squares) character of the traditional ward system on the one hand, and on the other, the freedom of association (circles at random) character of the cells. This is not to imply that the cell groups are the only types of community that can really address a transformation process. As van der Merwe (1996) indicates, it is possible to transform certain wards into cell groups. The contention is a basic Christian community which is fundamental to all other small group (support groups, etc.) ventures of the church.

There is a definite ecclesial conflict potential in this converging scheme. At a certain stage the DRC will have to address its organizational system. This would mean that elders and deacons — coming up from the ineffective wards — having to relocate themselves into cell groups or transform their respective wards, or resign from the church council. This is a "managerial headache". To ask a church council member to endorse a strategy that is going to exclude him/her from future participation on the church council is a tall order — especially if they do not know how to initiate a cell group from the start or transform a ward into a basic Christian community. This whole process is very threatening to any church structure in the DRC — it addresses the whole theological issue of the "office" of elder and deacon and the heart of the management system in the DRC countrywide. The fact is that this is what inevitably happens from the grass roots up as soon as a church engages in cell group church planting. In the planning phase (chapter 4) we outline a strategy to defuse the potential deadlock in the implementing of a cell group system, and suggests how to integrate missions and evangelism into the praxis of these cell groups.

3.3 Cell Groups — Mission, Evangelism and Social Awareness

3.3.1 An integrated missiology for the local congregation

Saayman (1991:6) says boldly: "...mission is not some peripheral idiosyncracy which can be left to some little group of enthusiasts (or crackpots!), nor is it some quaint relic of the colonial past which, thank God, we can now lay to rest forever; rather it becomes, as it should be, central to the life and being of the church."

According to van Engen (1991:17,20)

To develop a congregational missiology for the Church is no longer optional. Contrary to some predictions in the 1960's, local congregations are here to stay. But their quality of life is in jeopardy. They will either limp along struggling to maintain what they have, or they will rise to new life because they catch a vision of their unique purpose and mission within their individual context. *Local congregations the world over will gain new life and vitality only as they understand the missiological purpose for which they alone exist, the unique culture, people, needs of their context, and the missionary action through which they alone will discover their own nature as God's people in God's world...*The more I have pursued this investigation the more convinced I have become that the Church is a marvelous, mysterious creation of God that takes concrete shape in the lives of the disciples of Jesus as they gather in local congregations and seek to contextualize the gospel in their time and place. My thesis is that as local congregations are built up to reach out in mission to the world, they will become in fact what they already are by faith — GOD'S MISSIONARY PEOPLE (italics mine).

The missiological praxis of small groups — or absence thereof — in the DRC is undergirded by a certain view of what is to be understood as missions and what as evangelism. As indicated previously, this leads to an almost total lack of social awareness as far as basic community involvement is concerned. The local congregation is not missiologically involved in its own Jerusalem — whatever involvement there is, is purely evangelistic with a lack of social action and missions is done afar and is racially qualified.

If we apply this analysis of the praxis in the DRC to the proposed integrated centrifugal missionary outreach of the local congregation it looks as follows (see figure 3.3).

INTEGRATED MISSIONARY CELL GROUPS STARTING IN THEIR
LOCAL COMMUNITY (JERUSALEM) AND REACHING CENRTIFUGALLY
TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH VS. THE PRAXIS IN THE DRC
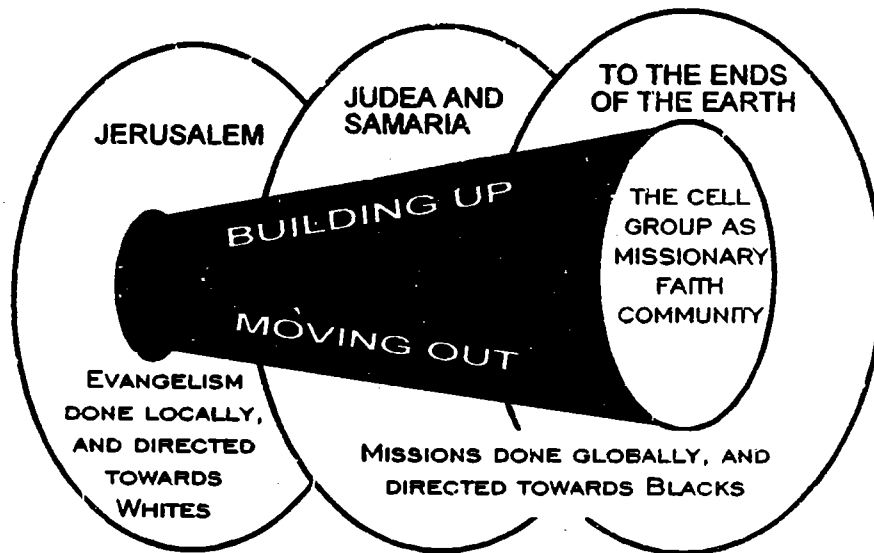
FIGURE 3.3

Kritzinger J.J. (1990:145) indicated that, "in South Africa, the contrast between mission and evangelism coincided with differentiating between races. Whites were regarded as Christians who had to reach out with the gospel to 'non-Whites'. The 'haves' (in the spiritual sense) reach down to the 'have nots'. The White church member in the pew regards even *churches* among Blacks as objects of mission." This perception of the spiritual superiority of Whites was furthermore based on the material reality (for a long time) of the Whites as the "haves" as far as material well-being was concerned.

3.3.2 The Dutch Reformed Church's mission policy and praxis[26]

Let us first reflect on the position of the DRC concerning the mission and evangelism

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[26] Smit (1993) mentions a list of publications on the mission approach of the DRC: A. Murray: *Die Sendingvraagstuk* (1901); J. du Plessis: *Gaan dan heen* (1909); and *Wie sal gaan?* (1932).; W.J. van der Merwe & G.B.A. Gerdener: *Het Groot Bevel, de Bybelse grondslag der Zending* (1908); *Recent developments in the South African mission field* (1958); *Die Afrikanes en die sending* (1959); *The development of missionary attitudes in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa* (1934); H.D.A du Toit: *Die kerstening van die Bantoe* (1967).

debate. Meiring (1995:402-408) addressed the synod of KwaZulu-Natal and applied the essentials of the mission-evangelism debate (cf. Bosch 1991:408-420) to the present and historical situation of the DRC. He makes five remarks on how the DRC differentiated between evangelism and mission and how this influenced its missiological praxis. In this section I summarize his views and develop them further. Firstly, concerning the *geographical* differentiation of mission and evangelism — evangelism works locally and mission works globally — he comments that long before the Cape DRC started to do missionary work "at home" in Transkei (1951), missionaries had already been sent to Nyasaland (Malawi) (1889); Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) (1899); and Nigeria (1908). Secondly, regarding the chronological differentiation of mission and evangelism — evangelism works with "no-longer-Christians", and mission with "not-yet-Christians", evangelism works locally and mission works globally — he says that the Reformed family of churches in general and the DRC in particular maintained this position for very long.[27] When Rev. W.A Alheit drafted the mission policy of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1964[28], mission concerned itself with "the heathen" who had never heard the Gospel, and evangelism with those who once had a relationship with the church but have forsaken the church completely (*buitekerlik geword*). Thirdly, concerning the theology of the Apostolate, a differentiation was also made — mission was not applicable to "civilized nations" who were already Christianized, although they may have backslidden. That meant that as far as the Whites in South Africa were concerned, mission was not applicable to them — evangelism maybe. His fourth comment concerns baptism, and he contends that the work among the baptized,even though they may live like gentiles, is never the same as work among the un-baptized. In the long term this view unfortunately caused DRC members who were baptized as infants to think that they could only be "evangelized" — that they would never become a mission field (cf. Saayman 1991:109 on re-evangelizing the White church). In the last two points of Meiring's address, we see a

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[27] According to Meiring (1935:403), both Karl Barth and Johannes Verkuyl held this view and it had a major influence on the mission theology of the DRC. Cf. Verkuyl (1978:72-73), Bavinck (1945:82-84), NGK 1994a: art. 52,53, Victor (1986:71).

[28] Cf. Smit (1993:500-501) for a discussion on the historical development of the DRC's mission policy.

subtle feeling of spiritual superiority nestling in the White Afrikaner's mind. In the last comment, evangelism and mission are differentiated by means of colour — the Blacks are missionary objects, while the Whites in the DRC "only" need to be evangelized. In praxis that meant that the Missions Commission of the Synod became the *Departement van Nie-Blanke Sake* of the DRC. Like the government, the church also had — so to speak — a department for Black affairs. This racial differentiation is not mentioned in Bosch's study on mission and evangelism. I believe that besides the fact that this terminolgical racial discrimation is unbiblical, it was a church-like counterpoint of the heresy of apartheid — of which Bosch was an antagonist. Without listing reflective conclusions on this matter — it is understandable why the social awareness and involvement in the DRC, via the ward system, was non-existent.

The same dichotomy between *praxis* and *theory*, which we mentioned earlier — concerning the social involvement towards a just society under Apartheid — is again clear when we look at the DRC's official Missions Policy (Meiring 1995:405):

> Sending is die heilshandeling van die drie-enige God, Vader, Seun en Heilige Gees met die wêreld, waardeur Hy uit die ganse menslike geslag vir Hom 'n gemeente deur sy Woord en Gees vergader. Deur die gemeente (1) laat God sy Woord aan die gevalle wêreld verkondig; (2) bring Hy die gemeenskap van die heiliges uit alle nasies tot stand; en (3) **laat Hy diens aan die wêreld in nood lewer.** So laat Hy sy koninkryk kom tot by die voleinding van die wêreld. Daarom aanvaar die Ned Geref Kerk dit as **die sin en bestemming van sy bestaan** om deur God gebruik te word in sy handelinge met die wêreld. Gelowiges uit elke taal en nasie wat sodoende vergader word, vorm met al die gelowiges 'n eenheid in die ware geloof in Christus. Sending en evangelisasie is die gerigtheid van die kerk na buite. Dit is die arbeid aan nie-gekerstendes en mense wat buite kerkverband geraak het. Sending en evangelisasie is die **roeping van elke lidmaat** asook van die plaaslike kerkraad. Waar die omvang en ander omstandighede van die werk dit vereis, word dit in kerkverband van ring en sinode onderneem. Volgens hierdie definisie moet die omvattende heil van Christus wat elke lewenssfeer omvat dus deur woord en daad en gesindheid

aan die wêreld deurgegee word. **Dit geskied langs die kanale van die evangelieverkondiging (*kerugma*); sowel as deur liefdesdiens (*diakonia*); en die opbou van die heiliges (*koinonia*).**

From this it is clear that mission is what the church exists for, mission and evangelism are the task of every believer, and the church has to be socially involved in the world — with elements (*kerygma, diakonia,koinonia*) which are found in basic communities. Sadly that is not the case. The ward system's potential as authentic base communities is exhausted. The congregation is supposed to *serve the world in need* (point 3 above), but service to the world in need at grassroots level has become institutionalized. Mission as the *raison d'être* of the church is the *task of every believer* (point 3), but it is delegated to certain mission-minded groups in the congregation, and is done by one of five commissions of the church council.

Smit (1993:507), in discussing *Die sendingbewustheid en sendinggerigtheid in die Ned. Geref. Kerk vandag*, suggests guidelines for the missionary ministry (*missionêre bediening*) of the DRC. Concerning the delegation of missions to a group in the church or a church commission in the local congregation, he draws the following conclusion and suggests an integratedness of the missionary dimension in all the church's activities:

> ... [Dit] is duidelik dat in die Ned Geref Kerk se kommissiestelsel 'n gevaar skuil: (a) dat sending as *een van baie* aktiwiteite gesien word in plaas van een van twee wesensaspekte van die bediening; (b) dat vier uit vyf aktiwiteite van die kerk na binne gerig sal wees, dit wil sê, dat jy 'n "oorvoede" en "onder-aktiewe" kerk ontwikkel; (c) dat die misverstand sal lewe dat ampsbediening, jeug, vrouediens, ensovoorts, primêr te doen het met die innerlike opbou en dat slegs sending met die uitbou te doen het. Die regte perspektief is natuurlik dat elke kommissie — elke afdeling van die kerk se bediening — 'n missionêre dimensie sal hê[29].

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[29] Cf. Kritzinger J.J (1988) arguing similarly already in 1988.

To reach this ideal, the DRC has to address its fragmented, compartmentalized and racist attitude towards mission and evangelism, or in other words the "building up" versus "moving out" imbalance. Smit (1993:507) continues that the local church council should function through only two commissions — not five or six, of which only one is directed outwards: "Die Kerkraad sou sy bediening teologies duidelik uitdruk as hy deur twee kommissies funksioneer: vir die ampsbediening na binne en vir die ampbediening na buite in die wêreld." He goes even further in suggesting that the whole ministry of the church should be conducted through one commission only — not differentiating between the "inward" and "outward" ministry of the church as done through two separate groups in the church: "Vanuit hierdie eenheidsvisie op die bediening behoort die Kommissie vir Ampsbediening en Evangelisasie en die Kommissie vir Sending *een* kommissie te wees. Dan kan die gemeente-opbou, gemeente-herstel en gemeente-uitbou gelyke bedieningsaandag kry."

These structural suggestions are symptoms of a much deeper misconception and theological view. It concerns the theological presuppositions regarding mission and evangelism and social awareness, which have been established in a certain praxis in the church over many years. In the next section we shall begin to address the social justice issue. We will suggest a new frame of mind concerning the mission and evangelism debate. The suggestion on mission and evangelism that follows in 3.4 forms the main theological cornerstone to correct the existing misconception in the DRC. It may also contribute to a new perspective in other mainline churches besides the DRC concerning the integration of mission and evangelism in the local congregation.

3.3.3 Cell Groups — the Church and the World in interaction

The small group experience has been part of the Church's history since i's foundation[30].

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[30] Cf. Raymond Collins (1988:115): "It is a historical fact that Christianity has its origins in the ecclesial units of the first century. More than one billion Christians in the world of today can find their roots in those small groups."

In fact, it goes back to the New Testament concept of *ecclesia*.[31] That experience has been recognized as the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church, enabling the church to fulfill its mission in the world. The specific forms of the small group (see figure 3.4)
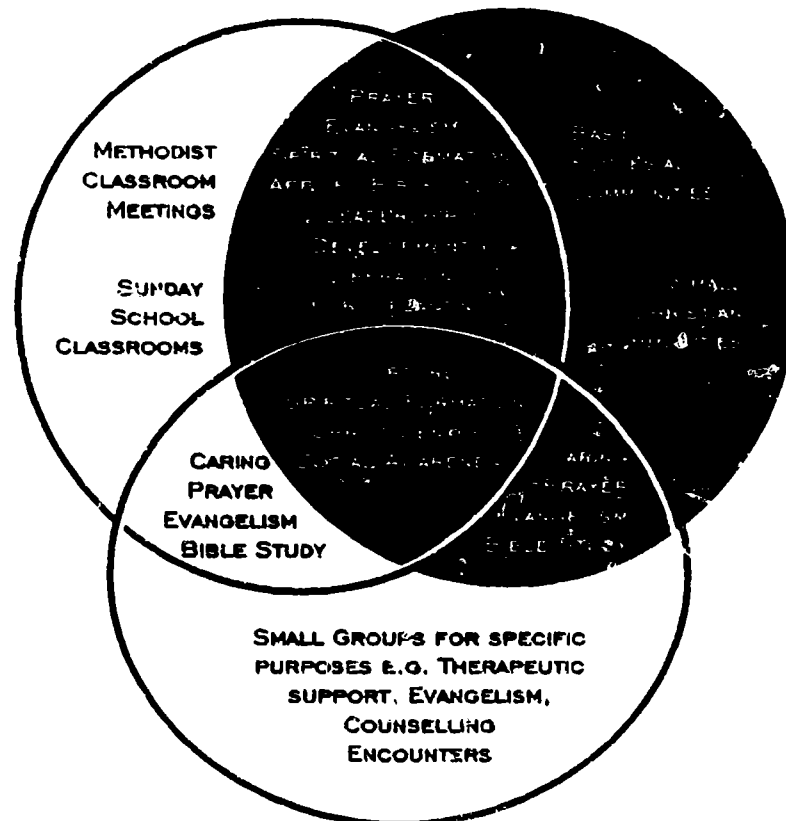
FIGURE 3.4

Christian experience has been dictated by social and historical circumstances as well as by practical needs of the Church.[32] The diagram illustrates how these different

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[31] In addition to the previous section, according to Cook (1985:173-199), the concept of *ecclesia* was originally a technical term for the town meetings in Greece. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, numerous grassroots ecclesial movements (so-called heretical sects) nipped at the church's heels for a millennium, right up to the Protestant Reformation. During the Reformation period, and in crisis periods from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, base communities appeared at the fringes of Protestantism. Most of them, like the Anabaptists, early Quakers, Congregationalists, Radical Pietists and Methodist classes, were eventually swallowed up by mainstream values and institutions.

[32] Cf. Raymond Collins, *Small Groups: An experience of church.* (1988:115) "Upon closer examination it must also be affirmed that the small groups differed from one another in many different ways. Some were relatively large and some were indeed quite small. Although there was no standard size for these groups, the typical gathering was small enough to take place in a single room. The small groups varied from place to place, and from one set of historical circumstances to another. Changing circumstances caused changes in the movement itself." Cf. Tigcheler (1987) for a study on the diversity of

groups address different issues, and how they overlap with other kinds of small groups. All the different kinds of groups — Methodist classroom meetings, Sunday School classroom meetings, small groups utilized in the church for therapeutic and counselling purposes; small Christian communities and Basic Ecclesial Communities — have certain characteristics in common. They intend to enhance the nurturing and spiritual formation of the participants. They radiate a Christ-centredness aimed at bringing every participant to maturity in Christ (Col 1:28). They have a social awareness in the sense that they are involved in the everyday lives and needs of the people they serve.

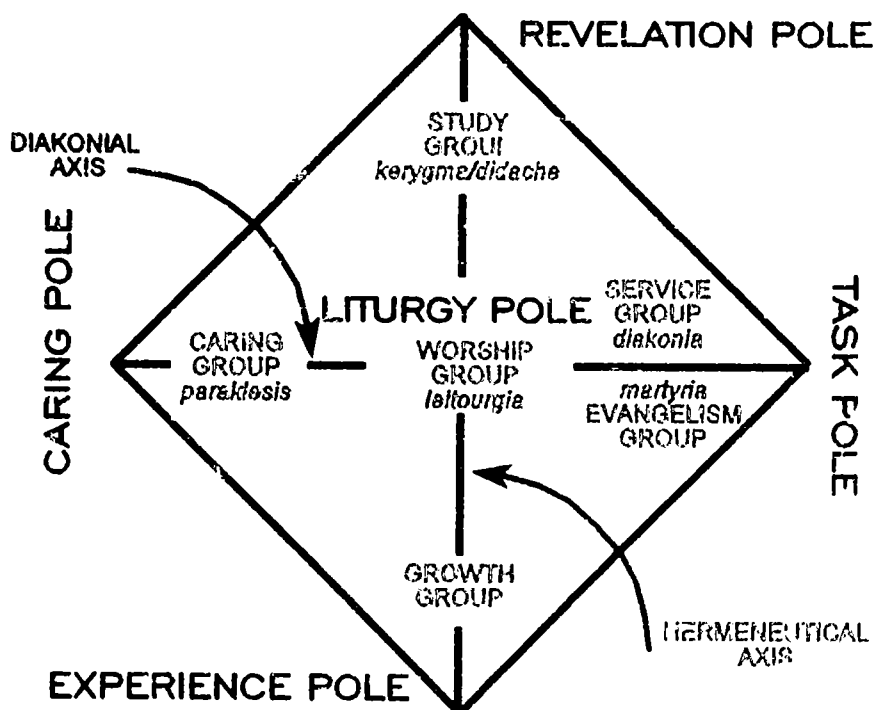Simpson (1993:185-192) suggests a theory on the functioning of small groups (see figure 3.5).

FIGURE 3.5 (ADAPTED FROM SIMPSON 1993: 185)

He categorizes small groups into four categories (poies). According to Growth (*growth group*), Caring (*paraklesis — care group*), Study *(kerygma/didache — study group)*, and Evangelism and Service *(evangelisasiegroep — martyria, service group — diakonia)*.

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the New Testament communities.

All four poles have a worship dimension *(worship group — leitourgia)* and presuppose fellowship — *koinonia* with God and with one another (see figure 3.5). He positions basic communities on the acting side (*Task pole*), which is to my mind a reducing basic communities to one pole, which is not the case as will be seen in this study. According to Simpson, different contexts require a focus on different poles more than others, and that the Holy Spirit's work in small groups stimulates movement between the different poles. Cell groups are neither an umbrella of all the groups as such or a specific category of group. Cell groups embody the migration between the different poles. In this study we accentuate the fact that groups in the DRC lack integrated action, and that action (evangelism, mission) is relegated to groups going up in one pole. George (1994) utilizes the cell group as the modus *(to cellularize all groups)* whereby all the different types of groups exist in his meta-church theory. When we utilize cell groups typologically, with special emphasis on social awareness, we indicate that action is to be integrated in all the different kinds of small groups, without exalting it as the main criterion. Groups that go up in one pole tend to develop an exclusivistic one-sidedness to them. Certain groups may nevertheless focus predominantly on one or more of the categories but Simpson suggests a dynamic interaction between the groups on the hermeneutical axis and serving (*diakonia*) axis. The lack of this theory is that its title suggests to include all kinds of groups. The presupposition of the *koinonia* character of all the groups may seem to include only goups of which the members are Christians (cf. Simpson 1993:184). Groups where Chriatians and non-Christians interact like the *Target* Groups and *Share Groups* (Neighbour 1990:254) and *Nurture* and *Critical Care Groups* (George 1994:195, 221) seem be excluded.

Throughout history certain aberrations have occurred with the small group experience, but the Spirit of God has continued to manifest the vitality of the church and to energize its mission by means of small groups which give evidence of the radically organic nature of the church (cf. Collins (1988:109-136). According to Collins (1988:135-136),

> The Spirit of God continues to work in the church at the present time creating in its midst small groups of dedicated Christians who support and love one another in faith and love.

Although the above-mentioned focus is on the Christian utilization of s..iall groups, it is not primarily an event confined to the Church. It is a phenomenon belonging to the realm of general anthropology and is an expression of the quest for new relationships between people, for a sense of belonging to a community.

According to Kerkhofs (1976:4), there appear to be three determining factors in the flowering of a variety of grassroots groups, small communities, and non-official groupings[33]. There is first of all the increasing pressure from social structures, which limit the liberty of individuals as well as their personal relationships. The isolation and anonymity which is the lot of urbanised people and the vicious circles caused by the incessant round of production and consumption are making people aware that they are prisoners of all kinds of social alienation. They long to return to something smaller, more tangible, where responsibilities can be more easily taken on again. Secondly, an important factor in the process of alienation is the weakening of intermediate groups within society. The family finds itself forced to abandon a great number of its functions to society, the mass media, and organized leisure. Big organizations of a professional, cultural or political order, enterprises and universities — not to mention trade unions and Churches — often afford little room for community experiences: relations between individuals are often of too short a duration, too functional, too free, perhaps too un-committed. And thirdly, humankind's deepest need on both the affective and the ideological planes requires social structures on a smaller scale and of a greater variety. Due to these factors, attempts to form limited groups have the following characteristics:

▸ an aspiration after security, in a group aiming to live according to one and the same scale of values and offering a guarantee of authenticity in relationships within and commitment outside;

▸ a protest against the inhuman character of many social structures and the scale of values on which these structures rest;

▸ an ideal type of small-scale society really capable of replacing a society which has fallen prey to gigantism.

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[33] Kerkhofs was writing about the situation in Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa — also South Africa (1976:21) — and much of what he says concerning other continents is also applicable to the situation in South Africa.

From a liberation point of view, an excellent South African example of such grassroots community is the well known Mandela-plan of the 1960's (Mandela1994:134-135). It was invented by Nelson Mandela on Robben Island as part of the liberation struggle against apartheid. Although invented for organizational and communication purposes, we find in it the three abovementioned characteristics of base communities mentioned by Kerkhofs. The ANC utilized it so effectively that I believe it is due to this relational and organisational plan that the previous government was eventually logistically checkmated. It functioned along the same organisational principles and with the same terminology (cells and zones) as the church cell group system (cf Neighbour 1990)[34]. In this way the ANC could muster thousands of supporters in a short time, even while being deprived of other communication channels.[35] Comrades were "discipled" in small groups as to what to do to survive and prosper politically under Apartheid. These same organised people were passing through churches on Sundays and attended funerals with anti-apartheid vigour. This gave the liberation theologians a very effective logistical mechanism to muster members and to expose the heresy[36] of Apartheid.

That the church feels the effect of these currents — as illustrated — and sometimes takes part in the currents is no matter of surprise. All the more so since, throughout the centuries, the church has been more or less happy to put forward the ideal of the small

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[34] As indicated in chapter 2, the utilization of the cell terminology in the church context is an analogous offspring form the Biblical body metaphor. The similar Mandela terminology probably finds its roots in the communist utilization thereof. The link between small communities (cells), the communist nomenclature and philosophy, and inter alia, the spontaneous emergence of basic Christian communities in the oppressed Latin America, is still to be researched. The fact is that every living being's search for an intimate community experience is a powerful tool in motivating people for a certain cause. In the DRC, because of its involvement in the Apartheid era, and the accompanying daily indoctrination against the *Rooi -gevaar* ("Red danger of communism"), the introduction of cell nomenclature in the church caused an initial hiccup in some older congregations.

[35] Desmond Tutu in his *Rainbow people of God* (1994:159) made the following comment before an audience in Nicaragua before their elections in 1982: "Television and the radio in South Africa are state propaganda instruments. The opponents of the Government are vilified on television and over the radio, and don't get a chance to reply. The press is severely restricted. Some newspapers are closed. I am talking of South Africa"

[36] Cf. WARC Ottawa (1983), addressing the Apartheid system in heretical terms.

group communities of the Acts of the Apostles[37]. The link between the so-called secular groups and the official church-like groups is those Christians who take seriously their role as Christians in everyday society and act as organized communities. In the DRC we find a dichotomy on this issue. On the one hand, in theory, it fervently adheres to the *imperative commission* of the Word to social involvement, but on the other hand in the praxis of church life concerning the Apartheid legacy, there was a great *omission*. Church-endorsed and organized social involvement — addressing the problems of Apartheid — in and by the ward system was non-existent. Even if the Church does not want to be involved in politics, politics will involve the church (cf. Löffler 1977:9). The heresy of Apartheid heavily influenced the DRC's view and practice concerning social involvement of the church. According to Kritzinger J.J (1990:144), the view often subscribed to by Reformed theologians when reflecting on the difficult area of the church's involvement in issues of injustice is the following:

> Transformation of society is extremely important, but it is expected to be the 'fruit' of the gospel 'seed'. Yes, the Lordship of Christ should be made manifest in all of society, however it is not the calling of the institutional church but of the members of the church (the church as organism).

Bosch (1986 :40) summarizes this view as that "The church is not called to change the social order: redeemed individuals will do that." Kritzinger J.J. (1990:144) says the involvement — [as such by the ward system which is the organized church] — with the affairs of one's "own", was not motivated theologically but culturally and politically. Individuals can redeem society by their personal effort as long as basic communities are not expected to get involved. The ward system as the church's most basic organizational tool — closest to the people — ignores the appeal of society's needs as far as institutional action from the church is concerned. From this it is clear that we find in the small group phenomenon one of the clearest challenges to the church's contextual theologizing on the issue of the transformation of society. Cell groups can

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[37] As Collins (1988:118) shows conclusively: "They [small groups] have existed in various times and various places. In retrospect it might be affirmed that the small group experience is a recurring feature of the Christian story."

provide the ecclesial body with a vital impetus — a contextual hermeneutic — to enter into transformational social action (*diakonia*).

3.3.4 A hermeneutic for contextual small group social involvement

A hermeneutic for contextual social involvement surfaces the mingling and mutual interaction of the biblical, theoretical and practical issues in the formation, functioning and furthering of this small group phenomenon through Church history. How normative this early Christian small group experience is, needs to be further researched. For this study I agree with Collins (1988:115): "The Bible, and especially the New Testament, serves the Christian church of today as the *norma non normata* of its *fides et mores*, the latter term denoting not so much ethical conduct as the patterns of the Christian way of life." That means that we should apply the same hermeneutic circle — which we apply to study the contexts of the Biblical small group experience — to new contexts in which small groups emerge throughout the course of history (see figure 3.6).

DIFFERENT CONTEXTS
SINCE THEN

THE SMALL GROUP
PHENOMENON IN THE OLD
TESTAMENT, NEW TESTAMENT:
AS SMALL CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES, AS BASE
COMMUNITIES, AS CLASSROOM
MEETINGS, AS PASTORAL CARE
GROUPS, AS "MANDELA"
GROUPS, AS PAROCHIAL
WARD MEETINGS,
AS MISSIOLOGICAL
CELL GROUPS

THE BIBLE AND ITS
CONTEXT

THEORIES (LOCAL
THEOLOGIES)
CONSTRUCTED
LEADING TO
NEW PRAXIS

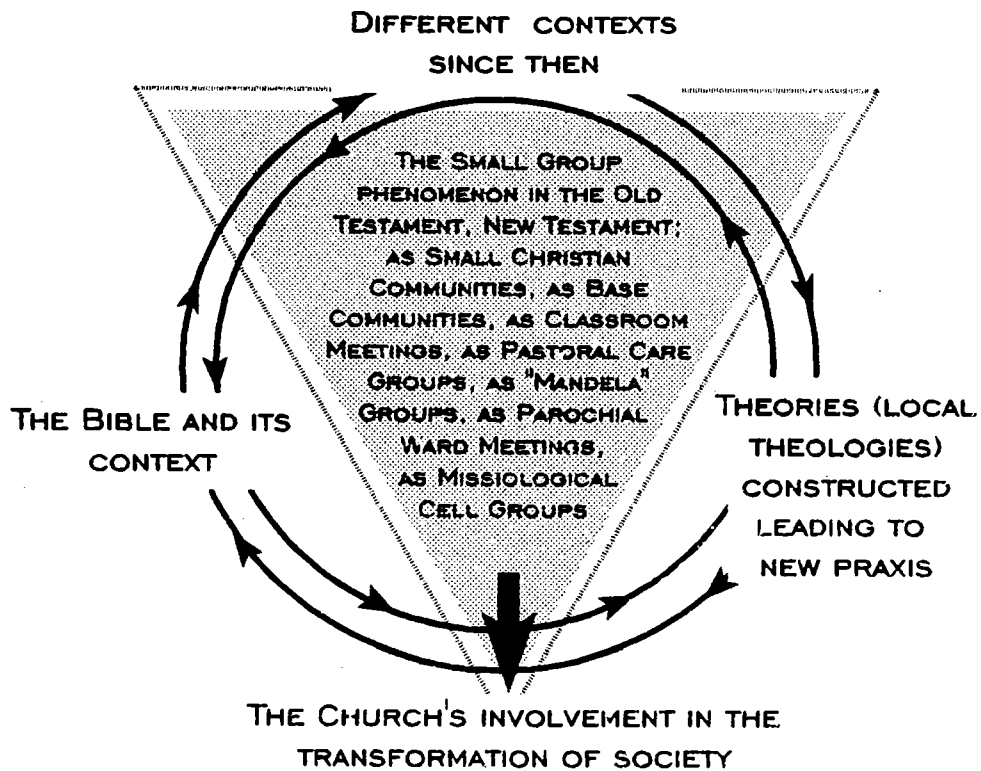THE CHURCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE
TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

FIGURE 3.6

As we look at the differerii basic communities in terms of the above hermeneutical circle, it seems that there is a fundamental way in which they differ from each other. Besides differing in their historical and social setting, they differ in their type of contextual reaction to their environment. A typical "local theology" (cf. Schreiter 1985) — concerning the small group's involvement in its community — is constructed. It is but one in a series of local theologies.[38] It is the group's mutual reflection and action upon social circumstances that are voluntarily or oppressively imposed on them. In the words of Kritzinger J.N.J (1988:6): "Mission is... the attempt to embody God's liberating presence in every human situation. It never takes place in a vacuum, but is always concerned with sp. cific people in specific situations, and searches to discover the meaning of the Good News in each context." Marins (1989:66) discusses the methodology of Basic Ecclesial Communities and summs it neatly by the saying:

> to see (to analyse comprehensively and from the perspective of the community) = SITUATION; to judge (to discern intelligently) = REFLECTION; to act (to make decisions colletively) = ACTION; to evaluate (on a regular basis and from a global perspective) = EVALUATION; to celebrate (to give thanks for our meaning of life-convictions and motivations) = CELEBRATION.

According to Hesselgrave (1989:145), all contextualization endeavours grow out of existing theological bents and matrices which, in large measure, determine the results. "It is essential that in analysing the contextualization attempts of others or in attempting our own we are sensitive to the theological soil which nurtures and sustains them." In this study, besides other small group occurrences, our focus is predominantly on the base community movement in its various contexts.

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[38] By doing this we by no means repudiate the Reformational cornerstone of *Sola Scriptura*, but to bring balance to an overarching of Scripture above its own context. According to Kritzinger J.N.J. (1995:373), "Many works of Christian tneology anaiyse the Bible or Christian doctrines without reference to the fact that these were produced in churches actively involved in attempts to change society in the light of the gospel. As a result of this the Christian tradition is often seen as an orthodoxy claiming universal validity rather than as a 'series of local theologies' (Schreiter:1985), developed by churches in widely differing contexts. The booming interest in social historical readings of the Bible and church history has brought a welcome change in this regard."

This movement has its roots in various contexts and historical events.[39] We are not to make one context of the base community development normative to our South African understanding of it. In dispelling the confusion that so often attends contextualization discussions and endeavours, Hesselgrave (1989 :145-157) brings us face to face with the critical nature of biblical authority: "The foundations of major theological orientations are identifiable by the ways in which their proponents view the Bible and handle biblical materials." (See figure 3.7.)

THE CONTEXTUALIZATION CONTINUUM (HESSELGRAVE 1989:157)
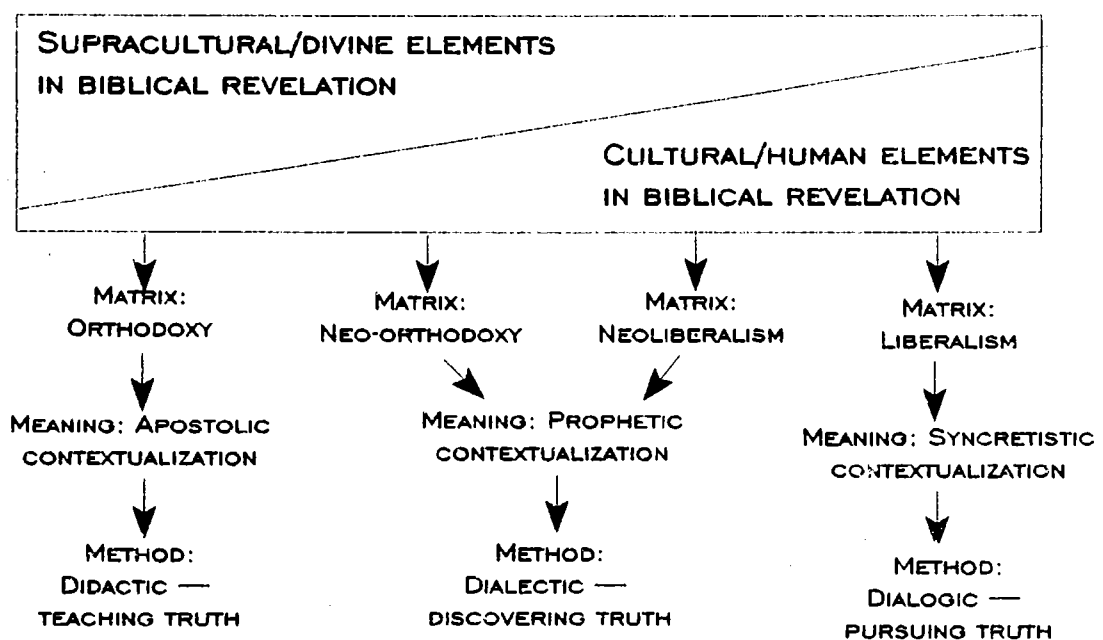
FIGURE 3.7

He locates them on a continuum "which in effect, indicates the relative weight they ascribe to supracultural and to cultural and human factors in the production, preservation, and interpretation of biblical text. Representing opposite ends of the continuum, orthodoxy and liberalism give rise to divergent Christologies, soteriologies, and eschatologies, and bear divergent *contextualized* Christologies, soteriologies, and eschatologies. According to Hesselgrave, this way of analysing contextualization

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[39] The SCCs in Africa developed separate from the Latin American BECs /BCCs. The small group phenomenon in the West have another context. The base community movement finds it roots in different theological traditions — of which the Theology of Liberation is but one of various (cf. AMECEA 1996; Kerkhofs 1976:2-32; Boff 1981:125-130; O'Halloran 1991:3-6).

questions is to find the theological roots of the contextualization understanding. "This kind of analysis is not offered with a view to affix theological labels, to categorize persons theoingically, but to relate contextualization meanings, methods, and models to a framework of theological orientations which is already in place, recognized by the informed Christian public, and intimately associated with differing understandings of contextualization." If we apply this contextual missiological integration to the small group phenomenon in different church settings, we discover that they grow from left to right (see figure 3.8) in their social and political awareness, and hence their missionary activity in their respective communities.

DIFFERENT SMALL GROUPS IN MISSION AT DIFFERENT STAGES

THE SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE IS A RECURRING FEATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN STORY
THE SPECIFIC FORMS OF THE SMALL GROUPS ARE DICTATED BY SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL
CIRCUMSTANCES. SOME ARE MORE SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY INVOLVED THAN OTHERS.

CARE GROUPS
SUPPORT GROUPS
BIBLE STUDY GROUPS
METHODIST CLASSROOM GROUPS
SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES
BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES
MISSIOLOGICAL FAITH COMMUNITIES WITNESSING IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

FIGURE 3.8

We agree with Hesselgrave's continuum as an ordering principle, and do not intend to label those small groups on the right hand side as purely liberational although there may be liberational applications of the basic communities — such as the Mandela groups above. If we bring this to bear on the DRC — concerning their small group activity they tend to be more to the orthodox side of the continuum. If the DRC really wants to be true to its *prophetic* role in society, it will, according to Hesselgrave's

matrix, have to seriously and actively pursue the *discovering of the truth* in its community awareness. Hendriks (In Buchanan 1995:29) analyzes different church and population statistics in the South African context and comes to the following conclusion:

> It becomes apparent that those who have the money and power are not in need of the church and that those without it do not easily find a home in the mainline denominations[40], with their hierarchical structures and top-down style of worship. They move, as demonstrated in the case of the African Independent Churches, to a type of church that is small group-oriented, where their basic needs can be met. That implies that mainline denominations, as a rule, are failing at the level of primary socialization: in the homes of the families constituting the church and its ministries.[41]

William Cook (1980:115) describes the fundamental orientations of the basic ecclesial communities in Brazil in four ways, one of which is that they have a new understanding of mission: "The *communidades de base* reflection upon their own social and ecclesial Reality, in the light of Biblical Reality has led to a new understanding of the church's mission. The proclamation of the Gospel — in word and action — is both announcement of Salvation and liberation in Jesus Christ and denouncement of everything that oppresses and alienates humanity."

The mainline churches in South Africa seem unable to grasp the dynamic potential of grassroots communities in the life and function of the church as body ecclesial. According to Anderson (1996:171), "The massive growth of the African Independent Movement (AIC) — [as a typical African basic Christian community] — over the past four decades has appeared to have been at the expense of older mission churches,

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[40] We group the DRC as part of the mainline church group, see footnote 2 in Introduction.

[41] As a matter of fact, according to Kerkhofs (1976:5): "There are many Christians who feel themselves crushed by church structures both on the plane of ideology and that of organization: centralization, strong organization, stress on the power of the hierarchy and the ministry, maintenance of ways of life and standards which are outdated... With the growth of a certain sense of marginalization among the poor, the young and the intellectuals, this feeling has increased. In the church, too, intermediate structures, parishes, as well as organizations, are in a state of crisis."

which have declined dramatically in relative membership" (cf. Hendriks 1995:3-10)[42]. People are flocking to the small group and basic community churches. Mainline churches do not take seriously their local contextual witnessing obligation. The missionary imperative is alienated from the everyday life of the church. This is probably one of the reasons why the missiological encounter of the local church with the world is delegated and relegated, to be done far from home by special mission-minded people. It seems that fundamental change is needed in the hermeneutics of the DRC concerning its utilization of small groups in order to bring about substantial change in society. The "theory-ladenness" of a Barthian epistemology is evident in the praxis of the DRC (see Introduction:11-12). Anderson (1996:173) says on the hermeneutical process of the African Initiated Churches in South Africa[43] that,

> We may discern certain trends and common characteristics in the hermeneutical processes of Pentecostal-type AIC's... The authority of biblical text and its interpretations, the first aspect, is literal and assumed, but not emphasised. The second aspect, the preunderstanding that influences the hermeneutical process, includes a high view of the Bible that is overshadowed by the experience and interpretation of the African context on the one hand and the power of the Spirit on the other. The third aspect is that this uniquely African and biblical experience is taken back to the text, and there new and relevant meanings are found which enlarge the meaning of the Bible for us all.

This small group hermeneutic has the potential to transform the DRC and launch it into playing a role in substantially impacting society. Social awareness has to be fostered in the cell groups. It is not a pragmatic programming of a small group system to involve itself in social matters, but it must be fostered in a life-like meeting the needs of those in the cell groups in a very personal way addressing deep emotional needs. It is done

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[42] Small Group Church membership grow and Mainline Church membership decline: A new census wass conducted in October 1996, but previous statistics indicate a decline from 70% in 1960 (West 1975:2) to 33% in 1991 (CSS 1992:121-123). Cf Hendriks 1995; Anderson 1996.

[43] The AIC's as a contextual base community movement in South Africa are growing at a tremendous rate. According to census figures (CCS 1992:121-123), AIC's made up 46% of the Black population of South Africa in 1991.

by means of a contextual hermeneutic and by the multiplying modus or discipleship. If the members' needs are met in the cell groups they spontaneously start reaching out to others that bear the same battle scars inflicted on them by society. Otherwise it is just another programme of social justice which does not really qualify to be called mission. Cell groups are then just utilized as a revitalizing fad of a dying church — or ward system.

3.3.5 Doing justice without cell group discipleship is not mission

We have indicated in 2.1.3 that in churches which have cell groups, a hybrid develops that succeeds in *developing a heart for the lost* but that the process stops here. They never become effective in reaching out as servants to unbelievers. Their imitation of Christ is confined to the cell meeting, and their being Christians is a venture that is meeting-oriented. The reason for this is that in the inception phase of the cell, evangelism and mission were taught in some kind of seminar or endless missions preaching; but it were never modelled in a discipleship manner. The practicality of reflecting the image of Christ in everyday situations was never taught in a relational way. If it is done in a relational and discipling manner, the system seems unable to assimilate new believers into a caring system that will nurture them from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity in Christ. The church needs a discipleship ministry which addresses people not only cognitively but penetrates into the deepest recesses of their affective and conative inner being, teaching them to bind their own wounds, in order to be ready to bind others' wounds — to be wounded healers in the real sense of the word (cf Nouwen 1990:88-89).[44] This calls for a special kind of spirituality in our small group praxis.

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[44] In the Cell Group church of Dion Robert on the Ivory Coast, which has a membership of almost 30 000 members, special care is taken that every member of a cell group is taken through what he calls "soul therapy". This is more than exorcizing demons, it is n holistic treatment of the whole person concerning his history and every possible wound — some caused the convert to fall into sinful habits . Ralph Neighbour wrote a small booklet —*The Journey Guide* — which every cell member has to complete and which he works through the cell leader. It is accompanied by a 14-week programme booklet —*The Arrival Kit* — through which every cell member is personally guided. In Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape, South Africa there is a congregation where similar intensive discipling guidance is given. Before a person is allowed to join the congregation, a three-year counselling relationship in a small spiritual community is completed. This Christ-like way of treating disciples has gained such a following that Ben Cloete, the pastor of the church, conducts seven-day retreats for spiritual leaders from all over the country virtually every month of the year.

Tozer (1987:11,12) says appropriately:

> There is today no lack of Bible teachers to set forth correctly the principles of the doctrines of Christ, but too many of these seem satisfied to teach the fundamentals of faith year after year, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their personal lives... Within the fold of conservative Christianity there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself.

Carson (1992:15) says that "The one thing we most urgently need in Western Christendom is a deeper knowledge of God. We need to know God better." We need a manifestation of the real presence of Christ in the lives of individuals as they gather together as basic Christian communities as well as when they venture into the world as individuals. Their witness to the world does not flow primarily from an effective evangelism programme but from intimacy with God. According to OswaldChambers (1963:196,214),

> The aim of the missionary is to do God's will, not to be useful, not to win the heathen, he *is* useful and he *does* win the heathen, but that is not his aim. His aim is to do the will of his Lord... The key to the missionary problem is in the hand of God, and that key is prayer not work, that is, not work as the word is popularly understood to-day [sic] because that may mean the evasion of concentration on God. The key is prayer. 'Ask the Lord of the harvest' (Matt 9:38). No Christian has a special work to do. A Christian is called to be Jesus Christ's own, one who is not above his Master, one who does not dictate to Jesus Christ what he intends to do. Our Lord calls to no special work: He calls to Himself. 'Ask the Lord of the harvest,' and He will engineer circumstances and thrust you out.

Waldron Scott[45] sees the gospel as a tripolar missionary encounter with the world. The

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[45] Cf. Waldron Scott, *Bring forth justice*, (1980. p. XIII). He provides a study of the triangular relationship among mission, disciple making, and social justice.

gospel message calls out for an integration of mission, discipleship and justice. This adapted figure (see figure 3.9) reflects the integral relation of praxis, context and the Biblical imperative.

THE INTEGRAL RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
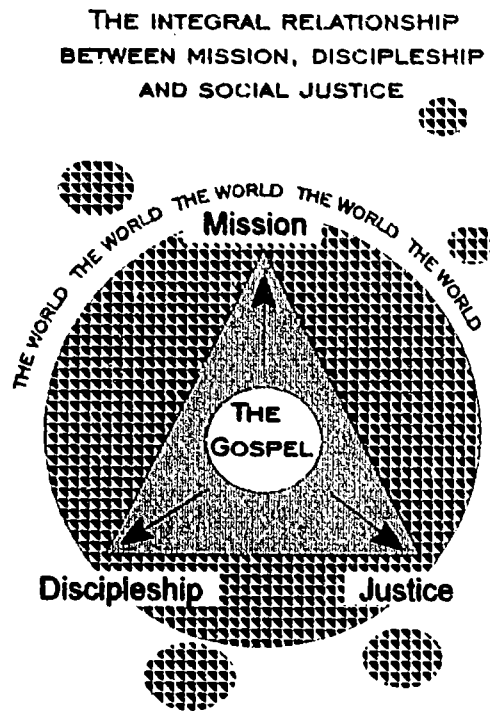
FIGURE 3.9

According to Costas (1979:back cover), "The true test of mission is not whether we proclaim, make disciples, or engage in social, economic, and political liberation; but whether we are capable of integrating all three in comprehensive and dynamic wisdom."

According to Bosch (1991:11), "This suggests a continuity between the reign of God, the mission of the church, and justice and peace, and wholeness in society, and that salvation has to do to with what happens to people in the world."[46] This wholeness in society must stem from people experiencing this "healing" in community with God and with others — growing to the fullness of Christ (Col 3:15) and modelling it in a very practical way into others.

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[46] Bosch (1991:11): This is God's "yes" to the world - it is an affirmation of the Christian's solidarity with the world.

Of this discipleship process and the creation of communities to facilitate it, Jesus was the best example. He imparted Himself — his life — to his disciples. For three to four years he drenched them with Himself so that when He ascended to heaven and they were fortified by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were able to impart the real essence of Christ's life to other people: not the doctrines about Christianity, but the incarnate life of God Himself (see figure 3.10).
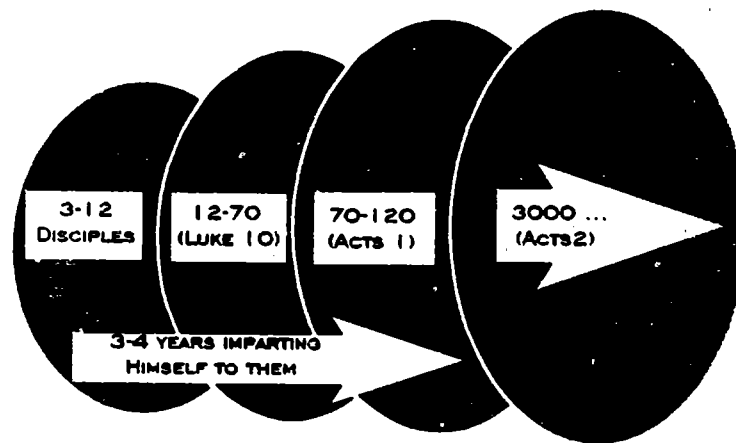
THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS OF JESUS CHRIST

| 3-12 DISCIPLES | 12-70 (LUKE 10) | 70-120 (ACTS 1) | 3000 ... (ACTS2) |

3-4 YEARS IMPARTING HIMSELF TO THEM

FIGURE 3. 10

Understanding the Jewish model of rabbi and students helps explain why Jesus called twelve to live with him and become his disciples. Jesus was acting in the tradition of the Jewish Rabbi.[47] Training those who were to inherit his ministry within the tradition of rabbi-and-disciples gave Jesus an accepted and proven method of imparting the great truths He had to share. Jesus interacted with a small group of disciples, shared his life with them, had fellowship with them, and was able to hold them accountable for their actions and spiritual growth.[48] Although discipling was done elsewhere—"on the road"—- the house was the locus of the more profound instruction that Jesus imparted

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[47] Gene Edwards in his (unpublished) *Spiritual Foundation Stones* portrays this impartation of Jesus to his disciples. How he literally duplicates and multiplies Himself into his disciples.

[48] Floyd McClung (1985:123) analyses Jesus' discipleship process with his disciples into four phases and I add the first: 1. He taught and they listened; 2. He did and they observed; 3. He did and they helped; 4. They did and He watched and helped; 5. He left them and they went on doing.

to his disciples. The Acts of the Apostles provides its readers with a stylized and theologically motivated reflection on a variety of significant events in the history of the early church. It points to the importance of the house church as the basic organizational and community unit within the church.[49]

This model of spreading the faith and holding each other accountable continued in the early church. (cf. Bordin 1990:73). Collins (1988:114) concludes:

> The household church was the basic ecclesial unit not only in Palestine but also in Gentile mission. The household church was a primary locus of evangelization and Christian initiation. It was within the household that Christians assembled for prayer and catechesis and the celebration of the Eucharist. The household gathering provided the unit for Christian fellowship and a base and support for further Christian mission.

About the basic communities in Britain and their social involvement, Vincent (1980:59) remarks that:

> They are small groups of Christians which gather together in their own context and situation, usually outside of church buildings, read the Gospels, create worship and debate their commitment in the light of concrete obedience and witness which they work out, live out, and reflect upon together. They often concern themselves with local politics, lifestyle, tithing, ecology, personal vocation, and work co-operatives. Frequently, they develop methods of 'having things in common', and interpret commonness in economic terms.

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[49] Raymond Collins (1988:109-120) argues conclusively from the Gospels, Acts and the Pauline letters that the churches of the New Testament times were essentially household units. The small groups were the vital cells of the church. Cf. O'Halloran (1991:3-4).

O'Halloran (1991:33) remarks that small Christian communities is God's way of mediating community life in this world and illustrates it as follows (see figure 3.11).

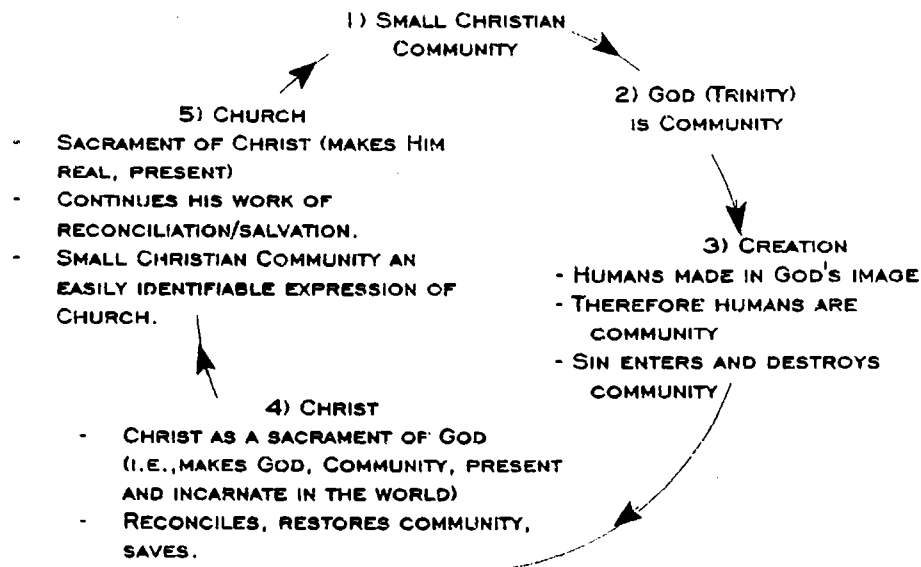SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES MEDIATING COMMUNITY

1) SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

2) GOD (TRINITY) IS COMMUNITY

3) CREATION
- HUMANS MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE
- THEREFORE HUMANS ARE COMMUNITY
- SIN ENTERS AND DESTROYS COMMUNITY

4) CHRIST
- CHRIST AS A SACRAMENT OF GOD (I.E., MAKES GOD, COMMUNITY, PRESENT AND INCARNATE IN THE WORLD)
- RECONCILES, RESTORES COMMUNITY, SAVES.

5) CHURCH
- SACRAMENT OF CHRIST (MAKES HIM REAL, PRESENT)
- CONTINUES HIS WORK OF RECONCILIATION/SALVATION.
- SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AN EASILY IDENTIFIABLE EXPRESSION OF CHURCH.

FIGURE 3.11

Unless the Dutch Reformed Church strives for a grassroots missiological integratedness and solidarity[50] with the world in which it finds itself, discipling every member in the communitarian way Jesus did — so as to impart real life to them — it will stay sterile locally and infertile globally. Delepesse (1968:14) says of the church, "All of its reforms have communities or have led to community life."

The words of Hume[51] (1987:1225) are indeed appropriate here: "There is a need to develop small groups within the parish for prayer, study and action. They are essential

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[50] This solidarity with the world needs to be specified. According to Bosch (1991:11), "What God has provided for us in Jesus Christ and what the church proclaims and embodies in its mission and evangelism is not simply an affirmation of the best people can expect in this world by way of health, liberty, peace, and freedom from want. God's reign is more than human progress on the horizontal plane. If we on the one hand assert God's "yes" to the world as an expression of the Christian's solidarity with society, we also have to affirm mission and evangelism as God's "no", as an expression of our opposition to the engagement with the world. If Christianity blends with social and political movements to the point of becoming completely identified with them, then the church will again become what is called a religion of society... then it cannot articulate faithfully the *missio Dei.*"

[51] In his evaluation of the 1987 Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Basil Hume (1987:1225) made this statement.

for spiritual formation and growth of holiness. The parish needs to become the community of communities." The cell group can facilitate this process. It is my contention that the DRC can become an effective tool in God's hands to change society (with new post-apartheid issues), reach out to its community in a fresh way and contribute to the coming of God's kingdom in all speres of life, if it embraces the fundamental challenge of an integrated missiological cell group praxis.

3.4 Mission and Evangelism — A clarified relation

According to Bosch (1991:409), a discussion on the meaning and scope of salvation and on the church's mission in respect of social justice leads us, almost as a matter of course, to reflection on the nature of evangelism.[52] It is important to reflect specifically on the mission/evangelism debate since it is a fundamental issue — not only for the sake of theologizing over it — but also, as indicated, for the very survival of the DRC. As indicated, the DRC has a history of making a racial distinction concerning mission and evangelism as well as discriminating geographically concerning the "target" audiences of evangelism and missions (missiones ecclesiae), respectively. If we propose a missiological integratedness in the local congregation, and bearing the abovementioned qualification in mind, we cannot evade the long-standing debate on what is understood as mission (missio Dei) and what evangelism[53]. Our understanding of missions and evangelism, and their relationship to each other, is fundamental to our

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[52] Broadly speaking — the debate includes a multitude of other sub-issues — controversy prevails in two areas: the differences (if any) between "evangelism" and "mission", and the scope or range of evangelism (cf. Bosch 1991:409).

[53] For a summary of the mission/evangelism debate cf. Bosch (1984:161-191; 1991:409-420;533). South Africans and many other missiologists are indebted to the contribution that the late David Bosch made in their theological formation — especially in the field of missiology. I am no exception. His theological approach is holistic — always covering all the options. He was a peacemaker, reconciler and bridgebuilder. While alive, in a very humane way his contribution to the DRC in South Africa was one of a "peaceloving prophet"— clearly pointing to wrongs in the Apartheid heresy but always trying to reconcile different opinions in a peaceful way (cf. Livingston 1989:453). This way of life also characterized his academic endeavours. He was always trying to defuse long-standing debates (eg. mission/evangelism; evangelicals/ecumenicals, First World-Third World), opting for a synergy between both without sacrificing the uniqueness of the respective viewpoints and seeking a way forward beyond the polarizations in mission theology and practice (cff. Bosch 1984:161-191; 1991; Kritzinger 1990:142; Saayman 1990:99-108). This study will indicate — although it does not intend to study Bosch's methodology particularly — that this synergizing way of doing is probably the Achilles heel in his definition of mission. Cf. Livingston (1989) for a study on the theology of mission and evangelism in the writings of David Bosch.

understanding of the *proximity* of the *approximations* of mission and the small group applications thereof.

3.4.1 The *missio Dei* and *missiones ecclesiae*

The missio Dei is the undefineable, unexhaustible resource for the missiones ecclesiae. This "approximatic" character of our definition of mission is particularly true concerning the essence of mission (singular) as primarily God's mission (*missio Dei;* Luke 4:18-21)[54]. But this undefinableness of the indicative *missio Dei* prompts us to venture into setting clearer the approximations regarding the imperative — resulting from this God-given indicative. The indicative is *mission (God's mission),* while the imperative is *missions* (the *missiones ecclesiae:* the missionary ventures of the church)[55]. (See figure 3.12.)

THE COHERENCE AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MISSIO DEI AND THE MISSIONES ECCLESIAE

GOD'S MISSION IN
ESTABLISHING HIS KINGDOM
ON EARTH BY SENDING THE
CHURCH INTO THE WORLD
— INDICATIVE

THE MISSIONES ECCLESIAE
FLOWING FORTH FROM THE
MISSIO DEI AND NOT TAKEN
UP BUT IN THE SERVICE OF
THE MISSIO DEI
— IMPERATIVE

THE MISSIO DEI
OF THE TRIUNE
GOD

FIGURE 3. 1 2

In the wake of the Uppsala Conference it was Paul Aring (1971) and Ludwig Rütti (1972) in particular who used the *missio Dei* concept as, in a sense, *the* fundamental

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[54] Cf. Bosch 1994:(389-393) for a discussion on the history and use of this concept.

[55] The *missiones ecclesiae* refer to particular forms — related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in the *missio Dei.* See also Davies (1966:33); Rütti (1972:232); Hoekendijk (1967a:346).

theological statement in missiology. The *missio Dei* fills the entire horizon of the world and of history. Everything God does is mission. Bosch (1984:182) warns against this overly broad use of this concept. "The only logical outcome of this is that, eventually, *Missiology becomes the framework within which the entire field of theology has to operate*" (italics mine). According to Stephen Neill, wł :n everything becomes mission, then nothing is mission. Although Bosch (1984:181; 1991:10, 390) warns against this missionary universalism — "everything is mission"[56] — he himself is not always clear on the priority and position he gives to the *missio Dei* as a fundamental concept for mission and in what context he utilizes it. He tends to be technically unclear when talking about the *missio Dei* and about the mission of the church (*missiones ecclesiae*) — mission and missions. One tends to feel that he alternates like a pendulum on this issue: On the one hand making *missio Dei* the main scriptural departure point of mission — the *raison d'être* of mission — and on the other hand making it but one dimension *of* the mission of the church — that is "mission *as* missio Dei" (1991:390). Do the *missiones ecclesiae* of the church flow from the *missio Dei* or is the *missio Dei* a dimension of the missiones ecclesiae? In his discussion on the relationship of mission and evangelism, Bosch sometimes uses the *concept* of mission interchangeably as *missio Dei* and *missiones ecclesiae* — although it is not obvious. "In an attempt to flesh out the *missio Dei* concept", Bosch (1991:390) says, "...mission *[missio Dei]* is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God, it is not the church that has a mission *[missio Dei]* of salvation to fulfill in the world, it is the mission *[missio Dei]* of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church. Mission *[missio Dei* or *missiones ecclesiae]* is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission *[missio Dei* or *missiones ecclesiae]* is to participate in the movement of God toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love." And (1984:169) "Mission is wider than the church — *as wide as the kingdom*" (italics mine).

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[56] Walter Freytag likewise criticized what he called "the ghost of pan-missionism" (= das Gespenst des Pan-Missionismus) (Bosch 1984:182). Donald McGavran (1977:241) criticized the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala (1968) for allowing mission to develop into "any good activity at home or abroad which anyone declares to be the will of God."

Nevertheless, although not so clearly, Bosch emphasizes that mission (as *missio Dei*) is not to be identified with the mission of the church. According to precepts of Calvinism, the church is but one of the spheres in which the missio Dei of God functions and exists. Bosch (1991:10) says,

> "*Missio Dei*, is God's self revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate."

The *Missio Dei* is not the theological *essential* that has to be studied in order to create the scope of *Missiology*. It is God's given indicative, the giving of Himself and can only be studied approximately. It is not a religious ground motive in the same philosophical sense as the creation-fall-redemption motive, but it gives the essence of God's involvement with creation through the self revealing of Himself. It permeates the church's life — the *missiones ecclesiae* — as a deep spiritual driving force. It is wider than Missiology and does not reduce everything to missiology. It is an appropriate term to define God's sovereignty over all creation — his Kingdom. It gives birth to the church's ventures — the *missiones ecclesiae* — in furthering the Kingdom of God on earth, but is not exhausted by it.

3.4.2 The mission/evangelism[57] debate

We proceed to Bosch's personal view and give a brief non-exhaustive summary of the mission/evangelism debate. From this we will determine two key themes in Bosch's writings concerning the relationship between evangelism and mission. We will evaluate Bosch's view by making use of Stott's and Winter's definitions. We will reflect on all three by using certain concepts from Calvininsm. [*Die Wybegeerte van die Wetsidee*] such as, *sphere sovereignty; wetsy en subjeksy, centrality of the Christian ground motive of creation-fall-redemption, universalism and individualism* (Dooyeweerd 1979;

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[57] The term "mission" in mission/evangelism includes mission as *missio Dei* (singular), and missions (plural) which is *missiones ecclesiae* as explained. The compound term "missions/evangelism" reflects on the *activities* of the local congregation, flowing from the mission (*missio Dei*) of the church.

Strauss 1987) and *dimension/intention; missionarische* and *missionierende Gemeinde* (cf. Gensichen 1971:80-96, 168-174). In doing this we will reach certain conclusions concerning Bosch's definition and the missiological praxis of the DRC and thereby propose a missiological integratedness of cell groups.

3.4.3 Bosch and Stott and the mission/evangelism debate[58]

Bosch's view on the debate: In a seminal article, Bosch (1984; cf. Kritzinger 1990:143) distinguishes between mission and evangelism from the Roman Catholic and the Protestant perspectives, respectively. He then goes on to list twelve interpretations of mission and evangelism and their interrelatedness. Two years later (1986:39ff) he grouped these together into two major tendencies: (a) those who use mission and evangelism more or less synonymous, and (b) those who distinguish between them in a number of ways, with special reference to those who define either mission or evangelism too narrowly or to broadly. Five years later in *Transforming Mission* (1991:390) he addresses this debate again, discussing evangelism as one of the dimensional aspects of mission: "mission *as* evangelism."

Bosch distinguishes between mission and evangelism in a specific way. We find in his writings on this relationship between mission and evangelism two themes in the way he differentiates between them. The first is that mission is more comprehensive than evangelism. He agrees with John Stott (1975:35) that mission is a more comprehensive term[59] than evangelism, and vice versa, that evangelism is less comprehensive than mission: "All evangelism is mission, but not all mission is evangelism" (Bosch

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[58] It is not in the scope of this mini-dissertation to discuss the magnitude of the evangelism/missions debate — that is to include an exhaustive summary of what is respectively seen as mission and what as evangelism. We focus on the *relational* debate. We address the debate through the perspective of Calvinism, and will scrutinize Ralph Winter's, John Stott's and David Bosch's contributions to this debate in order to reach a conclusion that is applicable to the cell group praxis.

[59] Stott, J.W. (1975:35) "Mission is embracing everything which God sends his people into this world to do."

1984:173). "*missions* is a wider concept than *evangelism*"[60] (Bosch 1984:169) (cf. Kritzinger 1990:146, Meiring 1995:406). Mission is an umbrella under which evangelism fits in (Bosch 1979:19; 1991:10,411). "Evangelism is the *core, heart* or *centre* of mission" (1984:170). In this typology Bosch (1979:18) builds on Stott's (1974:23-29) definition — that mission is "evangelism plus social action." — but also differs from it, as will be argued below.

The second theme in Bosch's understanding is his *dimensional* differentiation (1991:409ff). He treats evangelism as but one of a multitude of dimensional[61] distinctives of mission — mission as *missio Dei*, mission as evangelism, mission as the quest for justice, mission as liberation, etc. "Mission *includes* evangelism as one of its essential dimensions" (Bosch 1991:10).

3.4.4 Bosch and Stott and the modality structure of Dooyeweerd[62]

According to Chaplin (1995:119), Dooyeweerd bases his political and social thought on a systematic ontological framework rooted in the notion of divine sovereignty. God orders creation through law in two dimensions, the "modal" and the "individual". Creation is structured according to a series of modal aspects, all of which condition every discrete entity (e.g., spatial, biotic, logical, social, ethical, social, logical, numerical), or "individuality structure". There are three basic categories of such structures: things, events, and social relationships. Each "functions in", either as object or subject, all the modal aspects: a tree, for example, displays physical and biological aspects subjectively, and psychic, social, economic, juridical, and faith aspects

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[60] It is interesting that de Klerk (1979:6,16) believes that mission is subservient to evangelism, and that evangelism includes mission. Cf. Nel (1994:10) for a the relation between evangelism and mission form a *Gemeentebou* (church building) perspective.

[61] Nel (1994:28-29) says appropriately: "...dat die gemeente wat deur die missio Dei tot stand gekom het in alles wat hy is, sé en doen *missionêr gerig* moet wees. Anders gestel: alle bedieningswyses is per definisie ook missionêr in karakter... dit beteken dat die diens aan God en aan mekaar ook 'n missionêre dimensie het en nie net die diens aan die wêreld nie... die missie van die gemeente is meerdimensioneel."

[62] See footnotes 30-32 in chapter 1 for an outline of Calvinism related to the perspectives of Kuyper and Dooyeweerd.

objectively (i.e., as an object to human psychic, social and economic functioning). Social relationships — a category including every kind of community, institution, association or inter-personal, relationships — also function in all these aspects, and exist as individuality structures, each with their own "structural principle" which determines their distinctive nature.

We apply this modality (struction to *Stott's definition of mission* — in terms of its relationship to eve   ﹒﹒﹕﹒ as evangelism plus social action. When he differentiates between mission and evangelism, he uses the *numerical modal aspect* to define mission. Mission is the sum of "discrete quantities" such as evangelism and social action. As said above, Bosch (1984:177) differs from this definition:

> I call evangelism the "heart" of mission. If you cut the heart out of a body, that body is a corpse. With evangelism cut out, mission dies, it ceases to be mission. Not so if you use the language of evangelism *plus* social action is mission. The problem lies in the "plus". The moment you regard mission as consisting of two separate components, you have in principle admitted that each of the components has a life of its own. You are then saying that it is possible — perhaps even acceptable — to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social action without an evangelistic dimension."

Elsewhere Stott (1975:35) says "Mission is embracing everything which (sends his people into this world to do. "This can be interpreted as if the "everything   is a sum total of different discrete quantities — such as evangelism plus social action, plus liberation, etc. In Stott's definition concerning the evangelism and mission debate, we meet the logic of individualism.[63] According to Strauss (1978:113),

> Wanneer die *diskrete* aard van die getalsaspek as toegangspoort gebruik word en 'n poging aangewend word om in terme daarvan oor die volle werklikheid te spreek, ontmoet ons die *individualisme*. Die individualisme wil altyd in terme van 'n diskrete menigvuidigheid, of minstens 'n onderskeie aantal *elemente* oor die

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[63] This *individualistic* approach is sometimes also called *atomistic*. Cf. Strauss (1978:114), "Gekoppel aan die fisiese aspek staan die individualisme ook bekend as *atomisme.*"

werklikheid dink. Hierdie soort *optelsorr* benadering negeer die bestaan van alle egte totaliteite (gehele) — of reduseer dit minstens tot diskrete eenhede.

We do not say that Stott's *whole* treatment of mission is individualistic; this is only true of his treatment of the relation between evangelism and mission.

Bosch — in his definition of mission — uses the difference from Stott's definition — mentioned above — to argue that mission is wider than evangelism. He refrains from this *individualistic* way of thinking because, as said above "You are then saying that it is possible — perhaps even acceptable — to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social action without an evangelistic dimension." In terms of the relationship of mission to evangelism, Bosch *includes* evangelism as one of the essential *dimensions* of mission. He differs from Stott — who uses the *numerical modal aspect* — in that he uses the *spatial* modal aspect to define mission. On the spatial aspect Strauss (1978:14) says:

> Die ruimte-aspek volg op die getalsaspek en veronderstel daarom die getalsaspek. Tog besit die ruimte-aspek 'n besondere eie-aard wat duidelik onderskei moet word van die aard van die getalsaspek... ruimtelike *uitgebreidheid, kontinuïteit* is onder andere *aaneenlopend, samehangend* en *gapingloos.* Iets wat 'n aaneenlopende samehang vertoon besit geen hiate (gapings) nie. Uitgebreidheid in ruimtelike sin vertoon derhalwe 'n gapingloos-aaneenlopende samehang wat prinsipieel verskil van elke vorm van diskreetheid in die sin van die getalsaspek.

According to Bosch's definition of mission and evangelism — "that there is a coherency in all the parts" (*"aaneenlopende samehang in sy geheel en ai sy dele"* — Strauss *1978:26).* Or in Bosch's terminology: evangelism and social action — as well as liberation, church planting, witness, etc. — are all *dimensions* of mission. They form a coherent whole. The whole is more than the sum of all the parts — in reaction to Stott's "evangelism *plus* social action." Or, put differently ,the whole differs from the sum of the parts — the *missio Dei* is not merely the sum of all its parts.

Strauss (1978:114) says concerning the use of the spatial aspect:

> Indien gebruik gemaak word van die ruimtelike toegangspoort tot 'n spreke oor die werklikheid, doem die teenpool van individualisme op as 'n versoeking om in terme daarvan na die werklikheidsverskeidenheid te kyk. Indien hierdie geheel-dele relasie egter 'n universele vergelykingsnoemer word in terme waarvan oor die ganse skeppingsverskeidenheid gedink word, ontmoet ons die gemeenskaplike grondtrek van alle vorme van *universalisme...* Ander vorme waarin ons vandag hierdie universalistiese grondstelling teëkom is bv.: "die geheel is meer as die som van sy dele" of: "die geheel is anders as die som van sy dele."

In both *individualism* and *universalism* one aspect is exalted above the others. *Individualism* takes the discreteness of one aspect (the numerical) and makes it the vantage point whereby all other aspects (reality) are evaluated as the sum total of different entities (eg. 1+1+1+1...). *Universalism*, on the other hand, takes the spatial aspect — or a life form (society) — and exalts it as the ultimate *whole* (vs. the *discrete unit* of the numerical aspect) that contains other lifeforms as *parts*.

It is clear — from Bosch's reaction to Stott's definition and from his discussion on *Is everything mission?* — that Bosch (1991:512) is wary of "reductionism". He obviously does not want to fall into an *individualistic* trap. He is in reaction to the *individualism* of Stott, but runs the risk of falling into the opposite of individualism, namely *universalism*. He uses terminology such as "mission is *more comprehensive*"; "*All evangelism is mission, but not all mission is evangelism*"; "missions is a *wider concept*"; Mission is an *umbrella* under which..."; "Evangelism is the *core, heart* or *centre* of mission" — all of them have a certian *spatialness* in them. Fundamentally Bosch does not differ from Stott, they only use different modal aspects to translate mission and evangelism.

Bosch (1984:177) reacts to Stott's individualistic framework, and points out that it leads to a battle for supremacy, "The moment one says that one is *primary* and one is

secondary, the battle has been joined!"[64] Bosch rigthly rejects this typical individualistic fallacy which makes the numerical aspect the sole point of view. My concern is that Bosch makes the same cosmological mistake — not from the numerical aspect but from the spatial — when he defines evangelism as the "core", "heart", or "centre" of mission. He overstretches the importance of evangelism — not in relation to social action as Stott and COWE — but in relation to *mission*. Bosch criticizes Stott for implying that one could "have *evangelism* without a social dimension and Christian social action without an evangelistic dimension". If Bosch was true to his own construction that evangelism is a dimension of mission then he would have had to formulate his critique rather as "to have *mission* without a social dimension and Christian social action without a *mission* dimension". By differentiating mission and evangelism in this way, Bosch is exalting evangelism as a *holistic* lens through which other dimensions/facets of mission are discretely qualified as. It is "pulled into" the core of mission, and can therefore not be a dimension any more (see figure 3.13).
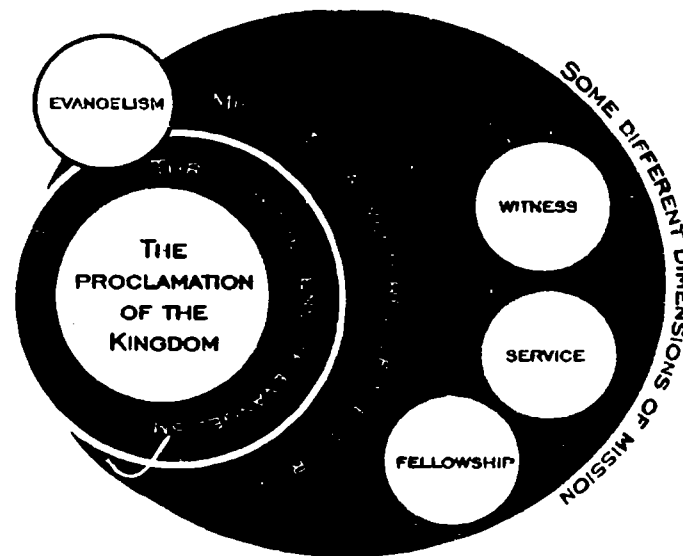

FIGURE 3. I 3

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[64] Bosch (1984:117-178) says that this battle happened, "During the (evangelical) "Consultation on World Evangelization" (COWE) in Pattaya, Thailand (June 1980), some 200 participants signed a "Statement of Concern" in which COWE was criticized for having gone back on the more inclusive understanding of mission expounded at Lausanne (1974). The COWE leadership tried to meet this criticism by including in the "Thailand Statement" a reaffirmation of COWE's commitment to both evangelism and social action. The statement went on to say that "nothing contained in the Lausanne Covenant is beyond our concern, *so long as it is clearly related to world evangelization* [sic.]. The significance of this sentence lies in what it does *not* say, namely that nothing in the Lausanne Covenant is beyond our concern, *so long as it is clearly related to social action*. It does not do so, because the COWE leadership consistently upheld the supremacy of evangelism."

Regarding the relationship between evangelism and mission, Bosch seems to commute between individualism and universalism or, in other words, between absolutisms[65] of respectively the *numerical* and *spatial* aspects of reality. This, to my mind is the reason why he does not really succeed in clarifying Stott's differentiation of individualism[66]. The following quote (Bosch 1991:512), with my explanatory *insertions*, illustrates his tentativeness and commuting from the one aspect to the other:

> We do need a more radical and comprehensive*(spatial)* hermeneutic of mission. In attempting to do this we may perhaps move close to viewing everything as mission *(universalism)*, but this is a risk we will have to take. Mission is a multifaceted *(numerical)* ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more *(numerical)*. And yet, even the attempt to list *(numerical)* some dimensions *(spatial)* of mission is fraught with danger, because we are tempted to incarcerate the *missio Dei* in the narrow confines of our own predilections, thereby of neccesity reverting to one-sidedness and reductionism *(individualism)*.

This problem is an integral part of the mission/missions and evangelism debate, and it can be clarified by means of the philosophical construction utilized above. Because of the one extreme, there is the danger that all of the church will be reduced to mission. Stephen Neill's (1959:81) axiom, that if everything is mission, nothing is mission

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[65] Various *"isms"*, e.g. rationalism, materialism, pietism, moralism and socialism, are found in philosophy and in subject sciences *(vakwetenskappe)*. Such terms — *isms* — denote that one aspect of reality is solely used to describe or translate a certain phenomenon. It is the only pair of glasses we put on. Every aspect of reality has a unique unconvertable own character, and can not be converted into another. All aspects in life cannot be explained *in terms of* say a view special ones. If one contends to use only one (a certain one) aspect to explain reality then we have an *absolutism*. According to Strauss (1987:29 also 7,319) an *ism* develops when "... want sodra alle ander aspekte herlei word tot die sin van één aspek, verloor die een vergoddelikte aspek alle sin, want ons het gesien dat die sin van elke aspek juis tot openbaring kom in die analogiese verwysing na ánder aspekte wat kragtens hul s.i.e.k. [soewereniteit in eie kring] *verskil* van die aspek waarin ons die analogieë ontmoet."

[66] Although Scherer (1987:244) does not use the dimensional differentiation, he also seems to overarch evangelism in relation to the other "tasks" of mission: "'Mission' should be used in the sense of the total activity of the church in preaching, teaching, healing, nurturing Christian communities, and witnessing to the kingdom, including advocacy of justice and service to humanity, while 'evangelization' will be reserved for the specific task of awakening or reawakening faith in Jesus Christ where it no longer exists or has already ceased to exist. Evangelization is a decisive part of Christian mission, but not identical with it."

anymore, is still relevant because it implies a missionary universalism. According to McGavran (cf. Bosch 1979:12), mission then becomes "any good activity at home or abroad which anyone declares to be the will of God". At the other extreme, mission and evangelism end up being used as technical interchangeables for the same thing. Or we end up arguing which came first, mission or evangelism — the chicken or the egg — which is individualistic logic. When we discuss the relation between evangelism and mission in the DRC, we shall see that this overstretching of the scope of evangelism also occurs in the missiological praxis of the local DRC congregation.

3.4.5 A transcending proposal

If we take the best of both Bosch's and Stott's definitions — relating to the mission and evangelism debate — and apply the principles of Kuyper's sphere sovereignty to their function, we are able make a proposal that utilizes both Bosch's and Stott's definitions and clarifies the debate from a different perspective (see figure 3.14).
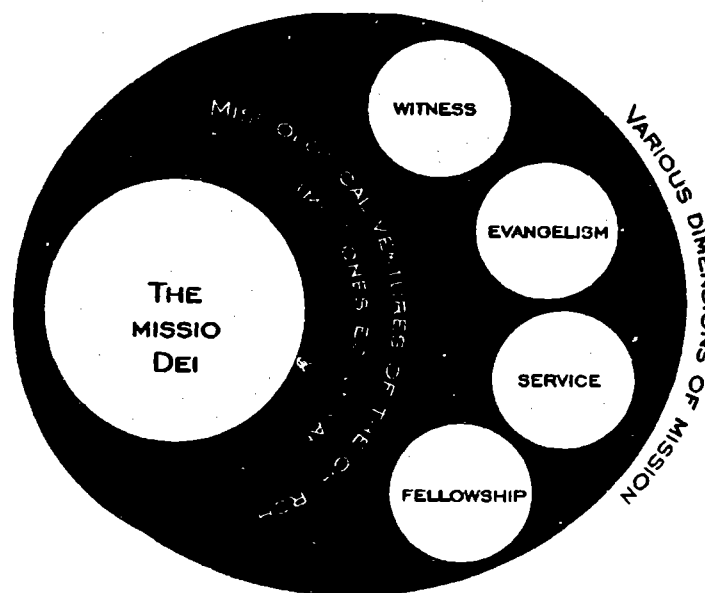

FIGURE 3. I 4

It includes Bosch dimensional differentiation — describing the relation between mission and evangelism through the spatial aspect — but without evangelism superseding other dimensions in a universalistic absolutism. It includes Stott's tabulating of different facets

of mission and adds other aspects/dimensions to it, but corrects the logical consequence of Stott's atomistic absolutism — namely that the missio Dei is merely the sum of all its aspects. The relation between the different dimensions can be articulated in terms of Kuyper's sphere sovereignty, as we will argue below.

3.4.6 Evangelism and Mission in the light of Kuyper's Sphere Sovereignty

Although evangelism and mission as such are not societal spheres (e.g. in school, university, politics, church etc.) in the full sense of the word — as in the Kuyperian tradition — we apply the principles of sphere sovereignty to this debate, since it may enlighten the relationship between evangelism and mission in a creative way and open new relational possibilities for relating it to the *missio Dei*. "Sphere sovereignty" is the central concept in the main tradition of social and political thought emerging from nineteenth-century Dutch neo-Calvinism. The Dutch phrase *souwereiniteit in eigen kring* is literally translated as "sovereignty in own sphere".[67] According to Chaplin (1995:115), a Calvinist cosmology provides the basis for Kuyper's social and political thought. Over against idealistic and monistic theories of the state current in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, which held that the state's sovereignty was in principle unlimited, Kuyper posited the notion that every community or "sphere" within society posesses its own distinctive "sovereignty" over its own affairs — for example with the church as a witnessing, evangelizing or serving community. Absolute sovereignty belongs only to God — which is true for the *missio Dei* — but He delegates particular sovereignties to various social spheres, not mediately but directly. Each sphere — family, locality, church, school, union, business, academy, state, and so on — receives a divine mandate directly from God. Society is an "infinitely complex organism" (Kuyper:1956a:44) comprising a multiplicity of social spheres, each equipped with its own rights and duties, each required to fulfil its own distinctive tasks, and all enjoined

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[67] It was noted initially by Guillaume Groen Van Prinsterer (cf. Vanden Berg 1978:63)), historian and critic of the French Revolution and leader of a group of Protestant members of parliament, though the term received its classic formulation in the numerous writings and speeches of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), theologian, Refomed church leader, political party leader and Prime Minister from 1901-2. Kuyper developed it into the organizing category of a distinctive Calvinistic social theory. The theory was subsequently developed systematically to a high level of philosophical sophistication by Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1975), a professor of law at the Free University of Amsterdam (founded by Kuyper).

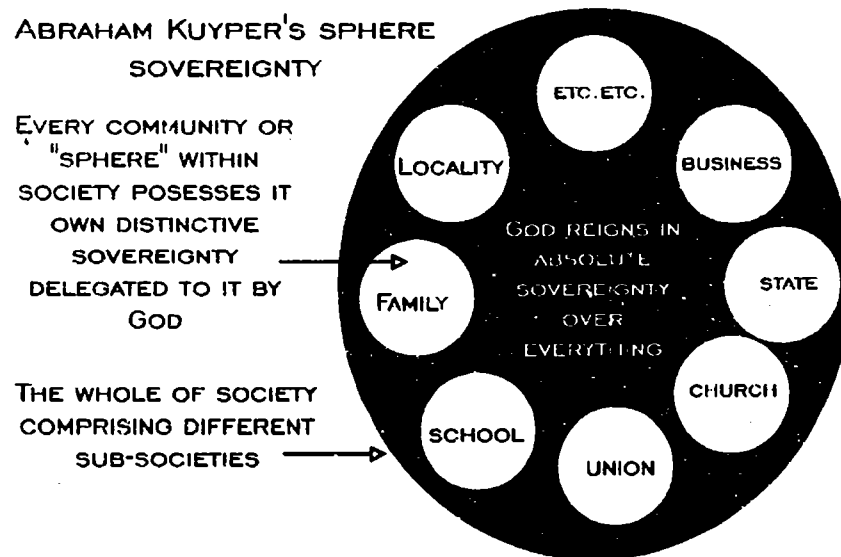to respect the rights and duties of all the others (see figure 3.15).

ABRAHAM KUYPER'S SPHERE
SOVEREIGNTY

EVERY COMMUNITY OR
"SPHERE" WITHIN
SOCIETY POSESSES IT
OWN DISTINCTIVE
SOVEREIGNTY
DELEGATED TO IT BY
GOD

THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY
COMPRISING DIFFERENT
SUB-SOCIETIES

ETC.ETC.

LOCALITY

BUSINESS

GOD REIGNS IN
ABSOLUTE
SOVEREIGNTY
OVER
EVERYTHING

FAMILY

STATE

CHURCH

SCHOOL

UNION

FIGURE 3. I 5

These spheres are not simply juxtaposed to each other — such as Stott's evangelism and social action, but organically linked[68], and this organic bonding is itself part of God's creation design[69]. Dooyeweerd (1979:43) says concerning the principle of sphere sovereignty that it is "a creational principle which is unbreakably connected with the scriptural ground motive (creation-fall-redemption) of the Christian religion. It tells us of the *mutual irreducibility, inner connection,* and *inseparable coherence* of all the aspects of reality in order of time."

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[68] Neither Kuyper nor Dooyeweerd (cf. Chaplin 1995:120) conceives of either the modal aspect or the individuality structures as arranged hierarchically. No social relationship, for example, stands over and above another in divine order, they are equivalent, though irreducibly distinctive. This differs from the Thomist (Catholic) idea of hierarchical subordination of communities to another (eg. Church over State) and degrees of efficiency of one community to another. All lesser communities lack self-sufficiency, but some lack more than others. Chaplin (1995:121) suggests, "that it is exceedingly difficult to operationalize this essentially quantitative notion of self sufficiency. Different communities, precisely because they are qualitatively distinguished from each other, just provide different kinds of help to one another. The corporation offers job opportunities to families, while the family offers mature adults capable of work to the corporation."

[69] For example: The state is sovereign, but only within its own sphere. It is the uniquely public authority, yet it stands alongside other spheres as one divinely ordained institution among many The sovereignty of the state meet its limit in the sovereignty of the other spheres: "within each of the different social spheres, it has no authority; in these spheres other authorities rule which derive their power not from the state but from God. The state — and so all the other spheres — can only recognise or acknowledge the authorities in these spheres " (Kuyper 1956a:45). The spheres are co-ordinately, not hierarchically related to the state and to each other. One of its principal tasks is to protect the sovereignty of other spheres from either internal decay or external encroachment (cf. Chaplin 1995:122).

This could be applied to the different dimensions of the church's mission endeavour. The various aspects mentioned above — which can include evangelism, social action etc. — arise from the single religious root, just as the colours of the rainbow originate in a single unbroken light — the *missio Dei*. Despite their distinctiveness, the aspects cohere and interconnect in the all-embracing order of time. This universal coherence and inter-connection expresses itself in the structure of each aspect." Strauss (1978:11) says:

> Die eenheid en die volheid van Gods wet is saamgevat en gekonsentreer in die religieuse diepte-dimensie (grondmotief) van die skepping en wel in die sentrale liefdesgebod wat aanspraak maak op die liefde tot God en die naaste met die hele hart. As *korrelaat* van die sentrale liefdesgebod ontmoet ons die religieuse wortelgemeenskap van die ou mensheid wat in Adam geval het en wat (antiteties) staan teenoor die nuwe mensheid in Christus (die tweede Adam) wat in beginsel weer verlos is tot 'n God-gehoorsame lewe, hoewel die Christen as verloste sondaar nog steeds in hierdie bedeling *feitlik* sondig. Die religieuse dimensie van die skepping besit derhalwe 'n *wetsy* (die sentrale liefdesgebod) en 'n korrelerende *feitlike sy* (die ou en nuwe mensheid) (see figure 3.16).
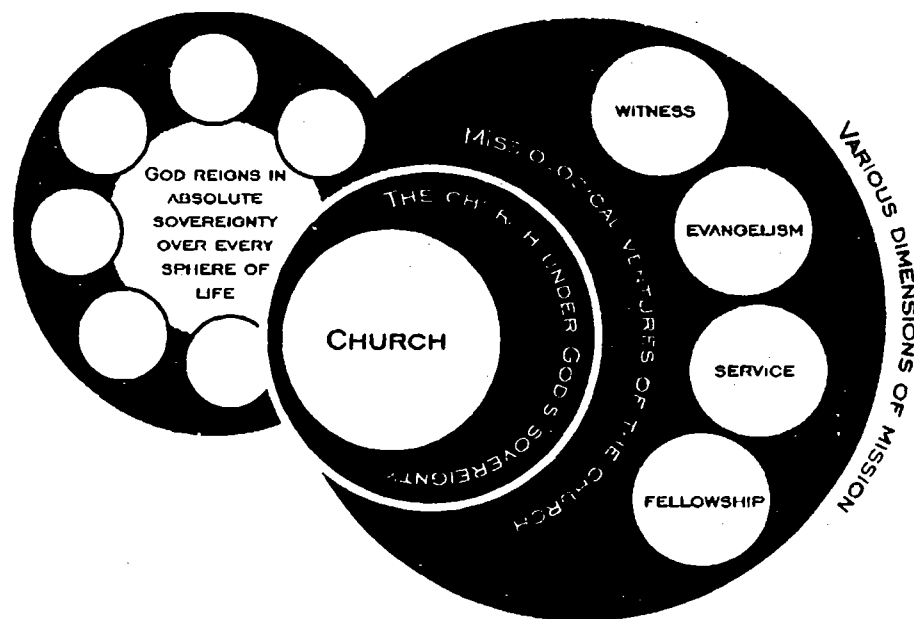

FIGURE 3. 16

In this sense we can speak of the *missio Dei* structurally[70] embodying the *sentrale liefdesgebod* above, which correlates with the *missiones ecclesiae* which are an expression of the "nuwe mensheid" in the midst of the "ou mensheid". *The missio Dei* cannot be defined — everything cannot be the focus of Missiology. Therefore Missiology studies predominantly the *missiones ecclesiae*.

Kuyper (1931:70) conceives of the entire social organism and its parts as standing under a universally valid divine law for the cosmos. He posits a universal order of law within which individuality finds its proper place. This universal law is differentiated into a series of particular "laws of life" *(levenswetten)* or "ordinances". The church as institute is one of the social structures existing in society (see figure 3.15). Each social sphere stands under such a law, which determines its nature and purpose in pursuit of a specific activity (cf Chaplin 1995:118). Strauss (1978:247) says of the church as institute

> ... die skepping besit inherent die struktuurbeginsel van 'n geloofsverband — 'n bo-individuele en bo-willekeurige vertrekpunt wat nadere vormgewing (positivering) kan ontvang in gerigtheid op God of in diens van die afval. Die kerk as instituut is tewens niks anders nie as só 'n op-God-gerigte vormgewing van die normatiewe struktuur van 'n geloofsverband... Kragtens die geloofstempel van die kerk (as Christelike geloofsverband) is die kultiese-godsdienstige bediening van die Woord, sakramente en tug daarin saamgetrek. Dit geskied deurdat die die *geloofsmag* [sic.] van Gods Woord bedien word binne die kader van 'n eie *histo,iese organisasievorm* [sic.].

3.5 Cell Groups — Integrating mission and evangelism

If we apply the abovementioned philosophical construction to the relation between evangelism and mission, we can compile a matrix[71]. It may clarify Bosch's differentiation

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[70] It correlates structurally in the analogous sense of the word. The *missio Dei* cannot be equated to or supercede the "sentrale liefdesgebod" (Matt. 22:34-40), which is undergirded by the creation-fail-redemption ground motive.

[71] According to Vos (1989:187), a matrix is "'n Samestelling van geordende elemente van verskillende aard waarvoor daar 'n nadere verduideliking nodig is."

between *missio Dei* and the *missiones ecclesiae*. Although it does not translate the richness and magnitude of the respective differentiations — for example the *missio Dei*, or what Gensichen (1971:80-95, 168-174) intends with his distinction between a *missionarische* and *missionierende Gemeinde*. It utilizes the principles of Kuyper and Dooyeweerd in another context — as an organizing principle (see figure 3.17).
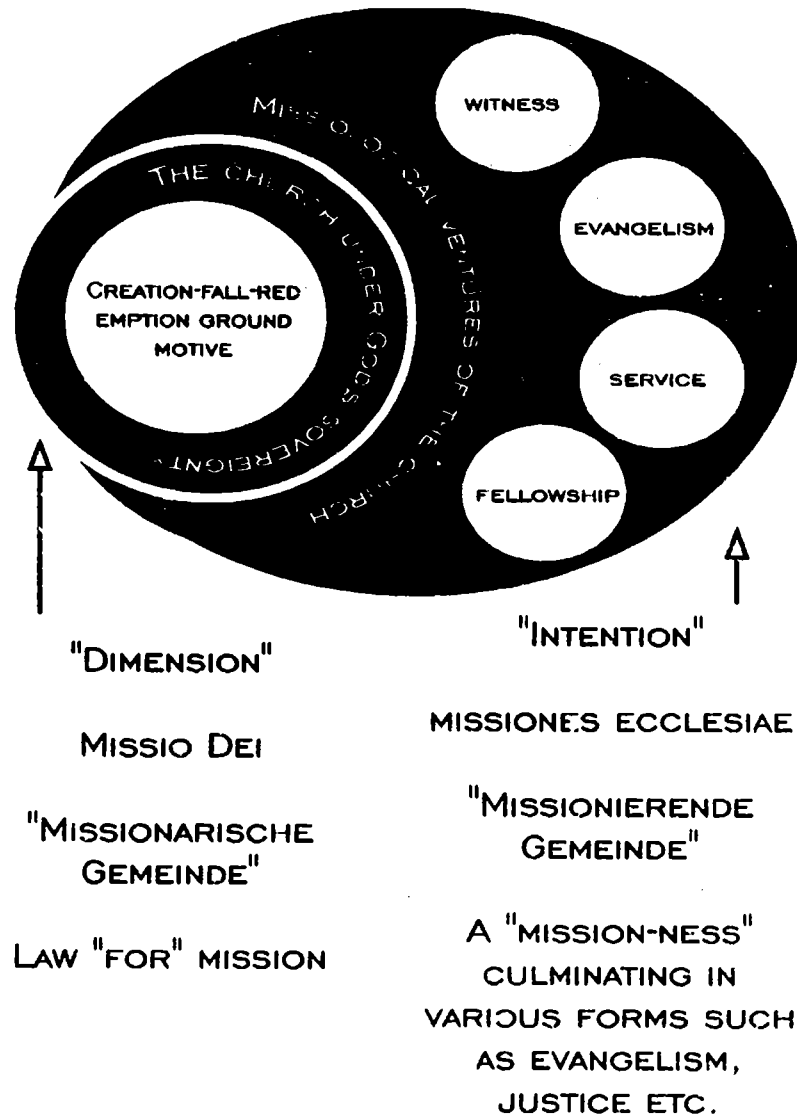

"DIMENSION"

MISSIO DEI

"MISSIONARISCHE GEMEINDE"

LAW "FOR" MISSION

"INTENTION"

MISSIONES ECCLESIAE

"MISSIONIERENDE GEMEINDE"

A "MISSION-NESS" CULMINATING IN VARIOUS FORMS SUCH AS EVANGELISM, JUSTICE ETC.

FIGURE 3. 1 7

Let us explain the terminolgy and the utilization thereof in this proposed integrated framework — figure 3.17. The central religious ground motive (creation-fall-redemption) consists of a *wetsy* (universal law side, e.g. law for the university, state etc.) and a *subjeksy* (particular laws or ordinances-side) (cf. Strauss 1978:11). According to

Kuyper (1931:70 in Chaplin 1995:118), "The universal law is differentiated into a series of particular "laws of life" holding for each dimension of the world. Each social sphere stands under such a law [also the church], which determines its nature and purpose by a kind of inner necessity. This is an internally generated force implanted by the Creator, which inclines human beings to group themselves in certain specific configurations for the purpose of pursuing a specific activity." The law side correlates with the central love command (*sentrale liefdesgebod*, Matt 22:34-40) and the subject side with an expression of that love command (*ou en nuwe mensheid*). For this discussion we may say that the *missio Dei* corresponds with God's universal law for the church as institution — on the law side. On the subject side this culminates in a *missionheit* (mission-ness) describing the practical implications — the *missiones ecclesia* — of the *missio Dei* for the church, such as evangelism, justice, witness, service etc. This is even better explained if we look at what Gesichen explains as *dimension* and *intention*, and *missionarische-* and *missionierende Gemeinde*. Dimension and *missionarisch* correlate with the universal law side, whereas intention and *missionierend* correlate with the subject side. Bosch (1980:199-200) summarizes it as follows: "Everything the Church is and does, says Gensichen, must have a missionary *dimension*, but not everything has a missionary *intention*. To put it differently: the Church's entire nature is missionary but she is not, in all her activities, explicitly aimed at the world. The church must in all circumstances be 'missionary' [*missionarisch*], but she is not in every moment 'missionising' [*missionierend*]... Only a Church that manifests this missionary dimension can also be deliberately "missioning", moving actively into the world."[72]

"Dimension and intention are dynamically interrelated. The one nurtures and stimulates the other" (Bosch 1980:200). Neither dimension nor intention should be emphasised at the expense of the other. In a sense we can say that the universal side correlates with theory, and the subject side with praxis. If one is overstretched at the cost of the other, it results in two extremes — to use Hesselgrave's (1989:157) continuum (figure 3.7). on the one extreme, the mission in the local congregation can either be over-

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[72] Cf. Kritzinger J.J (1988:286) , arguing similarly and utilizing Gensichen's concepts of dimension and intention. His application is a pastoral exhortation to the existing praxis in the DRC.

orthodox and just occupy itself with its apostolic role and just teach truth, with little or no social awareness. Bosch (1980:200) says, when discussing the dimension/intention relationship and the absolutizing of either, that "The purely apostolic approach to the Church is, on close scrutiny, indefensible." On the other extreme, if intention is overstretched, we may end up in liberalism, which occupies itself with syncretistic contextualization and pursuing truth, with little emphasis on the biblical revelation.

I am convinced that the above-mentioned philosophical construction provides a framework in which to understand mission and evangelism more clearly. We have systematically created a missiologically integrated view of the local congregation. This proposes a cell group praxis that integrates mission and evangelism on the local congregation level and establishes a praxis that can be duplicated in the church's immediate "mission field" and reach from there to the uttermost parts of the world, which may include the 10/40 window. The local church should be an integrated missiological unit/sphere. Every cell group is a micro and complete replica of this. The missiological character belongs to the essence of the church. It does not only come into existence when the church ventures into foreign mission. All the church's activities in its Jerusalem have a "missionary-ness" to them, which is duplicated as it reaches out and crosses various boundaries to Judea/Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Wherever and whenever it crosses borders (cf. Bosch 1979:12) in its missionary encounters — locally or globally -- it does so as an integrated missiological unit. The missiological cell group engages in more than evangelism or social action, it includes the whole praxis of the congregation. The missiological gestalt of the cell group is focused on realizing the Kingdom (cf. Padilla 1989:196) of God in every sphere where its members participate in society as Christians, as well as in focused activities where they function and act as an organized cell group. The whole gospel is taken to the whole world, beginning in Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

What then, practically speaking, is the position of evangelism in the whole venture? Ralph Winter (1992a:B157-159) suggested a missionary strategy at the Lausanne (1974) Congress on World Evangelization. Winter (1992b:B181) creatively addresses

the relational problem between mission and evangelism with the following matrix. To my mind it is an apt working definition that is true to the above-mentioned philosophical construction, where evangelism and missions are integrated and stripped of their "here" and "there" connotations.

		Reached People Groups	Unreached People Groups
↑	Cross-Cultural E2, E3	E2. Regular Missions	E3. Frontier Missions
↑	Mono-Cultural E0, E1	E1. Evangelism	

↑   Cultural distance between evangelist and possible convert.

Convert's Distance from

Culturally Nearest Church —→—→—→—→—→—→—→—→—→—→—→—→

E1. Evangelism:	by a same-culture worker, where the missiological breakthrough of a viable church has taken place.
E2. Regular Missions:	cross-cultural evangelism by a different-culture worker, in association with same-culture workers if possible, where a missiological breakthrough has taken place.
E3. Frontier Missions:	here is where cross-cultural evangelism (by a different-culture worker) is essential, since no missiological breakthrough has yet been made.

According to Winter, evangelism is a local monocultural act reaching out from an existing church within the same minisphere, and working to its fringes. As seen in his definitions of Regular and Frontier Missions, evangelism is a repeated action when reaching out. According to Scherer (1987:244), "Evangelicals since Lausanne have used 'evangelization' to refer to both cross-cultural missions (E-2 and E-3) but also to the evangelizing of nominal Christians (E-0) and non-Christians living close to a Christian community (E-1)." Winter succeeds in integrating evangelism in the missionary ventures of the church from local to global encounters with the world. According to the proposed integrated missiological character of the church — and vis-à-vis the cell group — we add besides evangelism various other" intentions" such as witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, fellowship, church planting and contextualization (cf. Bosch 1991:512).

Although Winter does not use mission and evangelism as technically interchangeable terms, he only partially escapes — as seen from the matrix — from the geographical and "target audience" definition of mission and evangelism[73]. He succeeds though in refraining from another trend which (according to Bosch 1979:16) is a growing tendency, namely that mission works less and less with the big unfinished task of world evangelization. So Winter succeeds in integrating mission and evangelism from local to global level. By means of his matrix one can address the problem in the DRC — of culturally/racially and geographically qualifying evangelism and mission creatively (see 3.3, pp. 47-53). With this proposal, evangelism as well as missions — racially and geographical differentiated in the DRC until now — can be corrected, involved and integrated in every missiological venture of the local church. Smit (1993:507) says that the DRC has a great task before it to integrate mission in its praxis, to place mission at the heart of its ministry and not as one of various programmatic ministries:

> Die Ned Geref Kerk het nog 'n groot taak om sending van die periferie na die hart van sy bediening te verplaas — nie een van die vyf tot ses bedieningsterreine nie, maar een van twee; nie die werk van een van sy (kerkraads-) kommissies nie, maar van die hele kerkraad en die hele gemeente; nie een van die opsies vir sommige "vriende" in die kerk nie, maar deel van die bedieningsroeping van elke Christen.

If we integrate Bosch and Stott's definition of mission and evangelism — as argued above — with that of Winter, we have an integrated missiological praxis that starts in "Jerusalem", "Judea" and spreads via "Samaria" to the "ends of the earth." We have argued decisively that the cell group as basic ecclesial community is church at local level. It should in its functioning show this missiologal integratedness, in all the missionary "spheres" (Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, the ends of the earth) in which it involves itself. The missionary activity that is found in "Jerusalem" is duplicated as the church ventures further and further from home. If we then conclude on the diagram

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[73] With object and geographical change we again refer to the fact that evangelism is sometimes denoted as local work, and mission as global work. Mission is working "there" while evangelism is working "here". Mission presumably works with the "unconverted", while evangelism targets the "not converted anymore".

(figure 1.1) drawn in the first chapter, an integrated missiological cell group praxis would look as follows (see figure 3.18).

MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUP PRAXIS — FIGURE 3. I 8
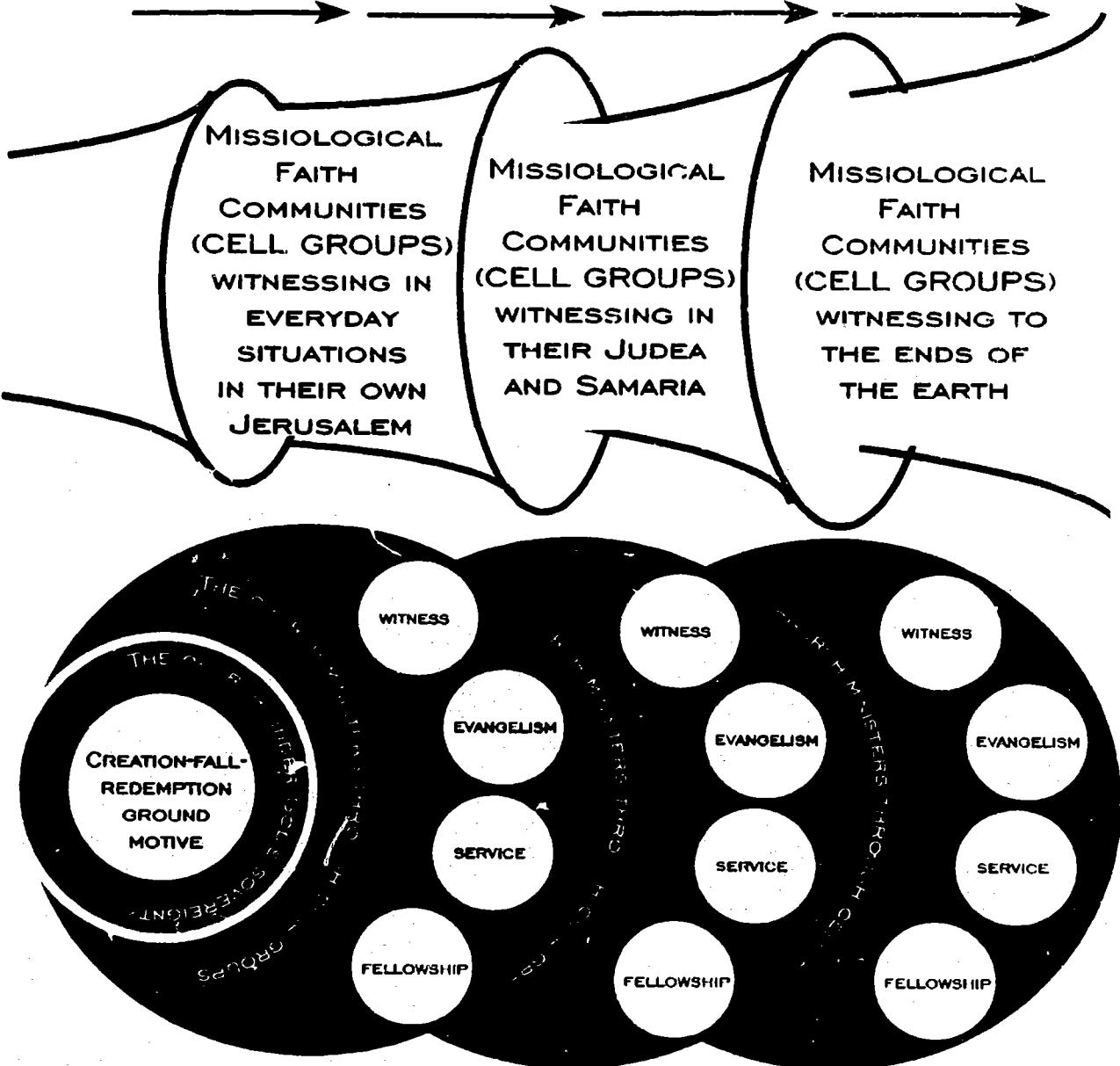
3.5.1 Conclusions from this Reflection

▸ Missiological cell group praxis accounts for the coming of age of believers in the DRC. The church has to face up to the fact that God's incarnate presence in every believer empowers every person as a contributor to God's mission in the world. This contribution is an authentic incarnation of Jesus Christ in the lives of other Christians. It is a "wounded healer" ministry that every believer is to be equipped to do. This true-to-life hermeneutic of God and his revelation through his Word is not subservient and inferior to the contribution that the traditional preacher has made[74].

▸ The DRC has a negative record concerning the formal involvement of basic communities in social change. They have unlearned to hear the voice and needs of the community amongst whom they live. Caring for their "own" has made them slaves to themselves. Since the mainline churches are experiencing a rapid decline in membership, this ingrown-toenail syndrome has to be addressed. A vital small group system, which penetrates the community — meeting the spiritual and felt needs — is the appropriate vehicle to reverse this alarming tendency.

▸ A strategy for the transitioning of a traditional missiologically fragmented DRC with ineffective wards is imperative at this time in history to face the fundamental change in being church which is dawning in the local church.

▸ World evangelization is not a programme to be driven by a local congregation. It is the spontaneous overflow from the heart of the congregation in their Jerusalem. This has to be worked out by the DRC in the "mission field" (Judea and Samaria) of our own country together with former "daughter churches" to be an effective tool to reach further to the ends of the earth.

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[74] Hendriks (1988:53), after assessing the situation in America, suggests the following to the South African Church: "Die pad na kerkherstel is 'n pad van ampsherstel. Die wyse waarop dit moet geskied, is ongetwyfeld geleë in die beginsels van die dissipelskapopleiding. Kleingroepwerk is die basis van dissipelbou."

CHAPTER 4

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUP PRAXIS

The final (fourth) element in the pastoral circle of Holland & Henriot is *planning*. It is during the planning phase in the pastoral circle that appropriate strategies are devised and executed. As indicated earlier (see page 31), planning and action flow spontaneously from the reflection done in the previous chapter which dealt with *reflection*. When venturing into planning there seems to be a conflict of interests. On the one hand the question may be asked: If God is sustaining his Church of which Christ is the head, is it necessary for us to plan? Are we not thereby running the risk of "organizing" God and his dealings with humankind? This may lead to proposing *missiological cell group praxis* as the *only* answer to all of the Church's problems[1] and thereby exalting cell groups as the only group for mediating change in the DRC (cf Beckham 1995:63). If this is the case, the next step is simply to get started: to devise strategies systematically and execute them. On the other hand there seems to be a reluctance to set measurable goals, and keep the church leaders and members accountable. Praxis is viewed as something more mundane than theologizing over a certain problem. In the DRC school in which I stand, an emphasis on praxis is often regarded as pragmatism, which has blown over from America. In reaction to this we may be tempted into theologizing abstractly on *missiological cell group praxis* and eventually just produce a dust-collecting theoria, not thought through to its practical implications. Both these extremes involve a certain view on *theory* and *praxis* and underlying this is what we view as "spirituality for ministry". The effects of the dualistic ground motive (holy versus profane) is clearly evident in these views on praxis. In this chapter we will arrange our planning along the lines of the following sub-themes:

> ▸ A spirituality of the road — indicating the spiritual presupposition for planning

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[1] According to Lobinger (1985:68-75) in discussing the role of Basic Christian Communities in the transformation of society that two questions arise concerning SCC's role in this process. That is, are SCC's a realistic possibility, and will they develop a society-transforming life. Eugene Lapointe respondes (75-78) saying that besides an approach through Small Christian Communities, other methods are also required before the church can be effective in the transformation of sociey.

in the congregation.

▸ A paradigm shift in being church — form the perspective of cell groups.

▸ How to start cell groups in the light of the discipleship process of Jesus Christ, and a proposal to transition wards into cell groups.

▸ The cell group as mission team starting in Jerusalem and centrifugally reaching to the ends of the earth by means of church planting through cell groups.

▸ How to reach the ends of the world — the 10/40 window — without skipping over Jerusalem.

4.1 A Spirituality of the road

We have consistently argued that an integration[2] is needed between theory and praxis. When we therefore venture in this chapter into *planning* we agree on the one hand with Plueddemann (1995:184-191) that

> Whereas measurable objectives are usually trivial and discouraging, it is faith goals which help Christians to focus on the eternal in a world of anarchy. Faith goals are visionary and become a driving and guiding force for ministry. They come from a God of hope, grow out of prayer, seek eternal results, describe qualities rather than quantities and grow out of team ministry.

And on the other hand we agree with Richards & Hoeldtke (1980:398) in *Theology of Church Leadership*, that:

> There is one basic, underlying conviction expressed in this text [*Theology of Church Leadership*]: that Jesus Christ is the living head of the church. Our whole task as leaders in the body of Christ is to bring ourselves and members of the body into a responsive relationship to Him. Our burden has been to explore the New Testament principles that guide spiritual leaders in the church in their allegiance-building task. In our exploration of biblical principles and practices, we've tried to avoid suggesting any "plan" or translating principles into programs. There is no formula that can be applied to a given situation, no five-

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[2] When we accept Freire or Holland & Henriot as framework, then we cannot speak of a *balance* between theory and praxis; praxis is the overarching term which *integrates action* and reflection — or more fully insertion, analysis, reflection and planning.

step program for churches over one thousand. In the place of programs and plans, there is the promise of a daily relationship[3] with Jesus Christ, who Himself must and will guide the process.

In a study on the passages of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians Bosch emphasizes that there is a need for Christians to be involved in the world. Not a flight from, but a serving in the world is expected of the followers of Jesus. "Being spiritual means being in Christ, whether we pray or walk or work. Spirituality is not contemplation over against action. It is not a flight from the world over against involvement in the world" (Bosch 1994:13). When we address the thesis of this study from a planning point of view and suggest strategies to address a new paradigm in missions, we do so with spiritual humility but without evading the challenge of asking hard questions to the praxis of the church and making concrete suggestions.

4.2 A paradigm[4] shift in being church

In Transforming Mission — Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, Bosch (1991: 181-189) utilizes the paradigm theory of Thomas Kuhn (1970) in describing "some relevance it may have for theology". He summarizes the challenge of various changing paradigms to Missiology as follows:

> The point I am making is simply that, quite literally, we live in a world fundamentally different from that of the nineteenth century, let alone earlier times. The new situation challenges us, across the board, to an appropriate response. No longer dare we, as we have often done, respond only piecemeal

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[3] Davies (1992:134-145) in an article, develops the New Testament principles of relationships after discovering that Getz does not do it adequately in Sharpening the Focus of the Church.

[4] By using the term paradigm we refrain from using it merely as an "emphasizing acrostic" and to indulge in popular jargon by using it. According to Bosch (1991:185) the term is a slippery concept. "Kuhn himself has been charged with using the term in at least twenty-two senses in his major work!... he defines a paradigm as 'the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community" (1970:175). Küng uses the concept in the sense of "models of interpretation" (1987:163). T.F. Torrance refers to "frames of knowledge" (cf. Martin 1987:372), van Huyssteen to "frames of reference" and "research traditions" (1986:66-77). Barker lists the definitions of Smith (1975:10), Harmon (1970), Ferguson (1980:26) and he defines paradigms as follows: "A Paradigm is a set of rules and regulations (written or unwritten) that does two things: (1) it establishes or defines boundaries; and (2) it tells you how to behave inside the boundaries in order to be successful."

and ad hoc to single issues as they confront us. The contemporary world challenges us to practice 'transformational hermeneutics' (Martin 1987:378) , a theological response which transforms us first before we involve ourselves in mission to the world (Bosch 1991:189).

At the Third International Conference of Cell Group Churches in Singapore (July 1994), the first session of the conference was devoted to viewing Joel Barker's video on *Paradigms* (1992). From various sessions it was clear that Cell Group praxis constitutes a major paradigm shift in the functioning of the local congregation, and its transformational[5] missiological presence in the world. Neighbour (1990:6) opens his seminal book *Where do we go from here?* with a bold statement concerning the influence of the Cell Group movement on the current church life:

> I am convinced that the traditional church worldwide is being slowly replaced by
> an act of God. Developments taking place today are as powerful as the upheaval
> in 1517 during the time of Martin Luther... It is time for the second Reformation.
> The people of earth have moved into a new era, one which never existed before
> in all history of man. Changes come faster and faster, and the church becomes
> more and more irrelevant to cope with the changes.

George (1994:276) suggests the following of a meta-church[6] that will address the new paradigm: "It's not a church *with* a cell department so much as it is a convention *of* cell groups. It's a church so decentralized that its heart is clearly the cell — the centre of evangelism, discipleship, and pastoral care. It is a church no more similar to a program-based, traditional church than a butterfly is to a caterpillar." Concerning the cell movement, George (277) says further that "In fact what the Holy Spirit wants to do may impact more segments of Christendom than what the Protestant Reformation achieved!

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[5] Lobinger (1985:68-75) discusses the changes that must take place in a church in order to reform it to a desirable model. He groups these changes in two categories, namely changes in participation, and changes in relation of the church to the world. It must become a people's movement in the church.

[6] According to George (1994:277), "Meta-Church thinking examines the degree to which a church has been "cellularized," and its leadership linked. The pure cell church is, in most cases, a bull's eye on the target; the Meta-Church is a perception of how churches are moving toward that bull's eye."

From Orthodox to Anabaptist, from Pentecostal to Lutheran, the notion of a cell-driven church is completely reorienting church leaders' understanding of the nature of ministry."

Bosch (1991:473) says concerning the small/base community phenomenon that it is a "development of momentous significance... It took a very long time before the Christian church discovered that Christ, who turned upside down the hallowed forms of ministry of his time, might perhaps also challenge the established 'theology of ministry' of the Christian church."

4.3 Starting cell groups

We have previously indicated that Jesus utilized a certain discipleship process in equipping his disciples for their ministry (see page 66). Beckham (1994:41, 1995:149-155) utilizes the same format to suggest a strategy to plant a cell group church or to transition a traditional church into a cell group church. As we will see the processes — transitioning and starting — have many similarities.

Beckham (1994:40) contends that five strategic units provide a framework for developing a Cell Church as a new start or existing church. A new start will process through these units from scratch out of nothing. An existing church retrofits these units within an existing framework and structure. These units allow the vision process to be separated into workable elements and periods of time so that an implementing strategy can be developed. Jesus went from unit 1 to unit 4 in 3½ years.

> Unit 1: Team of Innovators
>
> Size: 2 to 3 visionaries
>
> Characteristics: Shared vision, values, skills & availability
>
> Unit 2: Core Leaders
>
> Size: 12 leaders
>
> Characteristic: Shared commitment to the vision and values
>
> Unit 3: Support Network
>
> Size: 70 committed adults (including innovators & core)

Characteristic: Prepared to implement the strategy

Unit 4: Base Congregation

Size: 6-25 cells (120 adults)

Characteristic: Prepared to implement the strategy
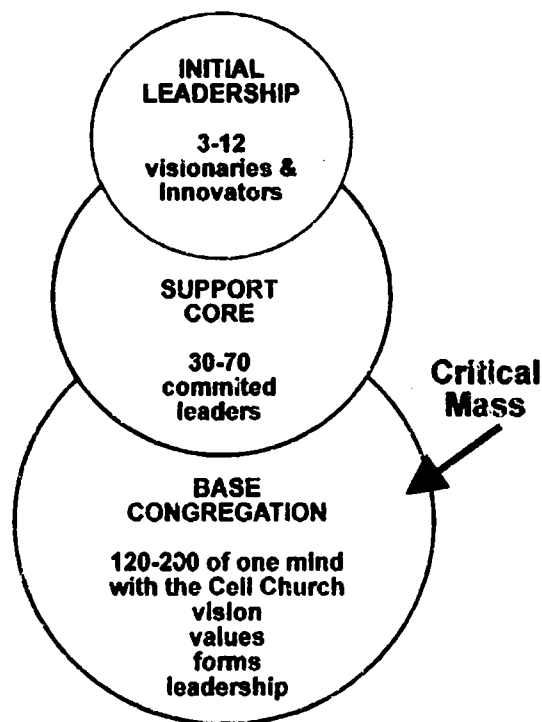
Unit 5: Cell Church

Size: Any number of cell & congregations

Characteristic: Exponential expansion in all areas... numbers, disciples, leaders, ministry, evangelism

The reaching of a critical mass — the base congregation — is the critical point in establishing a cell group church or transitioning another church. Beckham (1994:41) illustrates it as follows (see figure 4.1).

REACHING CELL CHURCH CRITICAL MASS

FIGURE 4. I

The similarities between this process template and Jesus' own method is ~vident. Jesus and his disciples formed the initial core, the other 70/72 disciples sent out by Jesus are the support core of committed leaders, and the gathering of the almost 120 in the upper room before Pentecost forms the base congregation.

The 120 disciples in the upper room were an explosive critical mass because they had the necessary components to be a "self-sustaining chain reaction". It had a *numerical component* — sufficient numbers to allow a chain reaction; a *vision component* — a Kingdom visioi that has focus and passion; a *commitment component* — absolute commitment to Christ; a *value component* — they had faith, the indwelling presence of Christ in their lives, established as a Christian base community, ministry was taking place, gifts were present, they practised servanthood, there was unity, prayer, edification has taken place; a *time component* — there was enough time for the components to interact; a *process component* — the different stages have been built upon each other over three to four years; a *leadership component* — leaders were trained in the crucible of experience; a *structure component* —"new wineskins" were ready to contain "new wine"; and a *power component* — power promised and given by God (cf. Beckham 1994:42). According to Edwards (S.a.) these disciples continued in the lifestyle that Jesus modelled to them and saturated the whole world of their day in one generation (cf Beckham 1995:157-176).

The profile of a Base Congregation according to Beckham (1994:43) should comprise of the following:

- ► They should live together in "one another" cell life
- ► There should be at least ten healthy prototype cells
- ► Every cell should have a leader and an intern (leader in training)
- ► The cells should be ready to multiply[7]
- ► There is a pastoral team that coordinates the church
- ► Interns are produced at every level of leadership

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[7] Cell Groups "multiply", they do not split or divide. The cell gives birth to a new cell. A living organism (cell) cannot split — if you split 1 you get a ½ , split a ½ and you get ¼ etc. If a cell group multiplies, 1 becomes 2, and 2 becomes 4 etc. That is what "exponential" growth means.

- ▸ Leaders oversee cell networks of 3-5 cells
- ▸ Youth and children function with adults in cells[8]
- ▸ Cells are reaching their *oikos*[9] through relationships
- ▸ At least 5 contact groups[10] in operation
- ▸ An equipping track is in place to equip every member[11]
- ▸ Two pastor teams are ready to serve 60 adults
- ▸ Major forces restraining transition have been neutralized
- ▸ Prayer is a personal, cell and congregational lifestyle.

The whole process starts with a catalyst and a start-up cell and moves through the different phases of the template mentioned above. According to Beckham (1994:46), a start-up cell is the building block for starting a Cell Church from "square one" as well for transitioning an existing church. In the start-up cell obedience to Christ is learned, leaders are committed to a common vision, a core group enters into Christian community, New Testament Cell Church concepts are understood, the basic task is experienced, simple implementing strategies are developed, and servant-kind of leadership is practised. From this it is clear that the process template of Jesus is an appropriate process strategy to facilitate a church in planting new cell groups.

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[8] The Old Testament covenant model of family units, where children function with parents in cell groups is maintained.

[9] See Introduction page 6 for a discussion on *oikos* as the "house" in the New Testament. The biblical concept of *oikos* is translated as "household, it is the basic building block of society, it always refers to an intimate community of people, it can refer to a cluster of *oikoses (oikoi)* which make up a larger community. Everyone lives in an *oikos.*, and according to Neighbour (1990, 1994:1) "Anyone we spend 60 total minutes talking to each week... it is face-to-face discussion" qualify to be in your *oikos*. Evangelism must penetrate oikoses (*oikoi*) relationally, it is there where most conversions take place (Luke 10:5-7, Acts 16:31; 11:14; John 5:53) Cf. Neighbour (1990:114-120, 249-251).

[10] Contact Groups is the term used for groups that are formed to meet a special "non religious" need in the community. Cell groups organize in such groups so to address a certain need (e.g. giving Guitar lessons), whereby Christians in cell groups make contact with non-Christian friends. Neighbour (1990:194).

[11] One of the cornerstones of the cell group church is that all equipping is done in and through the cell groups. Neighbour (1993a) compiled a *Journey*, whereby a person is systematically equipped in a relational way over a period of one to three years. It covers all the knowledge essentials which a Christian needs, its addresses his/her value system, teaches relational evangelism skills, covers the whole Bible in short Bible studies.

It is helpful to remark that Hebblethwaite uses a strategy similar to that of Holland and Henriot (pastoral circle) to start cells. According to Hebblethwaite (1993:190-191) starting basic communities "from the street" includes the following strategy:

> 1) Insertion. The pastoral agents must spend time with the people, listening to them, building up trust with them, sharing their hopes and joys, griefs and anxieties with them, before making any plans at all. This process may take months. 2) Responding to social needs. The pastoral agents may then begin to help people organize some activity, in respond to a need that has been expressed. This could be a campaign for civil rights, sports for youth, etc. 3) Responding to religious needs. In due course interest may be expressed in the faith that motivates the pastoral agents, and at this point a religious meeting or class can be started, preferably centred around a contextual reading of the Bible. 4) Bringing together faith and life. Because the social needs have both been responded to, a context is created in which faith and life can continue to feed each other in a "pastoral cycle", or "See-Judge-Act" process. The social events will be supported by values of sharing that come from the Christian basis; while religious reflection will be grounded in everyday reality, rather than floating in the clouds. 5) Maturing. As events become established, gradually the community matures — both the wider community, and the Christian community within it. Slowly the people gain confidence, as they learn to take responsibilities they have never had before. 6) Mission. One of the signs of maturity in a basic Christian community is that people are ready and willing to go out to others in mission. New communities may start, or individuals may go forward for training in ministry.

Whereas Beckham illustrates the process in the launching of a cell church from a discipleship point of view, stressing the exponential nature of discipleship, Hebblethwaite illustrates it from a grassroots-community-involvement point of view. I believe that both these strategies — although not opposing — are needed to establish cell groups that are missiologically integrated. Baranowski (1988) suggests a similar three-phase process that to my mind integrates the two abovementioned approaches.

It expands on Beckham's process which leads to the establishment of a Base Church, from where seven steps address specific issues in adopting and implementing this plan, and takes into account the specific character of a given parish as part of a larger community, and integrates deliberate planning with set goals into this process. He takes seriously the grass-rootedness typical of Hebblethwaite's strategy. Baranowski's strategy — although not intentionally — thereby refrains from what can be called creating a church — a cell church — within an existing church traditional church. We have seen that the whole ecclesial position of cell groups in an existing church can — when mismanaged easily lead to creating an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. Baranowski's (1988:23-39) model consists of the following: "The first phase is a "beginning experience" in a small group with eight to twelve people who communicate honestly and value each other. They have to gather weekly. The goal is to foster a sense of belonging to the group and to help members develop their skills." The second phase or "second experience" is focussed on prayer. The group spend at least eleven sessions learning to pray alone and together. In phase three the group begins to identify itself specifically as "church". By now, a group member has received pastoral facilitator training from the parish staff. This pastoral facilitator connects the small community to the larger parish. The group meets regurlarly and functions as a "base church" Baranowski (1988:27), suggests seven basic steps to get started on the gradual process to a restructureds parish:

1) Identify key people/form a core team.

2) Assess your parish

3) Start with the experience.

4) Include several area parishes.

5) Start small and set realistic goals.

6) Color the entire parish with your vision.

7) Commit to consistent leadership.

Mission is not "far away", but starts in the immediate community. This corresponds with our definition of missiologically integrated cell group praxis in the previous chapter. When discussing the transition process we inevitably venture into the wide field of

church management. It is not the scope of this study to evaluate all possible church organizing charts and management systems. We utilize the proposals of Beckham, George, O'Halloran and Hebblethwaite to illustrate that planning to integrate mission and evangelism — and for that matter any other *intention* of the church — into cell life is imperative for the local congregation if it wishes to fulfil its calling in the world.

4.4 Transitioning wards into cells

The transitioning of the ward system such as in the DRC — or for that matter any existing small group system in a mainline church — into a cell group system is certainly a great challenge for any church. Is it achievable in a traditional system? Can "new wine" be poured into "old wineskins" (Matt 9:17)?[12] Should the ultimate goal be to convert all small groups into cell groups, or can different small group systems exist alongside each other? We have argued in this study that fundamental theological change in the DRC's small group functioning concerning its social awareness (mission/evangelism), priesthood of the believer and holistic discipleship through small groups, is needed to establish the new paradigm in the local church. The cornerstone of the DRC's small group system is the existing ward system, which is maintenance-oriented. Our contention has been thus far that different kinds of small groups can exist alongside each other and that the cell group praxis is a philosophy that should undergird these different small groups in the process of creating a new tomorrow for the church. When we propose a transitioning process it may include all these small groups, but may include certain critical points of transition and change in existing church functioning to change to a cell philosophy. The intricate relationship between maintenance and transformation is what Schaller (1991a:125-133) discusses in the question :"Tradition or market?" He utilizes the marketing strategy of Theodore Levitt (1962) to indicate — as applied to the church — the difference between tradition-oriented and market-oriented churches and suggests a long-range planning committee within the organization as a tool to facilitate the necessary changes. Schaller

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[12] After 14 years of ministry in the DRC, Rev Christo Nel in Potchefstrroorr resigned to start a Reformed Renewal Congregation based on the cell group philosophy. He argues that the reformation required in the DRC concerns both structural change, and theological change — as far as the work c f the Holy Spirit, the priesthood of every believer and smallgroup discipleship is concerned — to bring about the momentous changes needed when moving into Cell based church.

(1991a:130) says: "This perspective calls for focussing on the needs of the consumer of the services or program, not on the producers needs... This is a difficult expectation to place on the tradition-bound church which finds it easier to attempt to perpetuate yesterday than to create a new tomorrow." He suggests a long-range planning committee consisting of people who are highly competent in initiating planned change from within an organization.

According to Baranowski (1988:1-4) there should be a dynamic relationship between programmes, relationship building and spiritual experience, and that the church needs to restructure to embody this in small group life:

> Rather than adding more programs and activities in an attempt to reach people, the time is here to look at the way the parish brings people together in the first place. Is the present parish structure effective for what a parish is meant to do?... Parishes need to restructure because parishes, as we now have them, are ineffective... Another continuing trend is toward large parishes where staff people specialize in education, worship or outreach — and this specialization can easily become compartmentalization. As a result, parishes can have many activities without having a specific, clear-cut and workable plan for bringing people together to reinforce each other... to live a gospel life-style. The way we come together as church is primary. That is what teaches us — not simply our programs. Faith and love are experiences. The more these experiences are shared — and this can happen only in a small group — the more people notice God and God's call to be a church for one another.

Beckham and Neighbour point out that the main difference between the traditional church and the cell church is that the traditional system is a programme-based[13] design. Ralph Neighbour utilizes this concept as an umbrella term for a methodological framework that has become part of most churches. Neighbour (1990:47) says of the

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[13] Except when used otherwise in quotes we use the American spelling *program* only for computer programs, otherwise we utilize the Brittish spelling *programme* .

"Program Base Design" (PBD) that it "doesn't build *people* on the foundation of Christ; it only builds *programs*. The assumption is that the programs are necessary to build people, but it doesn't achieve this goal!" According to Neighbour the programme based design has the following characteristics.[14] It seeks to find specialists to direct different programmes — the *Pastor-Specialist*. The Pastor is so busy in the church's programmes that he has no time left to make contact with unbelievers and impact their lives in a relational way. Specialists in the congregation come from *outside* the congregation, and are not recruited as in the Pauline model inside the church (cf. Allen 1956). "Specialists involve no more than 15% of the total members as working volunteers, the balance of the members are expected to attend the many functions which have been arranged for them... The P.B.D. church does not provide the all-important *koinonia*, or "fellowship", needed to create true community, lifestyles where people build up one another." The relations are functional and are centred around certain meetings or functions to be fulfilled. "The *programs* insulate members from each other. When they meet, it's in the neutral setting of the church building. Each encounter is carefully *programmed... There is no community in the P.B.D church structure.*" (Neighbour 1990:51). It is clear that the transitioning of small groups in the church does not address this problem comprehensively, but it is the main starting point (basic ecclessial point of departure) to introduce the fundamental change needed to transition into a cell system. As we have indicated earlier (see chapter 2), the introduction of a cell system into an existing ward system poses a possible threat to existing structures, both managerial and ministerial.

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[14] Cf. Malan Nel's critique (van Niekerk 1996) on the cell system according to Neighbour.

Beckham (1994:35-39) proposes a wider understanding of this potential conflict and suggests a certain process[15]. If we apply it to the transition of the ward system to a cell system it looks as follows (see figure 4.2).
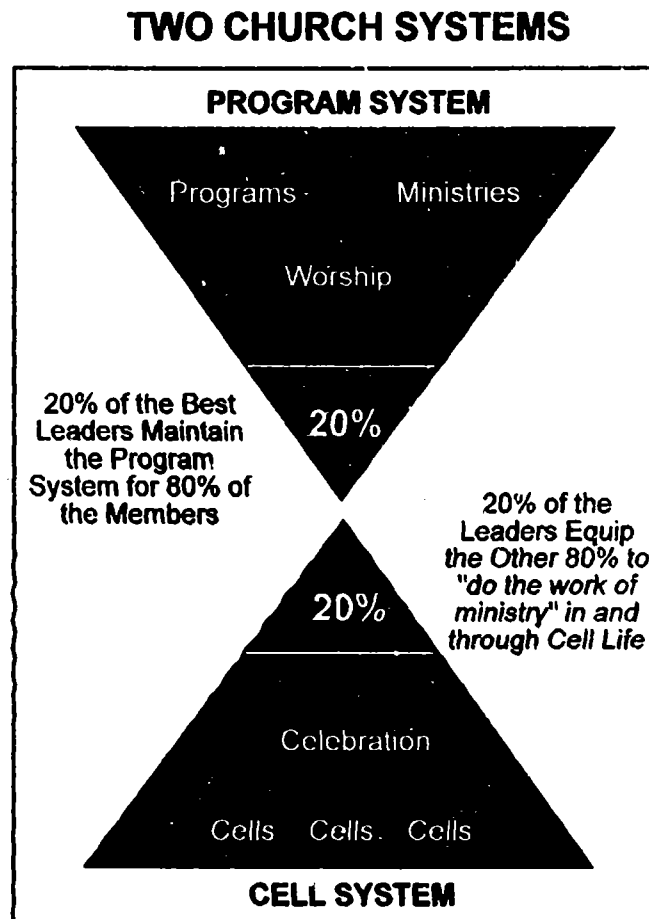
TWO CHURCH SYSTEMS

FIGURE. 4.2

The cell system and programme system differ in their approach to ministry. In the programme system 20% of the best leaders maintain the various programmes of the church for the other 80% of the congregation. In the cell system 20% of the leaders equip others "to do the work of ministry" according to Ephesians 3-4. "To place these two systems together intact will result in overload. Leaders who represent 20% of the church must now oversee two complete different systems. Existing programs and ministries compete with the cells and visa versa. This is a strategy that will end in

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frustration and disaster. Some kind of transition process is necessary for a Program System to become a true Cell System." (see figure 4.3). The main overlap concerns the
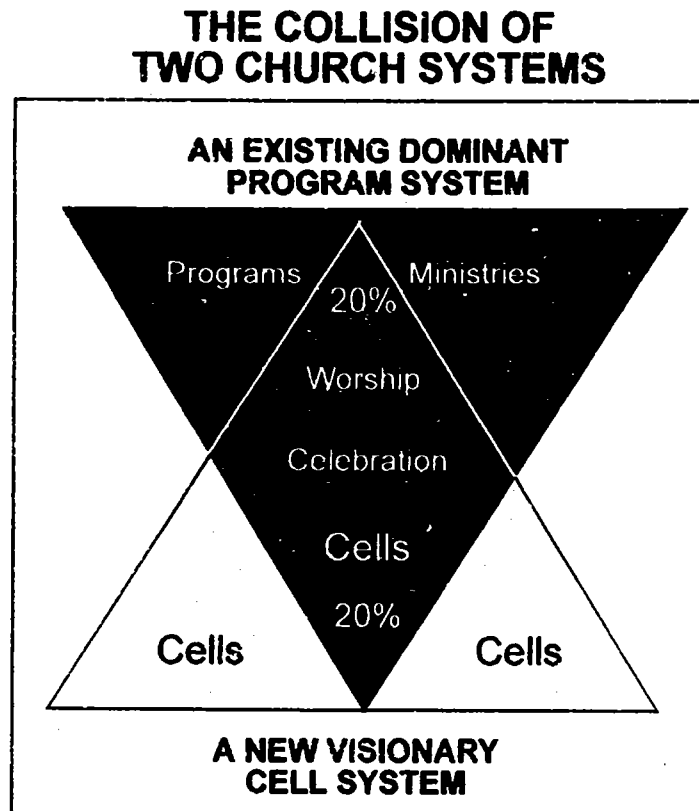
THE COLLISION OF
TWO CHURCH SYSTEMS

AN EXISTING DOMINANT PROGRAM SYSTEM

Programs   Ministries
20%

Worship

Celebration

Cells

20%

Cells   Cells

A NEW VISIONARY CELL SYSTEM

FIGURE 4.3

overlap in leadership and worship. A conflict arises in the leadership.[16] The leadership in the congregation are permanently between two fires. On the one hand there is — on the programme side — the presence of many programmes and ministries that must be maintained. For the purpose of this study it includes the evangelism groups that

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[16]Besides having to maintain to different styles of community (cells and wards), two worship styles are also to be created and maintained. Pastors — especially in the DRC — are often taken up in the conflict between those in favour of the more "lively" style of worship that addresses the cognitive, affective and conative aspects of worshippers, and the more cognitively oriented tradional style of worship. The worship in the cells are in a different "mode" to the traditional worship in the average mainline congregation. This implies that a potential conflict emerges between the styles of worship in the cell group celebration — when all cell groups gather for celebration — and the traditional liturgical Sunday services. Churches worshipping in the Pentecostal and Charismatic styles seem not to have this difficulty. It needs to be researched if their somewhat smoother transition into a cell church is because there is no conflict in the worship styles in the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches between their cell worship and celebration worship.

specialize in outreach, various commissions of the church council that attend to the building up of the congregation, and the missions commission which is solely responsible for missions work, and the ward system that is maintenance- oriented. On the cell side, on the other hand, there is the absence of cells through which ministries can be integrated and effectively implemented. Beckham suggests that the
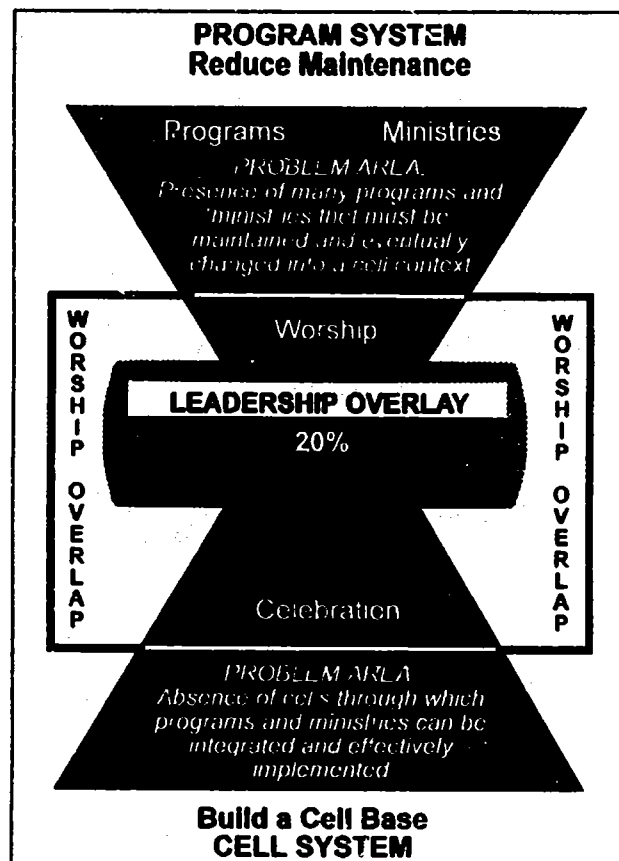
PLACES TO BEGIN

FIGURE 4.4

maintenance on the programme side should be reduced, while the cell system should be built[17]. To create more cell groups into which the ministries and programmes of the church could integrate into (see figure 4.4). Somewhere during this transition process, a decision has to be made as to the co-existence of wards or the termination of them.

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[17] This strategem implies that the wards are eventually to be phased out. This causes tremendous strain in the DRC. To expect church council members to endorse a policy that challenges their position on the council — "to phase themselves out of business" — is to cause a wildfire. Their instantaneous reaction is: How are we going to minister to members in the ward system, who are on the church's membership roll. This brings the whole debate of the ecclesial position of the 'office' of the elder and that of cell leaders as church council members to the fore. Cell leaders who are primarily shepherds tend to be reluctant to serve on the church board as *managers*.

It may differ from congregation to congregation. If the maintenance of the ward system is constantly reduced, the congregation will somewhere reach a point in its transition where the wards will be non-existent anymore. At this stage the managerial system should be in place. Visiting the Singaporean Cell church we observed no conflict in this ministry and managerial aspects in the church. The ministerial side of the church consists of a pyramidal structure, or what George calls the Jethro I and II model (cf. 1991:121-125, 1994:54-61, Exodus 18). At the bottom of the piramid we have a broad base of cell leaders ("leaders over ten"). For every 3-5 cells their is a zone supervisor ("leader over fifty"), and for every five zone supervisors there is a zone pastor ("leader over 250"). In the Singaporean model, cell leaders and zone supervisors are lay people. Zone Pastors are full time staff members, and are represented on the church board — as they refer to it. The church board consists predominantly of — besides representation of the ministerial side of the congregation — other specialists such as finance, manage and equipping specialists etc. The offices of elder and deacon correspond with the zone supervisor and cell leaders respectively. We do not have the space to argue this system and it is not in the scope of this study, except to say that the cell system challenges the DRC " theology" of the "offices" of elder and deacon (cf. van Eck 1991)[18].

FINAL INTEGRATION INTO A CELL SYSTEM

THE RESIDUE OF PROGRAM SYSTEM

Programs   Ministries

Leaders

Streamline or Integrate Programs into Cell Structures

Streamline or Integrate Ministries into Cell Structures

Worship

Cells   Cells   Cells

CELL SYSTEM

FIGURE 4.5

According to Beckham (1994:38), "Integration of a Program System into a Cell System takes place at three points: Leadership, Worship, Programs and Ministries (see figure 4.5). Leadership and worship are points of affinity between a Program System and a Cell System. It
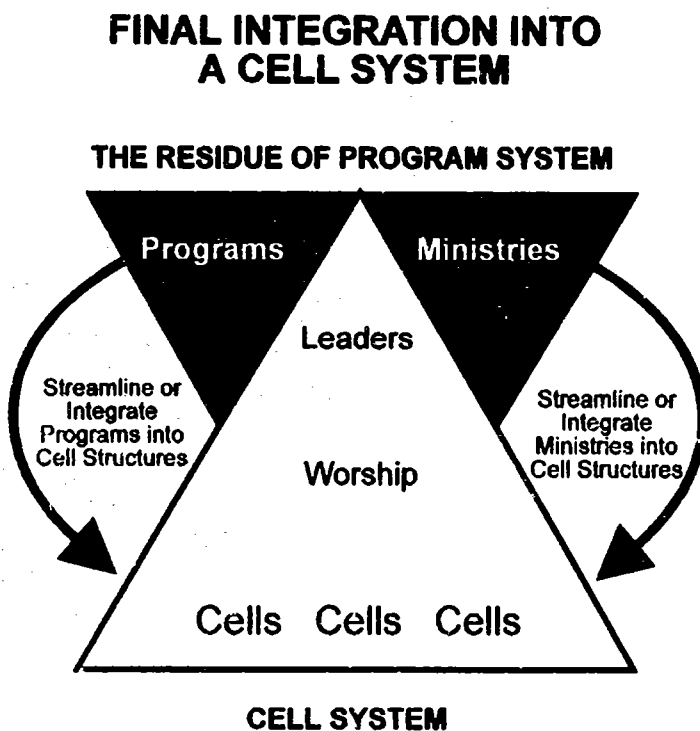
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[18] George (1991:135ff) provides a helpful tool to integrate management and ministry, with his *vision, huddle* and *skill* management system.

is at the point of programs and ministries that integration finds its most difficult challenge. The tasks performed in the programs and ministries must be incorporated into the cell context as soon as possible."

CELL CHURCH

20% of the Leaders Equip the Other 80% to "do the work of ministry" in and through Cell Life

Leaders

Celebration

Cells   Cells   Cells

Every task, inside and outside of the Church, is fulfilled in and through the Cell System. This simplifies, integrates and multiplies the ministry of the Church
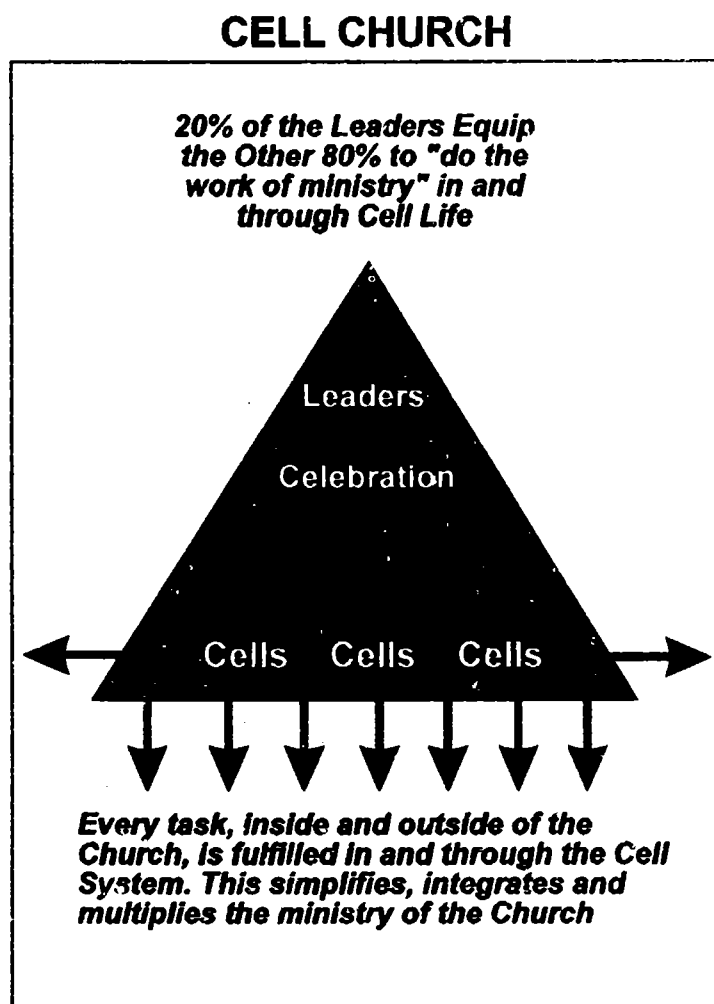
FIGURE 4.6

This then leads to the final integration into the cells of all the ministries of the church (see figure 4.6). Evangelism and mission are then incorporated into the cell life, from the grassroots level. There may exist other programmes in the local congregation, but they exist primarily to equip the cells in their functioning. Relations in the cells are foundational for the existence of other programmes and are more important than programmes (cf. George 1994:62).

The value of this process proposed by Beckham is that it stresses that evangelism and mission should eventually be integrated into cell group life. The cell groups accept responsibilty for their involvement in their local environment.

Baranowski (1988:13) says appropriately:

> Small-group experiences are already renewing the church all over the world[19]... this vision [is not] just another — albeit "better" — program for small church communites... What is unique in the small groups we talk about is that they do not remain mere small groups. They become *church* at a new, more basic level. And the pastoral plan for moving a parish in this direction is not just another program that the parish embraces *this year*. It changes the very way parishioners come together to be church for each other and for the world and, in the process radically changes — restructures — the parish forever.

4.5 Cell group as mission team

On the question of what is a mission group? Cosby (1975:54,63) answers as follows:

> A mission group is a small group of people (five to twelve) concious of the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives, enabling them to hear the call of God through Jesus Christ, to belong in love to one another, and to offer the gift of their corporate life for the world's healing and unity... The mission group embodies the varied dimensions of Church. It is total in its scope. It is both inward and outward. It requires that we be accountable to Christ and to one another for the totality of our lives.

According to George (1994:173), "Meta-Church thinking puts a high priority on the multiplication of small units led by people with a passion to serve human need". The cell group is the basic ecclesial community in the church. It is the primary missionary nucleus — in whatever community (Jerusalem etc.) it may involve itself. Marins (1989:50-53) says that the mission team consists of various aspects and role players:

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[19] Excellent programs exist all over the world for small group activity. According to Baranowski (1988:13) " RENEW is probably the most successful and widespread English-language format for small faith-sharing groups in parishes."

(1) It is a process whereby the grassroots community adapt to the "rhythm and customs of ordinary people, it is personalized and individualised, "much like the artisan who never creates two objects alike." (2) Further, it consists of grassroots communities (cells) "reflecting on reality with a critical conscience and in the light of the gospel, trying to go beyond external appearances to grasp the deeper reality there. [And] seek to formalise, through attitudes and immediate projects, the applications that the faith demands in each situation; and connect the people with the broader levels of the Church." This mission team emulates as a network of communities functioning in the local congregation.

Recently (May 1996) the Faith Community Baptist Church in Singapore sent out a thousand of its members on short term missionary outreaches all over the world. These members functioned as cell groups. They were missionary communities sent into the community of the world. Various South African churches were fortunate to host these visiting cell groups. We do not have the space to discuss the details of the team of seven's two week stay, but only to mention that they to our mind effectively succeeded in modelling an integrated *missiological cell group praxis* concerning mission, evangelism and social awareness by means of a basic Christian community.

O Halloran (1991:127) suggests a planning strategy for basic communities' involvement in mission: "Planning entails understanding the religious, political, social and economic realities of a situation as the ordinary people see them." This micro-involvement of the basic community with its community corresponds with the macro-structure of this study, which is along the lines of Holland and Henriot's pastoral circle of insertion/experience, analysis, reflection and planning. O'Halloran (1991:138-140) suggests seven steps whereby a small Christian community can involve itself with the needs of the community among which they live and work, and every step or phase of the planning process, will be done in the light of the Word of God and Church documents.

- The first step is: The team positions itself. This means that the members take interest in the whole environment of their area. This involves a preliminary survey to get to know the place better: considering climate, physical features,

means of transport, means of social communication, social and cultural factors. The team writes up the results of this initial inquiry and draws a detailed map of the place.

- The second step is the approach. The team converses with various neighbours on matters touching their lives and draws up a first list of problems. The team members identify and strive to eliminate any bias they themselves may have.

- The third step is the first meeting at grass-roots. The team members meet with those fellow residents with whom they have conversed so far — to involve them more. They present the first list of problems for their consideration, and help them to be objective — trust is built up through patient dialogue. A second more authentic list of problems emerges.

- The fourth step is the second meeting at grass-roots. The team strives anew to eliminate any bias they themselves may have and help people grow acquainted with one another. A second grass-roots meeting facilitates these goals — the number of participants is greatly increased, so as to be adequate and representative. Those taking part reflect on the second list of problems — adding, dropping and altering items. They work in groups and pool ideas in a general assembly. A still more authentic list of problems emerges. Generative problems (those that give birth to others) are identified.

- The fifth step is the examination of problems. Together with those neighbours who took part in the first grass-roots meeting, the team searches out root causes of the problems. It would be good to involve qualified persons, if available at this stage. The sixth step is the analysis of systems . The team and its associates consider how society is organized. This brings them into contact with oppressive structures which can only be effectively dealt with in their root causes.

- The seventh step is an overall view. Looking beyond their own area, the team and its associates see that oppressive structures prevail throughout the world. We must organize in small groups, relate to one another, make our little crack in the Wall. Resulting from this the team and its associates know the reality, have an integral world vision, feel a need to organize, have made a realistic assessment of resources, have explored imaginative ways to multiply resources,

and have gained spirituality, and are ready to plan. They now decide on priority objectives (four or five) and priority targets (approximately two for each object), which they programme for action[20]. The objectives and targets remaining are filed for future consideration. There has to be resolute implementation and frequent evaluation of the plan. There must be the necessary updating. A team takes responsibility to see that all this is done. But success depends on the team involving all people whom the plan touches in its implementation.

4.6 Church planting by cell groups

Creating new social units for belonging involves the planting of new churches. According to McGavran & Arn (1977) the planting of new churches utilizes one of the most effective tools for reaching the unreached. Schaller (1991:20) says that "church planting... continues to be the most useful and productive component of any denominational church growth strategy."[21] George (1994:174) says that "The secret to the expansion of Christianity is to deploy more laborers. It's a harvester-based approach." To prepare more harvesters is to prepare more care leaders. These care leaders are equivalent to a cell leader and the church planting starts predominantly with the planting of a cell group in an area where a special and distinctive need can be met. George (1994:175) says that "An existing church has two inherent limitations to reaching its community: (1) Its already-defined 'personality' characteristics open a door to only one segment of the total potential market, and (2) its existing location determines the distance from which it can draw people. Both these limitations can be overcome by the planting of new churches; each church planter will develop a church with a different personality in a different location. According to Cosby (1975:63), specific small groups can also be utilized as mission groups — to receive special training as a possible missions group. This does not mean that mission is relegated to these groups, but they exist to equip members already in small groups "who sense

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[20] According to O'Halloran (1991:139) an objective is "a wide statement of the goal one wishes to achieve." A target is "a statement which contains a more practical forging out of the objective." The programming of the target is "making a target still more practical and precise with regard to persons, places, tasks and resources."

[21] George (1994:334) cites various authors that stress the importance of church planting

Christ's call to belong to such a group."

4.7 Not skipping over Jerusalem to the 10/40 window.

We indicated earlier (see page 8) that reaching the unreached people groups in the 10/40 window is a possible focus for the local church's missionary endeavors. It involves a corporate orchestrated attempt to focus the efforts of the Church to bring the Good News to every unreached people group on earth. This focus can easily turn into a triumphalistic approach to the year AD 2000, which understands "foreign mission" solely in terms of the 10/40 window. And by doing that neglecting or skipping over the vast mission fields existing and re-emerging in various communities and nations. Nevertheless it provides a systematic and planned approach to world evangelization, and has the value that it has an ecumenical incentive. The contention of this study is that reaching unreached people groups — in the 10/40 window for that matter — can be done by translocating equipped cross cultural communities (cell groups) from a certain "Jerusalem" (see page 1) via "Judea and Samaria" and "to the ends of the earth". Foreign mission — focussed on the 10/40 window — can only succeed if done simultaneously at home by the local congregation. In the DRC in South Africa — and probably wider — that implies that the missionary zeal of certain "White" churches must be tempered and balanced with a cell group missionizing (*missionierend — Gensichen*) in our local "mission field" in a missiologically integrated way. This mission field includes existing White churches and the former Black "Daughter" churches and other surrounding communities such as the Indian and coloured comunities[22].

This brings the current unification process between the DRC and the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa to the fore. Grassroots missiological cell group praxis in the local DRC's Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria has to contribute to the unification process, in bringing together communities at grass roots level — not predominantly by programmed organization but by organic interaction — in creative relational ways. According to Pauw (1996:208) in an evaluative case study of the ecumenical movement at grass roots level in South Africa says,

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[22] Cf. Kritzinger J.J (1988:282-285) for a detailed assessment of the South African "mission field"

Unity belongs to the essence or being of the church and not merely to its well-being. For that reason the ecumene is a matter of vital importance for the church. The ecumenical movement is and has for a long time been an expression of this search for a greater and more meaningful realisation and experience of such unity. But when the ecumene is only exercised between church or denominational leaders and when the ecumenical movement largely manifests itself at national or international level, something is wrong.

Bosch (1991:467) says, "Unity is not an optional extra. It is, in Christ, already a fact, a given. At the same time it is a command: 'Be one!' We are called to be one as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one, and we should never tire of striving toward that day when Christians in every place may gather to share the One Bread and the One Cup." (cf Crafford and Gous 1993:35,) and Wainwright (1983:215) that stresses that unity must find a "local embodiment", for it is there that disunity is most apparent and where the quest for unity arises in various forms such as "united worship, mission and decision-making. "According to Pauw (1996:223), "It has been said that the lithmus test for the ecumenical movement is what happens where local churches live and minister."

The proverbial, 'they who pray together, stay together' — usually applied to married couples — is also true of grass roots level church unity. Ed Silvoso (1994) describes a mighty evangelical movement in Latin America. According to this strategy — resutling in whole cities coming to Christ — pastors in a certain town start to pray together for the reaching of whole cities — some up to 300 000 people. The pastors committed themselves to a Kingdom vision concerning the reaching of their city. This resulted in the development of a prayer network by all the respective congregations, that "covers" every house in the city with prayer. This prayer network is organized through "lighthouses" that are established all over the city by the respective congregations. Through these lighthouses eventually every person in the community is prayed for and blessed. This leads to the people in the lighthouses lovingly reaching out to those they are praying for. These lighthouses function as basic Christian communities born out of a united effort of the local churches loving everybody in their lighthouse vicinity. On a

given day after a long time of prayer and tender loving care for those who are prayed for, a day of Good News is announced. The whole community, Christian, and non-Christian get word that on this Good News day everybody in the commuity will receive a present. When this day eventually dawns all the lighthouses simultaneously reach out with the gospel to the people whom they have "cultivated" for months with loving care and prayer. These basic communities then harvest the great harvest the Lord has prepared. This sometimes leads to virtually a whole city turning to the Lord[23]. The respective converts are channelled to the various churches which organized the lighthouses in their area. The importance of this movement is that it stresses the importance of missiological cell groups starting in their Jerusalem by meeting the felt needs of the community amongst whom they live, irrespective of language and culture. Ed Silvoso has recently been in South Africa and we are already seeing individuals carrying this vision into pastoral fraternals, and creating fraternals for the purpose of proclaiming the unity of the Church and strategizing accordingly[24].

4.8 Conclusion.

I fully agree and have a similar experience as Arthur Baranowski (1988:20),

> Bringing the people of your parish together in small basic communities is not the only way to be church. I am, however, convinced that it is the most effective way... (1) small basic churches are possible in most, if not all, parishes; (2) the average pastor or staff person is capable of effecting this parish restructuring; (3) restructuring your parish into small communities is well worth the effort. Calling people together to be church for each other is hard work and demands

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[23] It spite of the claim to be ecumenical, this approach is probably (at least a bit) guilty of un-ecumenical praxis, since a Latin American city is simply assumed to be lost, until people join "lighthouse-type" groups. Although not intentionally, it may view large Roman Catholic parishes in such a city as "lost".

[24] In Vryheid there has been a Wednesday fraternal meeting averaging between 10-12 denominations for more than fourteen years, which was established when people started to pray for unity amongst the churches many years ago. Recently another fraternal has come into existence involving predominantly traditional Reformed churches. The Wednesday fraternal has been exposed to this ecumenical base community miracle, shortly after Ed Silvoso published his book. Recently after him visiting South Africa this vision has taken on a new impetus. We pray and trust the Lord for a migthy revival in his time and in his way, and we believe that the strategy of Ed Silvoso will enthuse various congregations into a real base ecumenical movement, and that this will give a real witness of unity between the DRC and its former daughter churches, and even stretching wider than that, testifying about to power of the missiological power of cell groups.

a steady effort over many years. There are no magic or immediate results. But the process is worth our best efforts, for through it parishioners revitalize each other, the staff and the parish in an ongoing way.

Stearns (1991:177) provides a diagram to illustrate the local church's commitment to reach the entire world from the perspective of people groups. It provides an integral local missiology uniting and embracing all programmes by a clear vision to reach the entire world. According to this, the local congregation should bless (Genesis 12:1-3) its own people group, equipping this and other reached people groups to become sending churches, and by this reaching unreached people groups. If we apply this to a local congregation functioning as a cell church, the figure would look as follows (see figure 4.7). This provides an apt summary of the central contention of this study regarding the missiological cell group praxis in the local congregation, utilized as a vehicle contributing to world evangelization.
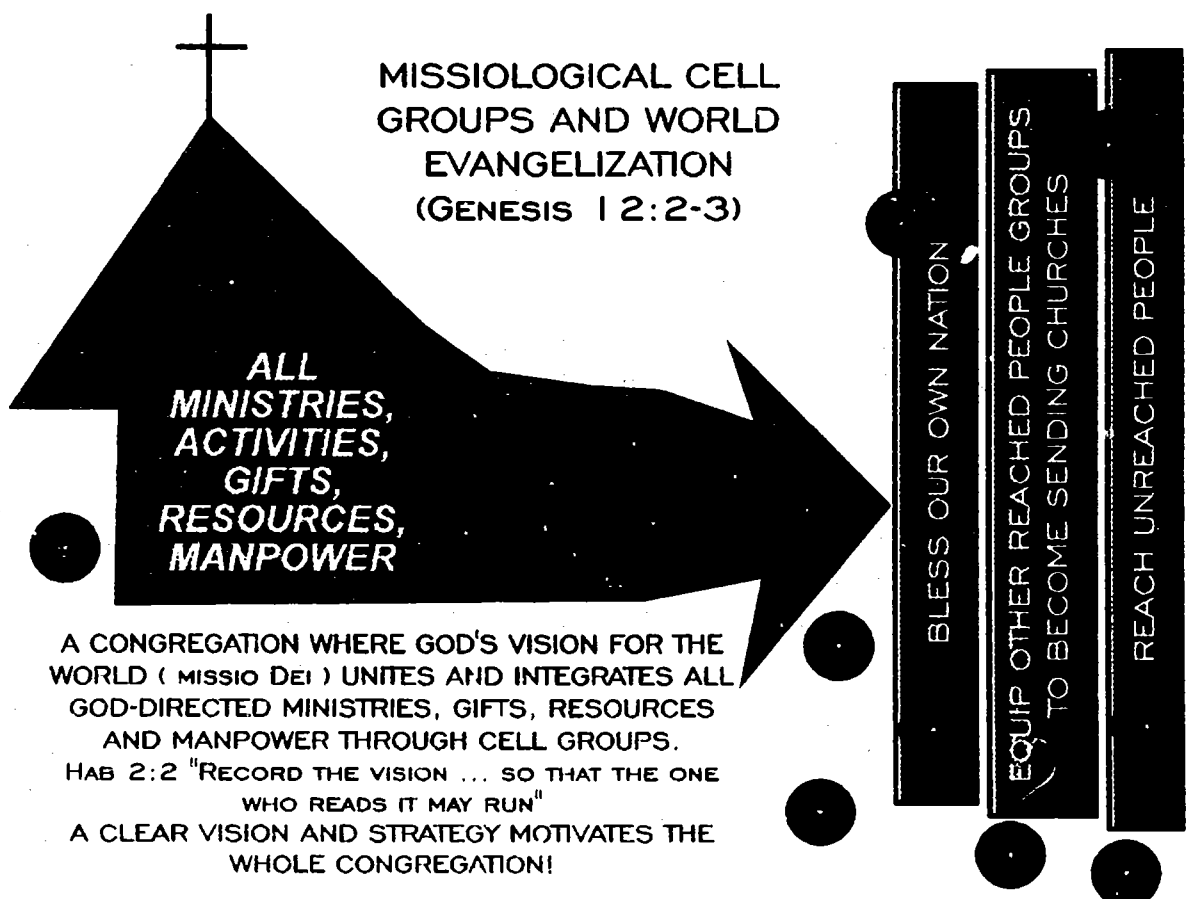
MISSIOLOGICAL CELL GROUPS AND WORLD EVANGELIZATION (GENESIS 12:2-3)

ALL MINISTRIES, ACTIVITIES, GIFTS, RESOURCES, MANPOWER

A CONGREGATION WHERE GOD'S VISION FOR THE WORLD (MISSIO DEI) UNITES AND INTEGRATES ALL GOD-DIRECTED MINISTRIES, GIFTS, RESOURCES AND MANPOWER THROUGH CELL GROUPS. HAB 2:2 "RECORD THE VISION ... SO THAT THE ONE WHO READS IT MAY RUN" A CLEAR VISION AND STRATEGY MOTIVATES THE WHOLE CONGREGATION!

BLESS OUR OWN NATION
EQUIP OTHER REACHED PEOPLE GROUPS TO BECOME SENDING CHURCHES
REACH UNREACHED PEOPLE

FIGURE 4.7

QUICK-FIND ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED

SOURCES CONSULTED

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