MISSION AS RELATIONSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN BOTH THE PASTORAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT IN RELATION TO THE MISSIO DEI.

by

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Thirdly, to Father, Son and Holy Spirit whose desire to be in relationship with me has impacted all relationships in my life, not least my relationship with this dissertation.
SUMMARY

MISSION AS RELATIONSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN BOTH THE PASTORAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT IN RELATION TO THE MISSIO DEI.

The dissertation underlines an approach towards mission, where the epistemology, hermeneutical key and methodology centre around relationship. This, by tracing trends in the pastoral context, verified through research and an analysis of congregational surveys. The results were then analysed in terms of biblical revelation (the creation narratives, God's covenental relationship with Israel, Christ as the New Israel, Christ's missiological methodology and an understanding of the Holy Trinity). The results were then also brought into conversation with recent developments in science, recognising the interdependence of all things, and also exploring recent definitions of mission. The study then grapples with a new way of engaging in theology. This new model simultaneously promotes the symbiotic nature of theologies, while placing them within the framework of relational objectives; using dialogue as medium, Holland and Henriot's Social Analysis and quantifiable relationship goals to engender a theological process accessible to people from all contexts and backgrounds.

Title of Dissertation
MISSION AS RELATIONSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN BOTH THE PASTORAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT IN RELATION TO THE MISSIO DEI.

Key Terms:
relationship, mission, methodology, hermeneutical key, epistemology, pastoral circle, social analysis, interdependence, systems approach, church growth, interdependence, creation, covenant, Trinity, dialogue, goals, inter-cultural relationships.
MISSION AS RELATIONSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN BOTH THE PASTORAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT IN RELATION TO THE MISSIO DEI.

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SECTION A: EXPERIENCE - THE INSERTION POINT

CHAPTER 1
AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 The limitations of a traditional approach to theology
In any missiological study the form in which that study is undertaken is often taken for
granted: as with any academic activity, research is based upon study, analysis, proposition
and conclusion. These may take the form *inter alia* of papers, theses or assignments. In
certain contexts these may include an action - reflection approach, such as that of Heyns and
Pieterse (1990:44) in which theory and praxis are interacted. In each instance missiological
research originates with, and is mostly dependent on academia. Thus an approach to mission
is determined predominantly by Tertiary institutions or their representatives. Even Liberation
Theology which holds as its primary contention the need for theology to be undertaken by the
marginalised (Maimela 1987:75) has to be engaged in by someone who is sufficiently
equipped to negotiate the daunting hallways, lecture halls and libraries of the academic
world so that they may be conversant in the appropriate methodological undertakings. Robert
Schreiter (1985:25) advocates a most illuminating approach towards creating contextual
models of theology, but the process in its own right is so complex that it requires someone
who is sufficiently conversant with the Western bias of empiricism, technical terminology and
abstract thought-concepts to understand, let alone implement the model.

Thus the common medium or form for determining missions theory is based
predominantly upon the research and study and experience of the academic world. Kraft
(1996:457-458) warns:

Many of us have gone to the field as missionaries armed only with western theological
understandings. And many, though working within their own non-western societies,
have been taught such understandings as if they were the only possible correct
interpretations of Scripture. Both groups have often found such theological understandings often inadequate and sometimes quite misleading in non-western
contexts. This is not necessarily because the theology in non-western institutions is
wrong. Indeed, it is usually quite right for those who developed it, but these have
usually been western scholars speaking in a western scholarly context.

The challenge is for us to acknowledge that, as theologians, our medium or form is
biased. Kraft (1996:137-140) substantiates this view to the point of offering practical
illustrations as to how certain forms may be interpreted with different meanings, by people
from differing contexts. Thus, for the struggling cleric ministering in impoverished, overcrowded Alexandra township, an academic missions theory may merely represent another attempt at manipulation or control from a Western-biased institution.

A prime example of the ingrained bias of academic approaches may be cited from this dissertation. In spite of the very conclusions of this study, the author still initially presented these conclusions in an academically-biased manner; although both the conclusions and assertions of the study demanded otherwise. It took a re-think and redraft of the study to begin the dissertation with the pastoral context in mind and to only later involve biblical and theological analysis. Here the very conclusions of the study were being threatened by the medium through which it was being presented.

Hesselgrave (1991:527) concurs. He claims that it is delusional to believe that a message will not be altered or corrupted when it is being transferred via a particular medium. In our case the message is the missions approach and the medium is the academic institution. Later on Hesselgrave (:553-557) suggests that not all mediums are appropriate or equally effective.

Kraft (1979:145) is more direct when he says:

Hermeneutics is not, therefore, merely an academic game to be played by supposedly objective scholars. It is a dynamic process that properly demands deep subjective involvement on the part of Christian interpreters operating within the Christian community (which includes scholars) both with the Scriptures and with the life of the world around them in which they live ... (italics mine).

In addition to this the reality of any sitz im Leben[^1] is that it lies in a continuous state of flux. We live in a world of globalization, syncretism, the challenges of politics and Africa's ever-increasing impoverishment and disease, a world where we have to re-investigate the role of liberation theology and the place of those who previously fell into the 'oppressor' category. There is a preponderance of theologies and contextual theologies that all seek to address these issues; what is needed is a methodology that can mediate and bring into dialogue all these issues and theologies without alienating the 'people on the ground' by demanding that they undertake the process in terms of the traditional academic approach.

[^1]: context (Deist 1984:238)
1.2 An overview of this exploration
The entire structure of this dissertation is based loosely upon Holland and Henriot’s (1980) pastoral circle of social analysis, beginning the dissertation with the experience of specific pastoral contexts, moving on to an analysis of that context and then bringing those conclusions into dialogue with theological reflection and finally determining pastoral strategy based upon the priorities and approaches of the previous movements. This pastoral strategy will then be placed back into pastoral context for evaluation.

Emerging in the contemporary pastoral context is evidence of the presence of a new (although mostly unconscious) approach towards theology (in general) and mission (more specifically). The symptoms of this new approach have become the initiating factor for this study and we will begin by very briefly outlining the nature and impact of these symptoms which appear to be based on the principles of relationship.

In response to the emergence of the importance of relationship in the praxis of mission we turn to a congregational survey which seeks to substantiate this hypothesis. The conclusions of the survey will then be brought into conversation with further analysis: biblically, the study explores the Genesis creation narratives, God’s covenant with Israel and finally Gaybba’s understanding of the Holy Trinity; scientifically, by taking a look at a new systems understanding of science and, theologically, by examining the dynamic nature of models of mission.

Once the observation and analysis has been completed the study moves on to the pastoral strategy movement by generating a new model for both hermeneutics, epistemology and theological and pastoral application.

The model is then placed back into context by bringing it into dialogue with both practical and hypothetical examples.

1.3 A word of warning
It is important to note that any research of this nature has to be undertaken with the understanding that my personal context, as a White middle-class Protestant minister, will

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2 For a detailed understanding of this approach please refer to 6.1.3
naturally colour any conclusions or observations that have been made; and therefore any such bias needs to be taken into account when entering into relationship with the issues and challenges raised by this dissertation. Secondly, this dissertation, by its very existence acknowledges the need for academic research but does call for a common medium for theology that will open up its doors to those within and without the Western tradition, such as - for example - the laity and adherents of the African Independent Churches.

It is the intention of this dissertation to provide a model that will assist in achieving a tool for theologising that will mediate between both academic and non-academic and Western and non-Western viewpoints so that mission theology may, not only in terms of its praxis, but also in terms of its application, become truly all-embracing.
CHAPTER 2
SYMPTOMS OF AN EMERGING PARADIGM IN THE PASTORAL CONTEXT.

2.1 Introduction
In my personal pastoral experience, since 1995, it has become increasingly evident that certain programmes, approaches and attitudes are beginning to have a decided impact upon the growth of the church and the ever-increasing inclusion of traditionally non-church goers. While reflecting on these programmes and approaches there appears to be a common thread behind their effectiveness. Below are just a few brief examples *inter alia* which appear to be both effective in the pastoral context which give expression to that ever-increasingly emerging paradigm.

2.2 Prepare - Enrich
There has appeared, recently, a host of tools used to equip pre-marital couples for their future relationship as husband and wife. These vary in content and style and all appear to be equally useful where a balanced approach has been adopted. Some of these courses take the form of psychological testing, others use videos as a basis for discussion and some appear merely in terms of outlining the content of the interaction between pastor and couple.

Since the 1970's, Dr David Ohlson has been developing what has become known as the Prepare-Enrich course (2000: 8); this is material that has been developed from psychological profiles, based on hundreds of thousands of couples, from all over the world, who are happily married.

The couple fill in a questionnaire which covers eleven categories or areas. Based upon computer feedback the counsellor then explores growth and strength areas while engaging in six couple exercises which aim at both equipping the couple with basic relationship skills and enhancing their levels of communication.

This whole process entails a minimum of three hour-and-a-half sessions with the couple; during which there is deep communication between the couple and the counsellor as they, together, explore these areas and engage in the exercises.

Of the couples I have married in the last four years the distribution between non-
members and members of a (and not just our) worshipping community are as follows (Figure 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCHED</th>
<th>UNCHURCHED</th>
<th>DRAWN IN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44 percent</td>
<td>56 percent</td>
<td>44 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1

Of these and in my opinion, as a consequence of the relationship and trust built up with the pastor, 44% of the 56% who have not been part of a worshipping community at the time of marriage, have either joined the congregation, involved their youngsters in the church primarily through the process of baptism or else have either maintained sporadic contact or become involved in the life and work of the congregation in an unofficial capacity.

Thus it appears that the relationship built up by the counsellor, with the couple, has had a positive impact on the couple's experience of spirituality and has drawn them into the confines of the worshipping community either formally or informally.

2.3 The Alpha Course
The success of the famed 'Alpha course', initiated by the Revd Nicky Gumble (1993) has challenged the severe trend of decline in churches not only in the United Kingdom, but all over the world. According to Rogers-Melnick (2000), more than one million people attended the course from 77 different nations.

The Alpha Course is based upon a series of fifteen video segments which cover the fundamentals of Christian belief. These segments are presented by Nicky Gumble in an easy to understand manner which aims at informing the mostly pagan¹ group about the basics of our faith. What makes the event such a success is that the videos are hosted within a complete programme.

The programme begins with a free meal and concludes with small group discussions based upon the content of the video. Over the period of the course these small groups allow individuals to develop strong relational bonds with one another.

¹ Second generation non-Christians
At the conclusion of the Alpha course these groups usually evolve into cell groups (cf. 2.4) which result in a large percentage of participants automatically moving into the life and work of the believing community.

The primary catalyst for becoming a part of the church in these Alpha Courses appears to be the strong relationships which are formed amongst the participants. These relationships provide both a sense of belonging, a sense of common experience and give the worshipping community a personal face.

2.4 Cell Groups
The concept of cell-based churches became popular with the phenomenal growth experienced by Paul Yonggi Cho’s church in Korea (Armstrong 1987:15), where a church of 57 grew to that of 500,000. Pieter van der Merwe (1996) in his comprehensive dissertation on missiological cell group praxis illustrates how the cell group has become an effective agent for mission. van der Merwe highlights the dynamics of small groups as he quotes Baranowski (Van der Merwe:113):

Small-group experiences are already renewing the church all over the world ... this vision [is not] just another - albeit 'better' - programme for small church communities ... What is unique in the small groups we talk about, is that they do not remain small groups. They become the 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 that parishioners come together to be a church for each other and for the world and, in the process radically changes - restructures - the parish forever.

Ghezzi (1990:12) endorses this when he describes cell groups as 'being focussed on evangelism', through a process of self-multiplication. The fellow cell members are considered to be practically 'family'. Thus the success of the cell church is one where individuals are brought together in God's name with the aim of reaching out.

2.5 Theology in action
Amongst Feminist Theologians (cf. 6.1.1) there appear to be similar trends. The process begins with story telling. Individuals gather together - illiterate and academic, conservative and liberal, oppressed and liberated - to share their stories. And from these oral testimonies emerges a picture that is accessible to both those steeped in, and those ignorant of the Western approach to theology. The process of sharing these testimonies not only draws the communities together, but also brings healing, understanding, ownership and liberation.
Women have used this approach as a basis for Feminist Theology, not to mention the pastoral function of bringing healing and dignity to broken individuals and communities.

2.6 Conclusion

It would appear that emerging in the pastoral context are movements which are becoming increasingly effective in not only drawing individuals into the church, but also in bringing healing and wholeness to broken communities. These movements vary in approach, theology, culture and worshipping tradition but the one common factor in each instance appears to be the primacy of relationships.

Marriage counselling, the Alpha Course, cell groups and interactive dialogical workshops all have at their core the development of relationships with those within the worshipping community; and it seems to be those relationships which not only draw individuals into the worshipping community, but also keep them there.

The common denominator of relationship in all these approaches raises the question about relationship's role in mission. The relationships between couple and pastor, within small groups and in workshops seem to be the catalyst. Collin's Pocket Dictionary (1989:713) describes relationship as, 'the mutual dealings, connections, or feelings that exist between two countries, people, or groups.'

Thus one could say that not only the new feminist approach to theology, but all of these movements are based upon relationship; upon the interaction between women and men of different backgrounds, cultures and world-views (Moore, Shakespeare, Gulliford & Bell 1986:29). Thus it is the prerequisite for the involvement Kraft speaks of above (cf. 1.1.).
SECTION B: ANALYSIS

CHAPTER THREE
VALIDATING THE OBSERVATIONS: A SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONS

3.1. Aim

In order to determine the validity of the assumptions made in chapter two a survey was established to determine whether or not there is a link between relational elements within congregations and a) joining a congregation, b) retaining membership, c) an impact upon spirituality and d) the effectiveness of small groups. This would be done by using inferential statistics to determine a generalisation for the particular worshipping communities involved in the survey (Gravetter & Wallnau 2002:5). This survey was undertaken without the participants being aware of the intentions of the study, in order to avoid any bias or predisposition on the part of the respondents.

3.1.1 Technical details of the research

In spite of there being a limited amount of resource material available specifically for religious surveys (Roozen & Carroll 1989:120) we can still follow a few basic principles.

3.1.1.1 Methodology

The methodological approach is based on a subjective analysis of organisational characteristics (Roozen 1989:121); it was administered in written form to members of the congregation who are regularly present in worship. Members were asked to fill in the survey and return it immediately to the local incumbent.

The survey was completely confidential and took the form of discrete variables (Gravetter & Wallnau 2002:17) using a check-box analysis where respondents were invited to tick the appropriate answers in a close question format (Babbie 1990: 127). For a detailed examination of the questionnaire please refer to Appendix A.

3.1.1.2 Scope

The survey was undertaken within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in the Port Elizabeth / Uitenhage region now known as the Nelson Mandela Metropole, during the
course of January 2002. Six congregations were surveyed, each with the following demographics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONGREGATION</th>
<th>DEMOGRAPHICS</th>
<th>WORSHIP TRADITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregation One</td>
<td>Partially-multi-cultural</td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Two</td>
<td>Partially multi-cultural</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Three</td>
<td>Mono-cultural</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Four</td>
<td>Partially multi-cultural</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Five</td>
<td>Multi-cultural</td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Six</td>
<td>Partially multi-cultural</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1

This was an attempt to reflect all interest groups, worshipping traditions and geographical areas within the author’s immediate context. The survey had a total number of 295 respondents; five of the six congregations exceeded a sample size of 30 respondents per congregation; thus in terms of the central limit theorem (Gravetter & Wallnau 2002:148) five of the six congregations produced results in which the sample distribution would reflect the norms for that group. In terms of the overall sample the number of respondents far exceeds the sample distribution necessary to determine the norms for this particular group study, as a whole.

3.1.1.3 Limitations

It is important to note that there was an error on the questionnaire. Question 1.8 read as follows: ‘If yes, then how did this visit impact your experience of Christ / the Church?’, whereas it should have read: ‘If yes, then how did this group impact your experience of Christ / the Church?’. Unfortunately when this was discovered at least half of the surveys had already been handed out and in order to maintain consistency the error was left. Belson (1981: 398) does indicate that a misunderstanding of the question and, in this particular case, a misstating of the question does not always affect the answer. In this case most respondents appear to have picked up the error as it is a duplication of a previous question and placed it in the context of the current section. In addition to this a response here, even if taken out of context, is limited to a comparison of relationships within the framework of other phenomena and any response would give an accurate indication of relationship’s standing.
amidst these other factors.

Secondly, the survey was administered within a single denomination (with the overlap of a united congregation), and although this is limiting it was felt that there was sufficient stylistic and worshipping tradition variation amongst the participating congregations to warrant using congregations of the same denomination.

Thirdly, the questions are limited to multiple choice responses; this may represent a bias in terms of the options available for response, although it would beyond the scope of this dissertation to manage, interpret and depict multiple voluntary responses.

Fourthly, questions two and nine offered options with more than one response. Thus the data was interpreted in terms of a percentage of the total number of responses for those questions, as opposed to using raw unqualified figures. These are known as ordinal measurements (Babbie 1990: 125) in which responses operate in terms of priorities with one another, as opposed to a rank scale.

Finally, the questionnaire did solicit a few responses which portrayed confusion as to the nature of the responses/questions. For example in question 1.7 the respondent is asked about his/her participation in a small group - requiring a yes/no response. Question 1.8 then follows with the quantifier, 'If yes, then ...'. Occasionally individuals responded with a ‘no’ for 1.7 and then still completed question 1.8. The outlay would have been more effective if mediated with indentations and arrows as suggested by Babbie (1990: 137 - 138). On these occasions if the respondent checked the ‘no’ box for question 1.7 then all responses for 1.8 were ignored.

In spite of the above limitations the survey, in my opinion, still offers effective interpretable results.

3.2  Analyzing the results of the survey

The results of the survey was recorded and collated and can be represented in tabulated form, as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Cong. 2</th>
<th>Cong. 3</th>
<th>Cong. 4</th>
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The analysis of the above data has been depicted according to frequency bar graphs as outlined by Gravetter & Wallnau (2002: 148), portraying the relationship (if any) between joining a congregation, remaining in a congregation and the small group environment with relational elements. The above results can be analysed in the following manner:

3.2.1 Attraction to the church
This segment is based upon question one of the questionnaire. It invites the respondent to determine the reasons why they joined the church. The items depicted in figure 3.3 offers a clear indication of the types of attractions that have drawn respondents into the formalised worshipping community.

![Figure 3.3: Reasons for Joining a Congregation](image)

The greatest response is from respondents who moved into the area. The second-greatest is from people who have been introduced to the church through their personal relationship with either relatives or acquaintances. Close to that are those who joined through family relationships. Were one to add up the relational causes of church membership: Introductions, parental links and relationships created through pastoral needs and existing denominational relationships these far outweigh the incidental involvement and geographical placement.

Thus there already exists an important relational component to church growth; which arguably relates to mission.
3.2.2 Maintaining association
It is one thing to be attracted to a congregation but it is another to sustain participation and involvement; and this is, perhaps, a true mark of the effectiveness of conversion to faith or attraction to a particular worshipping community. This section in the questionnaire was a multiple-response question where respondents marked more than one check box.

![Reasons for Remaining](image)

Figure 3.4 provides a very clear indication that friendship constitutes the primary motivation for remaining with a worshipping community. And all indications are, that friendships (relationships) would keep a great percentage of respondents within a particular worshipping community even when they may not relate to the worship, preaching or the minister.

3.2.3 The impact of pastoral visitation
This section is covered by two separate questions. One which investigates the impact of a minister's visit (Figure 3.5) and the other the impact of an elder's visit (Figure 3.6). In each case visitation, according to the respondent's perceptions, has a positive impact upon their spirituality. Very few respondents recorded no impact and none recorded a negative impact on their experience of the church.

One could easily and safely assume that this kind of interaction can be classified as a firming of individual relationships between members of congregation and the hierarchy or leadership of the congregation. Obviously any positive impact in this regard would affirm commitment to the worshipping community and encourage a deepening of identification with
that community by the respondents.

3.2.4 The impact of small groups

The impact of small groups on a worshipping community can be measured twofold: firstly in terms of a general impact, similar to section 3.2.3, but also, secondly, in terms of the reasons the impact has been positive.
Figure 3.7 represents the experience of individuals in a small group environment, it affirms the positive impact that small groups have on the individual’s spiritual and ecclesial experience. Only one respondent found small groups to have no or negative effects, and very few found them ineffectual at all.

The question then arises of the motivation for the positive impact of small groups on the individual in the worshipping community. The results of question nine (Figure 3.8) offer an overwhelming indication, once again, of the primacy of the relational factor.
This particular section is also a multiple response question where respondents provided more than one answer for the question. It is very clear that, once again, friendship has come to the fore; and it may be argued that the friendship factor has generated a sense of belonging amongst the small groups.

It is rather surprising that the more functional aspects of the small groups are subservient to the relational factors; of course certain group functions may be described as being relational, such as Home Fellowship Groups, for example - although even these contain some sort of functional structured content.

Thus the small group phenomenon, which is relationally based, describes those very relationships as having the greatest positive impact on their small group experience within the worshipping community.

3.2.5 Conclusion
In each instance of the categories outlined above there is a positive statistical correlation (Gravetter & Wallnau 2002:385) between relationship and participation in a worshipping community. Perhaps the most obvious conclusion from an analysis of this research is succinctly stated by Ray Armstrong (1987:19):

Probably the most common and most natural kind of evangelism is speaking of Christ, of his mercy and his love, to our relatives, our friends, our neighbours, and anyone else the Lord places in our lives.

Thus the survey has offered a clear indication that those very relationships are responsible for a great number of individuals being drawn into the worshipping community; that those relationships are the primary cause for individuals to remain within the worshipping community, and a positive experience of spiritual growth within the small group has been attributed to the relationships contained therein.

Therefore it appears that our initial suspicions about the primacy of relationships in the mission of the church (chapter two) have been validated. This role now needs to be investigated in the light of Biblical and Theological revelation.
SECTION C: THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 4
A NEW APPROACH TO BIBLICAL REVELATION: THE PRIMACY OF RELATIONSHIP

In this chapter we evaluate the conclusions of the congregational survey (chapter 3) in the light of biblical revelation, taking into account the emergence of the primacy of relationship within scripture and the role relationship plays within the narrative itself.

4.1 Genesis

As one explores the Genesis creation texts, as outlined by Adrio König (1988) in his explication of the creation narratives of scripture, we see early signs of the ascendancy of relationship and covenant in Scripture’s explication of God’s revelation.

In a close reading of Genesis 1:1-27 König (1988:22) asserts that man exists as the apex of a pyramid with all else created under his authority or dominance where everything holds a particular relationship to human beings; here humanity becomes the climax or the goal of the Genesis 1 text. And in as much as the created being is in relation to the rest of creation, each creative act has ‘its own independent place and relationship’.

The creation narrative of Genesis 2:4b-25 is even more assertive about the interconnectedness of creation. Here König (1988:22) speaks of how humanity can be depicted as the centre of a circle, where there is a symbiotic relationship with an anthropomorphic centre. Judging the individual of Genesis 2 to be closely identified with the agrarian lifestyle, König (22) outlines a close interconnected relationship with the earth.

Over and above this the editor of Genesis 2 uses the covenant name for God: Jahweh, thus bringing the idea of covenant immediately into play which we will explore further below (cf. 4.2.2). But very clear in this instance are:

the basic features of the covenant - the LORD who elects a people for himself, gives them a land to live in, and accepts responsibility for them; and a people united to him to serve and praise and obey him (König 1988:23).

Thus we see - right at the beginning - the very purpose of creation containing within it the importance of relationship between ourselves and our creator (vertical relationship) and
between ourselves and our world (horizontal relationship).

Unfortunately as Capra points out in the movie produced by his brother Bernt Capra, ‘Mindwalk’ (1991) we have also tended to prefer our understanding of the Genesis 1 narrative, often to the exclusion of Genesis 2. We view our relationship with creation as one of dominance as opposed to one of interdependence. Joan Chittister explores this one sidedness in greater detail in her book ‘Heart of Flesh’(1988).

Chittister (1988:162) asserts that society has been too dependent upon the Genesis 1 Creation narrative at the expense of the Genesis 2 Creation narrative which has denied theologians and adherents alike a true understanding of humanity’s stewardship role over the earth. Chittister (1:163) offers a different reading of God’s call for Adam to name the animals: not one of domination but rather that of relationship - where one has to be in direct relationship with an object to name it; one has to know something in order to name it; to name something means to bind oneself to it. It is only those things which are subjective to us, those things that we care for that we bother to name. Thus Chittister suggests that God brought the animals to Adam to be named as a token of his interdependence on fauna. Linking this with God’s instructions on how to make use of the land (Genesis 2:15) demonstrates how humanity is called to ‘take care of it’ and not exploit or dominate it. Thus the theme of Genesis 2 is once again that of interdependence between humanity and the world within which it dwells. We will explore this inter-connectivity later (cf. Chapter 5).

Gibbs (1981:24) deals with this sentiment with a broader stroke of the brush: quoting Genesis 1-2, Ps 24; 33:13; 47:2, where God not only takes personal responsibility for the creation of the world ‘but regards the entire world, including all its inhabitants as belonging to God.’ This is reflected in the fact that not only was God responsible for the origins of life but also for its ongoing sustenance and therefore can be considered as a ‘God of the nations’. König (1988:41) echoes these sentiments when he asserts that the covenental aspect of Genesis 2 is indicative of God’s care for the created being.

Although this relationship has other dimensions. God says to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28 and 29:

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2 All Scripture quotations are referenced from the New International Version (1985) unless otherwise stipulated, with the retention of the original (American) spelling.
Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

This is not only a cultural mandate but also a covenant mandate which encourages Adam and Eve to spread the character of Eden over the face of the earth (Gibbs 1981:28).

Noah is also the beneficiary of a general covenant for all the peoples of the earth. After the dramatic event of the flood when Noah has once again landed on dry land, Genesis 9:9-17 spells out to Noah the nature of God’s covenant with all living beings: a permanent covenant that will therefore be enforced to all Noah’s succeeding generations, and will ‘guarantee the continuance and stability of the natural order’ (Gibbs 1981:29).

Thus in both cases it is clear that God desires to be involved with and involved in the lives of the people of the earth, not just with a chosen few but with all the descendants of both Adam, Eve and Noah - in other words with humanity in its entirety! In this covenant God reveals himself as the antithesis of a remote, distant, disinterested God.

4.2 God’s people and the Nations

In this section I will be tracing Eddie Gibbs’ (1981) outline of God’s relationship with Israel:

4.2.1 Abraham

Israel finds its origins through Divine intervention. God calls Abram, a Chaldean, to resettle in a new land where God will ‘... make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’ (Gen 12:2-3). Von Rad (in Gibbs 1981:25) states that ‘Abraham is assigned the role as the “mediator of blessing” in God’s saving plan, for all the families of the earth.’ It is through Abraham’s descendants that the nations of the earth will discover God for themselves, his descendants will become the new interface for God’s revelation.

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3 This title is used by Eddie Gibbs (1981) in the opening chapter of his book, ‘I believe in Church Growth’, explicating his understanding of the covenental relationship between Israel and Jahweh.
We see this as Abram leaves Babylonia and in complete faith follows God into the unknown, where ultimately he sires the ancestors of the nation of Israel. The Hebrew Bible recognises this as Abraham becomes the archetype for faith and confidence in God (Gen 12:1 & Heb 11:8), extending all the way into the New Testament to the point where Paul denotes Abraham as, ‘... the father of all who believe ...’ (Rom 4:11) and, ‘that those who believe are children of Abraham.’ (Gal 3:7).

Some may view this as God’s abandonment of the nations in favour of Israel, but as Martin-Achard writes (in De Ridder 1983:175), ‘Abraham is chosen not just for his own glory, the good fortune of his descendants, or the misery of his enemies .... [he] is the instrument of the redemption of the world.’ In other words Abraham’s faith relationship with God (cf. Hebrews 11:8-10) influences or mediates God’s relationship with ‘all the families of the earth’.

4.2.2 A covenant with Israel

God’s covenant with Israel does begin with Abram where God goes so far as calling ‘Abraham my friend’ (Is 41:8), although it really takes shape and becomes crystallised when Abraham’s tribe or kinship group becomes a nation (Gibbs 1981:30). This occurs when God releases the Israelites from captivity in Egypt and ‘super-imposes’ the covenant with Moses upon the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant is itemised in terms of detailed cultic, social and ethical requirements (Goldingay in Gibbs 1981:31). It is a covenant which was made exclusively with Israel but not to the exclusion of others.

Gibbs (1981:31-33) suggests that this relationship is characterised by four facets:

- The relationship is an intensely personal relationship. As God sent Moses (Ex 3: 4-10), so only a person can send another (Davidson in Gibbs:1981 31). Here God calls Moses by name and in turn introduces himself to Moses by identifying his past relationships with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- The relationship is a redemptive relationship. As the Angel of death passed over the (Hebrew) homes spread with the blood of the Passover lamb, this was an indication of God’s deliverance from bondage and forgiveness from sin and where the life which God had given, as represented by the lamb’s blood, represented God’s mercy and liberation.

- The relationship was a responsible relationship, where God’s children were expected to respond by being holy because God is holy (Lev 19:2, 1 Pet 1:15, Heb 12:14). It
created the understanding that the privileges of being a part of the covenant depend
upon fulfilling appropriate obligations, as outlined by the law.

- The relationship was an extendable relationship. There was no understanding that this
  relationship would only ever be exclusive to Israel. In fact Bavinck (in Gibbs 1981:33)
  believes that the fact that God could have a covenant with Israel automatically implies
  that there is potential for God to enter into covenant with any other nation!

The Israelites were unsuccessful in maintaining their responsibility in this relationship;
not only did they fail to live up to the demands of the covenant but there was no offering
which could offer expiation for wilful disobedience (Gibbs 1981:33). Through the prophet
Jeremiah, God expands and modifies this covenant as follows:

‘The time is coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the
house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made
with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because
they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘This
is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the LORD.
I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they
will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother,
saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the
greatest,’ declares the LORD. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember
their sins no more.’ (Jer 31:31-34).

Suddenly the covenant is based upon the attitudes and approaches within, as opposed
to empty external observance, where the people of Israel are now renewed within their hearts
and minds. With this renewal comes responsibilities similar to those placed upon Abraham:
Isaiah records in chapter 42 verse six, ‘Through you I will make a covenant will all peoples;
through you I will bring a light to the nations.’ The author of Isaiah again echoes the same
sentiment in chapter 49, verse eight.

We see this priority towards inclusiveness reflected elsewhere, as Walter, C. Kaiser,
jnr. (1981: A25 - A33) convincingly explains how the Psalmist in Psalm 67 alters the Aaronic
blessing in Numbers 6:24-28, to prove his purpose to bless all the nations. Just one example
inter alia is how the psalmist changes the name for God (Yahweh = translated as LORD which
is Israel’s personal name for God) to Elohim (a more generalised and broadly accepted term
for God), indicative of how God wished to draw all peoples and (not just Israel) to himself.

Similarly, Solomon (Gibbs 1981:36-38), in his prayer at the dedication of the newly
built Temple which replaced the Tabernacle of the wilderness, asks God to heed the prayers
of the pagan pilgrims so that, 'all the peoples of the world may know you and obey you, as your people Israel do. Then they will know that this Temple I have built is a place where you are worshipped.' (1 Kings 8:43). Isaiah and Micah echo these sentiments and Jesus himself quotes Isaiah when he clears the Temple, 'My Temple shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.' (Is 56:7).

We see inclinations towards the inclusion of Gentiles in the following narratives from the Hebrew Bible:

4.2.2.1 Ruth
This book records the story of Ruth, a Moabitess who has lost both her father and husband. The narrative centres around a distant relative, Boaz who fulfills his responsibilities as her kinship redeemer and thereby (through their ensuing marriage) grafts Ruth into one of the most respected Hebrew families. Ruth is ultimately recorded as being the grandmother of King David (Gibbs 1981:40).

4.2.2.2 Jonah
Jonah is called by God to warn the people of the capital of Assyria, Nineveh, of their impending doom. Jonah - as a metaphor for Israel - exhibits great reluctance to reach out to these gentile foreigners. At first he attempts to go in the opposite direction; but God convinces him otherwise through his encounter with the great fish. Reluctantly he ends up at the capital and he preaches to the Ninevites. As a consequence of his proclamation the Ninevites exhibit great remorse and God decides not to destroy them. Jonah responds by sulking in the desert under the shade of a castor oil plant - more concerned about his own ego and comfort than the hundred thousand-odd lives that were saved! (Peterson 1992:157)

4.2.2.3 Daniel
Daniel and his friends are victims of Israel's exile at the hand of the Babylonians. Daniel struggles, along with his friends, to uphold his faithfulness to God against many odds. Facing different episodes of persecution and scorn, Daniel and his peers are preserved and offered supernatural insight as a consequence of their faithfulness (Gibbs 1981:40).

Each of these narratives offers insight into the calls by Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah and Solomon to be 'a light unto the nations'. Each illustrates that Israel's (Ruth's, Jonah's and
Daniel’s) faithfulness will result in (a) their growing in their personal relationship with God and (b) their drawing those around them to God.

4.2.3 A breach in covenant

But as a consequence of their unfaithfulness and their attitude of exclusivity which dominated Israel’s (later Israel’s and Judah’s) approach to the surrounding nations, the Hebrews broke their covenant with God and therefore forfeited his protection - being sent into exile, and not only having God’s presence removed from the Temple but also being removed from the Temple themselves. Jeremiah records this need for Israel to experience a change of heart (Jer 3:17, 31:31-34) and eventually Joel conceded that this change will only be realised with the advent of the Messiah and the consequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28).

4.3 Fulfilment in Christ

The author of the letter to the Hebrews twice refers to Jeremiah’s prophecy (cf. 4.2.2.) and perceives Christ to be its fulfilment: both as High Priest (mediator before God) and as a sufficient sacrifice (atonement) for sin (Hebrews 8, 7, 10, 4 & 9). Jesus himself refers to the fulfilment of this new covenant when he institutes the Sacrament of Holy Communion saying, ‘this is the new covenant of my blood.’ (1 Corinthians 11:25) (Gibbs 1981:34).

Jesus’ words in John 14:6, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’, declares that access to God is now no longer through the covenant, or through Israel’s fulfilment of the covenant but now through Christ, through relationship with Jesus. It is interesting to note that as God sent Adam and Eve, Abram, Moses and even Israel, so Jesus (in stark contrast) proclaims in all four gospels (Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 9, John 1), ‘...follow me.’ Now if Davidson (4.2.2.) considers God ‘sending’ Moses an indication of personal relationship, how much more of a relationship does ‘follow me’ constitute!

We see Jesus’ accent on relationship right at the beginning with his employment of traditional educational methods, interacting with the elders in the Temple (Luke 2). He then calls twelve disciples and spends three years equipping them - eating, living, sharing, teaching, offering example and worshipping with them. He shares meals with those he converts, such as Matthew the tax collector (Shields 1996:112). He speaks and eats with the undesirables. Even massed crowds are invited to share in meals with Christ, such as the
feeding of the five thousand. He reconciles himself to Peter over breakfast, he stays with followers in their homes and shows the ultimate sign of servant-hood and humility through the washing of the disciples feet (Wickeri 1990:102).

Speaking of meals, the great mystic, Julian of Norwich (Wolters 1985:85) reflects very creatively upon how she envisions Jesus’ relationship with us,

‘I saw in my imagination heaven, and our Lord as the head of his own house, who had invited all his dear servants and friends to a great feast. The Lord, I saw, occupied no one place in particular in this house, but presided regally over it all, suffusing it with joy and cheer. Utterly at home, and with perfect courtesy, himself was the eternal comfort of his beloved friends, the marvellous music of his unending love showing in the beauty of his blessed face, which glorious countenance of the Godhead fills heaven full of joy and delight.’

Jesus engaged with strangers and friends in a most personal way, mediating all he did, through close, personal, interactive relationship and contact in deep contrast to legalism and impersonal law.

Shields (1996:104) develops the above theme further, where he describes how Jesus was an itinerant preacher who gathered a group of friends who bonded into a ‘Jesus movement’ after his death. Once their recollections of Jesus were spread by the evangelists the movement gained momentum within small friendship groups before blossoming into the broader Christian community. He believes that this sentiment has duplicated itself in church history when someone who has experienced profound insight and through the support and encouragement of friends has set the church afire. The relationships provide momentum for the revelation.

Christ’s incarnation is a twofold indication of God’s desire to be in relationship with us: firstly, through a physical presence in the form of the incarnated Christ. Secondly, through the fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham, that ultimately desires relationship with all people. Christ’s sacrifice made this covenant a permanent reality through the Holy Spirit, which descended at Pentecost.

Karl Barth (1957: 196) reminds us that the object of God’s election through Christ for both the Church and for Israel is not primarily the individual but as he puts it ‘... its particular object is indeed men. But it is not men as private persons in the singular or plural. It is these men as a fellowship, elected by God ...’ Later on Barth (1957:196) says that it is only from the
standpoint of fellowship and 'with it in view' that one can speak of election.

Thus, according to Barth, and in my own understanding, fellowship (our mystical relationships with one another as determined by Christ) is the core of God's covenant, as fulfilled by Christ and initiated by God's election of Israel and then the election of his Church universal. Therefore one cannot limit God's covenant or Jesus' fulfilment thereof to the individual but one should rather focus on the interconnectedness between individuals, their relationships as a fellowship of believers.

4.4 The great commandment

Moving away from Jesus' methodology and into the content of his teaching is no less interesting. Jesus echoes the Deuteronomic law (Deuteronomy 6), as recorded in Matthew 22,

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

This commandment contains the essence of the Missio Dei⁴ - God's mission on earth. Matthew offers a practical working-out of this commandment in his entire gospel, for example, we read of Jesus' instructions on loving each other (such as the sermon on the mount in Matthew five) and relationship with God (such as the conclusion to the last supper in Matthew twenty six).

To quote Bosch (1991:392), 'Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people.'

Mission, therefore exists because of God's love for us. Mission is therefore based on love. Cannot love and relationship be seen as synonymous? Simone Weil writes (in Wickeri 1990:103),

When Christ said to his disciples: 'Love one another', it was not attachment he was laying down as their rule. As it was a fact that there were bonds between them due to the thoughts, the life and the habits they shared, he commanded them to transform these bonds into friendships, so that they should not be allowed to turn into impure

⁴ For a detailed explanation of what is meant by the Missio Dei please refer to Bosch 1991: 389 - 393.
attachment or hatred.

In other words, Christ commanded that we should be in relationship (friendship) with one another, as much as we are with him.

4.5 The Holy Trinity

We now turn our discussion towards a more distinctly theological one as we take a cursory glance at Brian Gaybba’s (1987) understanding of the nature of the Holy Trinity. Prof. Gaybba outlines the history of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and then grapples with the concept of the Holy Spirit as love:

The whole issue of procession is raised and the age-old debate between West and East as to whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father, alone, or from the Father and the Son (filioque). Bolotov (in Gibbs 1981:126) engaged in conciliatory work by surmising that ‘the Father from whom the Spirit proceeds, is only Father in relation to the Son. Consequently Moltmann (in Gaybba 1987:126) rephrases as follows, ‘The Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son’. Thus Father and Son have their identity in terms of their relationship with one another. To quote Gaybba (:127) if this is so then ‘the Father is a relational reality’, and further on,

God the Father has no personal identity whatsoever apart from the Son. Now the relationship of the Father to Son is one in which the Father is the source and all that the Son is. The Father is therefore the source of that relationship. As such he is the source of whatever flows from it ...

We may safely conclude from this that Father and Son exist in terms of their relational identity to one another, but what then of Holy Spirit?

Gaybba goes on to suggest that the Holy Spirit proceeds as the love of the Father and Son. The debate rages, here, as to whether the Holy Spirit is the love itself or whether it is the fruit of the Father’s love for the Son5?

Gaybba opts for the former. He describes the Spirit as being constituted by the love that the Father and Son have for each other. The Spirit is distinct from the Father and Son

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in that the Spirit is not composed entirely of the Father’s love from which all things have their origin, nor of the Son’s love which is a reflection of the Fathers’ love but rather specifically from the love that they exercise towards each other. Thus the Spirit is unique in reflecting the Father’s unique love for the Son and the Son’s unique love for the Father (Gaybba 1987:134-135).

Thus the Holy Spirit, by the above definition, exists as a consequence of the relationship between Father and Son.

Is it not possible to wrestle with an embracing third option? Perhaps the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and Son is a consequence not only of their love for each other, but also of their love for humanity. Jesus in Luke 11:13 and Peter in Acts 8:20 refer to the Holy Spirit as a gift. Job refers to the Spirit as the giver of life (Job 33:4), as does Paul (Romans 8:11, 2 Corinthians 3:6) and as does the author of the gospel of John (John 6:63). In Romans 8:6, Paul asserts that the mind controlled by the Spirit is life.

Therefore, firstly, the Holy Spirit is the activity and presence of God in our midst and secondly, as a gift, he is a token of God’s love and then thirdly, the life God offers us is a consequence of love (cf. fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, above and also John 3:16) and the presence of the Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit becomes a natural extension of the Father and Son’s love for each other, reaching its apex in the advent of Creation and the gift of life given to us by God as an expression of love.

Irrespective of whether the latter speculation is plausible, or not, the Holy Trinity’s existence and nature is never-the-less determined by relationship.

Surely if God, as a composite entity (for want of a better phrase), may be defined in terms of relationship then relationship should be the essence of understanding, not only God, but also ourselves and our mission, particularly in the light of the fact that Bosch (1991:392) has defined mission as being Trinitarian in nature.

4.6 Conclusion
Gaybba defines the Trinity in terms of relationship. Gibbs (1981:35) acknowledges that the ‘covent idea testifies to God’s consistent desire to establish an intimate relationship with
his people'. And then he challenges his people to extend that covenant to the surrounding nations. This occurs from Adam all the way through to Jesus’ fulfilment of the covenental promise and his final exhortation in the Great Commission of Matthew 28. It is a covenant, as we saw earlier, which is aimed at believers-in-community and not as independent units.⁶

Biblical history and theology therefore underpin God’s self-revelation with relationship. This relationship exists in three primary areas: vertical relationship (God and people), horizontal relationship (people and people) and introspective relationship (The Holy Trinity / Relationship with ourselves).

Our challenge is to understand how our relationships with each other (mission) and with ourselves (holiness) are to be used in the service of our relationship with God (Missio Dei).

There are of course sub-plots such as our relationship with the earth and our relationship with Scripture (as in the very process of reaching these conclusions), but the three main interactions which impact all other relationships are the horizontal, vertical and introspective relationships. The remaining relationships fall under an area which we will explore below by means of the pastoral circle (cf. 6.1.3).

As will become evident later on, when examining the movements of this pastoral circle analysis should not necessarily be restricted to the social or theological fields of operation and so we now turn to modern developments in the scientific world which undergird the conclusions reached in the previous section.

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⁶ It is important to note that this does not decry personal accountability for an individual’s salvation but rather asserts the individual’s need for an existence within a corporate worshipping body to experience the fullness of that salvation or covenant.
CHAPTER FIVE
A NEW APPROACH TO SCIENCE

5.1 A brief history

Capra (1983) and Zukav (1978) offer a comprehensive history of post-Enlightenment Science. Prior to the fifteen-hundreds Europe’s predominant world-view was based on an agrarian existence. Life was determined by organic relationships in small communities under the authority of the needs of the community and the Church. Aquinas had combined Aristotle’s theory on nature with Christian theology and established a conceptual framework that went unchallenged until the fifteen-hundreds (Capra 1983:37).

This faith-based approach was replaced with a scientific revolution inaugurated by Nicolas Copernicus. Copernicus proposed that the solar system was heliocentric i.e. the earth revolves around the sun. This concept was so revolutionary that Copernicus only published his findings in the year of his death (1543) and only then as a hypodissertation. Suddenly the world was not the centrepiece of God’s creation, as Ptolemy and interpretations from the Bible had supposed for more than a thousand years, but the earth was now merely another part of God’s creative blue-print. Copernicus’ views were endorsed by Johannes Kepler’s empirical laws on planetary motion. The individual who made all of this famous, though, was Galileo Galilei. Not only his invention of the telescope but also his mathematical genius and combining of experimentation with mathematics and empirical observation created the kairos moment for scientific thought. Galilei espoused a method of quantifiable, observable measurement excluding subjective properties such as colour, sound, taste and smell which he understood to be mere mental projections. Francis Bacon would take up the same cause in England, using inductive reasoning to reach conclusions from experiments. (Capra 1983:38-40).

In the 1630’s René Descartes visited the gardens in the palace of Versailles. Here he would have witnessed water fountains, music and moving statues which were all known as automata. For Descartes these intricate automata would be reminiscent of the nature of the world, which he would later equate with a mechanical clock. Using his mathematical genius to back up his philosophy Descartes sought to understand and explain the universe as a Great Machine and over the next three centuries scientists would aim to figure out exactly how this machine worked and what its components were (Zukav 1978:48).
Descartes believed that 'all science is certain, evident knowledge. We reject all knowledge which is merely probable and judge that only those should be believed which are perfectly known and about which there can be no doubts' (Garber in Capra 1983:42). This principle of radical doubt (Bosch 1991: 349) came to undergird all the subsequent developments in science, philosophy and theology.

Isaac Newton was born in the year of Galilei's death. He succeeded in successfully combining all the conclusions and discoveries outlined above and worked them into a comprehensible framework. Newton's superior grasp of mathematics allowed him to develop a complete mathematical formulation for the mechanistic view of nature. Newton's theories appear in great detail in his Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy. Newton's understanding of the world was that it was atomistic. Although he believed that all atoms were homogenous (made of the same material), it was merely the intensity of their attraction and density of their combinations that determined the nature of the material. Other scientists would make other discoveries - particularly those pertaining to electricity, magnetic fields and evolution (Maxwell and Darwin) which lay outside the sphere of Newton's theories - but the Cartesian-Newtonian concept of absolute space and time, elementary solid particles as the fundamental substance of all things, the casual nature of physical phenomena and the objective description of nature would be the primary paradigm from which science would be approached for a long, long time (Capra 1983:48-62).

A new approach to science would offer us an alternative to this objective, mechanistic, purely physical understanding to science.

5.2 A new way of looking at science

Bosch quotes Capra (1991:350):

[It is] the field of physics where scholars such as Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr introduced a revolution in thinking, so much so that Werner Heisenberg could say that the very foundations of science have started to move and that there was almost a need to start over again.

Einstein, ironically, initiated this change in approach (one which he struggled to accept to his life's end) with two new discoveries. In 1905 he published two papers: one which proposed his theory of relativity and the other (dealing with electromagnetic radiation) which was to be linked to the quantum theory. Einstein completed the work on relativity almost unilaterally but quantum mechanics was the evolution of a collaboration between top
scientists (Capra 1983:63-64).

Other new developments shortly thereafter caused a stir in the scientific world. Phenomena such as x-rays and radioactivity emerged which could find no basis in the traditional Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm. These complications affected physicists very deeply. Capra (1983:64-65) quotes Werner Heisenberg:

I remember discussions with Bohr which went through many hours till very late at night and ended almost in despair, and when at the end of the discussion I went alone for a walk in the neighbouring park I repeated to myself again and again the question: Can nature possibly be so absurd as it seemed to us in these atomic experiments?

A group of scientists from all nations which included Werner Heisenberg, Paul Dirac, Wolfgang Pauli, Erwin Schroeder, Niels Bohr, Louis De Broglie, Albert Einstein and Max Planck worked together and interacted on numerous levels. One of the chief results of these interactions was the emergence of a fully fledged theory on quantum mechanics. Even after the mathematical equations had been finalised the concept itself was very difficult to understand - let alone accept (Capra 1983:65).

5.2.1 So what is the quantum theory? The theory originates from the question about light which appears in two apparently contradictory states: as individual, relatively confined packets (quanta, hence quantum theory) of energy known as photons; and yet simultaneously also appears to exist as a wave which spreads itself over a large region of space. Experiments further complicated matters when the results were no longer consistent with what scientists understood atoms to be. (Capra 1983:67).

Obviously these experiments highlighted the inadequacy of the Cartesian-Newtonian approach when defining particles and waves.

Heisenberg expressed the limitations of classical understanding in mathematical formulae with his uncertainty principle and Bohr expressed the idea of complementarity where there may be two valid descriptions of the same thing, each of which is only consistent within a particular context and valid only for a particular aspect of the description (such as in the

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1 For a detailed explanation of the experiments surrounding these conclusions please refer to the list of sources: Capra, 1983 and Zukav, 1979.
This resulted in the discovery that at sub-atomic levels particles do have specific characteristics as independent units but only in terms of their interconnections, correlations or relationships. To quote Bohr, 'Isolated material particles are abstractions, their properties being definable and observable only through their interaction with other systems' (Capra 1983:68-69).

Thus the quantum theory moved from a focus on objects per se and began to shift towards the interrelationships between objects. These relationships in physics are mediated by the term 'probability' which takes into account all known, and all unknown factors / connections. It is a process similar in Biblical exegesis, where one would determine that it is, for example, most probable that the gospel of Mark came into being as a result of oral tradition surrounding an itinerant preacher, as opposed to being one hundred percent certain.

Einstein himself found this idea objectionable and in an attempt to disprove the idea of unknown connections (known scientifically as 'non-local factors'), he developed what became known as the EPR thought experiment. Not without a little irony, years later, Bell developed a theorem on the EPR experiment that proved that particles do not exist only in terms of their known (local) connections but also that they cannot be predicted in terms of Cartesian-Newtonian paradigms. The results implied either (unacceptably) that science is lawless or (Bell's understanding) that all particles - no matter how removed from each other - are interconnected (Capra 1983: 67-79).

Perhaps more to Einstein's liking, his theory of relativity, which creates a fourth dimension to the space-time phenomenon, has also impacted dramatically on science. Einstein asserts that space and time are inextricably linked and that when one considers the space-time phenomenon at the speed of light, the fourth dimension is relative to the observer; because what is seen will depend upon where the observer is 'standing'. This incorporated a new dimension to science - that of subjectivity (Capra 1983: 79-80).

Below is a tabulation by Zukav (1978: 66) on the differences between the 'old' and 'new' approaches to science: The Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm versus that of quantum mechanics.
Capra (1983:65) summarises this tabulation quite succinctly when he says:

... the world view emerging from modern physics can be characterised by words like organic, holistic, and ecological. It might also be called a systems view, in the sense of a general systems theory. The universe is no longer seen as a machine, made up of a multitude of objects, but has to be pictured as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood only as patters of a cosmic process.

It is an understanding that has reached some measure of consensus, as Teilhard de Chardin, for example, writes (1964), 'No one doubts any longer that the world of living forms is the outcome of increasingly complex associations between the material particles of which the universe is composed'.

5.3 The consequences of the new paradigm

Capra determines that this change from objects to relationships has far-reaching consequences. Gregory Bateson, for example, argues that relationships should be used as a basis for all definitions, and that this should be taught to our children in elementary school (in Capra 1983:70).

Thus it is important for us to consider the consequences of a new world view in which revelation history (Chapter four) and new paradigm shifts in science (cf. 5.4) both seem to
point towards a common epistemology of relationship. Capra’s book (1983) offers us a few other possibilities where the relationship between objects - the interconnectedness and subjectivity - should become apparent.

This need to understand the inter-connectedness of all things is becoming imperative not only for scientists but for all of humankind. The televised movie 'Mindwalk' (Capra 1991) develops Capra’s philosophy as mediated by dialogue between two friends and a stranger they encounter. These three debate how individual action can impact upon an entire range of phenomena - the effect of pesticides, war, poverty and so on. Teilhard de Chardin (1968:161) shared this sentiment as he warns about the self-absorption of human action,

So long as the human individual is conscious of living and working only for himself, he is not prepared to be too particular about the value and ultimate fate of what is produced by his activities. He has, it is true, a rather vague ambition to fulfill himself, and to leave behind him some evidence of his passage through life; but at the same time he is too conscious of the uncertainties of these chances of life to flatter himself that he - a single element lost in the multitude - can be successful and survive.

Teilhard de Chardin is more specific when he asserts that a new understanding between Matter and Spirit has come to light, as he writes (1964:97), 'spirit being no longer independent of matter, or in opposition to it, but labouriously emerging from it under the attraction of God by way of syndissertation and centration'. Thus the interdependence that Capra speaks of transcends the boundaries of science and enters into the world of theology. This is further explored where Teilhard de Chardin speaks of the spiritual basis for an understanding of evolution (1968:212-213). The understanding of evolution is dependent upon the 'preference for survival' / 'self survival' or survival of the fittest. This survival of the fittest can only be mediated by a desire to survive which Teilhard de Chardin refers to as 'zest for life'. He believes that the whole process of evolution would come to a halt if this zest came to an end - and because history has proved evolution irreversible (uninterruptible), therefore this zest has to be transcendent i.e. dependent upon a Being greater than ourselves or our whim and fancy.

Thus the scientific determination of our existence, in terms of Teilhard de Chardin’s understanding and Capra’s philosophy is inextricably linked or connected or in relation to theology. Conversely neither can be substantiated without that relationship.
5.4 Conclusion

Bosch (1991:350) rightly asserts that in the course of time these shifts in science would naturally result in similar upheavals in other disciplines, including the humanities. This new scientific outlook has offered the world, as a whole, an invitation to understand our context and existence in terms of the following:

- Interconnectedness
- A systems approach
- Subjectivity
- Possibilities

Thus the factors that come into play are relationships based on probabilities. This creates a new and exciting link between faith and science, both of which enter the realms of the personal (subjective), relational and dependent upon faith or probability. Again relationship, interconnectedness or even interdependence, if you will, appears to be the common epistemology.

This epistemology has been validated through experience (Chapter three), through biblical revelation (Chapter four), through theology (Chapter 4 and 5) and scientifically (Chapter 5).
CHAPTER SIX
A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT MISSION

6.1 Alternate Definitions and Paradigms
Theologically there appear to be a number of models, approaches and paradigms that serve the interests of relationship, ranging from the contextual theologies all the way through to secular approaches to pastoral counselling. We are going to take a brief look at a few of these approaches, without intending to cover definitions exhaustively.

6.1.1 Feminist Theology
As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, current trends in feminist theology have played a large role in mediating the conclusions of this approach. The way in which feminist theology has been undertaken has opened the process of theology to a new group of participants altogether.

Mary E. Hunt has come closer than most to espousing a theology of relationship. In her book 'Fierce tenderness' (1991) she establishes a feminist theology of friendship based on four pivotal aspects: love, power, spirituality and embodiment (99).

Chittister (1988:124) ascribes this method of dialogue to be a consequence of ever-increasing globalization where individuals are being brought into contact with people of different races, cultures, religions and creeds and have to find some way of mediating their differences. Where difference itself becomes the norm believing that an openness to learning something new through dialogue is an openness to the Holy Spirit. In Chittister's mind (:128), 'Feminist spirituality puts another face on God by putting another face on people, as well. To the feminist every human being comes to us as an expression of the mind of God, worthy of respect, valuable in themselves, capable, confident, competent and effective'. And this, in my mind is what makes dialogue an imperative tool for any theology as it opens the door for inclusive participation without prejudice either in terms of societal bias or in terms of academic or intellectual opportunity.

This accent on the relational element is evident as Ackermann (1996:34) defines her understanding of feminist praxis as:

critical, committed, constructive, collaborative and accountable reflection on the theories and praxis of struggle and hope for the mending of creation based on
the stories and experiences of women/marginalised and oppressed people.

It is these stories that I would like to turn to next. Van Schalkwyk (1997: 622 - 623) writes extensively about the use of narrative as an epistemology for Feminist Theology, where stories are told, shared and reflected upon by women as a means of reclaiming their subjective experiences as truth. The stories occur in two mediums: story telling and literature. The former is used as a witness to truth and an ownership of one’s reality, while the other is often a source for reflection or a framework for dialogue or discussion.

This narrative theology functions on a number of levels: it offers new paradigms, perceptions and spiritual alignment, it exorcises old attitudes and patterns, it allows women to tell their own stories and thereby shape their own realities. Stories create new language and a new form of self-expression for women and of course stories are very close to the heart and culture of the African context.

Thus Feminist Theology, over and above its pioneering and crucial work in the liberation and empowerment of women, invites us to consider a new dimension or way of doing theology: orally, specifically in dialogue.

Dialogue has been used by people such as Moore, Shakespeare, Gulliford and Bell (1998) who, used a six week course at Cambridge on Feminist Theology, and Langer (1986) who used a week-end away with 20 other women, to put the midrashic process into action. Through the reading of scriptures, the sharing of stories and experiences, the reflection on current events and a concrete focus on women, both groups reach a point of consensus where each individual has gained insight about themselves, about the scriptures and about the gospel’s comments on the issues at hand. Langer (1986:28) concludes with the following extract:

We are happy; we have found our story.
As we wrestled with this story it gripped hold of us
and we let ourselves be found.
Light of the heart we separate and depart,
fulfilled and henceforth inseparable. .

The process of theologising has been one not only in which theology has been undertaken but also one in which relationships have been built and the primary agent for this has been the verbal or oral testimonies, sharing of the participants and dialogue.
The commitment to dialogue amongst Feminist Theologians is of such an extent that they acknowledge that even their theology in its own right should be engaged in dialogue with other theologies (Van Schalkwyk 1994: 108).

6.1.1.2 Advantages

The advantages of the feminist approach are particularly relevant to the African continent:

First of all this approach opens the door to universal participation: the illiterate, the literate, the intellectual, the pragmatic, the marginalised, the privileged. The oral nature of dialogue does not prejudice any specific group and is non-threatening for all concerned.

Secondly, it is most at home in a continent where the majority of our inhabitants are steeped in oral tradition. Where the telling of stories, poems and sharing of song have for centuries been the basis of all expression, memory, cultural identity and religiosity.

Thirdly, it is personal. It invites people to interact on a one-on-one basis, within a group context. It gives faces to names, identifies people with experience and offers a relational slant to what could become a cold, impersonal document.

Fourthly, it provides greater room for clarification. Where there is confusion or disagreement or misperception or misunderstanding, oral dialogue allows immediate interaction and reasoning.

Fifthly, it involves greater participation. Individuals cannot be lost behind stacks of books or in the corners of dusty libraries - by being present in the group they are involved in the process, personally and become a part of the experience or narrative that is being shared. They are invited to be changed or influenced by what they have heard or shared.

Finally, content aside, the process of interacting builds relationships. It develops friendships. It gives expression to Christ's commands for us to love one another (Matthew 22:37ff). It brings us to a place where there is greater equity between student and educator, marginalised and oppressed, woman and man.
6.1.1.3 Disadvantages

The greatest disadvantage of feminist liberation theology, which includes in its methodology discourse, lies in that 'language is a (but not only) signifying process that constructs rather than represents reality' (Fulkerson 1994: 62). This means that one has to be cautious that the oral process (which is based upon language) adequately reflects (and then challenges) the context.

The next disadvantage of the oral nature of feminist dialogue lies in direction. The process of dialogue needs to be given a direction or goal that ensures that the whole experience has a definite direction and is not only a talk-shop or an afternoon tea party. It has to be accompanied by concrete outcomes.

Linked to this are issues of dominance and control: Kistner (1988:95-104) speaks of how the negative impact of imprinting from the violence of the Apartheid regime influenced not only the oppressors, but also the oppressed. This example indicates how individuals with pre-meditated agendas and attempts at directing the outcome of any dialogue process may cause a reactive response amongst other participants, resulting in a power struggle even at a sub-conscious level. This, again, may be mediated by the existence of concrete goals which override any personal agenda or attempt at dominating the proceedings.

Thirdly, one would be naive to assume that every dialogue is going to be positive, cooperative and effective. Although, if one is prepared to learn from mistakes, analyse failures and be sufficiently humble the process of break-down may in its own right be invaluable.

Fourthly, it is incredibly difficult to manage and control the differing agendas that may be present at any meeting. It is important to ensure that these are managed in such a way that the overall agenda of the gospel and the needs of the people, as a whole, are met - without offering any group/group member a sense of marginalisation.

Finally, dialogue is time consuming. Dealing with people and listening to all of their stories takes time and effort and commitment. It is a laborious and a patience-taxing exercise; therefore it is a challenge to balance the need to be heard with the need to keep the process moving forward.
6.1.2 The action-reflection model

Heyns & Pieterse (1990:45 - 48) define practical theology as an operational science. In their definition they outline the relationships which occur when theology takes place. There are three elements to theology:

- God’s self-revelation
- Humanity’s understanding of God
- The translation of that understanding into our everyday experience

This may be further reduced to simpler definitions:

- Scripture
- Theory
- Praxis

Heyns & Pieterse (1990:41 - 42) determine that there is ongoing dialogue between theory and praxis where our theory is refined when put into practice and our practice is influenced by our theory; thus there is mutual influence. Similarly, theory (and therefore ultimately praxis) is influenced by God’s self-revelation primarily in the form of Scripture. Heyns and Pieterse (:43) correctly assert that our understanding or interpretation of Scripture varies according to our understanding or context. Thus Scripture may be best described as theology which is our attempt at understanding God’s self-revelation.

Therefore, in conclusion, one can determine that the process of theology or theologising is best depicted in terms of a spiral (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:45) where there is a continual fluctuation between praxis (action) and theory/theology (reflection). Each contributes to the other, each enhances an understanding of the other, each refines the other. Just one example of this approach’s implementation comes to the fore particularly in Feminist Theologies (Van Schalkwyk 1994: 38).

6.1.2.1 Advantages

The advantages of the action-reflection model lie predominantly in the seriousness with which context is taken into account, when one’s praxis is deemed to hold relevant influence in our understanding of God and equally God’s message to us.

Similarly, it reminds us that all theory is not watertight but rather is process-orientated
where we learn from experience on a trial and error basis.

It also demands balance, eliminating the possibility of theology becoming a purely academic or intellectual subject divorced from reality and / or spirituality.

Finally, the action-reflection process means that all experience can be an opportunity for learning, not to mention that it can be revisited in the light of God’s revelation. The corollary is that God’s revelation only becomes effective when applied.

6.1.2 Disadvantages
The disadvantages are few but still worthy of note:

Firstly, there may always be the temptation to concentrate on either the action or reflection part of the spiral. Many contextual theologies operate on different ends of the continuum between action and reflection. Liberation theology, for example, would lean towards the action side.

Secondly, one may be tempted to see this as purely a ‘science’ or become distracted by the ‘analysis’, pushing the personal, relational element of faith aside.

6.1.3 The pastoral circle of social analysis
Holland and Henriot (1980:3-4) take the process of action-reflection one step further. They have developed a similar model which is also cyclical but hosts a heavy accent on social analysis. In this approach there is an attempt to marry the academic and the pastoral - the reflective and the practical.

The pastoral circle is also known as the hermeneutic circle and was developed predominantly among the members of the liberation theology movement¹ accenting heavily upon praxis.

In the diagram below (Figure 6.1) the following four nodes or ‘movements’ of the

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pastoral circle are shown:

**Experience**
The process begins with experience. This is the cutting edge of social analysis - beginning where the individuals are at; by taking into account their everyday life, their feelings, events, priorities and concerns. It is these areas that provide the basic information used in the analysis. Under this section critical questions are asked about the process, such as:

- Whose experience is being considered?
- Is there anyone who has been left out or marginalised?
- Is there a privileged role to be played by the oppressed in this process?

**Social Analysis**
It is not sufficient simply to take cognisance of the raw data. It is then analysed and taken into account in terms of all its relationships, both structural and social. They are then put into the bigger picture, by determining their impact upon each other and their overall interactions. Under this section critical questions are asked about the process, such as:

- What form of analysis is being used?
- Are there dubious presuppositions contained within this analysis?
- Can one use this analysis without embracing the ideology from which it comes?

**Theology**
This brings us to the next section, theology. This aims to understand the analysed material in the light of the gospel, that is the encompassing gospel message: scripture, tradition, revelation and the church. Under this section critical questions are asked about the process, such as:

- What are the methodological assumptions which underlie the theology?
- What is the relationship between the methodology and the analysis?
- How relevant is the theology to the experience?

**Pastoral Planning**
This can almost considered to be the goal of the pastoral circle and therefore the most important. Here the data determined by the experience, social analysis and theological reflection are translated into a response. The challenge is to find a response that is most effective in dealing with the issues raised by the previous stages of analysis. The circle then
reverts back to experience and continues in an ongoing process of action and reflection. Under this section critical questions are asked about the process, such as:

- Who participates in the planning?
- What are the implications of the process used to determine the responses?
- What is the relationship between the groups served and those who serve?

The pastoral circle can be depicted graphically in the following way (Holland and Henriot 1980:3):

![Diagram of the pastoral circle]

6.1.3.1 Advantages
The greatest advantage, to my mind, of this approach lies in the action-reflection process; where there is a fine balance between orthopraxis and orthodoxy.

This is further enhanced by a self-critical element which engages not only the issues at hand but also the methodology involved - being ever aware of those who may be hurt or left out of the process (this self critical nature has been demonstrated by the questions listed after each movement).

A third advantage lies in the preparedness to acknowledge society’s structural issues. In keeping with the systems approach mentioned below (cf. 6.1.4), it is important that one considers all the factors and inter-relations between elements in society.
Fourthly, as a model of change (Holland and Henriot 1980:18) social analysis helps us to cope with the ongoing transformation of society and to critically evaluate not only the change but also the status quo.

Fifthly, it is one of the few methodologies that adequately takes into consideration the increasing global nature of the world’s societies and where the analysis makes room for international trends, movements and influences.

Finally, the process itself is very simple and therefore open to use in a variety of ways by a variety of individuals who have been sufficiently equipped in analysis.

6.2.3.2 Disadvantages

Holland and Henriot (1980:6-7) openly acknowledge the limitations of this tool. My primary concern lies in the emphasis on Social Analysis. I believe that this is an important factor in any contextual methodology but do not believe that it is always relevant. I am aware that this is the whole point of Holland and Henriot’s methodology, but I think that their approach could be so much more useful if it was more inclusive of other forms of analysis, not to mention additional movements. The need for social analysis should be determined by those engaging in the theology itself and therefore should be only a (even if strongly) recommended option.

Secondly, the primacy of experience, I believe, is unnecessary. If a methodology is truly cyclical and all the parts are inter-related and have an equal bearing on the other, then whether one commences with experience or with the word of God, each will have the necessary impact on the other. Thus I believe their process will be equally legitimate if it was initiated by questions raised from Scripture, social analysis or even pastoral planning - as long as the whole cycle is followed!

Thirdly, particularly taking the analysis into account, this process is one which is clearly engaged in by the ‘privileged’, who are those most usually in possession of the information and tools needed to interpret it. Holland an Henriot acknowledge this weakness (1980:6) which is reflected in the final question under pastoral planning, above. They aim to train local people in analysis and affirm that local people need to find their own solutions to their social challenges.
Finally, this is a process that evolved from needs experienced within the United States. This does not mean it cannot be used effectively in South Africa, but one does need to ensure that it is genuinely inculturated before it is utilised.

6.1.4 A systems approach

Frijof Capra (1983:285) proposes a systems approach to life in general:

The new vision of reality we have been talking about is based on awareness of the essential interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena - physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural. It transcends current disciplinary and conceptual boundaries and will be pursued within new institutions. At present there is no well-established framework, either conceptual or institutional, that would accommodate the formulation of a new paradigm, but the outlines of such a framework are already being shaped by many individuals, communities, and networks that are developing new ways of thinking and organizing themselves according to new principles.

As Capra mentioned above, there are no or few methodological frameworks for a systems approach, but he believes that any systems approach can be based upon the ‘bootstrap’ approach to scientific formulations espoused by Geoffrey Chew (in Capra 1983:83-84). This approach rejects the notion that science can only be understood in reductionist terms (its smallest divisible components) but suggests that it may be understood rather in terms of its interconnections and the self-consistency exhibited by those interconnections. The aim will be to develop a system of inter-locking models and connections, from every aspect of life that will exhibit self-consistency.

In spite of the absence of an existing model, Capra (1983:286 - 332) offers us a few possible basic characteristics of a systems approach:

- The world is looked at in terms of relationships and integration.
- These systems are whole and arise as a combination of their interactions and interdependence of their parts.
- They are intrinsically dynamic in nature.
- A systems approach is based upon process thinking.
- The organic patterns created by viewing systems are different from the traditional building block / mechanistic/ reductionistic approaches (which are not invalidated but rather exist as complementary approaches).
- Multi-faceted non-linear influences create systems which are unlikely to be affected by solitary events or issues.
• Systems exhibit a freedom (autonomy) within their own environment and yet are also influenced by the interconnections with the environments around them - finding a balance between the relative concepts of determinism and free will.
• Because they are multi-faceted, systems have a high degree of stability as they are not dependent upon individual influences alone.
• Systems are naturally adaptive and change or modify to accommodate a new environment.
• Systems exist in a complementary and positive relationship with their environment.
• Complementarity is essential for the existence of systems.
• Death is not an end but rather an integral part of the life of the system.
• Systems are intrinsically outward-looking. ²

6.1.4.1 Advantages

It is difficult to offer a critical evaluation of Capra’s systems approach because it has not been formulated into a specific methodology. Nevertheless we may evaluate some of the principles themselves.

Firstly, a systems approach takes into account the structural nature of our existence acknowledging that life is more than just the individual.

Secondly, it opens the door for a multi-disciplined approach to issues and problem solving, by recognising the interrelatedness of, for example, psychology and history or theology and medicine.

Thirdly, it recognises the corporate-ness of human existence.

Fourthly, it hosts a positive, affirming view of society, ecology and conservation, where each impacts upon the other and has a positive role to play in each other’s existence.

Fifthly, it closes the door on a sacred-profane understanding of things spiritual and earthly, eliminating a false dichotomy between the things of God and the things of humanity.

² For a detailed break-down of how these principles may be applied to life, in general, please refer to chapters ten to twelve in Capra’s publication (1983), as listed under Sources Consulted.
In this respect science can no longer be seen as separate from theology but there is a mutual recognition of each by the other.

Sixthly, a systems approach is inherently contextual because its very nature is determined by the sum of the environment in which each system exists; and yet it also recognises that every system has impact upon other systems and therefore no matter how contextual a system may be - it will always have relevance and / or impact upon other systems / contexts. Thus 'spiritual' systems can be studied in terms of their impact on 'carnal' systems.

6.1.4.2 Disadvantages

Firstly, there is a danger that personal accountability may be lost within a systems approach and one may, on the whole, lose sense of the individual, although a genuine system will take the individual's role as seriously as any other dimension.

Secondly, systems are incredibly complex and one cannot understand them completely or be able to determine, let alone integrate every facet of influence completely.

Thirdly, systems can never be viewed objectively because by observing the system one is interacting with it and therefore impacting the system itself³. Therefore a system can never be unbiased or neutral. Theologically this may be perceived as an advantage.

Fourthly, in a systems approach one may have a tendency to adopt an attitude that everything is relative. But in order to recognise that a system is a sum of influences, one has to acknowledge the importance of each influence and the role it plays within the system.

Finally, it is important to remember that in certain instances the mechanical or reductionist approach to science and life in general is appropriate and should not be discounted altogether.

³ This has been determined by the Quantum Theory which suggests that an object, by being observed is changed because the observer can only perceive the object from his / her fixed perspective (cf. 5.2.1).
6.1.5 Desmond Tutu’s Theology of Ubuntu

Battle (2002:178) speaks of Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s theology of Ubuntu, which is based upon a relational spirituality which derives from the inter-connectedness of all human beings. The theology is evident in African spirituality whose epistemology begins with community and then moves onto individuality.

Tutu (in Kretzschmar 1986: 36 - 37) states:

The African would understand perfectly well what the Old Testament meant when it said ‘man belongs to the bundle of life’, that he is not a solitary individual.

There is a strong link between African culture and African communal life and the Old Testament approach to family and the New Testament approach to the body of Christ (Kretzschmar 1986:36). African communal life generally and the concept of ‘Ubuntu’ specifically recognise the importance of the fellowship of believers and the interconnectedness of all things - most especially corporate relationships.

John Mbiti (in Battle 2002:179) is well known for his aphorism, ‘I am because we are’, which characterises the African understanding of community. Nida (1990:58-59) explains how Africans do not distinguish between themselves and ‘non-persons’, ‘where Bantu people in general relate themselves very closely to their lineage’. Tutu (in Battle 2002:179) describes his Ubuntu theology as follows:

No real human being ... can be absolutely self-sufficient. Such a person would be sub-human. We belong therefore in a network of delicate relationships of interdependence. It is marvellous to know that one who has been nurtured in a loving, affirming, accepting family tends to be loving, affirming and accepting of others in his or her turn. We do need other people and they help to form us in a profound way.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer also affirmed this need for community as, even in the midst of persecution from Nazi authorities, he attempted to establish communities in which ordinands were able to shape their lives and discipline and existence within a communal setting (Bethge 1979:51-55).

6.1.5.1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was seen as an opportunity to restore this balance of community. It was based upon a Trinitarian understanding of forgiveness (Battle 2002:174). The process of testimony, receiving hurt, exposure, confession and revelation,
moves the epistemology from an ethnic-base to one of *imago Dei*, where our corporateness is determined by the sharing of all humanity in the common image of God which was implanted in all of us by our creator-God (:174).

6.1.5.2 Advantages

The advantages of this approach are clearly evident:

The support and balance and affirmation that are to be found in community.

A collective identity that exists beyond individual success or achievement, but rather is found in belonging and participation.

The creation of a common identity which becomes more important than the differences that cause division.

A celebration of that which unites as opposed to a focusing on that which divides.

An identity which embraces and recognises the need for consideration of the community, as a whole, when making decisions or undertaking actions.

6.1.5.3 Disadvantages

The one disadvantage would be integrating a traditionally Western based individualism into this world view, which is completely foreign to those whose African heritage is only of a few generations.

A second disadvantage may be a temptation to avoid individual responsibility and accountability when it comes to issues of righteousness. One sees this in the ‘witch hunting’ exploits of rural communities, who level blame at individuals for disasters or misfortunes of the community or other individuals, and create a situation in which the ‘witch’ suffers the collective anger of the community.

A third disadvantage emerges in the communicative process where in relational cultures reality may be obscured for the sake of enhancing the relationship which takes precedence (Schier 1995:471).
Even Tutu (in Kretzschmar 1988:37) warns against romanticising African communal life,

... this strong group feeling has the weakness of all communalism; it encourages conservatism and conformity. It needs to be corrected by the teaching about man's inalienable uniqueness as a person. We need both aspects to balance each other.

Part of this conservatism and conformity includes issues such as the oppression of women which frequently leads to the promotion of other abuses where, for example, oppressed women fear the dominance of the male to such an extent that frequently children are abused without exposure by female caregivers.

6.1.6 The Family Systems Approach

The idea that pastoral work operates within a systems context is not new. Pattison (1977) has written an incredibly valuable book on a systems approach towards pastoral care and ministry. Here he acknowledges that the church is a living system (:1), with particular functions (:20) and symbols with its own sub-systems (:28) and interrelations with the minister (:48). It would be the task of another thesis to investigate these systems and all their interrelations in depth but even within this pastoral context, systems themselves may be of use to the pastor to bring healing and salvation to broken communities.

Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick (1989: 3-25) have adopted a comprehensive systems approach to family therapy. It is an approach which takes cognisance of inter-generational pathologies and the repetition of those pathologies through the generations of each family.

Each generation could be said to move along a cycle which is governed by the movements of what are called nodal events. These events are defined by rites of passage that are inherent in each culture, such as birthdays, bar/batmitvahs, confirmation, circumcision ceremonies, 21st birthdays and the like, known as life-cycle transitions. These systems work on different levels - starting with the individual and moving outwards, taking into account the macro socio-economic and religio-political environments.

Pathology emerges when one of the life cycle transitions is interrupted because of death, illness or accident or alcoholism or retrenchment or any other stressor. The therapy aims at assisting individuals and families to work through the derailed developmental process
and regain momentum through the life cycle transitions that are customary for that particular family or individual.

The process recognises a number of phases within the family life cycle:
- The launching stage of the Single Young Adult
- The joining of families through marriage
- Becoming parents: families with young children
- Transformation of the Family System in Adolescence
- Families in Mid-life
- That family in Later Life

These developmental movements as determined by rites of passage are often interrupted by *inter alia* the following:
- Divorce and / or remarriage
- Impoverishment
- Death
- Retrenchment
- Disease (including Alcoholism)
- Religious conversion
- Abuse, Crime or Frightening Experience.

Thus Carter and McGoldrick have established an understanding of therapy which moves beyond the individual and takes into account all the systems that play a role within the individual's life: the family history, the external factors, the internal transitional moments and incidents which interrupt the flow of those transitions.

This challenges our understanding of individuals pastorally, and encourages us to take a systems approach towards salvation - where it is more than merely spiritual but a true liberation from all the factors which may impact upon individual lives.⁴

6.1.6.1 Advantages

The advantages of this systems approach to therapy / pastoral work is that it recognises the

⁴ Please refer to Appendix B for Carter and McGoldrick’s (1989:3) graphic representation of the factors which constitute a systems approach to family life cycle therapy.
‘hidden factors’ in the shaping of individuals. It takes seriously their context and the circumstances in which people find themselves and tries to address the irregularities in those contexts which challenge the normal development of the individual / family.

The second advantage is the flexibility of the system - it can be used in any culture and adapted to the meaningful nodal points of that culture without being a tool that is alien to the receiving cultures’ traditions as the tool is based upon the traditions themselves.

Thirdly, and very important in the African context, is that it takes seriously the family relationships and the sense of importance of the connections to ancestors.

Because of the flexibility of the tool it may be incorporated into a pastoral setting and used in a specifically Christian context.

6.1.6.2 Disadvantages
There are two main disadvantages to this systems approach:

It can only be used most effectively by someone who is highly conversant with the model and the methodology and has a knack for diagnosis.

It does, on occasion, tempt the individual to deny personal accountability and responsibility in terms of her / his personal actions, where ‘everything’ is blamed upon ‘the family’ or ‘someone else’.

6.1.7 Conclusion
It is interesting to note how these recent developments and trends in different areas of theory and praxis are all based on integrated systems or relationships. This is not to say that there are not other approaches around, but that these trends should be challenging Missiologists to give a systems world-view serious consideration. It would allow those participating in God’s mission to the world to take seriously and function effectively within a sitz im Leben whose many facets are completely interdependent.

6.2 Bosch’s definitions of mission
Almost commenting on these very phenomena of diversity and interconnectedness in
missions theory, David Bosch's (1991) momentous work on shifting paradigms in mission provides us with an extensive overview of current missiological trends. After tracing mission in the New Testament documents Bosch engages in a survey of historical approaches to mission and concludes by outlining current missiological thinking. He labels thirteen emerging paradigms (1993:368 - 510), which are listed as follows\(^1\): Mission as ...

- Church-With-Others
- Missio Dei
- Mediating Salvation
- the Quest for Justice
- Evangelism
- Contextualisation
- Liberation
- Inculturation
- Common Witness
- Ministry by the Whole People of God
- Witness to People of Other Living Faiths
- Theology
- Action in Hope

Now as much as these thirteen paradigms are helpful in understanding the dynamics of contemporary mission there is a danger that, where our definition becomes so inclusive, it is no longer useful or alternatively so narrow that it constrains Missio Dei to the intellectual activity of humanity.

Further, Bosch warns (1991:512) that these definitions are hazardous because 'even the attempt to list some dimensions of mission is fraught with danger, because it again suggests we can define what is infinite.'

Bosch then offers an alternative. He invites us to consider six images or pictures or metaphors of mission as facilitated by God's six salvific events: incarnation, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost and parousia (1991:512-518).

\(^1\) It would be unnecessary to duplicate Bosch's work here. For a detailed analysis of these emerging paradigms please refer to pages 368 - 510 of Transforming Mission (1991).
This definition is helpful in that it offers flexibility and yet also stability in terms of definition. It offers one the freedom to give expression to mission in terms of one's own understanding of these terms within one's own interpretive framework. But the danger does exist in that mission may only be perceived from these perspectives and not any other.

Bosch's definition is crucial to our discussion as it recognises the dynamic nature of mission by offering us a multitude of different definitions, frames of reference and models; and as such these fluid definitions require a concrete framework within which they can operate effectively: a framework that will offer a multitude of perspectives, theologies, interpretive methodologies and contexts without reducing the concept of mission to either a purely speculative comparative academic exercise or else something which is purely relative and contains no absolute revelation. The resolution to this, lies, in my mind, in a new hermeneutical key.

6.3 A new hermeneutic
If one takes into account the pre-eminence of relationship within scripture; the way in which relationship (interdependence) is coming to the fore within the scientific world; and the way mission is best defined in terms of many inter-related paradigms and keys which each have a role to play within certain contexts and are kept in balance by a creative tension between the different approaches, surely it makes sense to approach missiology from a relational perspective.

In terms of a relational missiology, relationships become a valid source of revelation and fulfilment of Jesus' commandments, not only in terms of the proclamation of the gospel and fulfilment of God's covenental plan (conversion and liberation) but also in terms of the medium (the mission theology and praxis).
SECTION D: PASTORAL PLANNING

CHAPTER SEVEN
A NEW MODEL FOR MISSION THEOLOGY

7.1 Relationship as the common denominator

Taking into account the conclusions reached in Sections B and C, we have determined that relationships are not only the goal of the gospel but also the way in which that goal is realised. We have determined the important role relationship is playing within our community of believers in not only attracting people to the community but also sustaining their participation and growth. We have seen examples of how relationship is becoming increasingly important in terms of a multi-disciplinary approach to mission, both in terms of the relationship between action and reflection and in terms of relationship between individuals and structures in society when it comes to developing local theologies. We have glanced at a systems (inter-relationship) approach to looking at life, in general. Desmond Tutu’s Ubuntu theology is based completely on the concept of community and even modern psychological trends are taking into cognisance the impact of interdependence and multifaceted relationships in the healing process. We have also seen how science is acknowledging (not without its own critics) the importance of relationship within its own paradigms.

Thus using Section A and B as our motivation and various components of emerging trends outlined in Section C, I am going to propose a tentative methodology for mission specifically, and for theology in general, which takes cognisance of the priority of relationship in our faith and takes seriously the importance of allowing relationship to be the medium of the message. It will show how relationship becomes the goal, the means and medium of theology and how relationship becomes both the norm and the source of theology (Young 1990:19).

Thus the following section will focus on how we are able to plan for a more integrated, inclusive systems approach towards mission theology by creating a tool to mediate a relational approach.
7.2 A Tentative Methodology

This methodology is based loosely upon the dialogue of feminist theology, the pastoral circle of Holland and Henriot’s social analysis and the action-reflection spiral of Heyns and Pieterse, combined with the systems approach of Capra and the underlying principle of Tutu’s Ubuntu (cf. chapter 6).

Essentially the pastoral circle will operate in four dimensions - cyclically, horizontally, vertically and introspectively, as follows:

7.2.1 Relationship as the goal

This methodology makes no claims to neutrality. In a methodology which is based upon relationship - contrary to the convictions of Paul Knitter (1995:219-220) who asserts that Christians can only enter into dialogue if they deny the ontological necessity of Christ - one has to bring something into relation with something else. The bias of the methodology is relationship itself, which on four different levels also constitutes the goal or intention of this methodology.

In his book, ‘The Purpose Driven Church’ (1995), Rick Warren convincingly explores the need to operate churches according to function or purpose. It is my contention that the church’s ultimate purpose (and therefore mission) is to promote relationship between God and humanity, between one another and with ourselves, as is reflected by the four goals of the methodology:

7.2.1.1 Horizontally: The Inclusive

The relationship model begins with the community of believers, where theologising is undertaken in the context of community, by or under the auspices of a group. Similarly to 4.4 (above) the goal is instituted by the second component of the Great Commandment: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Matt 22:39).

Letty Russel, a feminist theologian, believes that theology should be a ‘shared enterprise’ (Young 1990:49). Rahner (O’Donovan 1995: 4) echoes these sentiments: ‘Human existence is not a thing which we have, or an object which we observe, but a process which we do and are; experiential knowledge is the knowledge we have of ourselves related to a world of persons and things in the actual living of this relationship.’ (italics mine) and Philip
Wickeri (1990:102) writes, ‘... more broadly, the spirituality of human relationships provides an important, though neglected, perspective on Christian mission.’ Martin Buber is well known for his definition of humanity in terms of concrete concepts: validating the I-Thou self-understanding of human beings over and above the I-It (subject-object relationship). Therefore human beings are understood as and defined as being relational beings (Rooy 1965:194).

And so the aim or intention of the methodology is to bring individuals into a community and to enter into inclusive relationships that will ultimately facilitate the emergence of a new praxis and theology; where the goal is not only the theology but also the establishment of a community where individuals are free to practice their calling to the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 9:2). Thus, not only will the theology make Christ visible in the world, but so will the process of theologising, as God’s presence is manifested through the establishment of community. Particularly pertinent for the continent of Africa is this observation from Gary Scheer (1995:471):

In a culture where relationships are primary, relationships are also the key to communication. The foundation and goal of relational communication is not merely to pass on truth, but to establish, maintain, and enjoy the fruits of relationships.

This ‘committed reciprocity’ (Shields 1996:108) with a ‘shared vision’ (:110), does not only feature in its own right, but also impacts on the other goals of this methodology as outlined below (7.2.1.2-7.1.2.4):

Our relationships with each other impact our praxis as Mary Hunt (1991) comments:

Choices about how we will share our bodies in friendship reflect a concern for the entire human family. For example, the choice to have a child influences a wide circle of friends. The choice to take up a sport or to travel or to move all have concrete implications for friends. This is part of the responsibility of friendship. This is what it means to say that friendship is a political commitment.

The process of enhancing these inclusive relationships as we work on a theology together, in its own right has a practical impact, as Carter Heyward observes (in Shields 1996:109):

To be mutual we do not have to be social equivalents or equals. A man and a woman cannot be, for example, in a sexist social order; nor can a white and a black person be in a racist society. But we can share a commitment to accompany each other toward more fully mutual ways of being together. We can help create the ‘not yet’ by living toward it in anticipatory ways.
And so one can see how this particular goal of the methodology has a positive spin-off on the other goals. This is in keeping with a systems-based approach which recognises the interaction and inter-connectedness of everything.

Figure 7.1 illustrates how the methodology has a horizontal component or goal; as it progresses along so it seeks to embrace each other, more and more, moving outward in ever-inclusive relationships.

Thus not only does the method seek to unearth mission theologies, but as it does so, it incorporates individuals in the process and in its own right engages in a process of reaching out (mission).

For not only does one obey the second aspect of the great commandment by engaging in theology-in-community but as one engages in theology-in-community so one discovers that one is better able to fulfil this commandment. Teilhard de Chardin writes (1964:95):

To love is to discover and complete one’s self in someone other than oneself, an act impossible of general realisation on earth as long as each man can see in his neighbour no more than a closed fragment following its own course through the world.

Thus, according to Teilhard de Chardin, our ability to love each other is dependent upon our ability to understand that we cannot and do not exist independently of each other.
7.2.1.2 Vertically: The Spiritual

The primary goal of this methodology is the deepening of relationship with God, for both the authors and recipients of Mission theology. The group engaging in the theologising, does so with a deliberate consciousness of God's presence. Again, as outlined by 4.4 (above), this goal is instituted by the first component of the Great Commandment: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind' (Matt 22:37). Shields (1996:106) declares that love is a mark of friendship, and therefore surely also of relationship.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes a most fascinating chapter. At a first glance chapter seven appears to deal with marriage and celibacy but as one uncovers the principle behind the text one discovers that Paul is talking about a much deeper issue. In 1 Corinthians 7: 35 he writes, 'I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.' Paul personally encourages celibacy because he believed that devotion to God takes primacy. Our relationship with God should be the determining factor in all our decisions and in all that we do. And it is in this vein that the most crucial action or intention of a relationship-based methodology is to draw us closer to God.

Thus all that occurs within the methodology: the relationships, the movements on the pastoral circle, the local theology, the decisions, the priorities all aim to seek fulfilment of this commandment.

Figure 7.2 (below) outlines the vertical component of the methodology; where one cannot engage in relationships with others without moving closer to God; and equally as one moves closer to God so one engages in deeper relationships with others.

One could therefore say that this methodology has a definite spiritual bias in that it aims to impact directly upon the individual's (see 7.2.1.4 below) and the group's relationship with the Holy Trinity. Not only will the relationships be evaluated in terms of their vertical goal, but so will the methodology (7.2.1.3 below).
7.2.1.3 Cyclically: Processes of the Pastoral circle

The next goal of the methodology is to bring all of the elements/movements of the pastoral circle into relationship with each other and then with the participants in the methodology (the horizontal relationships) and with God (vertical relationships).

The pastoral circle operates much as Holland and Henriot's (1981) pastoral circle, where one moves through the different movements (components) of the circle on an action-reflection basis. This aspect of the methodology is instituted by Jesus' quotation from Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' (Luke 4:18-19). This is the practical, every-day dimension of salvation.

Here all the elements or movements accessible to the believing community are brought into relationship to 'preach the good news', 'proclaim freedom', healing and to 'release the oppressed'.
In Figure 7.3 one observes the circular nature of the pastoral circle at the top of the inverted cone. As one moves circularly through the movements so one is also moving outwards (horizontal relationships) and upwards (vertical relationship).

These movements are multi-dimensional: they are more than the social analysis, theological reflection, pastoral planning and experience of Holland and Henriot's pastoral circle. In his discussion papers to the Uniting Reformed Church on children’s participation in Holy Communion, Kritzinger (undated:1) asserts that theology is composed of many different facets and influenced by so many different dimensions including culture, gender, upbringing, class, race and so on. Any responsible model for theology would have to take cognisance of not only these facets but all dimensions of existence. In a lecture given to ministers of the now Presbytery of Gauteng of the then Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, Kritzinger (1997) adds additional movements to the pastoral circle. He quotes Barth when he says that all theology should begin in the gutter and to ensure that the movement along the pastoral circle embraces all the issues and dynamics of the gutter (so to speak) a whole host of different movements may be included; movements that seek to fulfil the aims outlined by Christ in the previous paragraphs. When discussing feminist theology Russel (in Young 1990:41) mentions that any group doing theology contributes to the 'unfinished dimension of theology', implying that any theology is incomplete and dynamic with a limited universalism. By attempting to bring as many movements as possible into the pastoral cycle,
we are attempting to ensure that this hermeneutic is as inclusive as possible.

Therefore the cycle may include more than one theological process, contributions from so-called secular professionals over and above social analysis, such as psychologists, conservationists and medical professionals.

The movements on the pastoral cycle will be determined by the participants, although it is imperative that there is always an action-reflection dimension.

7.2.1.4 Introspectively: Wholeness and Holiness

Karl Rahner (O' Donovan 1995:33) speaks of the importance of God, or at least the word 'God' to the individual:

If the word (God) dies, in all of its transpositions, then the human dies with it. As long as there are human beings, men and women before whom the question of their own existence and the meanings of 'the world' tells with poignant force and who feel a final responsibility for the quality of their lives, the word "God" will figure in their questioning and in their longings. Even if it exists only in question, the word is inescapable in a life that is human. It is the word in which language and the human situation which it embodies bring to consciousness the question or the answers, the disavowals or the affirmations, about ultimate meaning and ground. It is this word which evokes and confirms our humanity.

In other words our humanity is inextricably linked with our relationship with God.

The methodology starts (Figure 7.4) with the individual; more specifically with the context from which the individual originates and the goal is to bring this (individual's) context into relationship with 'Each other', with 'God', and with the 'Pastoral circle' and thereby bring freedom, liberty and healing to the individual / context.

This goal deals with the ongoing experience of God's salvation 'on earth', as God establishes the Kingdom in our personal contexts, and how to allow those Kingdom principles and priorities to impact and affect the way we live in our different contexts. Thus even in an academic theological exercise there will always aim to be some sort of personal growth / development.
7.2.2 Relationship as the method: Dialogue

Having looked at the goals of this methodology we now move onto its application. Every aspect of this methodology is facilitated by the chief component of relationship: dialogue. When we speak of dialogue we speak of two or more mediums interacting and impacting upon each other.
Figure 7.5, portrays how dialogue / relationship becomes the agent by which we tie all our goals together. As one follows along the spiral one begins with oneself / context and moves in a circular motion (following the movement of the pastoral circle), in ever increasing concentric circles (establishing inclusive relationships), upwards (drawing closer in relationship to God). Lockhead (1988:77-81) defines dialogue as relationship. He also determines that mission refers to the ‘calling of the Church by God into the world‘ (:82) - a relationship which can only effectively mediated by means of dialogue where there is a reciprocal listening between the Church and the world (contextualisation) which ‘enables the Church to better understand what the world hears when the Church speaks‘ (:83). Thus the dialogue or relationship facilitates the fulfilment of our horizontal, vertical, introspective and cyclical goals while at the same time achieving a mission theology. Thus the medium and the message converge at the point of dialogue or relationship.

And as we relate, so the four movements (outwards, inwards, upwards and cyclically) impact upon each other and all assist in the other’s momentum. Now we are going to take a look at the different dimensions of these dialogues or conversations that are taking place, as they are incorporated into the methodology:

7.2.2.1 Horizontally: The Inclusive

Determining the Participants

The first step in the process is one of determining who is affected by this methodology, and thereby who will be in the group that will undertake the process of theologising and who is involved in the questions, issues, concerns or local theology - a process similar to the critical questions raised under the ‘Experience’ movement in Holland and Henriot’s social analysis (6.1.3 above).

This will depend largely on the reason for the methodology being instituted. Questions raised here would be as follows: What initiated the need for a mission theology, a need for a local contextual theology, or an issue or problem or an attempt to develop an outreach strategy for a congregation?

Participants of the group could *inter alia* include any of the following:

- Theologians
- Local lay people
• Clergy
• Professionals such as psychologists, anthropologists, social workers, environmentalists, scientists, etc.
• Politicians, civic leaders or government representatives.
• Where appropriate, specific representation of gender or ethnic groups.
• Children and / or young adults.
• Homeless, marginalised, unemployed or abused individuals.
• Members of other faiths.

Thus one would have to determine the primary interest group that could offer the most balance and reflect as many of the systems / relationships that would be brought into play or connection as a consequence of the theology being developed.

This group would then not only aim to develop a strategy but the very process of working together and becoming a community, will be a fulfilment of the second portion of the Great Commandment. Van Schalkwyk (1997:629) encourages a methodology of involvement implying that the more affected people are involved in the theologising or dialogue itself, not only will the outcome be more effective, but also more lives will be changed all through the process itself.

Thus the role of theologian begins to shift from being an author or creator of theology to one where his or her primary function becomes that of a facilitator. Where the theologian is now responsible more for the drawing together all the movements and participants into a dialogue that will generate a contextual theology and less for determining the theology oneself.

**Setting Goals**
The group then determines its point of reference by asking questions such as, ‘Why are we here?’ and ‘What do we want to achieve?’. These questions will establish the goals that will later assist the group when it evaluates the process.

**The Nature of the Dialogue**
Finally the group needs to decide how the dialogue or oral (cf. 6.1 above) process is going to take place. This will depend largely upon the group gathered together, the context of the
group, the size of the group and the nature of the theology engaged. Below is a list of possibilities _inter alia_ which may be used individually or in different combinations:

- Open discussion
- Seminar-type testimonies
- Reflection upon readings or issues
- Each relevant party speaking upon the movement which reflects her / his speciality
- Brain storming
- Open Space Technology / Wilson Process

There are a couple of principles that need to be protected if the dialogical process is to be effective:

- The nature of the dialogue must not be too formalised as to 'lose' certain participants or exclude others who speak different languages or who may be confused by technical terminology, etc.
- Dialogue should be based on personal religious experience (Knitter 1995:207).
- Dialogue needs to be completely open without any predetermined agendas, where each participant is free to pursue their convictions (Lockhead 1988: 76, 78-79).
- Dialogue makes room for listening and mutual growth (Lockhead 1988:76)

Dialogue, as outlined above (cf. 6.1.1), is not a new aspect to theology, Chittister (1988: 160-161) indicates that in religious matters in Indian Villages in Mexico all the way through to the Benedictine tradition, people have operated in a circular or interactive or democratic or dialogical way. This means that communication occurs

without power, without status, without expectation of positions of honour or institutional domination ... where they learned to function as one human being among many and became totally human because of it' (:161).

Chittister was specifically referring to women but she could just as easily also be talking about the goals of this process where the act of dialogue does not only constitute a means to an end but also a goal within itself, where the interaction promotes the development of relationships and thereby 'humanisation'.

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1 To find out more details about the potential that these processes have to facilitate dialogue refer to appendix B.
7.2.2.2 Vertically: The Spiritual

Incorporating a Spiritual Consciousness

Scheer (1995:474) reminds us that God communicates truth and reality through relationships. Thus, simply by gathering together in Christ’s name (Matthew 18:20), the process becomes one of worship.

It is important that the group keeps this in the forefront of their minds as they engage in the theological process - so that it is not reduced to a series of intellectual arguments, or a meeting of certain agendas - but rather remains an act of worship.

Liturgy

What may help the vertical dimension to remain a focus would be to include in each session or gathering liturgical elements, such as worship, prayer, even a celebration of the sacraments - symbolising the group’s oneness in Christ. One may even ensure that there is a ‘chaplain’ present in the group who takes responsibility for the spiritual dynamics.

Having established the principles for the facilitation of the horizontal and vertical relationships we move onto the cyclical relationships of the pastoral circle.

7.2.2.3 Cyclically: Processes of the Pastoral circle

As has been mentioned a number of times, the pastoral circle in this model is based upon a combination of the spiral action of Heyns and Pieterse’s (1990) action reflection model, Holland and Henriot’s (1981) pastoral circle and Kritzinger’s (1997) modification of Holland and Henriot’s pastoral circle.

Determining the Insertion Point

The process begins by determining the insertion or starting point, that is the place where the group starts its discussions. This will depend largely upon the initiating factor of the methodology: if the group is engaging in this methodology because of a situation that needs to be dealt with then the starting point will be experience or context. If the methodology is an attempt to create a contextual theology then the point of insertion will be determined by the nature of that theology. If it has arisen out of scripture or worship or a focus on outreach then each of these becomes the insertion point.
The starting point does not have any priority over any other movement in the pastoral circle as the process will take cognisance of each movement with equal consideration, giving primacy only to action and reflection as a whole.

*Setting the Agenda: Movements Along the Pastoral circle*
Once the insertion point has become evident the group then has to decide what other movements are to be considered along the pastoral circle. Those items become the agenda for the dialogue. Bosch (1991) writes, 'Our mission has to be multidimensional in order to be credible and faithful to its origins and character.'

Saayman (1991:103-104) challenges us to be cautious about who sets the agenda when it comes to Christian mission and mission theology. In this methodology the group, as a whole, sets the agenda, as long as the agenda maintains its action-reflection characteristic.

A balanced pastoral circle or agenda for dialogue would contain some or all of the following:
- Experience / context
- Scripture & Exegetical Methodology
- Theological Methodology
- Application / Pastoral Planning

It is important, though, to remember that the relationship model is based upon a systems approach where every possible point of influence is taken into consideration. Thus a dialogue, for example, which may be based upon mission to HIV-AIDS patients may include the following:
- Experience / context
- Testimonies of HIV-AIDS sufferers
- Scripture
- Theological Methodology
- Psychological needs: individuals and families
- Medical needs
- Hospice care
- Economics
- Application / Pastoral Planning
When determining a pastoral circle of this comprehensive nature one may need to expand the group participants to include these sorts of professionals.

It is important, here, to make mention of the theological method. It is the responsibility of the group to decide upon the most appropriate theological methodology for the groups’ needs. Thus if dealing with the oppressed or marginalised then a liberation theology may be appropriate. If creating a local contextual theology in an indigenous culture then perhaps Schreiter’s (1985) local theological method would be appropriate. If using a theological method then it would obviously be wise to include a theologian or member of clergy who is familiar with that particular movement in the theology. It would also be appropriate to use more than one theological method - if necessary - perhaps gaining more than one perspective on the issue as suggested in 6.2 (above). Gaybba (1991:14) grapples with this issue when he suggests that only one way of doing theology is not always sufficient where both the contextual and cognitive theologies can serve an effective and valid purpose. In this instance the model would accommodate not only both simultaneously but also help to bring a balance amongst the different theologies in their application to a particular crises or context.

It is important to remember that as the dialogue continues so the agenda / movements may change. Shields writes (1996:108) that ‘As historical beings, our relationship grows as our stories develop and intertwine. Friends share a common memory that gives plot and line to their relationship’. Thus as the interaction progresses so the movements may change - this is a part of the dynamic process of the relationship-based methodology as it is based upon the relationship and not specifically the means of sustaining those relationships - as long as they keep on moving upward, outward and inward.

Figure 7.6 (below) is an example of a pastoral circle and how it would fit into the methodology:
The Natural Agenda of Relationship

Expanding even further on what Shields says, above,(1996:108):

As historical beings, our relationship grows as our stories develop and intertwine. Friends share a common memory that gives plot and line to their relationship. The particular life circumstances and social contexts within which friends live shape the story, as does the individuality of the participants. This means that among other things, that friendships are inherently political since they not only participate in but help to shape the social contexts in which they exist. (italics mine).

This implies that even the process of interacting with each other, as we move through the movements of the pastoral circle, will in its own right create praxis amongst the newly created community which is engaging in the theology.

Repeating the Process

Once one has worked through all the movements of the pastoral circle, so the process begins again. It is a dynamic process that fluctuates according the conclusions, observations,
applications, growth (knowledge) and experiences of the group. There is a time when the process should be halted and that perhaps should be when the outward, upward and inward movements cease and or else when the system becomes continuously lop-sided with no sign of bringing balance into the four dimensions of the relationship. Then this system needs to be replaced by another.

7.2.2.4 Introspectively: Wholeness and Holiness

Richard Foster (1989:2) quotes Psalm 42:7, 'Deep calls to deep'. We each experience within us a call to deeper living, a hunger to fill what C.S. Lewis frequently labelled as a God-shaped vacuum in our lives, a desire for personal growth. This need for a personal spirituality becomes very evident in David Bosch's study on second Corinthians (1979) where he discusses, in his first chapter, the struggles and difficulties that face missionaries, specifically - and all those involved in proclamation of the gospel, in general.

To return to, and expand upon what Shields says, above,(1996:108) that:

as historical beings, our relationship grows as our stories develop and intertwine. Friends share a common memory that gives plot and line to their relationship. The particular life circumstances and social contexts within which friends live shape the story, as does the individuality of the participants. (italics mine)

Rahner (in O’ Donovan 1995:19) reminds us that as people we are the sum of a whole lot of influences - that we can’t be reduced to a psychological or biological profile; instead: the fundamental reality of the whole person is the experience of subjectivity, or personal experience ... we question various causes and explanations offered by the limited anthropologies of which we are aware, and we realise that no single cause, whether biological or cultural, entirely explains us to ourselves.

As individuals work through the horizontal, vertical and cyclical relationships they impact upon us personally; they offer us explanations as to who we are. Equally as we share those stories so the stories become intertwined with our personalities. So the process of engaging in these relationships impacts upon our personal lives and our personal spirituality.

It would be helpful if the liturgical elements of the process be geared to linking the other relationships with the introspective ones - always keeping a creative tension between the personal (introspective), the corporate, the intellectual and the practical.

Thus we cannot engage in this methodology, we cannot get involved in these
relationships without them impacting upon our personal spirituality, shaping us ever-increasingly in the image of our Creator.

7.2.3 Relationship as the Benchmark: Accountability
Before the group enters a second rotation of the pastoral circle it is important that they spend time evaluating the process. The most effective form of evaluation would be in terms of the fulfilment of the goals as outlined in 7.2.1., by asking the following questions:

- Have we been drawn closer together through this process?
- Have we been drawn closer to Christ through this process?
- Has our personal spirituality been deepened through this process?
- Have as many elements, as possible, in the pastoral circle been brought into dialogue with each other to impact meaningfully upon the issue raised / context / methodology at hand?

Changes may need to be made to the group, agenda or even topic in response to these questions. And then the process will begin again.

7.3 Disadvantages
Perhaps the most glaring disadvantage of this process is the fact that it is quite labourious and time-consuming and less clinical than in an academic environment with its presentation of papers and clear-cut references. Working with people in a dialogical situation is always slow and demands much energy.

Secondly, it is difficult to maintain a process where the guidelines are flexible and determined by the group at hand. One has to trust the group and this could lead to the existence of circumstances which are contrary to the aims of the process.

Thirdly, the group may be hijacked by negative internal dynamics and allow this to distract them from their goals.

Fourthly, linked to the above, as Nelson (in Shields 1996:107) puts it:
Underneath all explanations for man’s difficulty in friendship I believe there lies one pervasive and haunting theme: fear. Fear of vulnerability. Fear of emotions. Fear of being uncovered, found out. So my fear leads to my desire to control - to be in control
of situations, to be in control of my feelings, to be in control of my relationships. These trust issues become profound if there is one party in the group who dominates the process without the permission of the group itself. It will be an ongoing challenge to maintain effective, responsible, considerate and inclusive group dynamics.

Fifthly, there exists the danger of relativism (Niebuhr 1951:234-241) where the combination of movements and the option of different theological uses becomes an exercise of comparison. The only way to stem this is to maintain the accent upon the vertical relationships - where the greatest comparative object is God.

Sixthly, it would be a temptation for the group to become too involved in the process, especially if they should they become so inward-focussed that they lose sight of the objective and the world they aim to reach through God's help.

7.4 Advantages
By engaging in theology-in-community one is more certain of a balance of perspectives and point of view.

Secondly, the advantage of a group dynamic is that the attentiveness and support and encouragement and acknowledgement of fellow believers fosters a creative environment (Shields 1996:107) which stimulates broader vision and a more balanced perspective. Not only does this balance occur because of the inclusiveness but also because of the different planes on which the model operates. For example, the poorly labelled 'Charismatic' movement may operate primarily on vertical relationships, whereas the traditionalists may function predominantly on the horizontal or even circular relationships - the model seeks to bring these areas into balance with one another; by including all dimensions without one dominating the other.

Thirdly, this inter-action in the words of Kenelm Burridge (in Wickeri 1990: 103):
... entails a dialectic between what is brought to that otherness and what is learned from it: a process of mutual communication and acceptance as, on both hands, horizons of awareness are widened.

In this case otherness being different cultures. MacGavran (1980:221) asserts that mission is best engaged in, in people groups of like ethnic or social strata whereas in contrast, I believe that this methodology is a way of developing a combined theology which acts as a witness to those who are being missioned, of the supremacy and necessity of inter-
relationship and unity (Padilla 1982:299-302), over and above social or ethnic strata.

Fourthly, the relationship focus ensures that as much as one is in the process of developing outreach methodology so one, in that very process, is reaching out through the inclusive relationships of the group.

Fifthly, the approach to dialogue is very secure in that if the horizontal relationships are stalling, the vertical and circular drag them along. If the circular relationships are presenting problems so the horizontal and vertical facilitate those movements’ progress.

Sixthly, Scheer (1995:474) accurately identifies the need to balance relationship and truth. He describes the relational person as ‘hugging Jesus to the heart’ and the reality-orientated person perceiving salvation as a ‘truth to be accepted’. The one is short on understanding, the other on love. This methodology balances the two components interactively.

Seventhly, the methodology recognises that this is a process and not an event. One could argue that any missiological methodology is a ‘conversion’ to a more authentic interpretation of the gospel in a particular context; as Conn (1982:82) points out, conversion is a dynamic, ongoing experience, which is taken into account by the repetitive, evaluative and cyclical characteristics of this hermeneutic. Equally Kritzinger (1997) affirms that theology and indeed salvation is a process which has to be worked out over and over again.

Eighthly, because of the dynamic nature of this hermeneutic no methodology is going to look the same. Each time the method is employed, there are so many variables from the insertion point, to the participants, to the dialogical method all the way through to the theology employed that no two processes are going to look the same. Pamela Young (1990:17) sees this as a distinct advantage, testifying to ‘strength and richness in depth’ of [a theology].

Ninthly, this model has great adaptability: it has the potential to function as a model for doing theology, as a hermeneutical key for scriptural interpretation, as a basic skeleton structure for pastoral planning all the way through to a counselling tool where the pastor and the client dialogue on movements surrounding the issues at hand thus all in all becoming an epistemology in its own right!
Tenthly, because of the process-orientated nature of the model, it recognises that as much as cultures are never static (Kritzinger 1997), so the model will always be contextual in that it is revisiting the context over and over again.

Finally, it makes room for allowing theology to become truly contextual; the product of dialogue between those within the context itself merely facilitated by a theologian, who, if the model is used properly, will ensure that theologians of the context are represented themselves.
SECTION E: RE-INSERTION

CHAPTER EIGHT
PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Here we are going to look at three examples in which the hermeneutical key established in chapter seven, will become the interpretive methodology. The italics represent the rationale or explanation of the process. Firstly we will investigate an actual case study where a breakdown in a recent General Assembly of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa resulted in a relational solution being sought. This relational methodology was unconscious but illustrates superbly the effectiveness of a relationship-based methodology.

The second and third examples are hypothetical constructs which were created to offer an idea of how this methodology could effectively be utilised. These two issues are (a) the current land issue crises, within a particular context in lieu of the current violence taking place in Zimbabwe and tensions arising in South Africa and (b) a reflection upon the results of the congregational survey, above, and a result derived from Christian Schwarz’s Natural Church Development questionnaire.

8.1 The Uniting Presbyterian Church’s General Assembly of 2002

The process was initiated by a report which was submitted to the 4th General Assembly of the Uniting Presbyterian Church on the current state of the church. An item on page four of the supplementary papers (2002: 393) read as follows, ‘Unhappiness at continued drain of resources for on-going support of Zambia and Zimbabwe’.

The Proceedings of the 4th General Assembly of the Uniting Presbyterian Church (2002: 443) record that a proposal was tabled that sought clarification on whether this statement was an official view of the denomination, if not, to withdraw the derogatory statement and issue a written apology to the parties concerned and grant the Moderator of the Assembly the right to withdraw any derogatory statements which appear in these reports in the future.

Instead an amendment to this proposal was passed which simply deleted the offending line and extended an apology to the affected parties.
The parties noted their dissent to this decision and the consequent unhappiness resulted in the calling of a meeting - outside of ordinary business - to deal with the issue.

Participants
Participants at this meeting included:
- The Zimbabwean and Zambian delegations
- The Moderator
- The colleague who proposed the amendment

Goal
The goal of the extra-ordinary meeting was to find healing and resolution over the relationships which had deteriorated over the years and had come to the fore over this issue.

Nature of the Dialogue
The meeting rescinded Assembly protocol and operated in open committee style where all were free to speak without notices of motions, restrictions or constraint. This created an environment where there could be genuine mutual communication.

Insertion Point
Clearly the insertion point was the statement under discussion.

Movements
These were not formalised but included areas such as
- Perception: The Zambian and Zimbabwean churches are perceived as being on the periphery of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa because they exist beyond the borders of South Africa;
- Statistics: This perception is more damaging in light of the fact that the Zambian church is actually experiencing the fastest growth in our denomination.
- Finances: Consideration of the fact that the Zambian church brings in more than it received in grants.

Spiritual Dimension
The report, minuted in the proceedings (2002: 465 - 466) which emerged from the extra-ordinary meeting resulted in a liturgical repentance and apology by the assembly, including
an opportunity for prayer and the laying on of hands on the affected commissioners by the commissioners from South Africa.

Repetition and Evaluation
The proposals adopted above resulted in a reconciliation between the South African and non-South African commissioners - not only in respect of the point of conflict but also in terms of a history of feeling marginalised. The worshipful and sincere act of repentance brought the entire Assembly into deeper relationship with one another and freed the Holy Spirit’s ability to pursue his work in the assembly; this while restoring the dignity and humanity of the affected parties.

There was no mandated opportunity for repetition as the relationship model was not engaged in consciously.

This example epitomises the contrast between a functional structure - even if it is theological - becoming unstuck because of the primacy of its goals at the expense of relationships (dealing with a financial issue), and the healing and restoration of relationship corporately, personally and spiritually because of a relational approach.

8.2 A reflection on two surveys.

Participants
Once they had the results of the Natural Church Development survey (Schwartz 1998) and the results of the Congregational survey used in this dissertation (cf. Congregation Six in Figure 3.1 & 3.2), the local congregation decided that it would use these results as a basis for determining an outreach approach to their congregation’s ministry.

- Minister
- Core leaders of the congregation
- Different lay representatives

Goal
Having received the data the group agreed that their goal was to reflect upon the results of the surveys and to see if they could assist in determining a theologically correct approach to
outreach.

Nature of Dialogue
Because we were dealing with a creative process it was decided to encourage the lay people to feel secure in making contributions without being threatened by the minister or elders present, so it was decided to use the Open Space Technology form of dialogue.

Spiritual Dimension
The pastoral circle included a movement for prayer. This was undertaken not only by the participants but also by the entire worshipping community as a corporate act of ownership, involvement and influence over the process.

Insertion Point
Analysis: The data from the surveys would be the insertion point.

Movements
After considering the data, the agenda / movements were determined by the headings determined by the Open Space Technology process:

- Survey analysis - The Natural Church Development Survey identified ‘small groups’ as the next area of focus for the congregation. The congregational survey gave an indication of the importance of relationships in the congregation.
- Current status of the congregation - The growth figures and demographics of the congregation were shared with the group.
- Bible’s understanding of outreach - The minister outlined his understanding of outreach. This raised the question of cross-cultural relationships in the congregation (which is an inner-city church) and the group decided on another movement on the pastoral circle - creating a local theology for a multi-cultural church.
- A local theology of integration and multi-cultural worship. Ways of making the church a ‘friendly place’ for different cultures was considered.
- Method for outreach - The group felt that the most effective way to reach people of different cultures was on a one-on-one basis. This would occur most effectively in small groups (thus being allied to the results of both surveys). At this point it was suggested that the church look at cell groups as being the basis for the formation and
development of these relationships, as a way to draw people into the congregation and at the same time to bring unity amongst the congregation members. A leader of a local cell-based church was then invited to address the group.

- Cell Groups - It was decided that because of the relationships established by the group that they would establish the first cell group with the aim of growing and sub-dividing in the future.
- Multi-Cultural Worship - The congregation were invited to offer suggestions and make comments on the ideas instituted under the local theology for an inclusive worship and pastoral strategy.

Repetition and Evaluation

The process was then evaluated on the following basis.

- The participants' relationship to one another.
- The deeper understanding of what the congregation is.
- The impact on the cell group adherents' spirituality
- The building of relationships amongst the congregation.
- The impact of the outreach on congregational growth.

The group would return to the movements to evaluate the process and make adjustments in terms of their experiences of the new praxis.

8.3 The land issue

The process is initiated by trying to determine who is affected by this issue, who will be able to contribute effectively to the envisaged movements along the pastoral circle and who needs to be informed of the progress. It is crucial not to be paranoid about getting this process perfect the first time as the cyclical nature of the methodology will ensure that any overlooked elements can be included at any stage of the process. For the sake of this discussion it was resolved that the following be included in the group:

Participants

- Theologian(s)
- Representatives of the landless
- Land claims commissioner
• Local land-owners
• Local clerics

Goal

Upon coming together the group agreed that their goal should be as follows:
To reach out to the community by creating a contextual theology that will grapple with the
land issue amongst the marginalised.

Nature of Dialogue

Because the issues themselves were quite evident it was felt that the group could readily
agree upon which movements should be represented in the pastoral circle and therefore the
dialogue could take place in a committee-type forum. Brainstorming sessions would be held
when looking at solutions.

Spiritual Dimension

The group was set apart by a combined service of worship - which gave them corporate
accountability to the community. The focus on the horizontal relationship was maintained on
a day-to-day level by the hosting of devotions, alternately amongst the group members, by
those who felt equipped. Before the group reached consensus on any issue time was spent
in prayer and silent reflection.

Insertion Point

As a result of an issue being the determining factor the insertion point was as follows:
The context of landlessness and the entire situation that gave rise to this condition.

Movements

Once deciding upon the insertion (starting) point, the group set the agenda by each proposing
that the following needed to be considered as movements on the pastoral circle:

• Testimony by those whose land was expropriated / experienced forced removal. This
  was to set the context.
• A history of the situation. To help the group get the broader picture.
• A social analysis. To help the group understand the structural motivations and effects
  of the land-issue.
• A Liberation Biblical reading of the ownership of land in 1 Kings 21 and Genesis 2 (Bosman et al 1991:20-24 and König 1988). To give us a clear picture of Scripture’s understanding of land and how it impacts upon our understanding of God and God’s intention for land.

• Current political measures. The land claims commissioner was asked to explain the process by which land claims processes are being settled by restitution taking place.

• Church’s role. The group then discussed the role which the church played in augmenting alienation from land and the role it could play in meeting the needs of communities.

The group then brain-stormed possibilities for dealing with the issue and felt that the following needed to be included in the movements along the pastoral circle, as a part of the pastoral planning:

• Healing - great benefit and healing having been found in the sharing of their stories, workshops would be set up for those subject to forced removal or expropriation to give expression to their pain. A counsellor would be included in the group to facilitate this

• Church-based Projects - Non-viable rural congregations would begin vegetable gardens, small subsistence farms or nurseries on their unused land to be run by landless communities for a small percentage of returns. This would help heal a sense of alienation from the land while promoting the financial health of these congregations. Local farmers and conservationists would be asked to join the group to assist with the correct planning of these projects.

• Tertiary Institutions - These would be approached to consider offering, as part of their community projects, to establish courses in basic farming skills and agricultural development for those communities whose claims have been successful.

• Local Church Involvement - A booklet would be sent out to churches encouraging them to take an active part in mediating disputes which arise between existing farmers and new tenants; and also promoting a Christian understanding of land.

Repetition and Evaluation

Once the information has been gathered and strategies put into place, the process will be evaluated in terms of the following relationships:

• Landless and the land.
• Understanding of God’s relationship to the land in relation to us.
• The relationship between the parties involved.
• The effect of the land-based theology upon the local congregations.
• The impact the process has had on the individuals who have been involved in the process.
• The effects of the workshops and the church-based projects.
• The experience of liberation within the communities involved, in terms of their involvement in the church and their involvement in the land issue.
• The relationships that the group have built with one another and the healing and liberation that it has brought to the group.

The group will then begin the process again.

8.4 Conclusion

One will be able to discern from the examples above that the relationship hermeneutic is a way of managing vertical, horizontal, introspective and cyclical components in such a way that they interact with each other and take seriously the inter-dependence of all things. Thus the hermeneutic becomes a tool that will change dynamically according to context, need and method.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to this method, but if our understanding of Christ’s example and his fulfilment of God’s covenant with Israel and the nations is correct then it stands as a necessity for any methodology.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.1 Where we have been

Consciously and unconsciously over a broad range of disciplines and in a host of different applications the importance of relational approaches and methodologies is becoming increasingly evident. Emerging from programmes within the pastoral context all the way through to understanding the systems nature of modern scientific theory and psychological practice, is an ever-increasing recognition that to perceive life through the glasses of the inter-relatedness of all things is to add credibility and insight to our perception.

If we were to add to this pastoral experience the very clear demand by Scripture that each Christian pursue relationship with the Holy Trinity (which is a relational entity in its own right), pursue relationship with one another and seek to draw others into these relationships, then one would have an imperative which we cannot ignore; and to do so would be at the cost of the primary principle espoused by Divine revelation.

As bold a statement as this may be, it appears through analytical survey that part of the Missio Dei is a drawing of believers and non-believers alike into the worshipping community through relational bonds which originate both within and without family contexts.

It therefore would be a grave flaw for any theologian not to taking serious consideration of the relational aspect of all theology.

9.2 The potential of a relational theology

Over and above this, a relational theology presents a potential that still remains mostly untapped in theological circles. A dialogical, relational methodology opens the door for professionals, non-theologians, those outside of the western academic bias and even illiterates to participate actively in the theological process; this in its own right is an act of inclusion, engendering a more accurate contextual theology which is open to and can easily embrace other theologies and approaches.
Mediating the primacy of relationship in theological and methodological approach is a new model which seeks to facilitate the process of mission and contextual theologies but is flexible enough to be utilised in counselling, pastoral, liturgical and any other context. This model seeks not only to engender a relational approach but also is relational in its very nature - transforming the theologian’s role from author to facilitator.

It offers a more authentic way of engaging in mission methodology because it is inclusive, it maintains a spiritual agenda without sacrificing intellectual or theological integrity with an approach that is as heterogenous as the theological and analytical tools available to those who engage in it. And perhaps, most of all, engaging in theology-in-community, is in its own right a form of mission: realising that ever deepening relationship with the Holy Trinity, with each other and with self.

9.3 Conclusion
We can conclude that relationship is the medium and the message, relationship is the goal and the process of mission and therefore, surely the most effective proponent - not only of mission itself - but also as a mission methodology. It represents a hermeneutic and epistemology that mediates the direction and goal of all theologies so that they remain essentially missiological - and leads to an ever deepening relationship with the Holy Trinity, with each other and with self and for this reason cannot be ignored under any circumstances by any serious theologian.

Perhaps above all, this model redresses the often unconscious imbalance in theologising and theology which sneaks in when we become side-tracked on either context or praxis or science or analysis and lose touch with the Creator who initiated our desire to reflect in the first place. The eminent psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1975:xxi) speaks of her desire that medical doctors should not only be concerned with the science of medicine but also its art. Is it not imperative that theologians embrace a model of this nature so that our models and methods may no longer be only science but also art: a creative, dynamic interaction with all that God has placed before us and in us with the express aim of drawing us closer to him. A link between science and art; a link between reflection, action and spirituality!
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## APPENDIX A

**CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY** Please would you, individually, fill in this questionnaire by ticking the most appropriate block for each question. Thank you for taking the time and trouble to assist in this research. The results of this survey will be forwarded to your local minister.

1.1 How did you come to be a member of this particular congregation?
- ☐ My parents worshipped at this congregation.
- ☐ I moved into the area
- ☐ I looked for a church of our own denomination
- ☐ I was introduced through a need / crises / wedding / funeral / baptism, etc.
- ☐ I just tried the church out
- ☐ I was introduced by a friend / acquaintance / another member / family member

1.2 Why did you stay at this congregation?
- ☐ I enjoyed the worship
- ☐ I enjoyed the preaching
- ☐ I related to the minister
- ☐ I found the church to be friendly and felt at home

1.3 Have you received a personal visit from the minister?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.4 If yes, then how did this visit impact your experience of Christ / the Church?
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Negatively

1.5 Have you received a visit from an elder / pastoral visitor?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.6 If yes, then how did this visit impact your experience of Christ / the Church?
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Negatively

1.7 Have you been involved in a small group at the church, such as a Cell Group, Bible Study, Choir, Prayer Group, Fellowship Group, Ladies or Men Group, etc.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.8 If yes, then how did this visit impact your experience of Christ / the Church?
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Negatively

1.9 In this/these group(s) what has had the greatest positive impact?
- ☐ Content (what you do in the group)
- ☐ Learning
- ☐ Friendships
- ☐ Support
- ☐ A sense of belonging
- ☐ Interest
- ☐ Personal Growth
APPENDIX C

There are any number of useful processes in existence with which one may conduct dialogue. There is the 'committee' approach where the group simply sit around a table and discuss, with or without an agenda. This would usually require the oversight of a facilitator or a chairperson. One may use readings or experiences or issues as catalysts for the discussion, such as those contained in Richard Foster's 'Devotional Classics' (1989). It is really up to the group to determine how the dialogue process will work. Below are two possible formalised methods that may be useful when considering the process of dialogue. They are not dissimilar - the Wilson process is more structured while Open Space Technology offers more freedom for and control by the participants.

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

Open Space Technology (O. S. T.) is the result of a collaborative effort refined by Harrison Owen (1992). The process is particularly useful in both the African and Developing World contexts as it finds its origins in the community based approach of a Liberian village (Owen 1992:3-4). In fact it has already proven to be effective in dealing with the traditional tensions facing Black and White South Africans during 1992 (Owen 1992:10). The fundamental principles of the process are based upon a commitment to giving the participants sufficient space and time to communicate effectively; and effective communication facilitates effective relationship (Owen 1992:12).

O. S. T. is dependent upon the absence of a predetermined agenda and the silent agreement of the participants not to dominate or exercise control over the proceedings other than that determined by the collective whole (Owen 1992:15); although the process is goal-orientated, as determined by the theme or 'title of the gathering (Owen 1992:18). In the context of this dissertation this would be determined by the four relational goals in terms of the issue raised by the insertion point.

The effectiveness of the process is chiefly determined by the commitment of the participants and their voluntary involvement in the process where the agenda is set or created by participants who are passionate about the point(s) they raise (which will

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1 For a detailed introduction to Open Space Technology please refer to Harrison Owen's publication (1992) in the sources listed.
become a movement on the pastoral cycle) and their preparedness to take responsibility for it.

This happens in the following way (Owen 1992:76-99):

**Initial Briefing**
The facilitator's chief role lies in orientating the participants about the basic principles of process and letting them get on with it themselves. Participants are seated in a circle while the facilitator explains that participation in the process is entirely voluntary and the time required or utilised is determined entirely by the groups concerned - within the limit set by the overall consultation.

**Setting the Agenda**
On one of the walls in the room is a blank space, with the headings of different venues and time slots available to the participants. Any participant is then invited to write down on a piece of paper provided an issue, concern, point of discussion or opportunity relating to the theme. He/she then moves into the centre of the circle, introduces him/herself, reads out the title and then places it in a slot on the wall/board. This process continues until the response from the group is exhausted.

**Voting by Participation**
The participants then move up to the board and 'sign up' for the topics / points that interest them. If there is a clash then it is up to them to negotiate with the initiator of the topic to change the time or else merge with another, if issues are similar.

**Discussion**
The groups are then free to discuss / grapple with the issues in any way they see fit for as long or short a time as is necessary. This is usually very lively as the people present are only those who wish to be there, and are passionate about the issue.

**Feedback**
In terms of the O. S. T. process feedback is offered in terms of written reports. Depending upon the participants, the fluency in one particular language and the literacy levels in the
group this may or may not be a good idea. Creative ways need to be explored in how the group, as a whole, can effectively synthesize the essence of the discussions.

Application
The movements for the pastoral cycle would then be characterised by the issues raised for discussion by the different groups - with the guidelines outlined by the points of discussion.

Advantages of this Approach
This approach redefines the traditional agenda-approach of committees. Here 'the unspoken and possible unspeakable' (Owen 1992:8) are able to become a part of the dialogue - often that which has been left off the agenda.

Secondly, as Owen has demonstrated (1992:9) the process is effective in engaging participants from different cultures and backgrounds; giving each the 'space and time' to own their own identity and bring it into conversation with others.

Thirdly, this approach is effective for groups ranging from five to five hundred. Thus the process of theology-in-community can become practical in great numbers.

THE WILSON APPROACH
This is an approach adopted by business (Wessels 2002) but may be equally utilised most effectively as a conduit for dialogue, when the insertion point is experience/context. It is clearly democratic and therefore may be useful for contentious groups.

Step One: Investigation
Individuals are invited to reflect upon the current context by answering the following questions on sticky address labels. They may submit as many responses as they feel necessary:
- What has been successful?
- What internal / external problems do you see in the future?
- What are our greatest opportunities?
- If you had no limitations, what do you do to fulfill those opportunities, personally?
Step Two: Reduction
All the responses are placed onto an easily visible board and each participant is given coloured stickers which have been distributed equally amongst the participants at a ratio of 1:4 for the number of responses.

Under direction from the participants the items are then grouped according to common categories or issues. With the permission of the group the facilitator removes duplicate items.

The participants are then invited to prioritise future discussion by voting for what they believe are the most pertinent/accurate observations. They do this by placing a coloured sticker on each response. Any participant may place more than one sticker on a response if they feel so convicted.

Step Four: Discussion
The most popular items are then allocated time frames for discussion; to be facilitated by the respondent who wrote the item down.

Step Five: Graphic Analysis
The issues are then graphed on two axes: competence and importance.

Summary
This process helps one to determine an agenda and prioritise the items on the agenda. These will become the movement points on the pastoral circle.