EVANGELISM in the EMERGING ECUMENICAL PARADIGM

by

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Evangelism in the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm

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Abstract

This Doctor of Ministry thesis looks at the ministry of evangelism. Specifically, it looks at the practice of this ministry in three Anglican suburban churches in southwestern Ontario – the churches of Trinity, Aurora, Trinity, Streetsville and the writer’s parish of St. Simon’s in Oakville – for the purpose of creating an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that is theologically sound and uses the tool of marketing. The history of Anglicanism and its impact on the present-day practice of the ministry of evangelism are examined to provide theoretical background. In addition, great attention is paid to the theologian David Bosch. His definition of evangelism is at the core of this thesis. Additionally, his explanation of paradigm shift is foundational to understanding the church’s move from the Enlightenment paradigm to the emerging ecumenical paradigm. Key, too, is the distinction he makes between dimensional and intentional evangelism, and the importance he places on creating points of connection helps to form the direction of this thesis. Furthermore, an understanding of the present-day religious landscape and demographics are discussed along with a reflection on how marketing can be used to strengthen the ministry of evangelism.
Darcey Ryan Lazerte was born in North Vancouver and after several moves settled in Oakville, Ontario in 1983. He attended Trinity College at the University of Toronto and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with a major in History and a minor in Political Science in 1993. He completed his Master of Divinity studies in 1995 and was ordained into the Anglican Church of Canada on January 14th, 1996. He first served as the Assistant Curate at St. Jude’s in Oakville. He was then rector of a two point charge, St. John the Divine in Cayuga and St. John’s in York. In 2004 he returned to Oakville to become rector of St. Simon’s. In 2008 he was made a Canon of Christ’s Church Cathedral, Hamilton. He currently resides in Oakville with his wife Dawn and together they proudly parent three children, Kieran, Trinity and Denver. As his Facebook page states, his broader interests in life are theology, politics and sports. He enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading and playing hockey and getting away from it all at the cottage.
To the three Trinity’s in my life that have made me who I am: the Holy Trinity through which in my own limited way I have encountered the transcendent; the University of Trinity College which exposed me to the richness of the Anglican tradition and has shaped my faith journey for twenty years; and my daughter Trinity who reminds me every day of the importance of having one place on earth, the church, which accepts people for how God made them.
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Introduction: A Ministry in Need of Discovering

It has been said that God has no grandchildren. In each generation the church must reach out to those around it and express the gospel of Jesus Christ anew. This reaching out to people in order to bring them into the church and into a place where faith is alive in their life is called the ministry of evangelism. One of the fundamental and underlying assumptions of this thesis is that the ministry of evangelism has been for the most part neglected by the mainline denominations. This is of particular significance as the context of this thesis is the Anglican Church of Canada and its ministry of evangelism. In response to this neglect my goal is to breathe new life into the ministry of evangelism through this study.

The approved research problem is as follows: Through this study I want to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that incorporates marketing that is theologically based and culturally appropriate. Broadly speaking, this will be accomplished by looking at the ministry of evangelism from two perspectives. The first will be an overview within the context of the Anglican Church and the history of Western thought. The past practices of evangelism will be presented in broad strokes, showing how they have formed the practice of evangelism today and how they create some hindrances to the exercise of this ministry. The second perspective is narrower and concerns the practice of evangelism at St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville itself. A case study will be done with some nearby churches that fall within the bounded system that is explored.

The thesis will be divided in the following way. It will begin with an exploration of the context of my ministry, which is St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville. This will be followed by a stating of and an analysis of the research problem as found in the approved thesis.
This will then be followed by an in-depth look at the theoretical framework of this study. The first three chapters, while looking at the specifics of what is being studied, do so in such a way that they explore a broader understanding of evangelism. It is with this broader understanding that the bounded system will be explored through the Action-In-Ministry. This will be done first by understanding the research methodology itself, and then by a sharing of the acquired research. The thesis will then conclude with a discussion of the significance of the findings of the study and how these findings can be implemented.

What this thesis will work through is the following. First, there will be an in-depth exploration of the fundamental problem that lies behind the research statement. The Anglican Church of Canada, of which St. Simon’s is a member, has for the most part neglected the ministry of evangelism. Then some of the tools which exist in the area of evangelism – theological, biblical and cultural – will be explored. These tools will then be looked at more specifically in light of the case study which examines the three churches in great detail. From this study conclusions will be drawn and the evangelism plan for St. Simon’s will be created.

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1 The approved thesis proposal is Appendix A, p. 169.
Chapter 1: Context of Ministry

St. Simon’s Context

The context in which I exercise my ministry as an ordained person and the basis of my Doctor of Ministry work is St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville. St. Simon’s is a church of 350 households, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2005. It is located on Trafalgar Road in northeast Oakville in a highly visible location across from Sheridan College’s Oakville campus. It exists within a relatively new building (1987), and previously had been located in three other premises in the area. Northeast Oakville was mostly farmland just over twenty-five years ago but since then has seen much growth, which continues today. The membership of St. Simon’s is varied culturally and socio-economically, though Oakville itself is usually perceived to be Caucasian and middle to upper-middle class. On Sundays there are two services. The first is at 8:15 a.m. and generally attracts around fifty people, and the second is at 10 a.m. and generally attracts 125 to 150 people.

A multitude of ministries exist at St. Simon’s, and they are organized into six clusters: worship, property and finance, Christian education, community, outreach, and communication. While each ministry cluster is run and staffed by volunteers who are members of St. Simon’s, they all have clergy contact as well as secretarial support through our parish administrator. From a governance perspective, and most relevant for this study, the evangelism committee is located within the outreach cluster and has done significant work in the area of young families. “Young Families” are defined as household units, in their many different contexts, which are raising grade-school-aged children or younger. This group became a focus because in recent years, the Diocese of Niagara commissioned a demographic study of the parishes of the diocese, including
St. Simon’s, and we concluded from the study that we were underrepresented in the ten to forty-five year old age group. We wanted to explore why that is the case. The evangelism group operates primarily on the basis of “a working ethnography”. A working ethnography is a qualitative research tool, often used in marketing, which consists of a series of challenging questions which prompt the respondent to share his or her story. These findings have been shared with the church at both a parish council level and Vestry (Annual General Meeting) level. While the research has been completed in this area, the implementation has not, and many of the findings are still being worked on. It should be noted that we have deliberately chosen not to work on evangelism for other demographics and that some church members realize that this situation needs to be remedied in the very near future.

**Dimensional Evangelism versus Intentional Evangelism**

When looking at the structure of St. Simon’s it is important to keep one of the fundamental understandings of this thesis in mind. As far as the ministry of evangelism is concerned, there is a difference between dimensional and intentional evangelism. The distinction between dimensional and intentional evangelism is based upon David Bosch’s unpacking of this distinction first made by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin.² Broadly speaking, “dimensional” refers to activities that are a part of ordinary church life and “intentional” refers to deliberate actions that are meant to engage the wider society outside of the church. It is the difference between what

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² David Bosch is a twentieth-century South African theologian who is respected by the mainstream and evangelical church alike. His 1991 book *Transforming Mission* looked at missiology in a new way and continues to influence theologians today. Hans Küng called it the first book on mission to implement paradigm theory. For the purpose of this thesis it is important to note that Bosch’s work is at the core of my study and foundational to my work. Bishop Newbigin, who is referred to repeatedly in Bosch’s work, was English by birth but served as one of the first bishops in the ecumenical Church of South India. He was also involved in many of the wider church organizations of his day. He is widely known for the period after he came back to England following his years of mission work. His underlying premise was that the church needed to take the Gospel, once more, to what he called not a “secular” society but rather a pagan society with false gods. His critique of the Enlightenment is key to understanding his thought.
happens within the life of the worshipping community and the direct involvement of that worshipping community with society.³ Specifically this means that things like worship, Christian education, general programming and even pastoral care would fall under dimensional evangelism. Evangelism may occur because of these ventures, as people encounter God, grow in their faith and take part in a worshipping community. Dimensional evangelism, however, is different from intentional in that it happens outside of the worshipping community. In addition to working intentionally on the ministry of evangelism, intentional evangelism also includes such things as working for justice and peace. Here, direct connections are made with the society around the church so that evangelism can occur beyond the walls of the church.⁴ This is reminiscent of the famous statement attributed to St. Francis that one is to “preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words”. It is important in the study of evangelism that churches have a clear sense of what their mission is and to recognize that it is important to have clarity of which actions are part of the worshipping life of the community and which actions are direct engagements with society. Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis is to point St. Simon’s, and possibly others, in a direction of ministry which will embrace the intentional ministry of evangelism by creating direct contacts between society and the church. When looking at St. Simon’s specifically from this perspective, it should be noted that there is a great deal of dimensional evangelism but very little in the way of intentional evangelism.

⁴Bosch, 373.
Professional Context

So far, I have talked about St. Simon’s as a church, how it functions and a little about its workings. What I have not done is speak about who I am in the context of my role at St. Simon’s. I have been an ordained minister in the Anglican Church of Canada since 1996, I am employed by the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, and I have been the rector of St. Simon’s in Oakville since 2004. The rector is the senior priest and has supervision over the other staff members as well fills a leadership role among the laity. The leadership structure of St. Simon’s is dictated by the canons of the diocese. It consists of a corporation, which is a management committee, and the parish council, which is an advisory body made up of cluster heads, the parish treasurer, the corporation and four lay delegates to synod. We are a multi-staffed church. There is multiple clergy: myself, and while presently vacant there is a history of an assistant curate as well as two honorary assistants. In addition we have a parish administrator, a part-time 8:15 musician, a half-time music coordinator, a cleaner, a nursery worker and a rector. As rector, I am an equal member of the corporation and the parish council, and the staff is either directly or indirectly accountable to me.

The nature and purpose of my ministry is contained within the parameters of the Anglican context and I exercise my ministry at St. Simon’s at the pleasure of the bishop. All Anglican churches are headed by a bishop and are not congregational like many Protestant churches where the authority of the pastor derives from the congregation. My job is to conduct worship in the richness of the Anglican tradition and to attend to all other matters that I think, with the concurrence of the governing body, are important to the health of the parish. By virtue of the structure itself, I work independently in the day-to-day operations of the parish while at the same time I am accountable to both the bishop and the members of the parish. It is an
interesting structure in that, while I am accountable to the bishop and serve at his pleasure, I have only sporadic contact with him or his office. He visits the parish about every two to three years, and I might have one professional conversation with him per year. Unless there are moral lapses or the parish is being noticeably mismanaged, there is very little direction from “head office.”

**Role of the Laity**

The parishioners and lay leaders of the parish are an entirely different matter. These are the people who give of their time and money and who see the church as a significant part of their faith journey. These are also the people who want to see their children raised in faithfulness and who come to the church to be ministered to and taken care of spiritually and emotionally at times when they are in need. The interesting and wonderful thing about these people, from my perspective, is that we journey together through and with each other’s highs and lows. I have seen many of them at their best and their worst and they have seen me likewise. A very intimate relationship grows over the years, and it is deeply rewarding to be a part of people’s lives as they experience their joys and their challenges.

One of the challenges of the ministry of evangelism is that while the ministry of evangelism attracts new people to the church, it can be argued that on the surface it does not actually do anything specifically for those who are a part of the church already. This is because the ministry of evangelism serves those who do not presently belong to the church and while it is a ministry opportunity for those who currently belong to the church there is a good chance that if a person already belongs to a church, for the most part they like it. It may feed their faith, it may challenge them to charity, and it may provide friends or a forum for ministry. Whatever role it has in people’s lives, the church is meeting those needs in some way or they would not be there. My role, as rector, is to bring the ministry of evangelism alive to the people in the pews and to
the leaders in the church, to let them know that evangelism is one of the ministries in which we are engaged, and that it can bring energy and joy to our church and feed those who are presently comfortable in their pews. It is to let them know that we, at St. Simon’s, are called to this ministry and that it will cost us time, energy and money. This is not the easiest thing to do, as there is, at times, some misunderstanding around what evangelism really is. It is not something that Anglicans have historically been trained to do, so to speak of evangelism, for many Anglicans, is counterintuitive to how they were raised in the church and countercultural to the way things were done in the past. This does not mean that the challenge of convincing the church that this is a worthwhile ministry should be abandoned, but it does mean that I need to be aware of people’s misgivings about this area of ministry and to respect them in a way that allows us to address their misgivings and move forward in this important ministry.

A Reflection on Professional Identity

Next, I will reflect on my professional identity in the midst of my context of ministry. I would point out, however, that I have three roles as rector of St. Simon’s. The first is as the chief executive officer. This is not a role I exercise exclusively as I am assisted by many staff and volunteers, though ultimately the responsibility rests with me. Being the CEO incorporates the visioning, or responsibility for providing strategic direction for the parish. While I am aware that I do this within the context of being a diocesan church and that St. Simon’s does not operate in isolation, given the relatively little contact with head office, much of this work takes place at the parish level. Practically this means that in order for evangelism to exist at St. Simon’s it must be a significant part of our strategic direction which in turn shapes the ministry and the people of St. Simon’s. I am responsible for making sure that staff is paid, that bills are met, that we are on top of cash flow, that volunteers have the support they need to do their ministries, that we liaise with
the diocese, that the staff is supervised, plus much more. There is a very heavy administrative role in my ministry at St. Simon’s, primarily because we are a busy program church with many different activities happening throughout the year, and one of my responsibilities is to make sure that things come together and that commitments are met.

My second role is as pastor and spiritual leader of the parish. I have this role in relation to many people in the parish. I meet them at times in their lives when they need pastoral care and I provide this. This means that I need to remember to look at parishioners not just as people who are volunteers and who go about doing the ministry of the church, but I must also recognize their spiritual and personal needs. This is one of the primary challenges of being a parish priest. There are times when I need to challenge people to be more active in their faith and not to use the church as a crutch, but rather to be people who are giving to their church and the world. There are other times when I need to support and help people through difficult periods in their lives. One of the keys to being an effective parish priest is to have the wisdom to know whether it is time to comfort or time to challenge.

My third role in the parish is as chief liturgical officer. I am the primary preacher, I am responsible for worship, and I lead our congregation in our corporate worship. This is a role I share with the curate, the honorary assistants and the musicians, but it is a role for which I am responsible. This role is often the one that defines my relationship with people in that it is most often the first role in which they see me. My administrative side, while time-consuming, is not readily apparent. My pastoral side most often is encountered when people come to some sort of crisis or crossroads in their lives. My worship side, though, is readily apparent; Sunday worship is our central gathering act as a community. It is in worship that people assess my spirituality and my faithfulness. It is through sermons that many people judge my competence. It is in that
“community feel” on Sundays that people decide whether or not to return. The worship experience speaks to our identity as a local church and people do make a decision whether or not this is something they would like to be a part of. It is in worship that we are most truly the church, in that we come before God in our thanksgiving and our praise, and we touch the transcendent as a people of God.

These three roles are intertwined with one another and with the ministry of evangelism. No ministry of evangelism can happen if we do not address it administratively, make it part of our pastoral and spiritual mandate as a parish, and have a worship experience that’s not only appealing but also brings people back and inspires people to go out in mission. This means that the ministry of evangelism is intertwined with my role as CEO, chief pastor and liturgical leader. It is through my role as CEO that vision and direction are set and evangelism needs to be a part of the vision in order to thrive and exist as a ministry within St. Simon’s. This vision then needs to be reflected in my pastoral work and in my liturgical leadership. Both ministries need to be open to evangelism and expressed in ways which welcome new people to the Kingdom of God.

To conclude, I would say that who I am can certainly hinder or help the ministry of evangelism within a parish and it can certainly set the tone in terms of whether it is a parish priority.

A Personal Critical Reflection

With the exception of this last statement, for the most part I have reflected on the context of St. Simon’s as a participant observer. That is, while recognizing I am a part of the church, I have taken a “step back” and analyzed the function of the church and how that relates to the ministry of evangelism. While appropriate for an academic paper, the weakness of this approach is that it is uncritical of the part that I play in the church and suggests that I am basically interchangeable with any other priest who would function similarly to me as rector. For many reasons, this is
blatantly not so. To begin with, as far as I am aware, no other Anglican priest in the church of Canada is doing a Doctor of Ministry thesis on evangelism and, as I have repeatedly observed, the intentional ministry of evangelism is not one that exists in most Anglican churches.

Additionally, I bring a unique set of gifts and weaknesses to my ministry that shape how I go about my role in ordained ministry and how I function as rector of St. Simon’s. My gifts as a good administrator, pastor, fundraiser and preacher serve as a solid foundation for my ministry. Also, because I was raised a Pentecostal, and my mother functions as a lay evangelist, I have come to have a great passion for the ministry of evangelism. I am also excellent at seeing the “big picture” and where we need to go as a church, and I am very hard working and function as a solid and faithful pastor.

My weaknesses are that I lack patience and can often get dragged down by the slowness that comes with institutional life. I become bored with projects or initiatives if they are stuck in a rut. Often I expect volunteers to manage on their own with very little help from me, which sometimes can be empowering but often can be discouraging if the volunteer is facing challenges she or he does not know how to handle. I also need to manage the number of new initiatives that we are undertaking at any given time as a church so that we are not overwhelmed and can stay focused on our vision and our purpose as a parish. These are all elements that I recognize within myself and repeatedly examine so that my weaknesses do not set the agenda or determine the functioning of the church. The biggest challenge that I face is in the area of widespread communication. I find that at St. Simon’s (and I have heard it of many parishes), there is the official communication of what is happening and then the undercurrent of gossip and misinformation. I think that this miscommunication does an incredible amount to undermine the

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My mother Rhonda Lazerte, has written several books, speaks in churches and has had a program on Vision TV called “Door of Hope” for over twenty-two years. The primary focus of her ministry is evangelical in nature.
good work that the church does and I continually strive to make sure that we are focused as a parish and that what we do is about our vision and our call to be followers of Christ.

As far as the ministry of evangelism is concerned, my challenge is achieving an adequate understanding of how to go about this ministry in the institutional setting. The examples of evangelism that I am familiar with are from outside the church and rely heavily on what I would call parachurch movements and organizations. I have been exposed to my mother’s ministry which primarily functions on Vision television, the charismatic movement when I was growing up, some participation in student groups in high school and university and the witness of individuals, to name a few. What these groups and movements have in common is that while they are often supported by churches they really function outside a traditional church setting and really do not challenge a church to engage in intentional evangelism.

**Missional versus Pastoral Models of Church**

I also find the demands of being a parish priest often get in the way of really bringing the ministry of evangelism to the forefront. There seems to be no end of pastoral care, administration, Sunday service preparation, volunteer management, staff coordination, with the result that there is little creative time left in which to engage in this ministry. I have come to the conclusion that there are two models of church. This became very apparent to me several years ago when there was a change in how the local hospital, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, administered its denominational lists. When I was an Assistant Curate at St. Jude’s over sixteen years ago we simply went to the hospital, got the list of patients who had been admitted, cross-referenced it to our parish list and visited our parishioners. When I came back to Oakville in 2004 I discovered that, because of the Ontario Privacy Act, there are now denominational lists. So a volunteer at the hospital prints the denominational list daily, and when I go to the hospital I
ask for the Anglican list and cross-reference from there. Interestingly, for a short while the hospital decided to print the lists only for the denominations whose ministers showed up. A month into this I was surprised as the volunteer behind the desk remarked, “It is only the Catholics, you guys and the United lists we ever print up you know”. This made me aware that among the many denominations represented in Oakville, there were different models of church and professional ministry operation. Broadly speaking, one is called missional and the other pastoral. Mission-oriented churches repeatedly look at how they can engage in ministry beyond their church walls. Pastoral churches look at how they can care for those who faithfully belong to them – in this instance, those members who are in hospital.\(^6\) Personally, I think there are biblical models for both. The Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20) tells us we are to go into the whole world making disciples of all nations, whereas, one of the post-resurrection stories in John has Jesus challenging Peter, who is head of his church, to feed, love and tend his sheep (John 21: 15-17). While this example from Peter is before the actual functioning church there are glimpses of the pastoral model in the book of Acts. A good example of this is in chapter six when the community selects some leaders to care for the community. What is interesting in this last example is that by appointing these elders, or deacons as tradition has come sometimes called them there is really a freeing up for the apostles to do missional work while other leaders take care of the work that is being described here as pastoral. It is my opinion, born of experience, that the pastoral model of church is in the DNA of existing Anglican churches. This pastoral model, which is a product of our history, brings unique challenges for Anglicans as we look at the ministry of evangelism. Broadly speaking, rather than totally reinventing who we, as Anglicans, are as a church, if we can lift up what is good about the pastoral model of church and

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\(^6\)There is a broad range of Mission church material in existence. Among those offering helpful perspectives on this approach are Darrell Guder, Craig Van Gelder, Karen Stiller and Alan Roxburgh.
infuse it with what is best about the mission model, we will make significant strides forward in
the ministry of evangelism. That said, I understand that this is not an easy task but is essential if
we at St. Simon’s, and we as an Anglican Church, wish to begin in earnest the practice of the
ministry of evangelism.

**Conclusion**

This context of ministry chapter has sought to establish that St. Simon’s has done very little
to engage in the intentional dimension of evangelism. It is not absolutely absent but for a variety
of reasons it is one of the ministries of the church which is infrequently exercised. This
underscores an underlying problem of St. Simon’s and one I think is present in the vast majority
of Anglican parishes. We, as a denomination, do not know how to do evangelism in a deliberate
way: it is a ministry we need to discover. This understanding is at the foundation of my Doctor
of Ministry work and is fundamental to why I have created the research problem that is presented
and explored next.
Chapter 2: Market the Gospel: Statement of the Research Problem

The Research Problem

The research problem is as follows: Through this study I want to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that incorporates marketing that is theologically based and culturally appropriate. In my thesis proposal I make the case that mainline Protestant churches have lost the ministry of evangelism in the last 300 years because of three factors – how the actual development around the ministry of evangelism played out, the legacy of Constantine, and the societal shift from modernism to postmodernism. Modernism is the philosophical approach consistent with Enlightenment thinking and postmodernism being the philosophical approach which is found in the emerging ecumenical paradigm and which is less empirical and more experiential than the modernist approach. From this I draw two broad conclusions: first, I have found a resistance to the ministry of evangelism in mainline churches; many regard it as a ministry that has been taken over by the more evangelical and indeed fundamentalist churches; second, as Anglicans we have a very limited skill set when it comes to doing the ministry of evangelism. I now wish to expand on my research problem by looking at its nuances.

Why An Evangelism Plan?

At the core of my research problem is the construction of an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s. This implies that such a plan does not exist and that there is a need for one. This is one of my core arguments as will be seen in the next chapter: the ministry of evangelism has been lost in the Western Anglican Church and it is time to recapture it. While the reason for the loss will be explained, I want to take a moment to answer the question, “Why an evangelism plan?” I

7 For further explanation please see chapter 4.
contend that in the absence of a solid foundation in evangelism and with a decline in adherence to the Anglican tradition in Canada, many church leaders who are concerned about this trend are tempted to move immediately into action. The scenario goes something like this. There are fewer people in the pews; we need to do the following to bring more people in; and a program is put into place. This often leads to the research and implementation of church growth strategies that fail to recognize the ministry of evangelism and the theological imperative for this ministry that comes from Christ. While a particular strategy may be successful in the short term, it does not necessarily lead to long-term sustained growth or to a realized ministry of evangelism. Often the success is due to a particular church leader, and leaders change. Also, because the program is most often executed by a small leadership group, the practice does not become widespread or ingrained in the faith and spirituality of the faith community. Therefore, my goal is to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s which is explained to, embraced by, and incorporated into the very fabric of the church community.

**The Role of Marketing as a Communications Strategy**

The second part of my research problem is the intention to incorporate marketing. I have found some resistance to this intention as I have moved forward with this study. Primarily, two reasons for concern are often raised. First, marketing is seen as something that does not belong in church; it is somehow “dirty”. Second, marketing is misunderstood; it is seen primarily as ad campaigns meant to change people’s minds, not as the communications tool it really is. The truth is that a vast segment of the population has no idea what Christianity is, never mind Anglicanism. So we need to find ways to communicate with those outside our church about who we are. One language of our culture is marketing and, I would argue, it is one of the few common languages that we as a society share. The key here is not to go into marketing in an
aggressive way which is dismissive of our core values and other methods of communication, but rather to incorporate, that is, use, where appropriate, marketing as a tool to share the Christian message.

Further, marketing is misunderstood because it is seen as interchangeable with advertising. While advertising may come out of marketing, marketing itself is not simply advertising. In a later chapter a more complete description of marketing will be given, but for now it is important to explain that marketing has to do with everything from understanding the language of the consumer, to how the product is perceived, to what makes a person commit to that product. When I use language like this I understand that it makes some people cringe. They see it as commodifying religion and categorizing people as consumers. I would suggest that it is really a matter of a paradigm born out of our societal norms and capitalist society. The point here is, whether we like it or not, that this is the society in which we live and with which, as members of the Anglican Church of Canada, we are very familiar. This does not mean that we do not critique our society but rather that we recognize that being part of our society means that we share common experiences and languages and these experiences and languages can be a useful tool in faith reflection. Conversely, I could have said something like; understanding the theological language of the religious adherent or their understanding of God, how the faith institution is perceived, and how one makes a commitment to their faith and the role the faith institution has in that is key to the ministry of evangelism. Both of the preceding statements are legitimate descriptions of one’s spiritual path but one is expressed in marketing language and the other is expressed in a language more typical of the subculture of the Anglican Church. That said, one of the keys to this research problem is the acceptance that, in marketing terms, people are spiritual consumers and make choices about their faith journeys. This does not negate the role
of the divine or the spiritual foundation of the church but recognizes that people can choose to be a part of us or not. Further, if we accept that there are many outside, as well as within, who are on a journey to find God and who have choices in that journey, it is important to be able to communicate as broadly as possible with those who are searching. Marketing, therefore, is foundational to this communications strategy. In order to reconcile the unease with using marketing language, I propose that we think of theology and of marketing as two separate languages. Our first and primary language, as Anglicans, is theological language. It forms us, it shapes us and it guides us in our thinking and action. However, we need to recognize that as Western Anglicans we also belong to a society which speaks another language, the language of marketing, and for our purpose we will call this our secondary language. This secondary language of marketing is a language that can help us in our intentional evangelism and is a way in which the direct connections, which are so important to Bosch’s and Newbigin’s understanding of intentional evangelism, can be made.

**The Theological Foundation**

The next element of my research strategy is a theological foundation. This is required for two reasons. There is a danger that the ministry of evangelism itself can be forgotten and be supplanted by what is commonly called “church growth”. If one walks through a Bible bookstore today, or surfs the internet looking at how to bring people into the church, one finds a bevy of church growth experts. While there is no consistent methodology to these church growth offerings, they claim to provide a program that will radically change one’s church and result in numerical growth. Confusion comes about because sometimes the person or organization offering the church-growth method calls it evangelism and implies that effective evangelism should result in numerical growth in a church. The difference, though, between church growth
and evangelism is that while church growth often begins with a program and a methodology aimed at results, evangelism begins with a theological grounding which recognizes that we, as the church, are called to engage God’s world in deliberate ways, and one of these ways is evangelism. To avoid the mistake of identifying evangelism with church growth, a church must ground itself in scripture and theology and let them, not results and methodology, form its evangelistic efforts.

The other reason that evangelism needs to be theologically grounded relates to the use of marketing in this venture. Just as church growth programs have the ability to overshadow the actual practice of evangelism, marketing has the ability to become foundational, displacing the theological. So it is important to begin and end with the theological to ensure that this work is God’s work and that what we are doing is consistent with the call to evangelize and with how God has revealed Godself to us. Otherwise, the tendency will be to try to get the marketing right to make our evangelism work. With a grounded theology we begin with the revelation of God, and use that revelation as the basis for our use of “marketing the Gospel”; we use marketing in order to share with others how we see God working in the world and how we see God working and wanting to work in their lives. Therefore, key to this is not just that our evangelism is theologically sound but that theology is the basis for the ministry of evangelism. The final part of my research problem is the issue of cultural appropriateness. Being culturally appropriate assumes, first, that there is a relationship between church and culture. What this relationship looks like will be explored in later chapters. For now, however, it is sufficient to recognize that while there are differences between church and culture, they live in relationship with one another. So we need to be cognisant of the culture that we live in.
The Connection Between Intentional Evangelism and the Research Problem

The relationship between church and culture is key to intentional evangelism. If in intentional evangelism we are called to points of connection with the society around us, as I will argue later, we need to know and honour those points of connection and learn how to speak of and to them. It also should be noted that culture is neither static nor monolithic; rather it is in continual flux and differing cultures exist within the same society. In order to be culturally appropriate, we need continually to revisit the culture in which we exist to make sure that our operating assumptions remain relevant for that culture.

The other reason that we need to be culturally appropriate is that, as we will see in the next chapter, evangelism has been done in ways which were culturally exploitative and in which others were seen as inferior to the enlightened Christians. Not only does this outlook not fit with the societal norms of today, more importantly it does not fit with a key biblical understanding of the nature of humanity. As the Genesis creation story tells us, “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1: 27). Even for those for whom theology is salvific and focuses on the sin of humans and humankind this is a very clear reminder that those with whom we want to share the Gospel of Christ do not have less worth than the already evangelized. As we will see in more detail, when the Great Commission is looked at, God’s desire is to reach out to all nations, making disciples of them and guiding them in the teachings of Jesus the Christ. So we need to remember in our ministry of evangelism that it is not about us having truth and being superior to those around us; in order to be both theologically sound and culturally appropriate, we need to treat others as equals and with dignity and respect. This, I think, is ultimately the manner in which we have been called to act, in
humility toward each other and our Creator, in the spirit of Jesus’ teaching which calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

**Conclusion**

In summary, first we explored the context of my ministry at St. Simon’s and how that led to the research problem. Now that some of the nuances of the research problem have been examined what I will next explore is the theoretical framework in which the ministry of evangelism is found.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework Part I
Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm

Epochs of Christianity

The theoretical foundation of this study of evangelism begins with an overview of David Bosch’s epochs of Christianity. Bosch has described the six epochs of Christianity first identified by Hans Küng in his 1984 work *Paradigm Change in Theology*, and he uses these to look at how the church has been and what the church must be in the future. The critical analysis portion of this paper will reflect on Bosch’s last two epochs and how the church struggles today to overcome the legacy of the modern Enlightenment paradigm as it operates in what Bosch calls “the emerging ecumenical paradigm”. While the church, broadly understood, will be recognized, particular attention will be paid to the Anglican experience since that is the denomination within which this study is carried out.

The epochs are as follows:

1. the apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity
2. the Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period
3. the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm
4. the Protestant (Reformation) paradigm
5. the modern Enlightenment paradigm
6. the emerging ecumenical paradigm

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8Bosch, 181.
9Hans Küng is a Roman Catholic Priest and theologian who while living today functioned primary in the latter half of the 20th century. While never excommunicated or inhibited from acting as a priest, he has been censured by the Vatican and not allowed to officially teach Roman Catholic theology and retired teaching in the area of ecumenism. For the purposes of his epochs of Christianity, he borrowed heavily from Thomas Kuhn’s paradigm shift theory as found in his influential 1962 work *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*.
10Bosch, 181.
11Bosch, 181–182.
While subdividing Christianity into eras is not original, what is original is that Bosch interprets these epochs in terms of Thomas Kuhn’s theory of “paradigm shifts.” While Kuhn restricts himself to the natural sciences, his theory is that knowledge does not grow cumulatively but rather by revolution. Scientists see that an existing system is no longer working and that it no longer is able to explain all the data and observations, so they propose a new and alternate theoretical system and, if effective, the new system or understanding replaces the old understanding. Bosch has applied this approach to how the church understands itself, goes about its mission and does theology. While the titles of these epochs are fairly self-explanatory, and not particularly relevant to this thesis, it should be noted that the footprints of these epochs continue to exist in the church even today. The Acts of the Apostle, which speaks of the early days in the church, and the writings of Augustine and Aquinas, that are part of later paradigms, are still part of what the church is. Consequently, as the church has made paradigm shifts, it no longer sees those writings through the lens of the previous paradigm but rather of the paradigm in which it presently exists. For the purpose of this study, it is the fifth and sixth epochs, the Enlightenment paradigm and the emerging ecumenical paradigm, which are of particular importance. As the name suggests, the Enlightenment paradigm has to do with how the church existed in the age of the Enlightenment, which came into its own during the eighteenth century.

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Bosch, 183.
Bosch, 184.
Bosch, 184.
Seven Concepts Foundational to the Enlightenment

Bosch proposes that seven concepts are foundational to the Enlightenment. First, it was the Age of Reason. Second, it operated with a subject-object scheme which means that humans were separated from their environment; and because they were separate from it, humans could subdue the environment. Third, there was the elimination of purpose from science and the introduction of the concept of direct causality as the way to understand the physical world. Fourth, there was a profound belief in progress. Fifth, scientific knowledge was considered to be factual, value free and neutral. Sixth, all problems were in principle solvable. Finally, people were to be regarded as emancipated, autonomous individuals.\(^\text{15}\)

Bosch concludes that the result of the Enlightenment for the church was that reason became supremely important for Christian theology: religion became privatized, theology was declared a science, and there was a desire to create a Christian society. Conversely, in doing this, there was also deference to secular society and the concept of reason that went with it.\(^\text{16}\)

Much of what evangelism looked like in the Enlightenment period can be seen in great detail in the historical section of the thesis. To summarize, and give a little context as we move beyond the Enlightenment, during this period, which was so imbued with the scientific approach and with colonialism, and, from the Anglican perspective, with the expansion of the British Empire, evangelism was normally a one-way conversation. It was a conversation in which the triumphant people argued and imposed their faith upon the conquered people. Remnants of this method of evangelism exist today in the form of an apologetic in which one argues that one’s faith is superior to the other’s faith.

\(^{15}\)Bosch, 264–267.

\(^{16}\)Bosch, 269–270.
The Paradigm Shift from the Enlightenment to the Postmodern

As noted, paradigms shift and postmodernism is the movement that challenged the Enlightenment and, according to Bosch, constitutes a rival paradigm.\(^{17}\) He contends that we exist in the reality of two paradigms, the postmodern and the Enlightenment, because it takes decades to establish a new paradigm.\(^{18}\) The postmodern attack on the Enlightenment paradigm began in the world of physics as a result of the scientific revolution introduced by Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr. Werner Heisenberg was led to conclude that the very foundations of science had begun to move and that there was almost a need to start over again.\(^{19}\) When rationalism was attacked by the new science of physics, the pre-eminence of reason which undergirded the Enlightenment paradigm began to break down.\(^{20}\) It was natural, Bosch concludes, for this thinking to spread into other fields including the humanities. Additionally, the devastation of the two world wars led to an erosion of the “naïve realism” of the existing paradigm.\(^{21}\) This challenge to the status quo also impacted theology, beginning with Karl Barth and his “theology of crisis” which was the first example of a break from the liberal theological traditions of the past and the inauguration of a new theological paradigm.\(^{22}\) As noted above, there is a sense in which there are layers to the church and its existence. The different paradigms all continue to be present even as they are replaced by newer paradigms. This makes the life of the church nuanced and complex since it is an institution which carries its history as a significant part of its identity. An excellent example of the complexity is the variety of who Jesus is. One could give an answer from the witness of scripture, from one of the creeds of the church, from the teachings

\(^{17}\) Bosch, 349.
\(^{18}\) Bosch, 349.
\(^{19}\) Bosch, 350.
\(^{20}\) Bosch, 350.
\(^{21}\) Bosch, 350.
\(^{22}\) Bosch, 350.
of Luther, from the perspective of the Jesus Seminar or from one’s own personal experience. All would be accurate reflections upon who Jesus is but their effectiveness would vary depending upon the hearer’s paradigm.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Explicit and Implicit Assumptions**

As will be seen, Bosch argues that this ongoing paradigm shift in society and in theology has led to the “emerging ecumenical paradigm” and that the latter is changing the face of mission, and therefore of evangelism, since evangelism, as I will argue, is a subset of mission. Interestingly, while Bosch does not explicitly define the emerging ecumenical paradigm, he does speak to it. He does this both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly he speaks of this new emerging ecumenical paradigm as containing the following traits: diversity versus unity, divergence versus integration and pluralism versus holism.\(^\text{23}\) He does this while noting that elements of the prior Enlightenment paradigm will persist, which will result in what he calls a creative tension.\(^\text{24}\) This means that the emerging ecumenical paradigm will challenge the church when the church makes absolute statements by pointing the church in the direction of diversity, divergence and plurality. In practice, diversity means that there are varying ways in which to be the church within and between denominations. In divergence we see plurality in that within and between denominations, there will be different approaches that exist in unison with one another which can only work if there is an understanding that in the wider church there needs to be plurality of thought and action.

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\(^{23}\)Bosch, 367.  
\(^{24}\)Bosch, 367.
The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Its Relationship to Postmodernism

At times, throughout *Transforming Mission* Bosch uses the phrase “emerging postmodern paradigm” rather than “emerging ecumenical paradigm” and again, he does not define the former but rather speaks to it. Key traits of the emerging postmodern paradigm are the survival and growth of religion in the twentieth century when many predicted its demise. This can be seen in the powerful resurgence of many of the world faiths such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism and in the rise of Christianity throughout the world.\(^{25}\) Additionally, the emergence of the influence of postmodernism, which will be explored in detail later in this thesis, has meant that the context in which the ministry of evangelism happens has changed. Third, the understanding of truth is different. The emphasis on diversity, divergence and plurality means that there is no longer one absolute truth but rather different truths or stories which coexist within the world. This is certainly evident in the wider discussion on postmodernism and is also found when the wider discussion on how one imparts faith is reflected upon. In the Enlightenment paradigm one argued one’s position with the aim of establishing its truth and, hence, winning, whereas in the emerging ecumenical paradigm one is respectful of the other’s story as also containing truth. Finally, the days of Christendom are over, Christendom being that period in Western civilization when the church, and hence Christianity, had been tied to the centre of political, economic and cultural life.\(^{26}\) In North America and Europe a multicultural and multi-faith society has emerged and with that the church has lost its place of privilege and, one might argue, influence. While the role of culture will be discussed later it needs to be noted that at its end, *Transforming Mission* presents Bosch’s exploration of the changing cultural context in which mission happens.

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\(^{25}\) Bosch, 352.

\(^{26}\) Stone, 10.
The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Relationship to the Ecumenical Movement

Additionally, Bosch acknowledges, near the end of Transforming Mission, that he has not explicitly defined what the emerging ecumenical paradigm is. He then turns his attention to this question. Again, while he does not give an absolute definition, he begins to speak of the emerging ecumenical paradigm from the perspective of what mission, and therefore evangelism, is. He takes as a given that the paradigm shift is emerging and looks at the concept of ecumenism. It should be noted that, instead of looking at the wider societal context, Bosch approaches ecumenism from how the church operates in relationship to itself. First, he takes a look at the ecumenical movement. Bosch contends that in Protestant circles the ecumenical idea was a direct result of nineteenth-century awakenings and of the worldwide missionary enterprise.27 A more detailed account of the missionary movement will be given later in this thesis, providing a context for Bosch’s comments, but for now it is sufficient to reflect on the outcomes of the missionary movement.

Of particular importance is the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 which effectively transcended denominational differences.28 As we will see, the Edinburgh conference was crucial to the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948,29 and to the WCC’s integration with the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1961.30 This integration, on a global structural level, demonstrated that unity and mission are intertwined; the church is only catholic if it is missionary in nature.31

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27 Bosch, 457.
28 Bosch, 458–459.
29 Bosch, 459.
30 Bosch, 459.
31 Bosch, 459–460.
Bosch does recognize some significant limitations of the WCC. First, the ecumenical movement is wider than the WCC; second, many evangelical and ecumenical agencies are absent from the WCC; and third, many member churches of the WCC have lost their missionary vision. Bosch references this loss of missionary vision repeatedly throughout his work. He observes that for some WCC member churches mission is now an umbrella term for “health and welfare services, youth projects, activities of political interest groups, projects for economic and social development, the constructive application of violence, etc.”

Bosch makes another significant observation: the paradigm shift, which is the foundation of his book, i.e., the emerging ecumenical paradigm, is absent among evangelicals. One could read Bosch’s analysis and conclude that the emerging ecumenical paradigm is fundamentally irrelevant when it comes to the ministry of evangelism, but this would be erroneous. Evangelism, as noted, is a subset of mission and how churches perceive mission shapes how they understand the ministry of evangelism. St. Simon’s and other Canadian Anglican churches tend to look at the ministry of evangelism from the perspective of member churches of the WCC. This, as we will see, has some significant implications for this ministry.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Its Relationship to Roman Catholicism**

Bosch continues his explicit exploration of the emerging ecumenical paradigm by looking at what is happening in Roman Catholicism. He contends that the movement toward ecumenism is even more dramatic in the Roman Catholic Church; after the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholics now refer to Protestants as brothers and sisters in Christ rather than

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32 Bosch, 460.
33 Bosch, 383.
34 Bosch, 460.
children of Satan, heretics or separated brethren.\textsuperscript{35} Bosch speaks of the movement toward acceptance between Roman Catholics and Protestants and then explores the concept of common witness whereby the various churches come together.\textsuperscript{36} He notes, however, that common witness is very rare in the area of evangelism because evangelism is so often defined as church planting.\textsuperscript{37}

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Six Key Elements**

Bosch builds on this by observing that one cannot speak of the church now without saying “mission” and likewise saying “one church and one mission.”\textsuperscript{38} This further expands Bosch’s thought on the emerging ecumenical paradigm as he identifies some key internal elements for the church. These are the following. First, the coordination of mission and unity is non-negotiable. Second, holding onto both unity and mission presupposes tension. Third, the church’s mission will never come to an end. Fourth, there is no longer a distinction between receiving and sending churches when it comes to mission and evangelism. Fifth, if we accept the validity of mission-in-unity, then the church must take a stand against the proliferation of new churches. Sixth, the purpose of mission is not to serve the church but rather to serve humankind. And, finally, the lack of unity in the church, as evidenced by denominationalism, is a sin.\textsuperscript{39}

These six elements provide a way to make sure that mission is grounded within the emerging ecumenical paradigm and that the focus on ecumenical cooperation, while still fractured, remains of paramount importance. There is a weakness, however: in order to practice this fractured ecumenism which is so key to the emerging ecumenical paradigm the different member churches

\textsuperscript{35}Bosch, 461.
\textsuperscript{36}Bosch, 462–463.
\textsuperscript{37}Bosch, 463.
\textsuperscript{38}Bosch, 464.
\textsuperscript{39}Bosch, 465–467.
must all keep these elements in mind, especially when it comes to mission-in-unity. This can be challenging since denominations exist, move and adapt within their own subcultures and churches are sometimes in different places with regard to issues. Present-day examples are the ordination of women and how the church relates to persons of homosexual orientation. While these differences do not mean that we should abandon the goals of unity in mission, or dismiss the emerging ecumenical paradigm, we need to recognize that there will be moments when our ideals are not achieved.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: The Wider Societal Context**

As already noted, it takes decades to establish a new paradigm. So while we cannot speak absolutely about the emerging ecumenical paradigm as it evolves, we can speak to trends that seem to exist. When looking at the wider societal context we see that many of the characteristics of the emerging ecumenical paradigm are shared with postmodernism. It is my observation that there is a suspicion of reason. Alongside this there is no acceptance of absolute truth; rather different truths stand beside one another and there is a fluidity of ideas and understandings that do not so much establish themselves as form part of the shared understanding of how we as a society perceive our world. There is a great deal of respect for diversity, and a great deal of suspicion of those who do not share this ideal. There is an understanding that the *subject-object scheme* approach has passed and we are all a part of whatever it is we are examining at a particular moment. There is a suspicion of traditional authority and a general desire to look beyond those things that the Western world has historically used to construct itself. Therefore we look to histories and philosophies beyond our own and there is a desire to bring these thoughts and experiences into our society. With all this there seems to be no shared desired outcome or dream beyond the process of respecting one another.
and walking with one another as we struggle to find our way in this new emerging postmodern paradigm. From the church’s perspective of mission and evangelism, it is significant that in this new reality Christianity no longer has any favoured position; we need to realize this as we practice the ministry of evangelism in the emerging ecumenical paradigm. It is also significant that the ecumenical role is prevalent and that we need to continue to pursue mission-in-unity because this is God’s desire for the church and also because, as we engage the wider world, our denominations and sectarian differences are of little relevance to them. As we go about our mission as a church our unity in action and engagement with the wider world speaks volumes about who we are as a church.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Tensions**

Bosch’s discussion of the elements implicit in the emerging ecumenical paradigm involves some significant tensions that require comment. The first is the nature of the ecumenical movement itself. Bosch rightly speaks of the wider churches’ movement, and within this he rightly identifies three significant elements, namely, the evangelicals, the member churches of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. In this, though, I notice that he neglects to spend any significant time examining the emerging ecumenical paradigm from the perspective of the Eastern church. While this is outside the focus of this thesis, which by its very nature is Western oriented, it is a missing piece which needs to be noted. Also, the practical application of the emerging ecumenical paradigm needs to be considered. If the evangelical churches have not joined the World Council of Churches or the ecumenical conversation, and mission has not gone beyond the social justice sphere among the member WCC churches, there is a disconnect between the theory of the emerging ecumenical paradigm and its practice. I am not saying that this invalidates Bosch’s theory but rather that he
understates the impact of the societal shifts which have taken place and how these have impacted the practice of mission. As will be explored more fully later, the legacy of the missionary movement has undermined the practice of the ministry of evangelism in the mainstream churches, and therefore WCC member churches need to do some work on reclaiming the practice of this ministry. As well as setting out the theoretical parameters, which Bosch does so well, some reflection on what the practice of evangelism is to look like in the new paradigm needs to be undertaken.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: Eighteen Characteristics**

Those shortfalls noted, it must also be said that according to Bosch, this new and emerging paradigm means that the face of mission has changed. In this he recognizes Karl Barth’s challenge, presented in his understanding of the *missio Dei*. Mission is primarily a product of God and not the church and needs to be understood in non-triumphalist terms. This means that there is a church because of mission and not vice versa and that the church participates in mission as a movement of God’s love toward all people. Once mission or evangelism is seen as a product of God and not a function of the church, the logical conclusion is that as the church struggles with its Enlightenment past and moves in the direction of the emerging ecumenical paradigm, the practice of evangelism will change. Practically, this leads to some new understandings around evangelism, which can be found in the eighteen characteristics of evangelism Bosch cites as key to the ministry of evangelism in the emerging ecumenical paradigm. These are outlined below as simple statements, since they are self-explanatory and their meaning will become evident in the course of this discussion.

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40 Bosch, 390.
41 Bosch, 390.
1. Mission is wider than evangelism

2. Evangelism should not be equated with mission though evangelism is integral to mission.

3. Evangelism may be viewed as an essential “dimension of the total activity of the church.”

4. Evangelism involves witnessing to what God has done, is doing, and will do.

5. Evangelism aims at a response.

6. Evangelism is always an invitation.

7. The one who evangelizes is a witness, not a judge.

8. Even though we ought to be modest about the character and effectiveness of our witness, evangelism remains an indispensable ministry.

9. Evangelism is only possible when the church is a radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and exhibits an attractive lifestyle.

10. Evangelism offers people salvation as a present gift with the assurance of eternal bliss.

11. Evangelism is not proselytism.

12. Evangelism is not the same as church extension.

13. To distinguish between evangelism and membership recruitment is not to suggest, though, that they are disconnected.

14. In evangelism, “only people can be addressed and only people can respond.”

15. Authentic evangelism is always contextual.

16. Because of this, evangelism cannot be divorced from the preaching and practice of justice.

17. Evangelism is not a mechanism to hasten the return of Christ as some would suggest.

18. Evangelism is not only verbal proclamation.42

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42 Bosch, 411–420.
We see in this how the world and the church are moving from one paradigm to the next and we see some of the ramifications. While Bosch is immensely important, it needs to be noted that Bosch wrote at a certain point of time and within a certain context. His work, while foundational, is now twenty years old, and in order to engage fully with the emerging ecumenical paradigm some further study in this area needs to be undertaken.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: A Definition**

Before moving on to the emerging ecumenical paradigm after Bosch it is important to bring together some of the foundations of this new paradigm that we have explored. It was noted earlier that while Bosch does not give a definition of the emerging ecumenical paradigm but rather speaks to its characteristics and implications. With that recognition in mind, and understanding the limitations of trying to absolutely define a paradigm which is still in the emergence stage a working definition of the emerging ecumenical paradigm will be given. The emerging ecumenical paradigm is a societal shift the church has been undertaking as the Enlightenment paradigm comes to a close. Within the wider church it is defined by greater denominational cooperation while still recognizing that in the western church there are three core constituents: the evangelical church, the Roman Catholic church and the mainstream Protestant church. Outside of the church the philosophical framework the church is moving towards is the postmodern one in which tolerance, diversity, dialogue and mutual understanding and respect are foundational to how the church engages the culture and peoples around it.

**The Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm: After Bosch**

_Transforming Mission_ was written in a moment in time, and, while influential and foundational to this thesis, work on the emerging ecumenical paradigm has continued. Significant in continuing Bosch’s thought is Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder’s
collaboration *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*. Bevans and Schroeder recognize that *Transforming Mission*, published in 1991, was notable since it marked a significant shift in the understanding and practice of mission in the church. Bevans and Schroeder see 1991 as a turning point in the life of the church. Indeed, they argue that the twentieth century was the shortest century: it began with the end of the First World War and ended in 1991. The year 1991 was the beginning of the twenty-first century because how the church operated and saw itself changed. While their rationale for this claim is complex, touching on a few key happenings will help us to understand it. First, they argue that World War I begins the century because it diminished the European faith in progress. As well, from a wider church perspective, it deflated the optimism of the Edinburgh conference. They then see the rest of the twentieth century, as they have dated it, as containing some key geo-political happenings. These include the Russian Revolution in 1917, the establishment of Communist China, the rise to power of Hitler and Mussolini, the Second World War, the rise and fall of Communism, massive migrations of people, the rise of Islam and technological changes like the Internet, to name a few. All these events and developments had a profound impact on the church and how it understood mission as seen in two key works – first, Bosch’s *Transforming Mission*, which as noted was published in 1991, and in the Catholic documents *Redemptoris Missio* published in 1990, and *Proclamation and Dialogue*, published in 1991. While the latter two documents are beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to observe that for Bevans and Schroeder they signify a shift in Roman Catholic thinking and set the stage for mission and thus

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43 Bevans and Schroeder, 239.
44 Bevans and Schroeder, 243–244.
45 Bevans and Schroeder, 239.
46 Bevans and Schroeder, 239–240.
the ministry of evangelism in the twenty-first century for the Roman Catholic Church just as Bosch does for the Protestant church.

**Mission in the 21st Century**

Further, Bevans and Schroeder point to some significant changes within the church during the twentieth century (as they understand it) which speak to changes in mission and ultimately how mission has been transformed in the twenty-first century and in the emerging ecumenical paradigm. Among these is a decline in Christianity in Europe accompanied by a significant global expansion. This is seen in the fact that the number of Christians in Africa increased from 10 million in 1890 to 360 million in the year 2000 and that in 1893, 80% of those who professed to be Christians lived in North America or Europe whereas at the end of the twentieth century, almost 60% of professing Christians lived in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. We see in this a profound shift in the centre of Christianity which, coupled with a postcolonial world, has significant ramifications today.

In the Roman Catholic Church one also needs to recognize the influence of Vatican II which, among other things, opened up the Roman Catholic Church in terms of its relationship with the world and with other denominations.

Many argue that the rise of the Pentecostal movement means that twenty-first century Christianity will likely be highly influenced by conservative, Pentecostal and charismatic forms of Christian life. While Bevans and Schroeder recognize that there is some debate about the

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47 Bevans and Schroeder, 266.
48 Bevans and Schroeder, 242.
49 Bevans and Schroeder, 243.
50 Bevans and Schroeder, 242.
influence of these newer expressions of Christianity, and their influence, it cannot be denied that this is a change in the Christian landscape which is significant to mission in the twenty-first century. Additionally, in the twentieth century, the church began to move beyond the nationalism of mission which characterized much of the nineteenth-century missionary movement and from predominant Western influence to non-coercive modes of evangelism and working with indigenous persons and populations.

**Mission in the 21st Century: A Protestant Perspective**

These changes all gained some ground in the twentieth century and continue to be important to mission and evangelism today. Turning specifically to the Protestant church, which is of particular relevance to us, Bevans and Schroeder argue that “similar to what occurred within the Catholic Church, mission within Protestantism passed through similar stages of certainty, ferment, crisis and rebirth”. Key to this process, they argue, was the deflation of the optimism of Edinburgh by the First World War, the historical happenings referred to above, the establishment of the Church of South India (first unification of Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches) and the WCC meeting in Amsterdam in 1947 and 1948 respectively. Further, with the end of colonization came autonomy for the various new churches which had been established as part of imperial expansions and a changed relationship with other faiths.

While these factors are significant to understanding mission, and therefore evangelism, across all the churches in the twentieth century, the divide which developed between the liberal and conservative church is unique to Protestantism. Throughout the nineteenth century the

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52 Bevans and Schroeder, 437.
53 Bevans and Schroeder, 249.
54 Bevans and Schroeder, 256.
55 Bevans and Schroeder, 255.
56 Bevans and Schroeder, 259.
57 Bevans and Schroeder, 259.
58 Bevans and Schroeder, 263.
divide which had existed between liberal and conservative, while noticeable, was managed by prominent church leaders who were able to maintain a sufficient unity and balance.\textsuperscript{59} However, by the 1960s the division between these two branches of the Protestant church became significant as conservative and more fundamentalist bodies organized more effectively separate from the WCC and its member churches.\textsuperscript{60}

The twentieth-century context has laid the foundation for how mission and evangelism look today. Key to understanding this is noting a few of the characteristics of the church today. First, there is a now a global Christianity whose centre is moving to the South. This means an increased leadership from Latin America, Africa and Asia.\textsuperscript{61} With this emerging world Christianity, Christianity is moving toward a more traditional, orthodox and supernatural expression than existed when Europe and North America dominated.\textsuperscript{62} Further, the rise of Islam and the history of conflict between Christians and Muslims is likely to shape how Christians go about mission in the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{63}

**Denominational Divisions in the 21st Century**

These factors shape mission today within the emerging ecumenical paradigm in the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the shape of mission today is not solidified to the point where absolute statements can be made. It is more accurate to speak of trends, movements and observations. First, while the phrase “emerging ecumenical paradigm” may on the surface speak to an ecumenical movement among churches, and while there is a merging of churches, there are still significant divisions which remain. While missionary action, as noted, has moved beyond

\textsuperscript{59}Bevans and Schroeder, 260.
\textsuperscript{60}Bevans and Schroeder, 260–261.
\textsuperscript{61}Bevans and Schroeder, 279.
\textsuperscript{62}Bevans and Schroeder, 279, quoting Jenkins, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{63}Bevans and Schroeder, 280.
denominational or nationalistic lines there are still significant cleavages. The four main factions, according to Bevans and Schroeder, are the Roman Catholic, Conciliar Protestant (that is the WCC member churches), Orthodox, Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. While much of their exploration of mission and evangelism looks at the differences among these strands of the church, they note some commonalities and how the different strands of the church recognize that these divisions are scandalous. This recognition has resulted in concrete action, including the various bodies calling for a common witness, Latin-American Evangelicals calling for social-justice, the WCC making strong statements about evangelization, and the Orthodox reaching across the divide. All of this speaks to an ecumenical spirit in the midst of the systemic division which shapes the church today. Within this, as Bevans and Schroeder observe, there has been a rebirth of mission within all factions of the church during the latter part of the twentieth century.

**The 21st Century Understanding of Mission**

With a different understanding of mission, as we first saw with Bosch, and as Bevans and Schroeder recognize, mission is now done in the “bold humility” which Bosch spoke of. As Bevans and Schroeder summarize,

The model of mission that we believe is emerging in our own day is the result of theological reflection on missionary practice in today’s multicultural, multireligious, globalized and religiously polarized world, a world in which the center of gravity of Christianity has, at least in terms of population, shifted to the South, and a world in which Christianity may well be becoming more and more Pentecostal, more supernaturalist, more theologically conservative and more religiously assertive.

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64 Bevans and Schroeder, 283.
65 Bevans and Schroeder, 279.
66 Bevans and Schroeder, 283.
67 Bosch, 489.
This is a significant change of mission and evangelism from the past. Whereas the historical section of this thesis reflects upon how there were differing degrees of denominational cooperation throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mission and evangelism were consistently enterprises of the Western church and quite often of Western governments. This meant that Christianity was defined and expanded by means of modern Western churches that were heavily formed by Enlightenment thinking. The impact of theological reflection on eighteenth and nineteenth century practice, according to Bevans and Schroeder, is that

No longer can we conceive of mission in terms of church expansion or the salvation of souls; no longer can we conceive of mission as supporting the outreach of colonial powers; no longer can we understand missionary activity as providing the blessings of Western civilization to “underdeveloped” or “developing” peoples and cultures; no longer can we conceive of mission as originating from a Christianized North and moving towards a non-Christian or religiously underdeveloped South. Mission today, rather, is something more modest and at the same time much more exciting – and, indeed, more urgent.69

Interestingly, they see this change as a good thing and are of the opinion that in this new model the mission of the church will be more exciting because what will be seen is, in their words,

God’s gracious invitation to humanity to share in the dynamic communion that is at the same time God’s self-giving missionary life; it is more urgent because in a world of globalized poverty, religious violence and new appreciation of local culture and subaltern traditions, the vision and praxis of Jesus of Nazareth can bring new healing and new light.

This understanding in turn, in their opinion, redefines what mission and therefore evangelism is. Mission is characterized by growing with God; dialogue with all involved parties; an openness to differing traditions, cultures and experiences while recognizing the Trinitarian foundation of Christianity.71

69Bevans and Schroeder, 284–285.
70Bevans and Schroeder, 285.
71Bevans and Schroeder, 285.
This view of mission and evangelism is far removed from the Enlightenment paradigm because it recognizes the multiplicity of the world in which the church exists. It recognizes that there are broad and variant experiences and it recognizes that a significant shift has taken place, a shift which will be further analysed as this thesis progresses. It also proposes a way forward in which the church is firmly grounded in an understanding of the gospel which engages the world around it with a sense of equality, recognizing the worth of those outside the church and that it is about God’s work not the church’s work. That said, it needs to be remembered that the emerging ecumenical paradigm is still unfolding, and it needs to be acknowledged that, while absolute clarity is still to come, we can recognize that a shift has taken place and some of what that shift looks like. This is a valuable extension of Bosch’s work. For while Bosch began to describe the emerging ecumenical paradigm, he left many unanswered questions. Bevans and Schroeder, on the other hand, give some substance to what this paradigm looks like both from the internal perspective, as in how the church operates, and the external perspective, as in the context in which the church exists. While changes such as the impact of the growing South and the changing culture of the West need to be lived and discovered, by identifying the trends within the emerging ecumenical paradigm Bevans and Schroeder bring a deeper reflection to Bosch’s work.

The Impact of the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm on the Missional Church Movement

Recognizing that Bosch’s work is a moment in time, the emergent nature of the ecumenical paradigm and the broad influence of Bosch it is important to note his continued impact and appeal. In the context section of this thesis I mused about the difference between pastoral and missional churches. While this reflection was in no way systematic, in my readings I have discovered that in the emerging church or missional church literature Bosch, and to a
lesser extent Bevans and Schroeder, are continually referenced. In order to understand the significance of this, the movement will be briefly examined. Essential to the missional understanding of church is that a new kind of church is being born.\textsuperscript{72}

While some of this is happening within traditional denominations these emerging churches are being birthed often outside of the traditional church.\textsuperscript{73} While a definition of this movement was hard to secure as the movement seems to be still in its defining stage, a good definition that I came across was “A missional church is a community of God’s people who live into the imagination that they are, by their very nature, God’s missionary people living as a demonstration of what God plans to do in and for all of creation in Jesus Christ”.\textsuperscript{74} An example of how Bosch is referenced is when they speak of how Bosch “describes Acts as the story of how the Spirit breaks the boundaries of planning and expectation of the young church”.\textsuperscript{75} This movement has found something in the thinking and writings of Bosch that speaks to their mission and their identity in a profound way.

A good example that I came across was in the use of the concept missio Dei. While recognizing the impact of the missionary councils and Barth, it is Bosch who continually returned specifically to how Barth speaks to the nature of the triune God that should shape mission.\textsuperscript{76} Now the interesting thing about this is that the missional movement seems to be happening primarily outside of the traditional denominations and what is referred to in this thesis as the WCC member churches. This has created what I would call an unresolved dichotomy. As noted earlier, one of the challenges to Bosch’s concept of the emerging ecumenical paradigm is

\textsuperscript{72}Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, \textit{The Missional Leader} (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006) xii.
\textsuperscript{73}Roxburgh and Romanuk, xii-xiii.
\textsuperscript{74}Roxburgh and Romanuk, xv.
\textsuperscript{75}Roxburgh and Romanuk, 124.
that it is absent amongst the evangelical and Pentecostal churches. So this is the dichotomy, the evangelical churches which do not embrace the emerging ecumenical paradigm are heavily influenced by Bosch and the WCC member churches which recognize the importance of Bosch have not been influenced to action in the area of evangelism that is reflective of Bosch’s work.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to solve this dichotomy but it is important to note. Further, there are times in the traditional denominations when the occasional voice speaks of the missional church movement as the solution to what ails traditional churches. While I am certain that there are things traditional churches should and will learn from the missional church it is not as simple as a wholesale adoption of the missional church way of being church. Furthermore, for the purposes of this thesis it is sufficient to note that Bosch’s influence is permeating the greater church.

The above discussion has described the emerging ecumenical paradigm and some of the foundations which are necessary for a more thorough exploration. The next chapter discusses the movement from the modern Enlightenment paradigm to the emerging ecumenical paradigm in the context of the Anglican Church and evangelism. First the foundations will be established. Building on our understanding of the paradigm shift the church is in the midst of, Part I will continue with a definition of evangelism that will be given and thoroughly examined. Then the biblical foundation for evangelism will be established.

**Bosch’s Definition of Evangelism**

To begin looking more closely at evangelism a working definition of evangelism must be established. For many, evangelism is understood simply as occasions of proclamation of the Gospel. These may be a Billy Graham Crusade, a televangelist, or a one-on-one encounter where faith is shared and there is an invitation to respond. This narrow understanding, however, does
not do justice to the many nuances and realities which make up the ministry of evangelism. Therefore, a more comprehensive definition of evangelism will be proposed.

Evangelism can be simply defined as the many ways in which people are invited to become followers of Jesus. However, this definition is too imprecise for the study we are undertaking. While there are a multitude of definitions for evangelism, for the purpose of this study and because of the prominence he plays in our theoretical understanding, the definition will be derived from Bosch’s writings. He defines evangelism as the following:

Evangelism is that dimension and activity of the church’s mission which, by word and deed and in the light of particular conditions and a particular context, offers every person and community, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives, a reorientation which involves such things as deliverance from slavery to the world and its powers; embracing Christ as Saviour and Lord; becoming living members of his community, the church; being enlisted into his service of reconciliation, peace and justice on earth; and being committed to God’s purpose of placing all things under the rule of Christ.77

Three Key Aspects of Evangelism

Three aspects are key to this definition. The first is the distinction between mission and evangelism. While mission is wider than evangelism,78 it must be understood that the principles and shifts that apply to mission apply directly to evangelism, as it is, in reality, a subset of mission; “evangelization is mission, but mission is not merely evangelization.”79 What this practically means is that in practice and academic study what one discerns and applies to mission in general applies to the ministry of evangelism. One, though, needs to take care to recognize that mission is wider than evangelism and that not all things mission oriented are evangelism and that it is important at times to note the distinction. The second is the word offers, which sets the tone for how the ministry of evangelism is to take place: not coercive or exploitive, as in the past,

77Bosch, 420.
78Bosch, 411.
79Bosch, 411–412.
but rather, as a partnership with those with whom the church is in dialogue and with whom the church shares this world. The third is that this definition does not make the church synonymous with the world around it. Bosch points out that such an identification has been a struggle within the new understanding of what it means to be church, but ultimately he concludes, “The church can be missionary only if its being-in-the-world is, at the same time, a being-different-from-the-world.”

To fully appreciate this definition of evangelism, and these three aspects, one needs to keep in mind the prior discussion of dimensional versus intentional evangelism. For the church to engage in intentional evangelism as a significant ministry, the key is to create points of connection with the surrounding culture in meaningful ways. Only in this manner can the ambitious goal of offering a radical reorientation to every person and community, which is key to this definition, be met.

**Challenges of Bosch’s Definition of Evangelism**

In fact, Bosch’s definition of evangelism is difficult to live up to. This is for two reasons. First, creating points of connection is difficult for churches. A lot goes into running a church and many of these demands have to do with maintaining the church and not with reaching outside the church itself. Three primary examples are pastoral care, property care and Sunday worship. These elements, though key to the ongoing existence of the majority of churches in North America, and certainly St. Simon’s, in no way create points of connection and in no way are part of the intentional dimension of evangelism. It is essential then, in order for intentional evangelism to be practised, that, as reflected earlier, a balance be struck between the pastoral and mission models of church. This takes commitment by the church and the church leadership and

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80 For a further understanding of how this has played out, see Bosch, 383–386.
81 Bosch, 386.
only once a commitment is made to try to engage the wider world can the intentional dimension of evangelism can begin.

The second difficulty of this definition is that it calls for a “radical reorientation”. This is difficult language for mainline churches. It is simply not in our ethos to call people to radical change; rather we have a tendency to affirm people as beloved creatures of God. While there is truth here, and God does love humanity, the scriptures are full of examples of God calling people, nations and communities to change their lives and follow God in a more complete way. What I think is key to this conundrum is to become convicted that there is a call for radical reorientation within our churches. Church life is full of many examples of this call to change. The Eucharist, the art and the readings, which are so fundamental to who we are, call us to radical change. In the Eucharist, where we relive the story of Jesus, we are reminded of the central act of Christianity which is the saving grace of Jesus as evidenced by his life, death and resurrection. In religious art, from music to painting, and in the reading of scripture we hear and see again and again examples of God reaching out to humanity and bringing us to that fullness of life to which God has called us. Instead of just going through the motions of our worship and getting caught up in meetings and programs, we need to take time to let these elements of worship, story and witness become a deliberate part of who we are and, in doing this, we can then make these elements a part of the intentional dimension of evangelism. I think that within this call for radical change, we can also realize that the change does not need to be immediate and that radical change can be a process which is achieved over a period of years. Key to long-term change is the ability of the leadership to keep the vision front and centre so that issues like a deteriorating building and volunteer management do not become the central focus of the church.
Outcomes of Evangelism

Finally, it must be noted that this definition speaks only to the desired outcome – that is, what evangelism results in. What this definition does not speak to explicitly is the how of how the church goes about the ministry of evangelism. In line with the emerging ecumenical paradigm and Bosch’s definition of evangelism is the understanding that evangelism happens in different ways in different ages and paradigms. This theoretical section of the thesis will continue by looking at some past practices and present-day realities of the church. The purpose of this review is to bridge the gap between the modern Enlightenment paradigm and the emerging ecumenical paradigm. When we look at solving the problem of evangelism in the Anglican context, we will see that, while there are some ways in which our heritage can help us, there are also some significant historical hindrances. Once the world we live in is understood, we can then turn our attention to solving the problem. We will be able to engage in the intentional dimension of evangelism in a meaningful way which truly creates points of connection with the society around us, allowing us to call people to radical reorientation of their lives as they become living members of Christ’s community, the church.

The Biblical Foundation for Evangelism: Some Background

Another key foundation to beginning our study of evangelism is the biblical one. When I began this program, one of my guiding principles was the passage from Matthew known as The Great Commission. In that passage, just prior to his ascension, Jesus speaks to his closest followers and commands them:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.  

Matthew 28: 19–20. All biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version.
In my experience of the Pentecostal tradition, when it came to the subject of evangelism and scripture, scripture was used in a way which was threatening rather than life-giving.

Examples of this are the following:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.  

(John 3: 16, King James Version)

and

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

(John 11: 25–26, KJV)

and

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.  

(John 14: 6, KJV)

These passages speak of the salvific nature of Jesus and were used in ways which were fundamentally threatening. The threat was that if you did not believe you were damned to an eternity in hell. In retrospect I see that this approach is consistent with an approach to evangelism shaped within the modern Enlightenment paradigm. While harsh, the idea that others need to be brought to a place of truth for their own good was justified in the approach which came out of the Enlightenment. This is the legacy of the last 500 years of Western history as experienced by women, non-Westerners – particularly non-white people – and the non-human aspect of creation. They experienced totalitarian control or annihilation when the dominant culture perceived them to be wrong.  

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83 Middleton, 35.
The Biblical Foundation for Evangelism: David Bosch

I have found that a biblical foundation for evangelism is not usually part of the academic discussion. It seems to be something that is either not addressed or is assumed to exist rather than justified through academic discourse. A notable exception is David Bosch, and since he is so formative for my work, I begin with him. He examines the place of the Great Commission in Matthew’s gospel and its influence on the early church. He concludes that Matthew is essentially a missionary text and that most scholars agree that the final verses of Matthew, known as The Great Commission, are what the whole book points toward.\(^8^4\) In order to appreciate fully what this mission of Matthew looks like, Bosch looks at the Great Commission itself in detail. He notes first that disciples are to be made of all peoples, including Jews, which is especially relevant given the significant Old Testament foundation of the gospel of Matthew and of Christianity itself.\(^8^5\) The call of Abram, where God says to him “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12: 3) is key.\(^8^6\) Bosch then observes that the call is to baptize and then to teach and that this is how one makes disciples.\(^8^7\) This, he notes, is different from the other gospels’ sense of mission in that the emphasis is on teaching and not on proclamation.\(^8^8\) He concludes from this that the Great Commission can be summarized in three phases: make disciples, baptize, and teach.\(^8^9\) This understanding of mission and therefore evangelism fits with the emerging ecumenical paradigm in that teaching can be done in a way which is respectful of the listener and results in a mutual dialogue, whereas proclamation leaves little room for respect

\(^8^4\)Bosch, 57.
\(^8^5\)Bosch, 64.
\(^8^6\)Bosch, 64.
\(^8^7\)Bosch, 65.
\(^8^8\)Bosch, 65–66.
\(^8^9\)Bosch, 66.
for the other’s opinions and is a method of evangelism more suited to the modern Enlightenment paradigm than to the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

This means that teaching is fundamental. While proclamation can be misconstrued as teaching, as it does contain some instruction, it fails to be teaching because it allows no input from the hearer, or student. While there are many styles of teaching, what good teaching recognizes is that the teacher and the student work together in the learning process. This teaching methodology works in the emerging ecumenical paradigm and fits with what Bosch is explaining.

What then is taught? To answer this we need to turn to the practical ways in which we engage in our points of connection. We saw that there were two practical ways to do this. The first was to bring people into the worshipping community and the second was to tell the story of the Christian faith, that is, to make the Bible’s story, over time, their story. In both these ways the story of the gospel is meant to be taught, shared, heard and reflected upon. A story which begins with the Creation and God’s faithfulness to the people Israel; a story which continues with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; a story which continues with the faithfulness of God through the ages, in the church and all of the world; a story which says that God will make a broken creation whole; a story, which if presented in a manner which is understood with the listener, should have the opportunity to resonate with the listener so that the listener identifies with what God is doing and sees this action of God in their own life. While there are many details of this story left unsaid, what we share is God’s story with humanity, and we use that as a basis to respond to what God has done. The end result is to give the opportunity for that “radical reorientation” of life which Bosch identifies in his definition of evangelism for all of humanity.
The Biblical Foundation for Evangelism: John Bowen

While I found Bosch’s examination of the Great Commission very insightful I still had a desire to find a biblical approach to evangelism that looked at the subject of evangelism in the entirety of scripture. An important resource in this was John Bowen. He shows that there is indeed a ministry of evangelism in the Old and New Testaments. Beginning with the Old Testament, the roots of evangelism are found in God’s call to the patriarch Abraham. In the passage where he is called, God says to Abraham,

Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you … so that you will be a blessing … and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Gen. 12:1–3)

Bowen contends that the calling of the people of Israel is not meant for their own benefit but rather for the benefit of the whole world. He follows this up by presenting many Old Testament examples that speak to God’s continued desire to reach out to the whole world. He closes this section by interpreting what this means about the nature of God. He concludes that “The desire to reconcile us to God comes in the first place from God’s side.” This should be encouraging, when we think of the ministry of evangelism, because what it tells us is that, in the ministry of evangelism, we are continuing what God has begun by bringing people to him. The challenge we have in this, as we endeavour to be consistent to what we have learned so far, is how to bring people to God in a way which is not culturally exploitive and which understands the work of God which is already taking place within them. There is no one answer to this question but it needs to be one of the lenses through which we reflect on the implementation of that living heritage, which we call the Bible, that forms and shapes us.

90 John P. Bowen, Evangelism for “Normal” People (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 29.
91 Bowen, 38.
This biblical foundation of evangelism continues in the New Testament and is also explored by Bowen. Bowen first looks at the life of Jesus and observes that his ministry is a model for evangelism (chapter 5) and then examines the early days of the church in more detail. He points out that it is at the church’s genesis that we begin to see the ministry of evangelism. As early as Acts 5, it is reported that thousands are converted to the way of Jesus. Bowen concludes that the ministry of evangelism found in the early church is something that, while centred on Jesus, actually has its roots in the Old Testament tradition that precedes Jesus.

**The Biblical Foundation for Evangelism: William Abraham**

There are, however, some explorations around the edges that complement Bowen’s work, such as William Abraham’s *The Logic of Evangelism*. Abraham argues that the venture into evangelism by the church of the Book of Acts is connected with the early Christians’ understanding of the “Kingdom of God,” which was Jesus’ central message. The point he makes is that the early church saw itself living in a suspended time. The Kingdom of God was present with the invitation for all creation to take part. Yet, the Kingdom of God was still to come, and this implies an invitation to all of creation to reach out to God as well. In the early church, the gospel, or message, of Jesus was not spread through a carefully constructed program or because they meditated on the Great Commission. Rather, in the church described in Acts people were attracted to the presence of God which they saw in the early disciples, and the first converts joined in the teaching, prayer, praise, fellowship, mutual care, and the breaking of the bread (Acts 2: 42). Abraham then draws from this that the evangelism of the early church was

\[92B\, Bowen, 111.\]
\[93B\, Bowen, 97.\]
\[94A\, Abraham, 32.\]
\[95A\, Abraham, 37.\]
\[96A\, Abraham, 38.\]
“rooted in a corporate experience of the rule of God … that signified the active presence of God in their midst.”

We can conclude from Abraham’s assessment that there is something in the early church experience that we need to recover as we begin to recover the ministry of evangelism in mainstream churches. We need to move beyond simple conversation and debate. We need to move beyond seeing evangelism as something separate from the everyday life of the church, and we need to come to realize that if we do truly live with the presence of God in our midst, that should be our motivation. By starting to see evangelism in this way we move away from an evangelism that is coercive, apologetic or argumentative and to one that is part of who we are. This makes evangelism genuine and legitimate in the emerging ecumenical paradigm; it is part of our identity and who we are and is therefore a legitimate expression of the church. Evangelism, therefore, is less a segregated action of the church and is more about the church and its identity.

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97 Abraham, 38.
Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework Part II
The Anglican Perspective: Its Historical and Theological Foundations

The History of the Anglican Church as It Relates to Its Global Expansion

Next we will look at some of the historical realities of the Anglican Church and how the Anglican Church’s formation is rooted in the Enlightenment paradigm. I contend that in the age of the Enlightenment, evangelism, for Anglicans, happened in the context of the expanding British Empire.

The Formation of the Church of England

While not wanting to get into unnecessary detail, it is important to focus on the period in which the Anglican identity gelled. After an era of turmoil in which Henry VIII began breaking away from Rome and papal influence, England was led by the boy-king Edward VI, a devout Protestant whose advisors led the English Church in a very Protestant direction. He was followed by Queen Mary, a Roman Catholic. Elizabeth I, a Protestant, succeeded to the throne in 1558. Following this period of turbulence, Elizabeth’s most urgent and pressing task was to settle the religious question of her nation. Queen Elizabeth was guided by two principles: the faith espoused by Thomas Cranmer and the church of the Reformers in which she had been raised from birth, and her desire to retain more colour and ceremony than the Edwardian Reformation would have allowed. She would have preferred to act slowly, in order to win some of the moderates over to her side, but she was pushed by the Puritan faction to make her desires known.

99 Neil, 63.
100 Neil, 100.
102 Cranmer was the first Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry VIII and his time with Martin Luther and other reformers was pivotal to his part in the formation of the Anglican Church.
The result was that, within five months of her ascension to the throne, she settled all the main issues of religion. The settlement was contained in the Act of Supremacy, which declared the sovereign to be the “only supreme governor of this realm, as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal.” Additionally, Elizabeth declared the Act of Uniformity, which imposed the Book of Common Prayer of 1552, with some modest revisions, as the standard by which the English Church would worship. The next act that she implemented was the Oath of Supremacy to the monarchy, which was to be declared by all clergy, justices, mayors, and royal officials as well as a few other classes of persons. Elizabeth’s final action, in this inaugural period, was to fill all the vacancies in the bishoprics and to restore the organization of the church.

The Church of England and Colonial Expansion

Although Queen Elizabeth came to the throne at a very troubled time, at the end of her reign in 1603 England was at the pinnacle of power, fame, and artistic achievement with the result that the Church of England was uniquely set up for expansion into the rest of the world during the colonial period. Colonialism, and the spread of the English Church, is captured well in Neil’s description of the expansion of the church:

Early Anglican expansion can be conveniently summarized under the not unattractive association of “Gain and the Gospel.” English interests were propagated by companies of merchant adventurers; where these went, they took their chaplains with them, and in most countries secured the right to maintain worship according to the order of their own Church, though often in the face of considerable opposition and under rigid limitations.

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104 Neil, 102.
105 Neil, 102.
106 Neil, 100.
107 Neil, 203.
This pattern resulted in the unique cultural phenomenon of the Church of England spreading over much of the world and, because of the uniformity imposed by Queen Elizabeth, doing so in a way in which its heritage and its ethos remained much the same from country to country. This expansion began during Queen Elizabeth’s reign in which English merchants went to every corner of the earth, carrying the English language and the English church with them. The fact that Elizabeth dealt with the religious conflict within the first five months of her coronation meant that a uniform religion accompanied the English expansion. Furthermore, in the model of church she created, liberty was asserted for all national churches while at the same time those churches retained membership in the worldwide Church of Christ. The national churches were independent while at the same time maintaining a worldwide connection, or as is said today “communion.” The importance of this, from the perspective of expansion, is that independence allowed the local churches to flourish in their local context while still maintaining their English roots and connection to other parts of the empire. Today, as the former colonial churches assert their voice and independence, fissures have been created within the Anglican Communion which have led to much speculation about the future of that communion. These fissures are compounded not just by a history of colonization, but by the shift, discussed earlier in this thesis, in Christianity’s centre from Europe to the South and East.

**The Christian Missionary Enterprise**

In order to understand the impact of colonialism on mission and thus evangelism, an exploration of the Christian missionary enterprise, beyond the boundaries of Anglicanism but

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108 Neil, 203.
which the Anglican church took part in, must be undertaken.\textsuperscript{110} While there was a missionary thrust to the Reformer’s theology, very little happened in the way of missionary outreach during the first two centuries after the reformation. There were some practical reasons for this. First, the Protestants’ primary goal was to reform the church of their time; second, Protestants had next to no contact with non-Christian people; third, Protestants were in a sheer survival mode until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648; fourth, by abandoning monasticism there was no missionary agency; and fifth, there was much internal strife within the Protestant churches, which left little energy for an outward focus.\textsuperscript{111} All of this changed, though, with the Christian missionary enterprise. As the Reformation settled, state churches emerged in European countries. Then as colonial powers emerged, first Spain and Portugal and then later Protestant powers, the Christian monarch of these lands acquired pagan subjects. It was their divine right to subdue the local pagan people. This meant that colonization and Christianization went hand in hand.\textsuperscript{112} The chief instrument of this partnership was the volunteer mission societies which rose to prominence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To understand the growth and impact of these societies it must be first understood that they came out of the three agents of renewal which characterized the Enlightenment period in the English-speaking world – the Great Awakening in the American colonies, the birth of Methodism, and the evangelical revival within the Anglican church.\textsuperscript{113} This period of renewal led to a great missionary spirit and the missionary cause became the great passion of the American churches.\textsuperscript{114} The result was the birth of societies devoted to foreign

\textsuperscript{110}An excellent reflection on this movement by its contemporaries is found in \textit{Rethinking Mission: A Laymen’s Inquiry After One Hundred Years}. This reflection shows how those involved in the missionary movement were beginning to wrestle with its legacy beginning in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
\textsuperscript{111}Bosch, 245.
\textsuperscript{112}Bosch, 275.
\textsuperscript{113}Bosch, 277.
\textsuperscript{114}Bosch 279.
From the English perspective, the first generation of these missionaries often were at odds with the civil authorities but as Victorian England sought to regain its religious dimensions, subsequent generations of missionaries found that they could work for both God’s kingdom and the crown. Over time it became natural for British, German and French missionaries to work in their countries’ colonies which meant that many missionaries became agents of Western imperialistic expansion.

**The Role of Missionary Societies**

Of particular importance to Anglicans, in this missionary movement, are The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), created in 1699, and The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) created in 1701. The aims of these societies can be found in the first annual sermon, which was preached by the Dean of Lincoln, Dr. Willis, who outlined the two aims of the S.P.G. – first, to take care of the religion of “our own people” abroad and second, the “conversion of the natives.” These two societies, very formative in the life of the Anglican church historically, are part of the background in which mission and evangelism took place for Anglicans until recently.

As alluded to above, these missionary societies existed over a period of time and within that period there were shifts in their focus and application. These shifts are worth noting since they continue to have ramifications today. First, from around 1840 to the end of the nineteenth century, the societies went from being interdenominational to denominational. Further, as the societies became denominational they began to think in exclusivist terms and along confessional

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115 Bosch, 280.
116 Bosch, 282.
117 Bosch, 304.
118 Bosch, 304.
119 Neil, 199.
120 Neil, 200.
lines, thereby putting up restrictions in terms of membership and mission. The net effect of this was that as mission societies came to be identified exclusively with denominations, whereas even denominational societies had previously accepted missionaries from other denominations, they shifted their focus from individual conversion to church planting. This shift led to a new slogan for the new denominational churches which were planted: “self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating”. Furthermore, this shift was entirely in line with Enlightenment thinking, since as rationalism and liberalism arose in society, one of the ways the church responded was through confessionalism. This was a response entirely consistent with the Enlightenment paradigm, in that truth was thought to be found in having the more logical argument.

Things did not stay this way, though, and by the end of the nineteenth century the mission societies became more ecumenical once again. This new movement within the mission societies, called the faith mission movement, was driven by a spirit of volunteerism and was in line with a “Western mood of activism, do-goodism, and manifest destiny”. There were some subtle shifts away from the predominant character of the missionary work of the nineteenth century. This was a preaching of conversion of individual souls once again, the establishment of the bases of the mission agency on the home soil where the mission agency was located, and the adoption of some of the local customs such as food and dress, as part of the mission work.

There was a certain ethos which came to be identified with both the denominational and

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121 Bosch, 330.
122 Bosch, 330.
123 Bosch, 331.
124 Bosch, 331–332.
125 Bosch, 330.
126 Bosch, 332.
127 Bosch, 333.
128 Bosch, 332.
129 Bosch, 333.
nondenominational missionary societies: Western society and the free-enterprise system were taken as givens, and mission went in one direction, that is from West to East or from the West to the South.\textsuperscript{130}

**The Impact of the Christian Missionary Enterprise Today**

It must be realized that the missionary enterprise just briefly described was a remarkable exercise that is having impact even today.\textsuperscript{131} At the same time, this missionary exercise, as it was formed and executed in the Enlightenment paradigm, needs to be revisited in light of a changing societal context.\textsuperscript{132} The missionary movement was incredibly influential and there are remnants of it which are still being played out; it forms the backdrop against which the church endeavours to practice mission today. There are those who look at this period as the golden age and those who look at it as one of the times of shame of the church. Regardless of one’s feelings on the missionary enterprise, it must be acknowledged that this understanding of mission and therefore of evangelism still exists within the church and the world today. Among some there is nostalgia for a return to this world and a significant level of denial of the negative consequences of the missionary enterprise. For others, this period has so alienated them from the idea of mission that there is an inability to move beyond social justice and to see that the call of mission is for social justice and evangelism alike.

**The Edinburgh Conference of 1910**

Before reflecting upon this movement’s significance for the Anglican church a word must be said about the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. While there were many missionary conferences over the years, the conference of 1910 was the turning point in the history of

\textsuperscript{130}Bosch, 334.
\textsuperscript{131}Bosch, 344.
\textsuperscript{132}Bosch, 344–345.
mission. First, the context. Many at the conference felt that Christianity was on the verge of a significant global expansion. The Church of England was a full participant. Edinburgh 1910 was conceived as “a great deliberative council of the Church Protestant that would prepare its missionary armies to launch a concerted and final onslaught on the dark forces of heathendom that still ruled supreme beyond the frontiers of Western Christendom”. Further, it was felt that the enterprise of foreign mission would no longer be ridiculed and that the conference would produce a scientific methodology to achieve its missionary goals. This was the viewpoint of the conference at the time. Of further significance, however, is how it was remembered over time, which was as the first in the series of conferences which led to the formation of the World Council of Churches. It should also be noted what the conference was not, that is, a true ecumenical council of Protestants, Roman Catholics and Orthodox; it was, rather, Protestant in nature, though the definition of Protestant here includes those members of the SPG who would call themselves Anglo-Catholic. The place of this council from the perspective of the formation of the foundation of the World Council of Churches was reflected upon earlier. It is sufficient for now to note that Edinburgh 1910 has ramifications for mission today and that the original aims of the conference, especially in terms of the missionary enterprise, are consonant with how the church operated within the Enlightenment paradigm.

From the Anglican perspective the missionary movement accompanied the English expansion in the colonial era. So as England acquired colonies, the Church of England became a colonial church which meant that its expansion was at times done in an exploitative manner.

134 Stanely, 3.
135 Stanley, 4.
136 Stanley, 4.
137 Stanley, 8-10.
From an evangelism perspective, the result was that, for Anglicans, evangelism ended up being a one-way conversation in which the “conqueror” proclaimed “truth” to the indigenous populations. In hindsight, we rightly label this as exploitative; however, it should be recognized that this way of doing things is consistent with the modern Enlightenment paradigm. In the Enlightenment paradigm “knowledge” or “truth” is something that is meant to be taught to those who are not enlightened. Therefore, evangelism generally ended up being a one-sided exercise that did not consider the stories and experiences of the peoples being evangelized. While this was appropriate within the Enlightenment paradigm and consistent with the colonial experience, as will be discussed below, it gives very limited tools for evangelism within the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

As we move into the emerging ecumenical paradigm, these one-way conversations provide the church with a very limited set of tools when it comes to evangelism. The proclamation of one’s truth fit with Enlightenment thinking which believed that truth had to be proclaimed in a very overt manner; however, in the emerging ecumenical paradigm, captured in Bosch’s eighteen characteristics of evangelism, it no longer does. In the ecumenical paradigm, “evangelism is always an invitation”, “the one who evangelizes is witness, not judge” and “evangelism is not proselytism.” So the era of the Enlightenment, and the paradigm for mission that came with it, did not prepare us for evangelism today. Consequently, we have to be very deliberate and examine our assumptions as we recover this vital ministry of evangelism for the church.

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139 As seen on pg 34.
The Relationship between the Anglican Theological Approach (Via Media) and Its Historical Formation

This too brief historical survey of the Anglican Church is also important because the Anglican theological approach is as much a product of history as of church councils or theological study. Anglicanism owes much to the concept of *via media*, meaning “the middle way,” as between "popery” and “dissent,” a phrase that, though popularized by the Tractarians, was in use among the seventeenth-century English divines.\(^{140}\) *Via media*, the seeds of which were planted by Henry VIII,\(^ {141}\) owes its development to Queen Elizabeth I. When we look at her legacy, we see that the Church of England maintained the Catholic faith in some significant ways, against the wishes of the dissenters. It kept the scriptures, creeds, and doctrinal decisions of the first four General Councils as foundational. It also kept the threefold order of ordained ministry and it restored some key Catholic understandings and practices that had been lost primarily in the medieval Church. These were worship in the common tongue, the supremacy of scripture in decisions of doctrine and conduct, communion in both kinds for the laity, and the practice of laying on of hands by a bishop for confirmation and ordination. It also aimed to restore the practice of regular communion by all the faithful. What was rejected was the supremacy of the pope and his authority in civil affairs of state.\(^ {142}\) A way, *via media*, was established to guide the English church through the different factions of the time and that foundation continues to shape and guide the church today.

When we understand the historical foundations of our praxis and our theological thought, we begin to understand how Anglicans operate and what the concept *via media* means when it

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\(^{142}\) Neil, 131–132.
comes to conduct and belief within the Anglican Communion. Traditionally the sources of
Anglican doctrine were Article VI of the 39 Articles which states that the whole of the scriptures
contain all things necessary for salvation, the three ecumenical creeds and the dogmatic decisions
of the first four general councils of the church. Further, the Book of Common Prayer with the
Ordinal set the order and theology of worship and the 39 Articles of Religion summarized central
theological and doctrinal issues.\textsuperscript{143} However, as Neil noted decades ago, “it is doubtful whether
any of these five points can be cited with equal confidence today.”\textsuperscript{144} The fact is that no one
diocese is bound by the actions of another\textsuperscript{145} but we continue tentatively as a worldwide church
which seems to be bound together by a shared history and by mutual loyalty and continual
meetings. We do not operate as a confessional church as most Protestant churches do, in that an
article of confession guides our worship and our conduct. At the same time, there are significant
differences from the Roman Catholic Church which holds to a catholic, or universal, approach to
theology, worship, and practice. In Anglicanism, no one voice or understanding stands up against
other voices or understandings, but rather the different voices and understandings stand side by
side in proclamation of word, ministry, and worship. The result is that we see Anglicans united
not so much by doctrine as by guiding principles.

This mode of being can clearly be seen in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888,
which produced a resolution outlining the essentials for a united Anglican Communion. As the
name would suggest, this quadrilateral has four key elements: first, the scriptures contain all
things necessary to salvation; second, the Apostles’ Creed as baptismal symbol and the Nicene
Creed as a statement are sufficient statements for the Christian Church; third, the two sacraments

\textsuperscript{143}Neil, 399.  
\textsuperscript{144}Neil, 399.  
\textsuperscript{145}Neil, 403.
instituted by Christ – baptism and Eucharist – are central; fourth, the historic episcopate is confirmed.\textsuperscript{146}

This understanding of how the Anglican Church exists and operates also helps to account for the long-standing divide within the Anglican Church commonly known as the High Church and the Low Church. The High Church tends to be more ceremonial and Catholic,\textsuperscript{147} and the Low Church tends to be less ritualistic in worship and more evangelical or Protestant in thought.\textsuperscript{148} Practically, this has meant that there is a lot of room for variety in terms of theological expression and theological praxis within our church. This has also meant, from a theological perspective, that we are a church that has been able to incorporate and deal with the many challenges and insights given to the church catholic in the second half of the twentieth century through the theologies of existentialism, feminism, Marxism, and liberation, to name just a few. While at times this can be confusing and has led to many identity crises, including the present conflict over how we as a church incorporate partnered homosexuals, it means that, at the same time, in our pews and among our leaders we have a wide variety of theological thought that shapes who we are and how we do ministry.

This development is a good thing for the ministry of evangelism in the present age as it allows us to speak to a wide variety of people coming from a wide variety of walks of life and allows great latitude in the actual ministry of evangelism itself. Further, it enables us to engage with new ideas and understandings of our world. This has the potential to be very positive when it comes to the ministry of evangelism in the emerging ecumenical paradigm. The theological approach which grew up out of a culture of \textit{via media} has the potential to allow for diversity of

\textsuperscript{146}Cross, 946. \textsuperscript{147}Cross, 767. \textsuperscript{148}Cross, 999.
thought and practice when it comes to matters of faith and theology. This in turn moves us away from insistence on concepts such as absolute truth and from the practice of coercion which was so characteristic of the Enlightenment paradigm.

**The Anglican Theological Approach in Light of Present Theological Trends**

**The Role of Postmodernism**

In order to reflect on the *via media* approach in the context of theology today a good place to begin is by looking in some depth at postmodernism, a movement which has swept through academia and popular culture, in a little more depth. While the meaning of postmodernism is nebulous, its essence is captured in the famous statement by Jean-François Lyotard: 149 “Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives.”150 This statement is based on Jacques Derrida’s critique that Western society’s philosophical foundation is oppressive because, as James Olthuis states, the unity of truth (“metanarrative”) is purchased at the cost of violence.151 This oppression is called “totalization” because it denies all human thought that does not recognize the unity of the perceived foundations of society and either co-opts, dominates, or eliminates that which is perceived as “other.”152 Both modernity, the period characterized by Enlightenment thinking, and postmodernity, with its insistence on hearing alternative voices,153 have challenged the church and in their own way have impacted and shaped how evangelism has been done.

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149 Lyotard is one of the pre-eminent voices of the movement commonly known as postmodernism.
152 Middleton and Walsh, 35.
153 Middleton and Walsh, 13.
Without evaluating postmodernism itself, this thesis recognizes that the multitude of voices which characterizes postmodernism is entirely consistent with Bosch’s emerging ecumenical paradigm. Furthermore, it is fair to say that Anglicanism, with its historical influence of the *via media*, is a place where postmodernism has the ability to resonate. Because of the heritage of *via media* Anglicanism is not a church where one theological understanding of what Christianity means has been paramount. From a theological perspective, there is an absence of an overriding metanarrative. Furthermore, because of this lack of a theological metanarrative, different elements of the Christian story stand out with different theologies. For some the story of the life of Jesus is the emphasis; for others it is his final days and the mystery of his resurrection. For others the emphasis is on the stories of creation and God’s continued revelation and interaction with humankind. As a result, from the perspective of metanarrative, within the Anglican church there is a tradition of hearing and valuing other understandings within the faith itself which lends itself well to operating within postmodernism.

If one were to look at the inflexibility within the Anglican church, it would not be so much around theological understanding but rather around worship. The conflicts over the liturgical renewal of the 1970s and 1980s when, across the Anglican communion, the *Book of Common Prayer* was replaced or supplemented by various alternate texts illustrate this. That said, this process of liturgical revision has resulted in much more diversity across the worshipping landscape of Anglicanism which again leads to the variety which is key to operating within a postmodern context.

As Middleton and Walsh argue, a totalizing metanarrative can be avoided by recognizing that all grand narratives are limited stories which have been imposed upon the world.\(^{154}\) By

\(^{154}\text{Middleton and Walsh, 73.}\)
limited stories what they recognize is that there has never been one narrative true for all humanity and that even in their widespread claims the totalizing metanarrative exists within a context. Building upon this, it needs to be recognized that the postmodern condition calls us to find a way in which to live with extreme plurality.\textsuperscript{155} Groups’ stories and narratives, be they totalizing, local or metanarratives, are not going to go away. So the key question becomes not “\textit{whether} the Christian faith is rooted in a metanarrative, but \textit{what sort} of metanarrative?”\textsuperscript{156} As Anglicans, within this framework, we have the potential to let our story stand beside other stories and exist in what, for our culture, has become an increasingly pluralistic world. Interestingly, the theological approach of \textit{via media}, which emphasizes process rather than dogma, allows a way of thinking about evangelism which can exist within the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

\textbf{The Role of Language}

Fundamental to the postmodern outlook, with its critique of the metanarrative and its re-examination of reality, is a new understanding of language. Postmodernism concludes that “language is more a producer of subjectivity than a meaningful product of autonomous subjects.”\textsuperscript{157} That is, language is not an objective means to truth; rather, language helps to form and shape what truth is. In Christian thought this reflection on the place of language has been captured in a movement known as postliberal theology. Postliberalism was founded in the 1970s by Hans Frei and George Linbeck. The defining feature of postliberalism is its belief that scripture is true because it draws the reader into the Christian framework which has meaning in and of itself.\textsuperscript{158} This perspective can be seen in George A. Lindbeck’s seminal 1984 work \textit{The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age}. Lindbeck explores the problems

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{155} Middleton and Walsh, 74.
\textsuperscript{156} Middleton and Walsh, 84.
\textsuperscript{157} Middleton and Walsh, 50.
of how theology has been done, and then he offers a solution that he terms the “cultural-linguistic” approach. In terms of language use, doctrine falls under the “regulative” or “rule” theory and not the propositional theory or expressive symbols theory. The conclusion is that doctrine and its meaning are found in a particular historical time and place and, therefore, seemingly opposing points of view can be reconciled without capitulation. The cultural-linguistic approach is able make this claim because language and culture do not make truth claims and are relative to a particular time and place; to a great degree human experience is shaped and formed by cultural and linguistic forms. This means that language shapes human existence that is pre-experiential and, therefore, language does not derive from finding some external truth but instead truth is found in language.

Bishop Newbigin extends this discussion in practical terms by exploring what the cultural-linguistic approach means in terms of our understanding of the world and of the faith that we live. He recognizes that every word we use is useful only insofar as it is connected to the language as a whole and that we use words confidently and a-critically. Further, he argues that traditions of rationality, such as those that characterized the modern period, are embodied in language. This in turn means that we indwell our language, which unconsciously constructs a plausibility structure around us.

160 Lindbeck, 18.
161 Lindbeck, 23.
162 Lindbeck, 34.
163 Lindbeck, 37.
165 Newbigin, 34.
166 Newbigin, 55.
167 Newbigin, 98.
Adapting sociologist Peter Berger’s work on the social conditioning of belief, Newbigin refers to plausibility structures as a set of “patterns of belief and practice accepted within a given society, which determine which beliefs are plausible to its members and which are not.” Language shapes us in terms of how we perceive the world, what we believe in, and ultimately how we are religious and spiritual people.

Where this matters, from the perspective of the understanding of evangelism, which this thesis has laid out, is that if we are going to create points of connection with the culture around us, language is foundational in this endeavour. This is especially true from the intentional dimension of evangelism. If in our points of connection we speak a language which is foreign to our listener than it is as if the words themselves have never been spoken; the point of connection is broken. So key to creating points of connection then is to make sure language is used in a way which is understandable to both parties. Practically speaking this means that when we meet others in our society who do not hear our story it is important to stay away from some of the language which so characterizes life within Anglican churches. This is something that we will need to work at, since it is very easy to fall into the use of familiar language and terms which would be unfamiliar to those with whom we are communicating. Now this careful use of language does not mean that as a church we change the message, but rather that we make sure we are sharing our message in a way that the one we are communicating with understands.

Along with recognizing the importance of the language we use, we need to remember the use of language from the opposite perspective, which is the message we are sharing in our points of connection. Brad J. Kallenberg’s exploration of the role of language in his examination of evangelism in a postmodern age addresses this concern. By working with Lindbeck’s concept of

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168 Newbigin, 8.
the role of language in enabling religious experience, he argues that acquisition of the
appropriate conceptual language is a necessity for religious conversion. From the perspective
of intentional evangelism, this means two very important things. First, fluency in the conceptual
language is gained by participating in the linguistic community’s form of life, and second, to
learn the conceptual language of a community one must learn that community’s stockpile of
interpretive stories.

Therefore, to do evangelism in the postmodern context we as the church must be aware of
the power of language, especially as it relates to culture in conversion. This is entirely consistent
with Lyotard’s perspective that language has assumed a new importance. Lyotard opens his
discourse by sharing the opinion that in the forty years prior to his writing the study of language
has been pre-eminent. Keeping this in mind, evangelism is no longer about arguing the case
or pointing toward the truth of God, to be discerned by a combination of logic and revelation, as
was often done in the modern context. Now evangelism is about inviting the uninitiated into the
life of the community. There are two practical ways to do this. The first is to bring people into
the worshipping community and/or to expand that worshipping community beyond the
traditional church walls. The second is through the continual telling of the story that is the
Christian faith to as wide an audience as possible.

Postliberalism reminds us of the importance of language and allows us a certain freedom
to speak. We have a message to tell, a message which is captured in our definition of evangelism
that calls everyone everywhere to reorient their lives around God’s purposes. To us our message

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170 Kallenberg, 41.
171 Kallenberg, 41.
172 Lyotard, 16.
173 Lyotard, 3.
is important, given the weight that we place on things spiritual, but we always have to be conscious of the impact of our words and of our story and of the power of language. As we engage in a world which is increasingly postmodern, the insight that postliberalism gives us into the place of language allows us to speak very carefully while at the same time sharing our story in a way which is non-totalizing.

**Conclusion**

The ultimate point is that theologically the Anglican Church is broad and diverse, and as such, we can speak to a wide variety of persons. This ability is particularly important in the postmodern ecumenical paradigm where a spirit of understanding is more important than narrow theological nuances. The challenge that comes with this diversity is that we can be handicapped by our own breadth. If we do not stand for one particular understanding of the Christian gospel then what do we stand for? The truth is that we stand for the gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed in scripture and as experienced by the Body of Christ for the past 2,000 years. Implicit in this is the understanding that within these 2,000 years many people have experienced scripture and the gospel of Jesus Christ in different and legitimate ways.

The limitation of all of this theological discussion is that theology is simply “God talk”; it is humans grappling with what it means to be spiritual. We can defend, explain, and invite people into our faith, but we always have to be conscious of the limitations of theology. Not that theology is bad per se. To talk about God and to do it in a way that communicates effectively and invites a response is good. However, we must always recognize that, as St. Paul says, “We see in a mirror dimly.”

There is power in words and words are the best tool we have to communicate our message. We need to be a church that can communicate in a way that our culture can

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1 Corinthians 13: 12.
recognize and that does not alienate others through an approach which is triumphalistic or oppressive.

Practically, this means that as the church operates within the emerging ecumenical paradigm, evangelism will look different. As points of connection are created, as intentional evangelism is engaged, we need to keep in mind that ours is not the only story that is being told to people and we need to share our story in such a way that it does not devalue other stories. This means that we do not enter into dialogue and learn of the other’s story in order to tell them that it is wrong. Rather we listen, knowing God is present in all of creation and in doing this we value their story and learn from their story. As part of this dialogue, the story that we share is both our own story and the story found in scripture which speaks of God’s eternal care of humankind. When it comes to our personal story, points of connection can be made with the other’s story and we have the opportunity to share how God, whom we know in Christ, has been a part of our life and can be a part of theirs too. We also have the chance to listen to others and see what part of our greater story, as found in scripture, resonates with the stories which shape their consciousness and share those stories in a way which makes use of those points of connection and commonalities in these points of connection.

Key to doing this is the use of language. We need to be clear about the language of our hearer, and we also need to be clear about the message that we are sharing. Our Anglican heritage of via media can be an incredibly useful tool as it is way in which we can share our story in a non-totalizing way. It allows us to recognize and celebrate the legitimate diversity which can exist within the Christian faith and allows a dialogue where our story can begin to mesh with the story of our listener. In the points of connection we create, as we faithfully share the gospel
in language that is familiar to the listener, the goal is for the listener to see themselves in those two key elements that we share: our story and our community.
Chapter 5: Theoretical Framework Part III
Evangelism as it Correlates with Culture and Context

The Role of Culture and How the Church Relates to It

Having just finished looking at the history of the Anglican Church and how this led to its unique theological approach which is consistent with emerging trends in theology, and having reflected on an appropriate biblical foundation for the ministry of evangelism in the emerging ecumenical paradigm, it is time to turn our attention to an underlying assumption which has been touched upon but not specifically addressed. Evangelism is not done in the confines of the church, but rather in the context of the world and culture in which the church exists. We saw that key to having an intentional dimension of evangelism is to have points of connection with the society around us and to deliberately take the ministry of evangelism beyond the church’s walls. It is one thing to have a conversation among ourselves about the nature of evangelism; it is quite another thing to engage the world around us in a respectful way, that affirms the emerging ecumenical paradigm. As we noted earlier, much of the history of evangelism in the modern Enlightenment paradigm has been exploitive and has not honoured the world or the culture within which the church has existed. How then do we go about the ministry of evangelism in a way that honours the world that God made and in which the church exists?

The Barth and Brunner Debate

We must first look at how the church engages culture. This is an area where there has been considerable conversation and debate. The question “How does the church relate to the world around it?” is key when it comes to operating in the emerging ecumenical paradigm. In fact, there have been many attempts to answer it. One of the foundational works in this
discussion is *Natural Theology: Comprising “Nature and Grace” by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the reply “No!” by Dr. Karl Barth*. In this two eminent theologians, Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, debated the question in 1934 in the form of two essays that dealt with the role of nature and grace in Christian understanding. Although written just on the cusp of the emerging ecumenical paradigm their debate continues to have significant influence today.

Barth points out that the theologians of the previous two centuries who were transitioning out of the orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, which derived theological truth only from scripture, were dealing with the challenges of rationalism and the Enlightenment and had begun to do things differently. They tried to build a bridge between revelation and reason, faith and life, and ultimately church and culture.\(^{175}\) This goes against Barth’s fundamental understanding that “the task of our theological generation has been this: we must learn again to understand revelation as *grace* and grace as *revelation* and therefore turn away from all ‘true’ or ‘false’ *theologia naturalis* by ever making new decisions and being ever converted anew.”\(^{176}\) The logical conclusion of this for Barth is that “every attempt to assert a general revelation has to be rejected.”\(^{177}\) General revelation is the revelation of God in the world around us, such as in the beauty of creation and is not the revelation found in scripture. As Barth asks in rebuttal to Brunner, “What use would the purest theology based on grace and revelation be to *him* if *he* dealt with the subjects of grace and revelation in the way in which natural theology usually deals with its *soi-disant* data derived from reason, nature and history?”\(^{178}\)

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\(^{176}\) Barth and Brunner, 71.

\(^{177}\) Barth and Brunner, 74.

\(^{178}\) Barth and Brunner, 77.
One of Brunner’s foundational directives is that he finds that there is a “problem concerning Christianity and Culture, Commandment and Ordinances, Reason and Revelation.” He therefore goes on to challenge Barth’s doctrine of *sola scriptura*, which has the Bible as the only standard of truth. Brunner raises some interesting questions and challenges around how culture affects our reception of the gospel message, not least of which is that, as creatures made in the image of God, there is something in our creation that links us to the creator, and that the very capacity for language itself means that we hear the “Word of God” in a way that begins beyond *sola gratia*. I find Brunner’s distinction helpful when one looks at how the gospel is to be proclaimed in our world. The capacity to know God is indeed a gift from God and the root of all evangelistic efforts, and it is a capacity for truth other than that contained in scripture. Barth, despite all his efforts to the contrary, unknowingly acknowledges this when he looks at the effect of preaching. As he writes, “The success of the preaching of the Gospel is as dependent upon the contact that is made as upon true doctrine.” This is the one place in this work where Barth acknowledges that the dissemination of the gospel message is concerned with more than just scripture. What we see is an understanding, by someone even as focused on scripture as Barth, that scripture requires a point of contact in the hearer.

**The Barth and Brunner Debate as a Way to Look at Culture**

This debate is a good example of the struggle to define the place of culture in relation to the proclamation of the gospel. While there are significant differences of opinion when it comes to this area, there is ultimately recognition that culture is the context in which proclamation

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179 Barth and Brunner, 19.
180 Barth and Brunner, 20.
181 Barth and Brunner, 21–24.
182 Barth and Brunner, 32–33.
183 Barth and Brunner, 114.
occurs. This bodes well for Anglicans, who with a state church background, realize that the church is a vehicle that is heavily influenced by, and in many ways a product of, culture. An example of this in the historical section is that when the foundation of the Anglican church was explored, the role of the monarch figured heavily. The challenge that we face, though, is that in the postmodern world there is no homogeneous culture, and so if we are to speak within the context of culture we must first recognize the cultures that we inhabit and recognize that culture itself is fluid and polymorphous. Furthermore, in contrast to the era of Christendom, Christians are no longer formative in shaping culture. This in turn is consistent with the goal of engaging in evangelism in the emerging ecumenical paradigm because the emerging ecumenical paradigm clearly recognizes the diversity which is at the foundation of Western culture today.

If we are to engage in intentional evangelism which engages culture in points of connection within the context of the emerging ecumenical paradigm, we first need to recognize that there is a divide between the church and culture. The Barth and Brunner debate illustrates that the capacity to hear about God exists before we even begin this conversation. The purpose of this thesis is to use their discussion as a lens through which culture can be examined and to look at the two opposite poles. The author of this thesis, for the purpose of the ministry of evangelism, sees more through the lens in which Brunner presents. It is from this perspective that this writer concludes that our task is to recognize that God is at work in culture and that the role of evangelism is to share the gospel story and invite others into our worshipping communities so that they can respond to the radical reorientation that God is calling us all to.

While the work of Brunner and Barth is one of the foundational works which helped to frame the debate between church and culture, others have continued this exploration of how church and culture should interrelate.
H. Richard Niebuhr: Christ and Culture

Of significance in this task of how church and culture should interrelate is a later theologian, H. Richard Niebuhr. In his seminal book *Christ and Culture*, he wrestles with the concept of how the church should relate to the world. Niebuhr explores five options. Niebuhr develops the thesis that Christians over the centuries have perceived Christ to be engaged in culture in five distinct ways: Christ versus culture, Christ as culture, Christ as superior to culture, Christ in paradox with culture, and ultimately Christ as the transformer of culture. There are limitations in Niebuhr’s work. As even he recognizes, the ways are not mutually exclusive, and there are points of reconciliation among them.¹⁸⁴ He is also clear that his purpose is not to present one understanding over the other, but rather to contribute to mutual understanding of the variant and conflicting Christian groups that follow these different approaches.¹⁸⁵ While Niebuhr states that this is his approach, as we read his analysis, it becomes very clear that his preference is for Christ as the transformer of culture.

The Role of Culture from the Perspective of the Ministry of Evangelism

The purpose here is not to critique Niebuhr in depth but rather to recognize that the models he proposed have been significant in the history of theological thinking concerning church and culture. I propose to use these models as the backdrop against which we reflect on the role of culture from the perspective of the ministry of evangelism. Bryan Stone writes, “Every way of viewing the world and reading history arises from some particular set of convictions we might call ‘faith’ and from within some particular narrative. To believe that the ‘real world’ is something other (or larger) than the world of the gospel is to deform Christian

¹⁸⁵Niebuhr, 2.
evangelism from the beginning”. I like this because it would allow me to add a sixth category to Niebuhr’s work, Christ in partnership with the world. In this way, as a church we avoid some of the sins of the past, which are captured in Lyotard’s condemnation of metanarratives – an oftentimes triumphalistic and exploitive relationship between the church and the world.

While not an official policy of the church, or any church for that matter, the World Council of Churches in a recently released draft document begins with this statement: “Today’s Christians in almost all parts of the world live in religiously pluralistic societies. Persistent plurality and its impact on their daily lives are forcing them to seek new and adequate ways of understanding and relating to people of other religious traditions”. Thus, when it comes to the issue of evangelism a natural sort of tension builds up when traditional views of salvation encounter people of other faiths. However, as declared in the World Mission in San Antonio in 1989: “We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.” This approach allows the church to be the church and at the same time gets away from the feeling of superiority that has so often dictated the church’s relationship to the “other” in the past. It further takes the ministry of evangelism from the express purpose of saving other’s souls to living and walking in partnership with the world which God has created. This in turn lets us look to Christ as partner with culture and allows the church to exist in a relationship with the world which is equitable and in accordance with the precepts of the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

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Christ as Partner to Culture

So if Christ is partner to culture, the question which logically follows next is how does the church relate to culture in a way which is in keeping with the emerging ecumenical paradigm? The answer is story – the story found in the Bible; a foundational witness to God’s continued action throughout history; a place where we begin to understand how God relates to us; a place where the revelation of the role of Jesus the Christ is reflected upon; the story of the early church and its successes, struggles and attempts at evangelism. A most insightful example of this is found in the book of The Acts of the Apostles where Paul gives the following evangelistic speech:

Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets said, “For we too are his offspring.” Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

Acts 17: 22–31

I have chosen this story because it is an example of an evangelist putting the biblical story in the context of culture. In this speech by Paul, one sees him first recognize the place he is in. He reflects with his listeners on how they are religious, he recognizes their objects of worship and
their religious thinkers and picks out a key inscription on an altar which states “to an unknown God”. Paul recognizes that God is already at work in that culture and rather than condemn, he affirms the culture in which he is preaching, and he uses that cultural context to share his particular world view, that God the Creator has worked through the resurrection of Jesus to bring hope to all people, and he invites the Athenians into relationship with God because of this. He sees the story of the people of Athens, tells it back to them and then shows them how their story intersects with the story of Jesus Christ and that we are all called to repent.

This particular passage of scripture brings together much of what has previously been discussed. It reflects what Brunner argued, that since we are created in the image of God, we are linked to the creator. The fact that the Athenians have somehow intuitively made an altar to the unknown God, whom Paul identifies as the Christian God, shows the capacity of humanity to yearn for God. It highlights the role of scripture in evangelism, in line with the principle of sola gratia, for the message that Paul preaches has repeated references to the story found in the Bible. Further, it does not condemn the society itself but rather recognizes the good in that society while pointing that society toward something more, the more being that place of repentance for all humanity. This example of the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles speaks to how we need to engage in points of connection. Here Paul’s point of connection was the altar to the unknown God and probably also the Athenians’ willingness to listen to an itinerant preacher.

This passage points us to two considerations. We need to see that place in our society around us where there is evidence of God’s revelation and we need to make points of connection there. We then need to follow this up by speaking in a way in which society can hear. In this manner we can engage in that intentional ministry of evangelism which we have identified the church needs to (once more?) move into. Further it fits with a postmodern understanding. As Lyotard argues,
knowledge is not the same as science\textsuperscript{189} and he laments how science has reduced the importance of narrative truth.\textsuperscript{190} He does this in the context of an “incredulity towards the metanarrative” while at the same time speaking to how narratives help us to order and understand our world.

Bowen expands on the use of the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles by centering his observations on the understanding that Paul’s ministry in Athens is a prime example of ministry within the multicultural setting. He calls his chapter on Paul “Cross-Cultural Communication: Paul in Athens.”\textsuperscript{191} Bowen argues that Paul connects the gospel with what a person’s life is like in a culture that has no Christian exposure.\textsuperscript{192} The underlying assumption here is that God is already involved in people’s lives even before they hear the Christian message.\textsuperscript{193} Interestingly, Bowen is able to link Paul’s ministry with Jesus by citing Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4: 1–30) as an example in Jesus’ ministry of Jesus connecting with and bringing to fruition what God had already begun in the woman’s life.\textsuperscript{194}

As Bowen observes, we have here a reminder that we need to be like Paul and Jesus who were on the lookout for places where God was already at work in people’s lives.\textsuperscript{195} Bowen takes this observation further to hold that every culture has altars to the Unknown God.\textsuperscript{196} He then concludes by saying that this is a central point of the incarnation, that Jesus lived within the culture of his age, as we do today.\textsuperscript{197} The importance accorded here to culture resonates with Bosch on two levels – first, in his definition of evangelism that recognizes that evangelism

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{lyotard} Lyotard, 18.
\bibitem{lyotard} Lyotard, 27.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 98.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 102.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 103.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 103.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 108.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 109.
\bibitem{bowen} Bowen, 109.
\end{thebibliography}
happens in particular contexts and conditions, and second, (number fifteen of the eighteen characteristics of evangelism) that “authentic evangelism is contextual”.

**Mutual Self-Mediation: A Culturally Appropriate Tool for Evangelism**

How then do we engage in this ministry of evangelism, knowing that we live in a pluralistic society and global village? First we must recall that the old days of being the bearers of the whole truth to the “savages” are over. To live in an emerging ecumenical paradigm means that one has respect for one’s neighbour, regardless of religious affiliation or lack thereof. Yet at the same time, we have identified mission and evangelization as key and core to the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Evangelism which, according to Bosch, recognizes that people live in a context (or culture) calls people to a radical reorientation of their lives according to the message and ministry of Jesus. This presents a quandary, a quandary of ministry and identity and ultimately of how we must act. A way out of this impasse can be found in Bernard Lonergan’s concept of mutual self-mediation. Mutual self-mediation occurs between two human beings when:

- one reveals one’s own self-discovery and commitment to another and receives the self-revelation of the other; one opens oneself to be influenced at the depth of one’s being, and others open themselves to be influenced by us.\(^{198}\)

This in turn means that the church has a two-way existence. We enrich the “other” and at the same time the “other” enriches us.\(^{199}\) This means that, as pointed out in the Vatican II document *The Church in the Modern World*, there are “treasures hidden in various forms of human culture.”\(^{200}\) This relationship of faith and culture is one that has challenged the church since the


\(^{199}\)Dadosky, 306.

\(^{200}\)Dadosky, 307.
beginning but has taken on a new urgency during the last century as society radically changed. If we can approach the ministry of evangelism from this perspective, we will be a people who take other people seriously and who respect the emerging ecumenical paradigm. We will be a people who recognize and experience God’s presence in the world around us, and we will then be able to be a people who share how God has reoriented our lives and what that would look like for them and for others. If we do evangelism using this method of mutual self-mediation we will be a people who do not recommit the sins of the past and can fully engage with the culture around us in a meaningful manner.

**A Demographic Description**

Since the ministry of evangelism does not happen in a vacuum but rather in the societies in which the church exists, I have undertaken a demographic study in order to understand the mission field of St. Simon’s. I have had two primary sources for this. The first is a demographic study commissioned by the Diocese of Niagara in 2004, and the second is a look at Canada’s religious landscape primarily through the Canadian religious demographer Reginald Bibby, as captured in his book *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*. The following exploration of the religious demographic makeup of Canada is important for two reasons: the reality within which St. Simon’s and the Canadian church exist, and what it means for the church to exist in the emerging ecumenical paradigm. It is not a matter of the church being marginalized to the place of non-existence but that the church really is just one voice among many when it comes to the religious landscape of the country we live in. Also there is something to be said for seeing the richness of God’s creation in the plurality which makes up Canada.

Before beginning this demographic analysis a note must be made about its place in this study. Bosch’s definition of evangelism calls us to reach out to every person and community
everywhere. However, it also calls us to recognize that the church does indeed operate within a particular context. Given this understanding of context, and the central premise in Bibby’s work that denominational adherence is still significant in the life of Canadians, it needs to be noted that this study is taking place within the Anglican Church of Canada. For better or worse, denominations are a significant part of the context that the church exists in and practices its mission. Therefore the demographic analysis will be done from a predominantly Anglican perspective. This does not mean that when we answer the research question it will be applicable only to Anglicans at St. Simon’s but rather that we need to know the context in which we minister at St. Simon’s order to be able to develop an evangelism plan which does have the potential to reach out to every person and community. Interestingly, the only theological justification for the study of demographics came from missional church writings. The understanding given there was based upon the idea of missio Dei and the idea that since missional congregations are guided by the Spirit, demographic studies reveal areas where missional congregations can focus so that they have the most impact.\textsuperscript{201}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{201}Van Gelder, 53.}
The demographic breakdown of Canada in terms of religion, according to the 2001 census (that is self-identified adherents), is as follows: 43.2% of Canadians are Roman Catholic, 16.2% profess no religious adherence, 9.6% are United Church, and 6.9% (or 2,035,500) of the population is Anglican.²⁰²

**Figure 1.0 2001 Religious Demographics of Canada**

These numbers are reflected in the Ontario total. While overall in Ontario the actual percentages remain comparable there is an increase to 8.7% (or 985,110) in terms of the Anglican

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²⁰² *Statistics Canada 2001 Census: Selected Religions in Canada, Provinces and Territories—20% Sample Data, 17 March 2008*  
[http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Religion/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Code=01&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Canada&B2=1](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Religion/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Code=01&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Canada&B2=1).
representation. This compares to the 1991 census, the last time religious affiliation was asked, where in Canada Roman Catholics increased by almost 5% in terms of an overall percentage of Canadians, while the United Church and Anglicans went down by 8.2 and 7% respectively. The big change from one census to the next is that those in the “no religion” category increased by 43.9%. There are four key factors that become apparent when looking at these data:

1. Anglicans are the third largest faith group in Canada and Ontario. Significant to note in this is that the four largest groups, at 75%, Roman Catholics, “no religion,” United Church and Anglicans, make up the bulk of the population. While diminishing over time, this tells us that there is a significant Christian memory in Canada and it puts a perspective on how religiously pluralistic Canada is.
3. There is significant growth in the “no religion” category.
4. The percentage of Anglicans as related to the population of Canada has significantly declined between 1991 and 2001, by 7%

These data concern affiliation. Of equal, if not greater importance, are the attendance patterns. From 1946 until 2001 the percentage of the adult population that attended religious services on a weekly basis slipped from 67% of the adult population to 20%.^204

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Likewise monthly attendance slipped from 43% in 1986 to 31% in 2001.  

Figure 1.1 Attendance Patterns for Weekly Attendees

Figure 1.2 Attendance Patterns for Monthly Attendees
While there are not ready statistics available that speak to children’s weekly attendance, what we do know is that 36% of children under the age of twelve attended church monthly in 1994–1995. This means that the attendance pattern of children is somewhat higher than that of adults, though we will see shortly that Anglicans are an exception to this. As the population of Canada was 12,300,000 in 1946; 26,100,000 in 1986; and 31,000,000 in 1991, this would suggest the following. In 1946 weekly attendance in Canada was 8,250,000, and in 2001 it was 6,200,000. It would also suggest that in 1986 the number of those who attended monthly (which includes weekly adherents) was 11,225,000, whereas in 2001 the monthly attendance was 9,600,000. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that, while the overall percentage of people who participate significantly in a faith community has declined considerably in the postwar period, because of significant population growth in Canada during this period, there are large numbers of people still involved with faith communities. Furthermore, the actual raw numbers of people who take part in a faith community regularly, while declining in the neighbourhood of 25% over the postwar period, is a substantial number and is a number that would be enviable to many industries and products in the Canadian landscape.

The above numbers indicate a gradual decline in attendance and in overall religious affiliation and would seem to suggest that the decline is irreversible and that regular attendance will continue to decline in the future. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that this is not so. Bibby, in his book Restless Gods, using Statistics Canada data, compared weekly attendance

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208 Please note all numbers have been rounded to the nearest 1000th.
at religious services between 1990 and 2000. What he found was that although overall attendance at religious services declined from 24 to 19% there was actually a climb among Protestants from 24 to 28% and that the decline was among Roman Catholics, who fell from 31 to 23%.

Figure 1.3 Religious Attendance for All Denominations

Figure 1.4 Religious Attendance for Protestants

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210 Bibby, 75.

211 Bibby, 75.
Given the large number of Roman Catholics in Canada, this had a strong effect on trending the weekly attendance figures downward and skewed the results to look worse overall, from the perspective of the Canadian churches, than they actually are. In fact, when we look at the Anglican experience during this time, there was actually a climb from 14 to 18% in terms of those who are affiliated with the Anglican Church and those who attend an Anglican church regularly.\textsuperscript{212}

\textsuperscript{212}Bibby, 75.
Figure 1.6 Religious Attendance for Anglicans

Interestingly, these numbers reflect the attendance patterns of Anglican children, who in 1994–1995 are reported to be among the lowest of attendees in the various faith communities, at 18%. Further to the age breakdown of religious attendance among Anglicans, it is interesting that among those who call themselves Anglicans church attendance has increased. In 1990, 8% of Anglicans aged eighteen to thirty-four were weekly attendees of Anglican churches while 14 and 20% of thirty-five to fifty-four and fifty-five-plus, respectively, attended weekly. In 2000 the story changed. Thirteen per cent of those who professed to be Anglican, in the age range of eighteen to thirty-four, attended weekly while 14% of those aged thirty-five to fifty-four were in attendance, and the fifty-five-plus group grew to 26%. Now, while this is an obvious positive development, it needs to be tempered with the realization that although proportional adherence has increased, the percentage of Canadians who are Anglican has declined.

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213Jones, 14.
This means that during the 1990s, in terms of raw numbers, the attendance rates have remained the same for Anglican, as with the other Protestant mainline churches.\textsuperscript{214} While this does not mean all of the challenges for Anglicans, or other mainline Protestants, have been met, what it does mean is that a three-decade-long trend of decline has stabilized.

**The No Religion Category**

At this time, a word also needs to be said about the “no religion” category in the census. This option was not available until the 1971 census but has grown from 1\% in 1971 to 12\% in 1991\textsuperscript{215} and according to the 2001 Census grew to 16\%.\textsuperscript{216} This trend needs to be set against Roman Catholic affiliation, which between 1891 and 1991 grew from 42 to 47\% of the Canadian population, and the Protestant affiliation, which fell from 56 to 36\% during the same time period. The fall in the Protestant affiliation is not as a result of people switching to formerly marginalized religious groups but rather a result of Protestants and some Roman Catholics switching to “no religion.”\textsuperscript{217} Furthermore, Bibby has found that 40\% of those who claim “no religion” are under 25, 80\% are under forty-five. Further, there are strong indications that they would return to their parents’ religious identification for the “rites of passage” that come with aging. As Bibby argues, the “no religion” category is often short-lived.\textsuperscript{218} The conclusion that can be drawn from this for Anglicans and other mainline Protestants, though somewhat tenuous, is that there is actually a larger affiliate pool than the census would indicate.

In terms of a statistical analysis, there is one last item that needs to be looked at, and that is the demographics of Oakville itself. According to the 2006 census, Oakville consists of almost

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{214}Bibby, 76.
\textsuperscript{215}Bibby, 63.
\textsuperscript{216}http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Religion/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Code=01&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Canada&B2=1, accessed 31 May 2010
\textsuperscript{217}Bibby, 63–64.
\textsuperscript{218}Bibby, 64–65.
59,000 households with a total of almost 166,000 people. Its median family income is $90,920, and there are fifty-two places of worship, eight of which are Anglican.\textsuperscript{219}

**Figure 2.0 Population Demographics of Oakville and Burlington**

Oakville

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<thead>
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<th>Total Populations (2006)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
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<td>Median Family Income (2000)</td>
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</table>

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</thead>
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<td>Other Faiths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The broad conclusion that can be drawn from these data is that, based on 8.7\% of the Ontario population being Anglican, there is a pool of 14,408 Anglicans to draw from in Oakville alone. Furthermore, if 15\% of those who identify as being Anglican are actively involved, as is the statistical finding,\textsuperscript{220} there are potentially 2,161 active Anglicans in Oakville. There is also evidence that Oakville is highly English in origin; Oakville is seen as an anglicized bastion by

\textsuperscript{219}A compilation created by Rosemary Antsey based on 2006 census data. For further information see http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3524001&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=oakville&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=35&B1=All&Custom=

\textsuperscript{220}Bibby, 76.
the outside world, which actually means that the pool is much bigger. Add to this that many in the “no religion” category could potentially be adherents, if Bibby is right, through “rites of passage,” this suggests that that there is actually a minimum of three thousand potentially active Anglicans in Oakville.

Then there is the matter of growth in the community. In 2004 the Oakville Town Council agreed to zone the area known as the North Oakville Corridor as residential. The population projection for this development, which has not yet begun, is fifty-five thousand residents. This means that there are potentially 4,785 Anglicans moving in, of which 15%, or 717, should be already active. This is a potential that St. Simon’s needs to prepare for by distinguishing itself from other Anglican, and non-Anglican churches.

**Using the Language and Practice of Marketing**

Having looked at the more traditional areas of theological discourse, such as history and the Bible, and examined an underlying assumption which is that faith and culture live in relationship with one another, we now turn to an area which is less traditional in theological reflection, marketing. In this section I will share some tools, through the use of the language of marketing, which can be useful for the church at large and St. Simon’s in particular as it endeavours to focus on the ministry of evangelism.

For many, marketing is a “dirty” word which is linked to unfettered capitalism, greed, and manipulation. Marketing is not simply a synonym for advertising or selling. A formal definition of marketing, as adopted by the AMA (American Marketing Association) is “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas,

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goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.”

As can be seen by the definition, marketing is a multi-layered discipline which is actually complex in terms of implementation, a tool which aids in communication and in our Western society is part of who we are. It is a language that we have all been formed in understanding; we have become sophisticated consumers of everything from written material, to education, food and I would contend, our places of worship. Marketing is a secondary language and is in no way meant to supplant the primary language of theology although it is a primary language for many in our culture and can serve as a point of connecting.

It is my belief that if we, as the church, truly value the world which God has created, we must open our eyes and understand that the world has gifts which have been given to it by God and that we in the church can and must learn from the world around us. As established earlier, one of the foundational pieces of this work is that in the emerging ecumenical paradigm it is no longer the church speaking truth to the world around it but rather the church in dialogue with the world and society; we must communicate our message in a language which the world understands – hence marketing.

In order to use the discipline of marketing appropriately for St. Simon’s it was important to start at the beginning. As the AMA-approved definition of marketing indicates, the practice of marketing is multifaceted. I have applied the definition by making the foundation of my marketing work the 4 P’s. That is, in marketing one begins by looking at product, price, promotion and place. A marketing audit consists of an examination of the 4 P’s, followed by setting marketing objectives/goals, and is completed by looking at one’s competitive advantages and disadvantages. A marketing audit of St. Simon’s looks something like the following.

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224 Beckman, 8.
Marketing Audit

Product

The “product” which is being offered is Christianity within the context of a local church, specifically, a Christian faith community of the Anglican tradition. The Anglican Communion is a loosely affiliated worldwide church consisting of 77 million people. Its churches share a common British heritage, but vary from one another in many significant ways on a regional level. Given its British heritage, St. Simon’s is made up mostly of people from a Caucasian background though there are significant exceptions. There is a significant representation from “The Islands,” that is immigrants from the Caribbean who are Anglicans by virtue of the missionary efforts that went along with expansion of the British Empire. This manifests itself at St. Simon’s by the presence of some mixed-race couples and also some Anglo-Indians who again have an Anglican background as a result of the British having been in India. There is additional cultural diversity as a result of marriage. Many people from different religious and cultural backgrounds have married people who are Anglican in background and have switched faith communities as a result. Theologically, St. Simon’s is like the Anglican Communion, divided. There is a diversity of opinion and thinking among those who call St. Simon’s their home. This can be, and for the most part is, healthy as people are respectful of different faith understandings. It is also healthy as it endeavours to be an inclusive community which understands that people come from different experiences and understandings.

Price

Continuing in our marketing language and with our audit, while there is not a set fee, there is a cost to belonging to a faith community. This is because faith communities are 100% privately funded and they function with minimal staff and a multitude of volunteers. The result is
that the real cost of belonging to a church is a combination of time and money. Since our church does most of its work as a result of its volunteers there is a constant need for people to give of their time. This can consist of just a few minutes from time to time or it can be hours a week. The time commitment is something that is real and again is discerned by the person who is giving of their time. Having said this, there are also times when the church will specifically ask everyone, or particular people, to contribute either financially or with their time.

Promotion

There is not a lot of deliberate promotion of St. Simon’s; it is more of a quiet presence which comes out of being rather than any deliberate systematic process of making St. Simon’s known to the community around it. This is aided by a cultural understanding, though often misinformed, about what church is. Further, society continually encounters church through many associated elements. A person might be a friend of someone who has a strong church affiliation. A person might come across, or be associated with, a church relief agency. A person might read of an action, positive or negative, of a person in the church or of the institution itself. Most of the promotion which takes place is as a result of societies’ and individuals’ direct or indirect encounters with the church or its members.

In terms of direct promotion St. Simon’s uses three specific methods. The first is presence. St. Simon’s is located just off Trafalgar Road, one of the main throughways of Oakville. This means that people directly see the building as well as people coming and going from the building. There is a sign out front, with changeable messages, which sends a series of messages out to those who walk and drive by. This sign also contains a web address, to direct people further to what is happening at St. Simon’s. This website is the second promotional piece, www.stsimon.ca, which tells in great detail the happenings at St. Simon’s. The final piece is
advertising in the local paper, the *Oakville Beaver*, which is done in conjunction with the other Anglican churches in town and appears on the church page with all the churches from all the denominations. There is no ongoing cost allocated to the building or the sign in terms of budgeting but there is a cost for the website and the *Oakville Beaver*. The budget for the website is $500 US per year and the paper costs $12 per week for a total cost of just over $600 per year.

*Place*

*Place* directly refers to distribution, how our product is distributed to the community around it. Effectively this means the church building itself. The church was built in 1987 and is made of brown brick. To see a picture of the space please go to [www.stsimon.ca](http://www.stsimon.ca). It is a two storey-building with worship space, offices and a board room/library on the top level. The bottom level is one main hall surrounded by the kitchen and three meeting rooms. Additionally there is a choir room and a nursery. Functionally this means that we typically have worship upstairs and, with the offices upstairs, the day-to-day operation of the church also takes place there. We use the board room/library for many administrative meetings as well as small group discussions. Downstairs we host our social gatherings, including coffee hour after church, hold larger gatherings of 50 to 150 people, as well as the Sunday School and Youth Group activities. There are a variety of daytime renters and a very well attended and effective Alcoholics Anonymous Group from 12:15 to 1:15 every weekday. In the evenings we rent this space to the Oakville Children’s Choir on Monday and Tuesday, and on Thursday it is rented by a theatre company. The downstairs is split 50% of the time with outside renters and 50% with church use. In terms of the functionality of the building we have an 80 spot parking lot outside. We have a ramp into the main entranceway, an elevator that connects the two levels and specific “wheelchair” sections of the pews for those with mobility issues. We have an air-conditioned
sanctuary but overall have electrical heating. The building is in excellent shape and there is an ongoing maintenance program in place. All in all, St. Simon’s is a functional, well-kept space, with a beautiful sanctuary framed in modern stained glass with a very modest facade that faces Trafalgar Road. It is perpetually in use and occupied and is home to the church community as well as many outside community groups.

**Marketing Objectives/Goals**

Once the 4P’s have been established, the next step in a marketing audit is to set marketing objectives. From the perspective of the ministry of evangelism, and recognizing that we are an Anglican parish set in Oakville, the marketing objectives are actually quite straightforward.

1. Increase Sunday attendance by approximately 5% per year.
2. Work toward having our demographic representation more closely resemble the neighbourhood.
3. Implement a monthly program geared to Sheridan College Students.
4. Sponsor an annual community event, thereby raising St. Simon’s profile.
5. Focus on ministry to and with children and their families. This can take many forms. If the Anglican Church of Canada is to meet and partner with the next generation, this focus is something that needs to be done in partnership with the National Church.

**Competitive Advantages**

1. Being Anglican. This gives us name recognition, a pool of sometime adherents, and an image in many people’s minds. It must be noted, though, that some of the preconceptions lead some people to avoid us. That said, there is nothing that we as an individual parish can do about that and we need to speak to those for whom the Anglican name is a positive one.
2. Location. St Simon is located in a highly visible part of Oakville, it is across the street from Sheridan College, and it exists in a neighbourhood where there has been extensive residential development with more development planned.

3. We have an air-conditioned sanctuary and are completely handicapped accessible.

**Competitive Disadvantages**

1. As a newer church building we do not have the rich architecture which characterizes older buildings; therefore, we are less attractive for many people’s first venture back to church, which is often a wedding.

**Conclusion of Theoretical Framework**

To conclude, at the foundation of this paper is the understanding that we are in the midst of moving from one paradigm to another and that with this shift there are challenges the church must understand and respond to in order to be effective in its ministry of evangelism. The methods of the Enlightenment paradigm must be abandoned as the church learns to live in dialogue with the world. In the emerging ecumenical paradigm the ministry of evangelism must be done in a way which honours the world which God has made. I have to this point explained the challenges that the Anglican Church faces given its colonial past and how the concept of *via media* allows a way forward which respects the world in which we live. Furthermore, the biblical call to evangelism in all sorts of cultural contexts is affirmed. This was discussed in the section on the historical and theological foundations of the Anglican Communion. The second section of this chapter was an examination of how the church relates to the world around it. Key was a look at the relationship between faith and culture. Then, after using Lonergan’s concept of mutual self-mediation as a way of establishing a positive relationship, some tools for helping this to take place were discussed. Key among these were a demographic analysis of the ministry context, St.
Simon’s, and a look at some of the tools and language of marketing which can be applied, if used appropriately, to the ministry of evangelism.
Chapter 6: Research Methodology

The methodology for the action-in-ministry is based on the methodology in John W. Creswell’s informative book *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. What was created was a bounded system in which a case study was executed using a mixed-method process of data collection, that is qualitative and quantitative research. This approach not only allows a significant amount of data to be collected but allows a significant variety of data to be used. “A case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.”\(^{226}\) What this functionally means is that as one does the research the researcher discovers more detail about the initial bounded system which was created. Broadly speaking, there are two aspects to this methodology. The first is the data collection itself and the second is the analysis of that data.

The bounded system that was explored was suburban Anglican churches in southwestern Ontario. Specifically, looking at the first decade of the twenty-first century and exploring their experience of gaining and keeping new adherents during that period.

The Participants

There are three participant churches Trinity Anglican Church, Aurora, Trinity Anglican Church, Streetsville (Mississauga) and St. Simon’s Anglican Church, Oakville.

Trinity, Aurora is the only Anglican Church in Aurora and dates back to 1846. Its present building has incorporated the historic chapel into its approximately ten-year-old renovation. The renovated part of the building is the main worship space, the parish hall and

\(^{226}\)Creswell, 61.
most of the meeting space. The historic part of the building which was retained is used as a chapel for the early service, weddings and funerals and as social and program space. The main worship space seats approximately 350 and the building itself is located in downtown Aurora, just off Yonge Street. It has a small parking lot, which fits fifty-five vehicles and there is ample street parking. Its recent clergy leadership is as follows: Canon, now Bishop, Philip Poole served as rector from 1987 to 2004. Bishop Terry Finlay was the interim before the present rector, Canon Dawn Davis, began in 2007. Presently average Sunday attendance is around 350 people.

Trinity, Streetsville is the historic Anglican church in Streetsville, which is a village within Mississauga. It presently has a building, located on the main street, which was built just a little over ten years ago when the historic building burnt down. It seats about 400 people and has a parking lot which accommodates ninety vehicles. Its long-time rector Canon Harold Percy just retired after twenty-three years in that position. Its present Sunday attendance, in its three services, is around 500 people.

St. Simon’s Oakville is one of seven Anglican churches located in the town. It is located in the north-east section of Oakville and has been in existence for approximately fifty-five years. It is presently housed in a building approaching twenty-five years of age after existing at three other locations for the first half of its existence. Its sanctuary seats about 250 people and it has a parking lot which can accommodate seventy vehicles. It is on a highly visible street, just across from Sheridan College, the local community college. It has been served by its rector and writer and researcher of this thesis, The Rev. Canon Darcey Lazerte, for the past nine years after two prior incumbencies of about six years each. It has a parish roll of about 350 households and its approximate Sunday attendance at its two services is a little under 200.
Method

Beginning with the two Trinities, the core of the research was church attendance, site exploration, Vestry report analysis and interviews. Both Trinities were attended twice, in order to get a feel for what the character of the worshipping community into which people were being invited. Second, the church buildings themselves were examined to see how they were used and how the space was used to welcome and include parishioners. Then the Vestry (Annual General Meeting) reports for a ten-year period were read through with particular attention being paid to the process and experience of welcoming and embracing newcomers. Of particular interest here was that Trinity, Streetsville contained at least three testimonials in each Vestry report of the experience of newcomers at their church. Finally, several leaders and newcomers were interviewed from both churches: the potential interviewees from the congregation were provided to me by the rectors of Aurora and Streetsville based upon the criteria noted above which speaks to time and role in the parish. As a result though a cross-section of the parish was received, there were some commonalities. Most were of Caucasian decent, most were over fifty and none were under thirty-five years of age. Further most were married and the younger participants had children at home while the older participants were mostly “empty-nesters” and there was an equal balance of males and females. At St. Simon’s, the

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227The questionnaires employed can be found in Appendices B&C pages 204 to 207 and the exact descriptors of who I interviewed can be found on page 193, point c.
researcher is intimately familiar with the worship and life of the parish and no further research was needed there. However the same ten years of vestry reports used in the two Trinities were used at St. Simon’s and because of issues around ethics and satisfying the needs of the ethics review committee a questionnaire\textsuperscript{228} was used instead of interviews. What was done was that about three-quarters of our households were emailed copies of the questionnaire and the rest of the parish was mailed a hardcopy. This was done through a parishioner, John Mackenzie, who gave the researcher the results in anonymous form which in turns satisfied any ethical issues which might have arisen. Twenty-four responses from the three hundred and fifty questionnaires mailed out. Of these responses the predominate age group was over fifty-five, all but three had been part of the Anglican church for their whole life, they were predominately female by over 80% and about 65% had been at St. Simon’s for over ten years. So while the results of the questionnaire is helpful its scope is limited in that the respondents are primarily female, life-long Anglicans over fifty-five years of age. Additionally given the nature of the questions for the most part the answers were short and succinct. Whereas in an interview the participant might speak at some length about a subject matter this was not the case in the questionnaires received from St. Simon’s. An example of this is question one where it asks how they heard about St. Simon’s. The answers read, “asked neighbours”, “saw sign”, “website” and “Anglican church close to home”, to give a few examples. In retrospect it would have been more helpful to have some sort of interview process but in the creation of the thesis proposal, as noted, the researcher was steered clear of this because of ethical concerns. Hence while the analysis of the interviews and the questionnaire are the basis for the NVivo analysis greater emphasis is put on the

\textsuperscript{228}See Appendix E p. 209 for the questionnaire.
interviews as the questionnaire responses tend to reinforce what the interviewees shared but do not add any new insight.

When all of the data from the interviews and questionnaires was collected, using the NVivo qualitative research tool, a list of attributes of the respondents was created and themes were extrapolated based on the data received. As far as attributes were concerned there were some attention paid to age, gender and marital status though it was found this had little bearing on the answers given. Key, though, was the participants’ relationship to their church. Were they newcomers? Were they in positions of leadership? The goal was to see if what the leadership had intended was consistent with the experience of the newcomer. As far as the themes were concerned, what people’s experience of discovering and staying at a church was about became apparent very early on during the interview process. This was likely because in the opening letter to them the purpose of the interview was identified as doing work in the area of evangelism and the questions were clearly about the topic. There was a separate questionnaire for newcomers and leaders within the parish, though there were some commonalities. While a complete questionnaire can be seen in the appendix a moment needs to be taken to speak to its construction and final form. The questionnaire was created by the researcher with the intent of speaking to the interviewees experience in the church, their relationship with the ministry of evangelism and how the came to identify their church as their own. To this end several drafts were created until they satisfied both the thesis supervisor and the Thesis Proposal Committee. In substance, for both the “newcomer” and “leadership” interviewees the questionnaires went through a process whereby the role of the interviewee in the church is established, their experience of either coming to church or addressing this in a leadership position is looked at and

229See Appendix D p.208.
finally the subject of retention is examined. It needs to be noted that as this was an interview format and at times the discussion went beyond the stated questions but it should also be noted that the conversation did come back to the stated questions by the end of the interview. This data was then processed through NVivo, an industry standard analysis program for academic research, and the results can be seen in chapter seven. NVivo is a qualitative data too which allows the researcher to bring together a large amount of data and then is allows the researcher to create themes and commonalities and arrange the data in an organized manner. This is what the researcher of the study did. This approach to data analysis is consistent with Creswell who states that in order to analyze the data gathered in a case study, one begins with a detailed description, then makes categorical aggregations and direct interpretations, looks for patterns, and, finally, makes naturalistic generalizations.230

As noted, in this action-in-ministry more than just interviews and a questionnaire were administered. Examination of archival materials and attendance at worship by the researcher were also executed. From this one piece of data which was not factored into the original thesis process was that the researcher not only gained an understanding of what was employed in terms of ministry to and with newcomers, he also was able to gather trends in this area especially through an examination of the archival material. While this trend data does not fit into the thematic analysis, it does form part of the bounded system which will be further discussed in the chapter eight, “Findings and Significance of Study.” This is key to a case study, for as Creswell states, one begins a case study by constructing a narrative231 which then directs the findings as presented in chapter eight.

231Creswell ,152.
Once the themes became evident they were able to be looked at from the perspective of the research problem: **Through this study I want to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that incorporates marketing that is theologically based and culturally appropriate.**

This was done by looking at the themes generally and seeing where they aligned with the research problem. A solution to the research problem is then developed, in the final chapter, by using these themes to construct an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s.
Chapter 7: Results - Part I

Turning to the project itself, in order to answer the research question it seemed helpful to examine it from two perspectives. First, what brought people to the specific church to begin with? And second, what were the factors in their retention? It must be noted that the research focused on those who were part of the churches in question and that no research was done with people who had left the churches. While this information may have been helpful, given the structure of the research, it would have been very difficult to obtain. It also should be noted that the experience of each person’s introduction to church is different although there were significant commonalities. The sources that provided the most information for looking at these issues were the interviews and, to some extent, the Vestry reports, especially in the case of Trinity, Streetsville because these contained a number of testimonials from newcomers.

Discovering a Church

With regard to people first discovering a church, there were several key factors within the variety of experiences. First, in all instances there was an expressed desire to find a suitable church. Most were at least churched in their background, though many had not been involved in church for a considerable length of time. From a marketing perspective these were all potential religious consumers who saw value in church, who had some interest in getting involved, and who ultimately made the decision to attend a church on a given Sunday. Furthermore, while a few had had interactions with the churches at a community or non-Sunday event, it was the decision to attend on a Sunday and experience a worship service that was the key first step. With one exception, there were no “gateway” experiences where someone came and said something along the lines of “That was a really good parish supper, or adult study; I want to go to church
there now.” The exception to this was someone who got involved in leadership through the invitation of a friend involved in the church. She recounted this experience, very enthusiastically, during the interview.

It’s a great story, because I had my children, the babies, so I was home with my kids, but one of my neighbours is a member here. She knew I had ESL background. She said to me one day, how would you like to help with the ESL program that’s beginning at our church. And I was at home with my kids full time and I said I’d love to, I’d love to get back into it. So I started with the ministry. A lot of people from the parish wanted to help, but none of them had ESL experience, except for three of us. So I ended up being the leader without really asking for it, I was just kind of put into that designation because of my experience. Through doing the classes and working with the other leaders I got to make friends here. And Diane embraced me as an outsider, because I was the only outsider. And through that I started coming to Trinity. The neatest thing was that my friend who had invited me, just to think that Trinity would open up to a stranger, like myself, coming in, and also put in a leadership position at the time.

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of this subject, this was very atypical. The people interviewed were in the market for a church and while they discovered their church in a variety of ways there were two primary experiences to the discovery of a church: reputation and referral by a friend or family member. The reputation itself varied. Some referrals were vague, for example, one interviewee talked about someone influential in their faith life who had said to them, referring to Harold Percy at Trinity, Streetsville,

I know of a church, I can’t think of the name of it right now, but I know there’s a church in Streetsville, and the Minister’s name there, his first name is Harold, I can’t think of his last name.

Then there were more specific reflections like the following.

[It seemed to me to be a church which had] participation in the community, active involvement in doing things and having the community touch in more ways than a Sunday morning. [It had] some programs that have probably reasonable visibility in terms of the welcome table on Wednesday nights. So, and, you know, word of mouth, reputation.

Reputation was essential for the churches under examination and was something that they made a very specific effort to enhance. Poole related the following.
The Sunday I was inducted my parents went to a gas station and asked the gasoline attendant where Trinity Aurora was, and he couldn’t tell them. And the gas station was actually within a block of the church. So that told me right away that the church had very little visibility in the community and so we worked really, really hard at getting visibility in the community. We did it in a variety of ways and I can say more about that when you get to the marketing piece. But I believe that Trinity eventually became Aurora’s church. It was both highly known and highly regarded in the community.

This echoed Percy who modestly related,

The people that we have involved in various sections in the community just mention Trinity church and every chance we get to try to raise our profile by doing little bits of service around, you know, however we can help in different situations.

Alongside this reflection by Percy is the fact that Trinity has become a well known entity itself. As one interviewee related,

A big part of this I think, when you mentioned about Harold being dynamic, using that word, as you know Harold travels across the country. He has spoken at a lot of other churches and to other clergy as well. And so I think Trinity Anglican Church, that name, is out there.

This was further attested to, and captured quite well, in a way that brought together some of the common understandings.

I think word of mouth and reputation. I think are very important. Participation in the community, active involvement in doing things and having the community touch in more ways than a Sunday morning. We have some programs here that have probably reasonable visibility in terms of the welcome table on Wednesdays. So, and, you know, word of mouth, reputation. People who I know who don’t know anything about Trinity know a lot about Trinity. They may not attend, but I think that’s a great part – I think marketing and advertising, and this is my personal belief, is to catch, it’s a reference point for some people who may be looking for some connection. So they know what they’re looking for, they just aren’t quite sure where to find it. The website obviously is big in terms of marketing, and is very pro-active I’d say in terms of getting the word out.

How the subject of reputation was addressed by the interviewees was very typical of the responses received. The clergy had clear, thought out and precise answers. The lay participants gave answers which were a little more meandering in nature, as if the participant was thinking
through the answer for the first time. In a way this should not be surprising in that the clergy are professionals who have dedicated much time, thought and their professional vocation to the church whereas for the laity there was very little evidence of systematic thinking about the subject of evangelism though they were very clear about their experience of church. This fits in with a fundamentally different approach to church by clergy and laity. For clergy it is a profession, for laity it is their spiritual home. This was a difference only discovered once the research was complete. There were some very thoughtful answers from the laity. One that stood out, because the participant recognized that evangelism was more than a numbers game, was the following.

Yeah, I think growth at Trinity needs to be understood from the perspective of not just seeking numbers, it’s not about, you know, bums in pews and those types of statistics. They are important but growth is really around the spiritual involvement of its members. So there’s a lot of focus on, you know, growing people – quality over quantity, as it were. Now, it’s prudent and it’s forthright to also say however, that numbers do matter. We monitor regularly every Sunday the attendance, we’re always looking at those type of statistical matters and of course, we’re looking to identify trends, opportunities for, you know, good attendance, and try to make sure we at least have an understanding of what’s happening with people and the numbers of them and the demographics of the congregation in relation to the programs we’re delivering, the focus areas that we choose to put forward in terms of some of the educational programs or one-off seminars, those types of things. Just even the demographic of age group is so profound in many congregations and certainly at Trinity. So you see some migration and trending from younger families with lots of kids, we are certainly following the baby boom demographic, so that has some impact as well on when we talk about growth.

Turning back to the subject of reputation, in Streetsville there was the fire that burnt down the church during the initial rebuild. While this fire happened in 1999 its effects still linger. It was not the fire so much as the act of forgiveness by the church which defined Trinity for members of the general public. When the researcher mentioned that he was looking at Trinity, Streetsville he would get one of two responses. One was that it was Hazel’s (Hazel McCallion,
the mayor of Mississauga) church and the other was that it was that church that was burnt down by some teenagers, but that the church had forgiven the boy or boys involved.

All indicators are that the two Trinity’s had good reputations in their communities and so when people in the area were looking for a church they were seen as churches worth considering. There was no one thing about the churches’ reputations which stood out. Sometimes it was the outreach, sometimes it was its history, sometimes it was the minister, sometimes it was the ministry people heard about, sometimes it was just a general feeling that it was considered a good church. Whatever the situation, repeatedly and in many different contexts the churches had solid reputations, were a part of the community, and were well regarded by churchgoer and non-churchgoer alike, a part of the fabric of the communities in which they reside. This became an intentional part of the churches’ ministry. Both do a significant amount of work in the community and the community notices. And there is a deliberate attempt to engage the communities in which the churches reside and thus raise the profile of the church.

The other important factor, was a referral from a family member or friend. In interviews, in conversation, in the questionnaires and in looking through printed material, person after person spoke of how they heard about the church from a friend or a family member. This was true of St. Simon’s as well, where one person responded in a manner which captures a story heard over and over again.

Our friends brought us to church one Sunday - people were VERY WELCOMING – our children were at an age to attend church and we thought it would be a good experience for them (although neither have attended church since) – My husband joined choir and I got involved in church school.
It is imperative to recognize that it does not just happen but that growing churches grow because people who come to church invite others to come and share their church experience. As Percy related,

Other people came because somebody mentioned it to them in the neighbourhood who didn’t go to it, but they, you know, someone would say – I’m looking for a church to go to and I heard that church is a pretty good church. We were always asking our people, we weren’t putting a heavy load on, but we were saying, if you enjoyed this service maybe this week you can have a conversation with someone who you think would enjoy a service just like this and ask them to come along. You never know what might happen if you do that, you know. And so we would, we always, always tried not to preach in such a way that you’re making people feel guilty or tell them to do something that they’re not ready to do, always holding out a vision of something a little bit better and encouraging them to step towards it.

This was a theme that was carried on with Poole

it was important that we made it really clear to the congregation that if they wanted to grow they had to invite people to come. And they got comfortable in doing it. They got excited about what was happening at Trinity and the difference it was making in their lives and the lives of others and so they invited people to come and join with them. So it’s the community itself, and the welcome they received.

In both cases it was a message that the parish got; person after person spoke of how they first came to the church because they were invited, because they kept hearing about how great it was from a family member or a friend, and because there was something about the passion of those that were involved that was catching. This implies that there was something worthwhile going on at the church and this factor will be addressed when we turn to the subject of retention.

Of note in the interviews was that for the most part the interviewees had not thought out in a systematic fashion what had brought them to the church in the first place. A very typical exchange is as follows.

Lazerte:
So how did you discover Trinity Streetsville? Or how did you first hear about Trinity Streetsville?
The response:
I don’t know, friends. A couple of my friends, they went to Trinity, and we were talking about…I was involved in a lot of the women’s ministry at Erindale. It always peaked me and impressed me. And once we made our decision to move…it was very difficult. It wasn’t an easy thing to do. My husband and I both decided, and we let the church know in writing that we had made this decision. We don’t like this about all of a sudden not appearing anymore and everybody wondering. Sneaking out the back door. And I had given different areas of question at a different time beforehand which were not responded to. And, you know, it’s cumulative, so that was fine. We went, well, you know, the church that has always interested me, I like some of their extra programs, I knew of Harold the minister and different things, so we started to go. And it was just an automatic fit.

A significant reflection from a participant for whom church was incredibly important.

There was a sense that he/she could articulate what happened, the importance of friends in the move from one church to another but not an identification of this before the actual move itself took place.

With regards to first attracting people to a church, as stated above the two primary experiences have to do with reputation in the community and invitation or involvement by family and friends. This does not mean that this was the only way that people were attracted to a church. While limited in numbers, increasingly amongst the younger interviewees it was found that the website was an effective tool. There was definitely a contingent that “church shopped” until they found a church they were comfortable with. There was still a place for the pastoral offices, specifically baptisms, weddings and funerals, though it was noticed that there were more references to baptism and looking for a church for their children from some of the data received from people who had been at the church for more than ten years. It also seemed that location and the appearance of the church mattered. Whether this was the appeal of a traditional look, noticeable sign or just an accessible and noticeable location, location did make a difference to many who were looking for a church. Being Anglican was a factor for many; the first church
they looked at was their denominational heritage. Participants, however, were those persons who connected with their denomination of origin.

While most participants accepted the assumption that growth and evangelism were good, one participant did question if that was the purpose of the church and wondered if we gained that idea of growth from the capitalist paradigm which speaks of society’s purpose as being about expansion. Additionally several interviewees noted that faith was private and personal and indicated a degree of discomfort when it came to sharing one’s faith.

**Maintenance and Retention**

It is one thing to attract people to a church; it is quite a different thing to retain them. In the examination of second part of church growth – retention – it became apparent from the interviewees that there were three key elements: the Sunday morning experience, getting involved in the life and the ministry of the church, and growing in one’s faith by being fed spiritually. It must be recognized that these three areas feed into one another but there is enough distinction between them to look at them separately. The tendency was for people to come and engage on Sunday, then become involved in an activity or ministry, and then a little later become involved in something that very specifically fed them and helped them grow spiritually.

For Sunday morning experience there were three key elements for retention: music, preaching and the welcoming nature of the congregation. Music that was moving and engaging was essential to keeping people in a church. At all the churches examined there was a deliberate blend of modern and traditional music and overall attention to good music was a hallmark of both Trinity’s. The occasional respondent said they needed some time to get used to the more modern music but that over time they did come to appreciate it, and if it was done well, they found it to be engaging. With respect to preaching, the positive feedback was general in nature. It
tended to be statements such as “the preaching is good, I find the preaching interesting, or what is talked about on Sundays is relevant to my life.” So while good preaching was important to many there was not enough information shared to state specifically what good preaching is. Relevant, engaging and well delivered were paramount.

A welcoming and engaging congregation is something people effused about. They said things such as that they were warmly welcomed, they were greeted in a friendly manner, and they made friends there that they wanted to see again. The community itself and how people socially interacted was an absolute essential. People came back because they were comfortable socially, made friends, were warmly greeted, and were treated well by many. One interviewee captured this in the following reflection.

Trinity has just become such a part of our lives. Our friends are at Trinity, our groups, our involvement, a lot of our life is … when we’re not doing stuff here in the building, they often were doing it where people could be moved from here, so it’s kind of, it’s part of what we are.

Once people were engaged with the Sunday morning service the next step was to get involved in a ministry or activity of the church. Some of this involvement was on Sunday mornings, some was social, and some was a specific ministry; whatever it was it solidified people’s relationship with their church, deepened their social contacts within their church and brought meaning to their lives.

These elements of retention do not happen in isolation. As one of those who is in leadership reflected:

Well, Harold’s paradigm, his vision of discipleship, of helping people come in and, first of all, be welcomed in, you know, in the sense of having no barriers, there is no criteria to come in and become a part of this big journey if you’re at this church. And once in, to really work at going deeper into understanding and your exercise of your faith. Finding your gifts, using your gifts, being involved in ministry. And largely through discovering
the joy in all of that. So often churches get into the doing from an obligation and a sense of duty and we have a philosophy here, and I credit Harold with that, for doing it out of delight. Psalm 37:4 – delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. If you delight in Him, if you’re finding joy in doing what pleases Him, you just naturally kind of get energized and delightful and the whole place takes on a greater sense of joy. So I guess it’s about helping people find their joy, exercise their joy. Not just within the church community, but then to start to reach out with that. ----- we operate in the congregation, travel and worship ministry, we interconnect with those who can’t get to a church. Those are things that….the seniors lunch which we now do, serving people who don’t have a social place to connect with others. It all comes from this discipleship model which says, come and be connected with Jesus and you will joyfully be a part of building His kingdom. And so less focussed on specific strategies to try to grow the church.

This is a good example of how that initial Sunday morning experience is connected to the other areas of retention, getting involved and growing in faith. In the following response we see that church is not a chore but rather a joy and worth doing out of enjoyment and not out of guilt or a sense of duty.

If I was slogging here, in the activities I get involved in, I’d burn out. And I don’t burn out. I do this travelling ministry several Sundays a month, two or three to nursing homes. My brother says, why don’t you go golfing with us? I golf with them on other days when I have the time. I’d hate to miss the nursing homes. I mean, I really look forward to doing the five minutes, both the preparation and talking to these folks for five minutes in a half-hour service and trying to be a messenger of God’s love. That God just loves you to death. I don’t quite say it that way. But if you don’t get … I’m preaching … I get joy in what I do.

This point, but from a more negative perspective also came up on one occasion when the interviewee was speaking about why the participant left the church he/she attended previously.

The phrase he/she used to describe why they left was “burnt out” and spoke to the need for a positive church experience in order to maintain long term retention.

There was also the recipient of what the churches had to offer. This approach is captured in the most recent Vestry report from Trinity, Streetsville. In their Vestry reports there are reflections from newcomers. One newcomer family wrote, “At the top of our priority list was
choosing a church that offered a thriving children’s and youth program.” Then they go on to speak of how their needs were met. Significantly, as the researcher got to know people in the churches and spoke to a wider variety of them, he discovered that the longer a person was in the church the more they spoke to him about what they were able to do through their ministry at the church rather than what the church had done for them.

The final key to retention was spiritual formation. In the case of Trinity, Streetsville spiritual formation was done very deliberately in two specific ways. The first was through a process of learning the basics. Christianity 101, followed by Christianity 202, as a way to give people a faith foundation through which to grow in their faith and to have an understanding of what the church is all about. The second was through LIFE Groups (Learning, Insight, Friendship and Encouragement). LIFE groups, of which there are around twenty-five in Streetsville. These are small groups of about a dozen which in a variety of ways bring people together to discuss and grow in issues of faith. Certainly there is a social element to these groups but when people spoke about the place of these groups in their lives the key was not the friendships, though they were important, but rather that in these groups they were able to explore the meaning and the living of life from the perspective of putting their faith into action. As one interviewee so succinctly put it,

The important thing in small group life, everybody will have tough times at some point in their lives and so it’s a wonderful way to get through the tough times, knowing that God loves them and that others in this community love and care for them and help them through the challenge. Yeah, I think Christianity is meant to be done in the community and you need a place where the community can gather, so Trinity is absolutely vital in providing that place where you can get together.

Those who are deliberate about faith formation, when facing crises in their lives, do not fall away from the church or from their positions of leadership.
While Poole’s approach in Aurora was to begin with the Sunday morning experience, he reflected that,

as we grew with our staff we became more focused on the notion of adult education and more focused on good music, good liturgy and we were able to provide more by way of Bible studies and more by way of adult education and learning opportunities.

This was modelled on what was happening in Streetsville and it is interesting that both churches found a way to feed people spiritually in a similar manner. As Poole related, in reference to the conclusion of a process the church had gone through in terms of adult education,

By the end of that third weekend, we had 21 suggestions for small groups and 19 of them got acted on. Everything from bible studies to support groups, to visitation groups, to a music group that’s called, Anything Unplugged. That gave us the basis for a small group program which we really modeled after Trinity, Streetsville, and created these kinds of life groups.

This key attention to spiritual formation is something that continues and has grown under the present rector, Canon Dawn Davis’s leadership, as she has instituted a year-long leadership program which takes a limited number of people whose intent is to grow in their faith. The participants are leaders in the church who step away from leadership to learn and grow. Those interviewed, who were taking part in this, spoke of how it was key for them in their walk with God; giving them rest, refreshment and an opportunity to refocus before going back into positions of leadership. The experiences related seem gentle and thoughtful in nature. In the interviews some insightful reflections on what evangelism is were encountered. As their interviews were so formative to the research, It is important to compare what Percy and Poole shared about their understanding of evangelism. Poole defined evangelism, in the context of parish growth as,

proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and encouraging people to follow Jesus as their Lord. And to encourage a deepening of Christian faith. And a living of Christian faith in day-to-day life.
When asked, Percy defined evangelism as,

I would start with the understanding of evangelism of the good news about Jesus and the invitation to turn to follow Jesus. And absolutely anything that’s involved in that chain of events that moves people along that. So I would kind of see it as a chain with all kinds of links in it, you know. All kinds of nodules.

In Bowen’s, Percy’s and Poole’s understanding of evangelism, there is the centrality of following Jesus but not the explicit Bosch imperative for reorientation. Additionally, their definitions do not explicitly state that evangelism is about reaching every person and community. This latter point does not need reflection but the prior point – the lack of call for radical reorientation and the apparent gentleness of the Bowen, Percy and Poole understanding of evangelism compared to Bosch – deserves some reflection. It is not that Bowen, Percy and Poole are against a radical reorientation since if the call to follow Jesus is heeded, following that call is about radical reorientation. Further, while Bosch does not mention timing there is a sense of urgency to his definition. Again, these definitions are not necessarily exclusive as a person’s radical reorientation can take place quickly or over a period of time. The question that can be asked is the following: when people find Christ is it a gentle and gradual change or is there a moment when the radical reorientation is observed? In the interviews, with the exception of one person who told me about their decision for Christ, it was found that people reflected about a gentle process and never used words or phrases about their life being radically reoriented. That said, when the interviewees spoke of the practical application of their faith there was a strong sense of transformation and their lives and the actions in them reflected the journey Jesus calls us to. This reflection needs to be tied to an earlier observation. That is, in order to go about the ministry of evangelism two keys were noted. The first was that people needed to be invited into the living community of Jesus, that is, the church. The second is that faith is imparted by
teaching the stories of our faith and of Jesus found in the Bible. It is through this process that this radical reorientation can take place and lives can be transformed. Further, this thesis has spoken repeatedly about the importance of the need for the church to practice the implicit dimension evangelism. The place of learning the stories and belonging to the community reminds us that we cannot be dismissive of those dimensional aspects of evangelism as it is in those dimensional aspects that faith stories are learned and examples shared of what following Jesus looks like.

**Clergy Leadership**

Finally, in this process of attraction and retention of newer members, leadership is extremely important. In both Trinity parishes the leadership was committed to the ministry of evangelism and inspired their congregations to embrace this ministry. Percy emphasized the importance of leadership.

So, my job there is to lead it and, in terms of the leadership, my job is to keep reminding everybody who comes there. All the staff who work there, myself, the parish executive with the warden and treasurer and all of our staff. My primary job is to keep reminding them of why we exist. I read somewhere, many years ago, that the number one job of leadership is to explain to people why the organization exists. And so that’s what my job is – my job is to keep talking to people, why we’re doing this thing called being the Parish of Trinity, Streetsville. And it’s an interesting thing, because I worked with these evangelists, I went to college for many years while I was here. So when I travelled all over the country, you know, working at all kinds of different venues and it slowly dawned on me that this wasn’t happening in most of the churches across the country, in most of the dioceses – there is nobody in the diocese and there’s nobody in the parishes telling the people why the church was there. And it just seemed like, you know, the church is here and we’ve been given it and we’d better have services on fifty-two Sundays of the year. And provide some pastoral care for the people who make up the congregation. That seemed to be the thing. But, when I’m talking about being the leader, I’m talking about being responsible for the vision of the place and for the definition of the place and helping everybody to understand who we are and what we’re doing. That’s a huge part of what I do. It’s not heavy lifting, I don’t work up a sweat doing it, but it’s a primary piece of my work.
Percy mentioned additional aspects that were clearly a part of Poole’s ministry. He was the leader, brought vision, and continually guided the parish back to its purpose and its mission. His ministry, like Percy’s was focused and aimed at achieving results, results captured in the mission statements which guided their leadership at their respective churches. As Poole described it:

The first thing we did was to come up with a vision for the church and it’s still, I think, the Parish vision: In Christ’s footsteps we worship, serve and grow. Everything we did was related to that. All vestry reports were related to that. Every committee kind of related to the notion of worship, service and growth.

Percy reflected this focus as well, that for him was also captured in the parish mission statement.

I got the congregation, over time, to accept the mission statement which I dreamed up in my office about a community of ordinary people. And we just kept working that. What do we mean by saying community? Why are we interested in the church seeing itself as a community rather than just a bunch of people who want to come to church? And what do we mean by ordinary people. We’re trying to say we don’t think there’s anything special about us because we’re following Jesus, we’re just like all the rest.

He also reflected on an example of how this happened for him in a place which is critical to his ministry at Trinity,

I’m preaching, you know, with our mission statement, there’s a community of ordinary people learning to follow Jesus in our time. And when I’m preaching, I’m preaching with a couple of intentions. One is to help encourage and persuade people to be intentional as followers of Jesus. You know, I hope that every week we’ve got people there who aren’t intentional in following Jesus because they’re just kind of new and coming in. But I’m also hoping that we’ve got lots of people who are because they’ve made that commitment with their lives and they know that that’s who they are.

What we see here is the importance of clergy to be focused on their leadership, which translates into the entire ministry of the parish. Key to this focus is clarity about what the church is about; an effective way to become clear is to develop a clear and concise mission statement.

Clergy leadership who inspired those around them and communicated effectively what their churches were about was essential to the effective ministry of evangelism at the two
Trinity’s. From the encouragement to invite a friend, to creating a worship atmosphere which was relevant and engaging, to clearly and repeatedly communicating the mission statement of the church, in growing churches the clergy leadership was committed to growth and that that this message was communicated and came back from all sections of the laity. As one interviewee commented, reflecting on Percy’s leadership skills:

Well, Harold’s paradigm, his vision of discipleship, of helping people come in and, first of all, be welcomed in, you know, in the sense of having no barriers, there is no criteria to come in and become a part of this big journey if you’re at this church.

There was similar appreciation of the leadership in Aurora, as one respondent so succinctly reflected,

We’re very active, both my wife and family. Key to retaining, always has to go back to the clergy leadership. . . . In my tenure as warden I worked with Philip, his temporary incumbent, Terry Finlay and Dawn Davis. So you know, very, very strong individuals. So I’ve been spoiled.

This is a sentiment that is expressed throughout the interviews, a strong appreciation for the clergy leadership and a reflection of what that leadership was about. There was not, however, a lot of development of what clergy leadership should look like. This was most likely because the interviewees were identified by the rectors and there was clearly a good relationship between the interviewee and the rector which was very apparent in the interview process. What was clear was what the rectors of the Trinities believed about leadership and that other interviewees concurred, though in a less reflective manner.

Marketing

Finally, the role of marketing should be explored in this action-in-ministry, as it is central to the research problem. Marketing is actually one of the few areas where the Trinities had divergent experiences. At Trinity, Steetsville the conversation went like this:
Percy: But marketing, you know, in early days, um, when I was young and had lots of energy, we used to do some whacky things, some of those church ads. We bought them from a place in the States, up in Michigan or Minnesota, we used to put them in the local, one of our parishioners owned the Streetsville Booster, which was a local newspaper and he would give us half a page once a month and we would put one of these crazy ads in. Six guys carrying…

Lazerte: I’ve seen that, that’s good.

Percy: Where it takes six strong men to bring you back to church, or something and underneath – At Trinity Church in Streetsville we’ll take you however you come but we’d like to meet you while you’re breathing. Or at Christmas – now that your kids can name Santa’s reindeer, wouldn’t it be nice if they could name Jesus’ disciples.

Lazerte: That’s good.

Percy: Just crazy ads like that. We did those for a couple of years. In my first couple of years there, we would often walk in the neighbourhood putting flyers in people’s doors, just inviting them to come to church with some kind of a catchy little thing. And, other than that, it was pretty much buzz around the neighbourhood.

Lazerte: And also, you’ve got a pretty comprehensive website.

Percy: Yeah, that came later on. I don’t know anything about websites, but they work on it, and they’re still working on it. And, now, you know, many of the people – I don’t know if it’s a majority, but – when we have our newcomers evening and we get them to fill out our little thing and ask them how they heard about Trinity or whatever – it’s not surprising to see somebody put down that they checked the website.

Lazerte: I’m finding more and more of that myself.

Percy: Yeah, it’s just a change in the culture, eh?

Lazerte: Yeah. What about the sign – you’ve got a pretty fancy sign out there – did that…?

Percy: Yeah, I don’t know that anybody’s ever said that it was the sign, although that might be part of the ones who say they drove by and saw the building and it looked like it might be a happening place, or a place with some life in it.
This narrative gives an example of Percy’s feeling and the practice of marketing at Trinity, Streetsville. Coupled with the impressions of his parishioner, who provided some leadership in the area of marketing, a clearer picture of the role of marketing is understood.

When asked about the place of marketing the interviewee, who was a long time leader in his church, said,

I’m a big fan of marketing on my side of the insurance fence I sit on. So in terms of marketing, outside of the traditional types of brochures, if you will, or hardcopy stuff, I was involved there, either alone or, most often with other people, that we could put our heads together and come up with something. But if you’re thinking of marketing in the sense of sending out a flyer, if you will, to the neighbourhood, or door hangers, or things like that, no, we’ve never done that. I’m not saying that we would never do that in the future or never see it happen, but I don’t think that was our culture to do that type of marketing.

Marketing is something that might have some potential but without any real leadership behind it, it never really got off the ground.

The practice and approach in Aurora was much different. When asked about marketing Poole responded,

One of our guys worked for Hill & Knowlton and managed to manoeuvre for us a full-blown Decima research poll. And so we were able to ask a whole bunch of specific questions to our congregation related to congregational issues and we polled them, and then we got those results. That was fairly early on in my time. That set the table for our Christian education program. It clearly set the table for that. And also gave us some good ideas of how we would move forward in other programs. One of the things it taught us is that the constant proclamations from the Pope on certain issues changed the attitudes of the people that were in the pews. I was very keen on not having Sunday shopping and I was very anti-capital punishment – both of those debates were going on at that time. And our people scored differently than the people in the province or the country and we attributed that to the constant reinforcement of those things from the pulpit. So it told us how important the pulpit was. And, well we did that Decima research thing. I consulted some guys in marketing in my congregation and I sent two personal letters around in town which we hand-delivered to people throughout the community, parishioners delivered them. And they were basically – you know, I’m new to town, I’ve got two small kids who are getting engaged in the community, at Trinity here, some of the things Trinity does in aid of scouts and Christian education, and baptism and weddings and all that sort of stuff. It got huge, huge play for us and it wound up attracting folks which was
wonderful. We used our very deliberate approach in terms of advertising. We used some of the Minneapolis ad project stuff. We created opportunities to get into the newspaper, both in terms of the non-paying stuff, paid-for ads, and articles. We encouraged our people, if they were ever interviewed in the paper, to mention Trinity, if it was appropriate. We got engaged with the school system. And, in fact, when we had a couple of teenage suicides they called us immediately to come in and help with the care thing. We instituted an annual town carol sing, Christmas carol sing, which worked with the Salvation Army band and the local IGA to provide coffee, hot chocolate and cookies, which proved to be successful. As I said, we got involved with the Chamber of Commerce. We did a demographic survey of our community through and then we targeted those parts of our community that had less members, both by trying to do community, sort-of, in-house coffee invitations, meet your neighbour kind of thing. And also we tried to drop postcards of particular kinds of invitation material into certain segments of Aurora. And Aurora was growing exponentially in those days and we felt obligated to keep up with it. And so we would target definite kind of marketing, a project. One of the things we did, for instance, was when the Town Council was inaugurated every year, every couple of years, they still would use prayers to open up that and we offered to buy bibles for each of the councillors to mark their inauguration, as a gift from Trinity Aurora. They would swear on the bible, and that went over pretty well. We sponsored sports teams – we had hockey and baseball teams that we sponsored. It was called the Trinity Saints. We did whatever we could to get out into the marketplace. I would accept invitations from community groups that had nothing to do with the church to talk about either the growth of the church, or the demographics, or that sort of thing. Any opportunity I was given to be able to do that.

Compared to Percy’s response we see that Poole took the use of marketing much more deliberately. Additionally we see here that marketing can be used not just as a way of introducing people to a church but also of changing societal attitudes, which is in keeping with Bosch’s call for radical reorientation. Poole was able to use some aspects of marketing for the ministry of evangelism. He was the exception in that he not only reflected upon marketing but also put some effort into implementing his thought and doing something about it. As for the rest of the interviewees there was a realization that very limited effort had been put into this area. As one interviewee, a leader in the church, reflected:

Well, there was a neighbourhood drop of pamphlet inviting people to this back to church Sunday thing. Just when I arrived at Trinity there had, previously to my arrival, been a pamphlet I heard about but I wasn’t involved in, in a national newspaper ad. And being part of the parade with a float as a way of presenting the church to the
neighbourhood, to the community, and kind of being a little bit more humorous about who we are and why people would maybe want to come and check us out.

This was fairly indicative of how most people thought of marketing. They maybe remembered a thing or two about what had been done. Spoke positively about it but there was no real thought of doing more or of its place in the overall life of the parish.

**Summary**

The purpose of this action-in-ministry was twofold: – first, to answer the question “what brings people to a specific church?” and second, “why do people stay in a parish?” The answers given by Trinity, Streetsville and Trinity, Aurora were remarkably similar:

The Primary ways people discovered Trinity, Aurora and Trinity, Streestville was by

1. Reputation
2. Referral by friend or family member
3. Website
4. Churchshopping

The Keys to Retention were

1. Sunday Morning Experience
   a. Preaching
   b. Music
   c. Welcoming nature of the Congregation

2. Getting involved in the life and ministry of the church.

3. Spiritual Growth

4. Excellence in Clergy Leadership

St. Simon’s needs to address almost all these areas. From the perspective of attracting people to the church, St. Simon’s has not established a place in the wider community. It needs to work on its reputation within the wider community. Within this, Poole’s reflection on marketing provides
good insight as to how this can be done. The parishioners of St. Simon’s, for the most part, are not inviting friends or family members; parish leaders need to start encouraging people to do this and to give them some tools to do so. The website, while solid, needs work. For church shoppers St. Simon’s needs to reflect on the experience that people have as they come through the door. The role of marketing here is to raise its reputation and the likelihood that St. Simon’s will be tried. From the perspective of retaining people, the Sunday morning experience could use work on two levels, its welcoming nature and its music ministry. This would mean moving beyond being primarily led by a traditional choir and offering a variety of musical styles. This would bring another level of excellence to the musical ministry, very much in evidence in the two Trinity’s. So as to engage people meaningfully in ministry and it breaks up some of the rote which can creep into prayer book worship. In the Sunday morning experience, it would be important also to learn about preaching from Percy and Poole, not just in terms of excellence and the attention they paid to their craft but also how they linked the mission statements and purpose of the church into what they had to say, repeatedly reminding the congregation of the call to grow, in the case of Poole, and to make disciples, in the case of Percy. As for the other elements in retention, St. Simon’s does a poor job in walking with people in their spiritual growth. This is something that will need to be addressed in the future modelling on the L.I.F.E. cells of Streetsville.
Chapter 8: Results Part II

The action-in-ministry, through the use of case study methodology, researched not just person’s experience of church but also the churches themselves; for the purpose of the thesis the churches explored are referred to as the bounded system. The bounded system in which the ministry of evangelism was researched is suburban Anglican parishes with a history of growth as a part of their living memory. These participant churches are Trinity, Streetsville, Trinity, Aurora and St. Simon’s Oakville; the focus was on the last ten years of their history. The case study, which employed both qualitative and quantitative methodology used a variety of sources to collect data about the bounded system. In addition to the interviews, archival material and site visits were the primary resources employed by the researcher.

Similarities Amongst the Participant Churches

As members of the Anglican Communion, the churches have much in common: the main services are on Sunday morning; they follow the Anglican liturgical format; there is a gathering rite, followed by scripture and sermon, and then the service concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist. They all have a blend of modern and traditional music, (though Streetsville would be the most modern), and a variety of musical resources.

The system of governance and the corporate structure are quite similar as well. The chief pastor is known as the Rector, the various clergy assistants are either Associates or Assistant Curates, and all the churches have a relationship with their diocese and Bishop. At various times these parishes have had non-ordained professional staff, but the primary staffing is clerical. There are two levels of volunteers: the formal and governance-related volunteers, including wardens (essentially corporate officers), the treasurer, the members of Parish Council and the lay
delegates to Synod, the informal volunteers who offer their time and talents to specific ministries and activities of the church, Sunday School teachers, greeters on Sunday, people involved in Outreach in the community, etc.

In governance, the Corporation functions as the executive with a lot of input from the many leaders in the church. Decisions that are significant to the entire congregation, especially in terms of expenditures, are made at Vestry meetings where the whole congregation has the opportunity to come together and vote formally on proposals.

There are many commonalities in the actual ministry and programming. All the churches have a heavy emphasis on the ministry of social justice, and they divide it in a similar way, taking into account local, national and international needs. They all take into account the ministry of teaching and the need for adult education, from small groups to Lenten series to special evenings and series. They place a special emphasis on children and youth, putting significant resources into this area. They execute a plan of pastoral care intended to ensure that all who need pastoral care receive it. They exercise the pastoral offices – baptisms, weddings, funerals and confirmations. They have social events which bring the church community together. They have virtually identical newcomer programs by which they reach out to and integrate newer parishioners into the life of their church.

The three churches have surprisingly similar buildings and resemble each other. They are brown brick, have a bell tower, and are located in fairly prominent and visible places in their respective communities. They are welcoming, spacious, accessible, and generally well put together church plants; they have some parking. There are some differences though. St. Simon’s is smaller, seating about 250 people, and it has less program and meeting space. It is a twenty-year-old building at a new location. Streetsville is a historic church which was burnt down and
completely rebuilt, over a decade ago, incorporating a few adornments from the old building. Aurora is primarily a ten-year-old renovation which kept the old worship space as a Lady Chapel and meeting room and then rebuilt the rest of the church including the new main worship space. Despite these different histories the buildings are remarkably similar to one another.

One final commonality is the kind of community within which the churches are located. All the communities, while including some residents in economic distress, are for the most part affluent and middle to upper-middle class. I received feedback from multiple sources that all were communities which were friendly to the Anglican church. That is, there is a little higher than average proportion of Anglicans. They are communities which have a high level of education and higher income levels than much of the country, traits deemed by diocesan leaders to be conducive to Anglican adherence rates. All three churches have used diocesan commissioned demographic studies which spoke positively in terms of the potential for their future growth. All the communities had significant housing developments with new people moving into their neighbourhoods. New housing developments are planned in the future. There is one consistent flaw in the demographic studies, the predictions about the makeup of the new housing developments underestimated how multicultural the new neighbourhoods would become. There was no realization that the penetration rate for Anglicans was much lower in the new neighbourhoods compared to the old. While not empirical in nature, this was evidenced in the site visits. For example as one walks around the neighbourhoods in the participant churches, specifically the retail centers, visually these are not traditional White Anglo-Saxon Protestant communities in which the churches were founded. As these churches look to their future assumptions of growth dependent upon demographic trends can no longer be assumed as the character and historical makeup of those who live in their neighbourhoods are changing.
Differences Among the Participant Churches

The first noticeable difference is in size. St. Simon’s has an average attendance of under 200 on Sunday and a budget in the low three hundred thousand range. Aurora has an attendance of under 400 on Sunday and a budget close to seven hundred thousand. Streetsville has an attendance over the 500 mark and a budget around a million dollars.

There is a difference in terms of history with rectors. Both Trinity’s have had the benefits, and challenges, that come with long-tenured rectors in the prime of their careers. During these long tenures significant numerical growth and building expansions took place. The rectors held up a vision of growth, were clear about what they were doing and why, and had a strong theological foundation for their focus on growth. Percy, Poole and the interviewees spoke in great detail about the attention they paid to growth and that it was a priority during their tenure. While these long tenures have come to an end; in Aurora, Poole left over five years ago and in Streetsville Percy recently retired.

St. Simon’s, however, had a long-term rector, who served at St. Simon’s for over fifteen years and who left shortly after building the present building over twenty years ago. Then the next two rectors were there for about six years each. Their present rector, the writer and researcher of this thesis, has been there for almost nine years. This puts St. Simon’s at a unique crossroads; their rector has been there long enough to work at the goals identified in this thesis and to learn from the ministries of Harold Percy and Philip Poole. The key will be for him to stay and to implement them.

The final significant difference between St. Simon’s and the Trinities is in terms of its existence alongside other Anglican churches. St. Simon’s is one of eight, including one Anglican
Network Parish\textsuperscript{232}, in Oakville. That is very different from Aurora’s reality where they are the only Anglican church in town and as Bishop Poole remarked to me, “over time we became the town’s church.” As for Streetsville, while there are many Anglican churches in Mississauga, as evidenced in the site visits and the interviews, there is a very distinct community of Streetsville and it sees itself as different from the community of Mississauga. In the case of St. Simon’s, residents may belong to a certain neighbourhood but they clearly identify themselves as residents of Oakville. The demographic study, commissioned by the diocese, speaks to this. The churches draw a consistent number of their adherents from their neighbourhood but there is also a large number of parishioners who cross parish borders for the Anglican church of their choice. The important thing to note here is that though the reputations of the Trinity’s are quite extensive, they really are neighbourhood churches. As Percy remarked in his interview, about 90% of his parishioners were within a ten to fifteen minute drive and it really was a greater Streetsville church. Davis, the present rector in Aurora, told the researcher that 65% of her parishioners come from Aurora, 35% from Newmarket (which is just down the street) and only 5% fall outside this range. Both churches are made up of people from the area in which they are located. This would be similar to St. Simon’s experience, with one exception. While it does draw a few parishioners east of it in Mississauga, and a few from south Oakville, it also draws significantly from northwest Oakville, and within the bounds of the neighbouring parishes. It is still a matter of a ten minute drive and that is well within the normal driving range for people in north Oakville when they go out to dinner or do some shopping. This is a very real reminder that the locations of our buildings matter since people tend to connect to churches which are geographically accessible to them.

\textsuperscript{232} The ANIC is a group of churches that broke away from the Anglican Church of Canada in the late 2000’s, primarily over the issue of same-gender unions.
Challenges Facing the Participant Churches

All the churches involved have experienced some negative indicators when growth is looked at over the past five to seven years. These are as follows:

- declining Sunday attendance
- declining numbers in the Sunday School
- declining number of self-identified newcomers
- declining number of baptisms
- declining attendance at Christmas and Easter.

This does not mean that the number of people involved in the church has diminished. There is still small growth in terms of identifiable givers, size of the parish rolls, and in the budget.

People come to church less consistently and young families raising children come to church the least. The following graphs of the involved churches illustrate this point. It needs to be noted that this data, while comparing some aspects of one church to another, are best read by looking at each church in isolation and then comparing the overall trends from one church to the other.
Figure 3.0 Statistical Trends for Trinity, Aurora
Data Compilation from Annual Vestry Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Sunday Attendance</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Attendance</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Attendance</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>1508</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2090</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2096</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>1561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcomer Visits (Households)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Increase reported</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School Attendance</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Growth Reported</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Decrease Reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.1 Statistical Trends for Trinity, Aurora
Data Compilation from Annual Vestry Reports
Figure 4.0 Statistical Trends for Trinity, Streetsville
Data Compilation from Annual Vestry Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Sunday Attendance</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Attendance</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>1048</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Attendance</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>1309</td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcomer Cards Filled Out</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Decrease Reported</td>
<td>Decrease Reported</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Decrease Reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Adult Members</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sunday School Attendance  | 90   | 90   | 80   | 90   | n/a  | 100  | 80   | 80   | 75   | 60   | (Average Weekly)
Figure 4.1 Statistical Trends for Trinity, Streetsville
Data Compilation from Annual Vestry Reports
Figure 5.0 Statistical Trends for St. Simons, Oakville  
Data Compilation from Annual Vestry Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Sunday Attendance</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Attendance</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Attendance</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.1 Statistical Trends for St. Simons, Oakville
Data Compilation from Annual Vestry Reports

![Bar chart showing statistical trends for St. Simons, Oakville. The chart includes data for Average Sunday Attendance, Baptisms, Easter Attendance, and Christmas Attendance from the years 2000 to 2009.](image)

Legend:
- Blue: 2000
- Red: 2001
- Green: 2002
- Purple: 2003
- Turquoise: 2004
- Orange: 2005
- Light Blue: 2006
- Pink: 2007
- Light Green: 2008
- Lilac: 2009

The chart illustrates the trends in various church activities over the years, with each category showing fluctuations and changes from 2000 to 2009.
Shared Areas of Decline

Some people identify themselves as Anglicans but the church plays only a small part in their lives. These Anglicans tend to show up during festivals and for the pastoral offices. As noted in the demographic statistics of this paper, the percentage of census Anglicans significantly declined between 1991 and 2001. Cultural observances of Christmas and baptism have declined. If the percentage of practicing Anglicans continues to decline we will continue to see a decline in these cultural observances. This declining percentage may also speak to why the number of self-identified newcomers has declined. Self-identified newcomers are those people who fill out visitor cards, and attend the newcomer program as a result. As the number of Anglicans in the population declines, the number of Anglicans who just come through our doors of a church because it exists goes down correspondingly. Over half of those interviewed had ties to the Anglican church. This means that a significant portion of our growth comes from non-practising Anglicans, so if the numbers of Anglicans continue to decline in our society it will affect the number of adherents that Anglicanism has. Therefore unless the Anglican church deliberately reaches out beyond the pool of Anglicans, to every person and community, as Bosch encourages us to, overall decline is inevitable. While the cultural context of being Anglican directs some of the ministry of evangelism, there is a need to move beyond this context so that our actions and our ministry of evangelism speak to the culture around us as a whole. Our points of connection must be broad and effective.

The other significant decline in all the participant churches is in Sunday School attendance. Generally, there are fewer young families coming through. Children attend church the least among those who identify with a denomination. There is also the change in societal
norms around Sunday morning which means that there are no longer any reservations, from a societal perspective, about scheduling children’s activities on Sunday morning. Furthermore, there is a generational shift in the parents of young children in the church today. The parents of children today are no longer Baby Boomers but members of Generation X. When Bibby’s work on patterns of youth attendance is examined, this should hardly be a surprise. His book Restless Gods is based on the premise that while there has been a decline in religious adherence there are some signs of hope. The initial concern that he had identified in 1985 was that 23% of 15 to 19 year olds attended church weekly and that in 1992 this figure fell to 18%. By 2000 this figure rose to 22%. Given these figures, is it surprising that, if the group which is presently in the midst of raising children did not come to church as they were growing up, that they do not bring their children today? This would suggest that in the years ahead this trend of decreasing Sunday School attendance will continue. Further, this challenges some of the common wisdom of Anglicanism. There is a belief that while younger adults may not be coming to church now they will come back when they have children. However, if these young adults did not come as teens it is doubtful to think that they will come when they are parenting. This trend is seen, in this study, in the fact that infant baptisms are significantly down, in the last ten years, in all of the churches examined.

The Local Church

When the research in the context of the bounded system is reviewed, there are some significant findings for theology, church and society and for those engaged in similar practices of ministry. The findings are divided into two areas. The first is related to the localized community,

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233 Bibby, 25 quoting Bibby 2001b, 75.
234 Bibby, 87.
that is, the individual Anglican churches. The second is within the context of the Anglican Church of Canada as a whole and how this relates to what is happening at the parish level.

As I begin to draw conclusions from my research it must be remembered that I explored evangelism in one specific bounded system and, while learning can be gained from my experience, it is important not to universalize this research and apply it to parishes at large. That said, I think some factors are key to recovering the ministry of evangelism in the life of the parish. When one looks at the local parish the main conclusion is that the ministry of evangelism does not happen by accident; it happens only with a deliberate focus to recover this ministry. This requires strong clergy leadership that inspires the lay leadership of a parish to share this vision. It must be remembered that the ministry of evangelism is just one aspect of mission and that the overall mission of a parish must be attended to as well. If one looks at Bosch’s definition of mission and realizes that evangelism is a subset of mission, the church cannot have mission without evangelism and vice-versa; they feed one another. While reflecting on Bosch’s definition of evangelism it must be noted in the research, especially the interviews the process of evangelism was often portrayed in a gentle manner. Compare this to Bosch who calls for a radical reorientation of people’s lives which leads to deliverance, as a result of evangelism. A moment needs to be taken here to explore this a little further. There are many different understandings of evangelism, in addition to that of Bosch. Bowen speaks of process evangelism “that recognizes that evangelism takes time.” He writes “coming to faith is a gradual process, and Christ-like evangelism will respect that.”235 A way to reconcile this radical reorientation and gentle experience is to allow the radical reorientation Bosch speaks of to take place over a period of time.

235Bowen, 83.
As mentioned, clergy leadership as well as convinced lay leadership is essential. Breaking down prejudices and misunderstandings about what evangelism means is an absolute key, so that the parish knows what this ministry is all about. A clear understanding of the mission and the ministry of the parish is also essential. Our best ambassadors and evangelists are those who are engaged in our church. We need to help them by providing them with a language to communicate their experiences to those outside our church walls. Mission statements and stories are very effective ways to do this. We need to see evangelism as a ministry, as something that is here to stay, and not as a church-growth program.

The National Church

In the Anglican Church of Canada it is a fair assessment that there is great fear about our survival. How we exist as a church and relate to society around us has changed. The first decade of this century was hard on Anglicanism as will be seen in the report of the 2011 census. The church will need to reflect seriously on this. For much of this past decade the message we have heard as a church has been about the legacy of residential schools and the conflict over same-gender long-term relationships. In my many conversations with people in the participating churches, only once did I hear about these subjects. This would suggest that the message which is often heard from the national church is not resonating with what is happening in the parishes themselves. In our diocesan synods, our general synods and in our publications there has been a focus on same-gender relationships and residential schools. Those I interviewed told me a lot about things like worship, outreach, social justice and growing in their faith, but they did not tell me about what seems to have been a preoccupation at the national level during this past decade. This is not to suggest that the conversation over same-gender relationships and justice for
Aboriginal communities is not important but rather that they are conversations that seem not to have resonated in the churches I examined.

I think it is essential here to realize that evangelism happens at the local level of the congregation and while dioceses and the national church can encourage the ministry of evangelism it is not something that can be dictated from the top down. In my interviews no layperson mentioned anything other than their local priests in terms of the ministry of evangelism. Also Percy and Poole, in their reflection on their ministry and the role of evangelism, gave no indication that there was any great direction from the diocese. It was entirely absent in Percy’s reflection and in Poole’s reflection he mentioned that his bishop told him there was potential in Aurora and that he should add another service. That said, what both Percy and Poole did came from their own understanding of ministry and it is to their credit that they were able to lead their congregations into the ministry of evangelism. All evidence indicates that evangelism is done by local leadership and local congregants. Nevertheless, there is a lot the wider church can do to make the ministry of evangelism essential and relevant to the church as a whole, not from the perspective of fear about our survival but rather by communicating to us all that evangelism is a gospel imperative. This leads to two realizations. The first is that systemically we need to have the ability for parishes to grow. This means in part having the right building and the right leadership in the right place. As a historic church, we have buildings which are not functional; they are in locations which are not conducive to creating points of connection with the surrounding community and sometimes they are too close together. This means that some buildings will need to be closed as the diocese creates the landscape in which evangelism happens. While there are a certain number of Anglicans who will connect with the local parish, that number is finite and if there are too many buildings within
close proximity it hampers the critical mass needed to begin the ministry of evangelism. The second realization is that we need to look at some of our diocesan structures in terms of location. This became very clear in one of Poole’s AGM reports where he noted that there were more Anglicans worshipping at Trinity than in some dioceses in Canada. Further if half the Anglicans in Canada are in Ontario and it contains only five of the thirty dioceses in the country there is some indication that things are administratively out of line. This matters because administration takes money and time; if the money and time is put into institutional maintenance then it is not put into other ministries such as evangelism.

Summary of Findings

1. All churches have had negative indicators in the past five to seven years in terms of growth.
2. There is reason to be concerned about the level of participation among children and their parents.
3. Strong clergy and lay leadership are essential to the ministry of evangelism flourishing within a church.
4. Mission statements are an excellent tool for speaking about the ministry of evangelism.
5. Evangelism happens at the local level.
6. The emphasis on residential schools and gay marriage by the wider national body of the Anglican Church of Canada is hindering the ministry of local evangelism.

There are three readily apparent implications for St. Simon’s. First, the parish needs to rethink and restructure our ministry with children and their parents. Second, it needs to develop some leadership in the area of evangelism. Third, it needs a mission statement which speaks to the ministry of evangelism.
Chapter 9: The Evangelism Plan

The Project

There were two aspects to this research project: the development of an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s; and the incorporation of marketing in this plan with an appropriate basis, theologically and culturally. **Starting with the last we shall move to the first.**

Cultural Basis

God has made the world around us and that the ministry of evangelism calls us to connect to this world. While the historic way of doing this, as shown, leaves much to be desired, the aim is for the current evangelism plan to be culturally appropriate. This means that the perspective of postmodernism, from a philosophical perspective, and the emerging ecumenical paradigm, from a theological perspective, need to be incorporated. Whatever we do needs to be done in the spirit of Lonergan’s mutual self mediation, and we need to stay away from a totalizing metanarrative. This is especially important as we make the transition from the modern Enlightenment paradigm to the emerging ecumenical paradigm. There can be a tendency to fall back into old patterns, to fall back on old habits and speak to rather than with the culture around us, to do evangelism in a way which is dismissive of this world. In order to be culturally appropriate we will need to look at every aspect of what we do in the ministry of evangelism and see that it fits within the present world view.

Theological Basis

Bosch’s definition of evangelism forms the parameters of this study. There are three keys to his definition. The first is that evangelism is a subset of mission, and therefore, the plan must recognize the specific ministry of evangelism and not simply state that all things the church
does are evangelism. This closely ties in with the understanding noted early on that there are intentional and dimensional aspects of evangelism. The intentional dimension of evangelism is those activities that are specifically done for the purpose of evangelism, while the dimensional aspect are those things that are a part of the church’s mission and may have evangelistic impact but are not intentionally about the ministry of evangelism. Therefore, the plan must recognize both the intentional and dimensional sides of evangelism. Second, it was noted that effective evangelism must be a ministry which is offered and is not coercive or exploitive. What we offer must be received as a gift and not as a threat for example to either one’s personal sense of fulfillment or one’s eternal destiny. The third is that the evangelism plan must recognize that the church is distinct from the world and that distinction must be recognized and not hidden for later discovery.

A basic premise of this thesis is that the ministry of evangelism needs to make a shift from an Enlightenment paradigm to an emerging ecumenical paradigm. The assumptions of the paradigms of the past must be abandoned, and the assumptions of the emerging paradigm of the present must be addressed. This means that the evangelism plan that we will construct must respect a diversity of opinion and thought. It must work in partnership with and respect to the surrounding culture. It must be open to this new environment where Christianity no longer holds place of privilege, to new ways and experiences of connecting and sharing our story with the wider world, and come up with new tools to make these connections so that the ministry of evangelism sheds some of the practices that are no longer applicable to today’s context. This happens within the tension of the emerging ecumenical paradigm. The churches have coalesced around evangelical, WCC member churches, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and, as noted earlier, WCC member churches see mission primarily as social justice initiatives and not
evangelistic efforts. In order to bring evangelism alive in this new paradigm, it is important that stories of evangelism within the member churches of the WCC be discovered and shared so that evangelism is not seen as something done only by the evangelical branch of the church.

As was explained in the exploration of the history of the Anglican Church, much of what we learned about the practice of evangelism is a product of the modern Enlightenment. There is a tremendous contribution that can form our ministry of evangelism in the emerging ecumenical paradigm as a result of the Anglican theological approach commonly known as *via media*, not dogmatic but rather recognizing that within certain parameters a relationship and a knowledge of God, whom we know in Jesus the Christ, can be found. This is significant because the postmodern world rejects dogma, seeing in it an example of a totalizing metanarrative. This means that in our ministry of evangelism, and in our evangelism plan, we need to keep three things at the forefront: an understanding of *via media* which allows different Christian voices and understandings to be heard as we go about this ministry, relationships with those outside of the church that are paramount, and viewing those outside of the church as part of God’s creation. Lonergan’s concept of mutual self-mediation is helpful in this regard. What we implement must not be a one-sided conversation, but rather a two-way dialogue where the one engaged in the ministry of evangelism and the “other” respect each other’s world view while at the same time engaging in a meaningful exchange of substance. Language is incredibly important in the ministry of evangelism. We need to be conscious of the use of our language and recognize when our language becomes triumphalistic, or esoteric or impenetrable to outsiders. We need to be careful to not speak truth, as we know it, in a way which demeans and dismisses the other’s world view. This is a unique challenge because the gospel does have truth claims and calls
people clearly to a way of life. These truth claims can be shared in such a way that they respect differences of opinion and in return I hope to receive the same sort of understanding.

Turning to the biblical foundation, there are three key aspects: we are called, as the church, to the ministry of evangelism and that we need to be deliberate about it; the ministry of evangelism must be reintegrated into the life of churches; Jesus calls us to be clear about what our message is. Our message is the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by the life and teachings of Jesus. While recognizing that we exist within the emerging ecumenical paradigm and need to respect others, we still need to be very clear about our message. Within Lonergan’s concept of mutual self-mediation this could result in a very interesting dynamic, such as learning deeper truths about what the kingdom of God is from the other. This is to say that being clear of one’s own biblical foundation does not preclude growth and expanded understanding of our faith.

**Marketing Basics**

The marketing audit consists of three components that are action focused: the marketing objectives/goals, the competitive advantages and disadvantages. Ultimately the evangelism plan will need to incorporate these three aspects. It must be first noted that I am in no way a professional marketer, but I will attempt to proceed in such a way that the marketing is theologically based and culturally appropriate. In the study of the two Trinities, I learned that they both had attempted marketing that were successful. From the perspective of evangelism they created connection points with the community around them. I want to recognize, however, that there are inherent limitations to putting together a marketing plan for St. Simon’s.

The distinction between the attraction and the retention of new parishioners and the evangelism plan must keep these findings in mind. Further, the challenges of the trends which face the church today must be a recognized part of the backdrop in which the church exists and
practices the ministry of evangelism. Many of the trends go beyond anything that is in control of a single local church, e.g., negative growth trends, decreasing level of participation amongst children and the negative impact of the national church body provides not only perspective but some direction in which energy and focus needs to be given. What came from the national church did not resonate in the lives of the average Anglican parishioner. Strong clergy leadership and vision statements, however, have significant impact upon mission and evangelism. It makes sense putting effort and energy in these, rather than being a champion for the message from “head office”.

**Conclusions**

1. Evangelism is a subset of Mission.
2. It is important to note what is intentional and what is dimensional evangelism.
3. The approach to the ministry of evangelism needs to shift from the modern Enlightenment paradigm to the emerging ecumenical paradigm.
4. The Anglican approach of *via media*, Lonergan’s concept of mutual self-mediation and a careful use of language is foundational.
5. Significant attention and understanding needs to be paid to how the church relates to culture.
6. Marketing is a useful tool in the ministry of evangelism.

There is particular statistical information:

1. There is declining Sunday attendance.
2. There is declining numbers in the Sunday School.
3. There are a declining number of self-identified newcomers.
4. There are a declining number of baptisms.

5. There is declining attendance at Christmas and Easter.

Key elements to newcomer ministry and discovery:

1. Reputation
2. Referral by friend or family member
3. Website
4. Churchshopping

Keys to Retention

1. Sunday Morning Experience
   a. Preaching
   b. Music
   c. Welcoming nature of the Congregation
2. Getting involved in the life and ministry of the church.
3. Spiritual Growth
4. Excellence in Clergy Leadership

This then led to the overall conclusions:

1. All churches have negative indicators in the past five to seven years in terms of growth.
2. There is reason to be concerned about the level of participation among children and their parents.
3. Strong clergy and lay leadership are essential to the ministry of evangelism flourishing within a church.
4. Mission statements are an excellent tool to speak about the ministry of evangelism.
5. The wider national body of the Anglican Church of Canada is hindering the ministry of evangelism.

6. Evangelism happens at the local level.

   The findings summarized above are the basis for the following “Evangelism Plan” which is intended to answer the research problem. Broadly speaking, what this plan does is to keep the theoretical learning in mind while directly addressing the findings from the research by noting the need for the ministry of evangelism and creating a plan which focuses both on attracting and retaining newcomers.

The Evangelism Plan

Step 1: Conduct an Evangelism Audit

   Keeping in mind Bosch’s understanding of the two aspects of evangelism, an audit will be conducted to determine which aspects of St. Simon’s ministry have evangelistic elements in either an intentional or dimensional way. Those that have a dimensional aspect of evangelism will be assessed to see if what is being done is theologically based and culturally appropriate. Those that are determined to be intentional will be reviewed to see if they could be done in a manner which more closely reflects the research statement. An example of dimensional evangelism is the coffee hour after worship. We will look at those elements of our church life which have an evangelistic impact and determine if there needs to be improvement or change. An example of intentional evangelism, at this stage, is the church sign. The rotating sign slogans could be church-oriented and triumphalistic or those sayings and slogans could recognize and respect the challenges that all of God’s creation faces. Additionally, sermon series focused on newcomers, courses like Christianity 101 and other initiatives of this nature will start to bring the
ministry of evangelism to life at St. Simon’s. Key to this audit is the evangelism plan will be the results of the marketing audit which was presented earlier in the thesis. 236 A look at the four P’s, product, price, promotion and place and how each of those speak to the relevance of the church within the wider community will need to be examined thoroughly. For example, by looking at product an examination of welcoming, preaching and music would be example. By promotion an examination of the reputation of the church within the wider community would be foundational.

**Step 2: Examine and Adjust the Sunday Morning Worship Experience**

Foundational to this step is to recognize that a significant finding was that key to retention of newcomers is their Sunday morning experience. The three factors that continually arose were preaching, music and the welcoming nature of the congregation. Each of these factors needs to be examined independently to ascertain their effectiveness. This can be done via casual conversation, formal surveys and other methodologies which will gauge the effectiveness of these areas, especially the music and the preaching. As far as the welcoming nature of the community is concerned, this is something that needs to become a part of the fabric of St. Simon’s. This can be done formally via workshops and formal training for ministries such as greeters and hosts and can be done informally through casual conversation, references in preaching and lived examples of the leadership (both lay and clergy) at the church. Fundamental to the success of this step is to be honest with who we are as a church and to in an effective and systematic way address the changes which need to be made in a way that they grow out of the

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236 The marketing audit begins on p. 99.
life of the parish, versus being imposed by a leadership group removed from the average parishioner.

**Step 3: Embrace the Ministry of Evangelism at the Parish Level**

This will involve preaching, teaching and constant communication, especially at the implementation stage. In a practical and pragmatic way, I will be involved in such activities as leading a rector’s study on evangelism. I will focus on evangelism and mission in my preaching for at least a six-month period. Additionally, using tried and true resources, like John Bowen’s book *Evangelism for “Normal” People* and beginning a parish study and discussion on it will begin to give people an experience and some language around the ministry of evangelism. There are also some practical tools which will need to be put into place. First, we need a clear mission statement which is produced sensitively and effectively and then shared widely, a mission statement which guides our ministry, and our use of resources so that it shapes how we act as a church. Ultimately, this mission statement will need to be a part of our identity and be a part of how we talk to one another. It needs to be a constant part of our communication. Fundamental to this step will be naming and addressing the learning and practices that Anglicans developed in the Enlightenment paradigm and how they are no longer applicable and then developing an understanding of evangelism that is appropriate for St. Simon’s and is appropriate culturally. An outcome of this step will be to build an evangelism team made up of people who feel called to this particular ministry to guide the wider parish in the ministry in such way that recognizes our research problem. That is they will lead the parish in the ministry of evangelism in a manner which is culturally appropriate and theologically grounded and uses the tools of our society, such as marketing.
Step 4: Raise Visibility in the Community

In terms of visibility in the community the marketing piece for the evangelism plan will create a process by which St. Simon’s name and activities become known and even commonplace in Oakville. This will be done by writing articles in the local paper, being present at all community events, engaging with the civic and cultural institutions from Sheridan Community College to Syl Apps Juvenile Detention Centre, to the nursing homes, to the various volunteer organizations. In order to do this effectively we will need to identify in more detail the appropriate communications medians, community events and the institutions where our presence would be well received and positively reported. Again, in order to do this effectively the marketing audit will need to be referred to.

Step 5: Redevelop Ministry to and with Young Families

As the research has shown, the biggest area of decline is among Sunday School aged children, and this is something that is true for Anglicans throughout Canada. A fresh approach to this ministry is needed. At St. Simon’s I will develop this ministry in such a way that old assumptions are not taken for granted and that we reach out to this group in more effective ways. We need to ask “Is Sunday morning where we meet young families?” While we have forty plus children registered in Sunday school a typical attendance is around ten. It would also be helpful if the national church recognized that we are effectively in crisis when it comes to this demographic and would steer some energy and resources in this area nationally and make it a priority for all of our churches. Over the last number of years we have tried to reach out to this group by building community and by providing program. Both of these efforts have failed and our ministry with this group remains anaemic. The only widespread response we get is to our
periodic children’s Eucharist. These are instructed Eucharist where one of our priests goes down with the children and takes them through a guided communion service. We will use this as a starting point to begin to build up this group.

**Step 6: Be More Deliberate about Spiritual Formation**

Building on what I learned from Trinity, Streetsville’s L.I.F.E. groups we will start to create small cell groups that meet in people’s homes for prayer and spiritual reflection. Here we can again learn from Streetsville in order to steer people into these L.I.F.E groups. They first held newcomer workshops. Then people were steered into Christianity 101 followed by Christianity 202. So we need to develop a process by which we can steer and direct people toward the cell groups which will be the backbone of spiritual formation. What will be important here is to make sure that these groups are not simply social groups but rather take Bosch’s challenge to reorient our lives seriously and to be deliberate about it.

Through the implementation of this evangelism plan we will have a plan which is culturally appropriate, theologically grounded and which incorporates marketing in such a way that Bosch’s definition stands firm and fast. By word and action, in our context of St. Simon’s Oakville, we will reach out to all whom we meet and offer the radical reorientation that Christ calls us to.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the problem which is central to this thesis is that Anglicans in Canada have lost the ministry of evangelism. Central to this study are the writings of David Bosch. He has provided a definition of evangelism which calls us to reach out to every person and community so that their lives can be reoriented in Jesus Christ. He has also provided the distinction between
intentional and dimensional evangelism. Further, key to the intentional dimension of evangelism is creating points of connection with the culture beyond the church. This then led to the conclusion that there are two keys to the ministry of evangelism. The first is that people be invited into the Christian community and the second is that we share our stories as a way to lead to this radical reorientation that Jesus calls us to.

Having set the background, I turned to the theoretical underpinnings of the study. I developed the case that we, as a church, have moved from the modern Enlightenment paradigm to the emerging ecumenical paradigm. This then established how I looked at the historical, theological, biblical and cultural contexts of evangelism.

Next I used this foundation to state the research problem: Through this study I want to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that incorporates marketing that is theologically based and culturally appropriate.

Then I presented shared the action-in-ministry which created a bounded system and through a mixed method research project explored Trinity, Aurora, Trinity, Streetsville and St. Simon’s Oakville.

Finally I have created an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s Oakville which is theologically sound, culturally appropriate and methodologically accessible for Anglicans.
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Evangelism in the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm
A DMin Thesis Proposal
Submitted to the DMin Program Committee
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I Background and Context

The context in which this action-in-ministry and thesis will take place is St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville. St. Simon’s is a church of 350 families, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2005. It is located on Trafalgar Road in northeast Oakville in a highly visible location across from Sheridan College’s Oakville Campus. It exists within a relatively new building (1987), and has previously been located in three other areas. Northeast Oakville was mostly farmland just over twenty-five years ago but since then has seen much growth, which continues today. St. Simon’s membership is varied culturally and socio-economically though Oakville itself is usually perceived to be Caucasian and middle to upper-middle class. On Sundays there are two services. The first is an 8:15 a.m. service which generally attracts forty-five to fifty-five people, and the second service is a 10 a.m. service which generally attracts 125 to 175 people.

A multitude of ministries exist at St. Simon’s, and they are organized into six clusters: worship, property and finance, Christian education, community, outreach, and communication. While each cluster is run and staffed by volunteers who are members of St. Simon’s, they all have clergy representation as well as secretarial support through our parish administrator.

My role is rector of this parish. The rector is the senior pastor and has supervision over the other staff members as well as a leadership role among the laity. St. Simon’s leadership structure is dictated by the diocesan canons. It consists of a corporation, which is a management
committee, and the parish council, which is an advisory body made up of cluster heads, the parish treasurer, the corporation and four lay delegates to synod. We are a multi-staffed church. In addition to the rector, there is an assistant curate, a parish administrator, a music coordinator as well as an additional musician for the 8:15 service, two honorary assistants. I am an equal member of the corporation and the parish council, and the staff is responsible to me.

My research interest is in the area of evangelism. For my purposes, I loosely define evangelism as that ministry of the church which deliberately invites people to discover more about God, who is known in Jesus the Christ, by taking part in a faith community. The formal definition of evangelism that I have been working with comes from David Bosch, who has been seminal to my work. His definition is as follows:

Evangelism is that dimension and activity of the church’s mission which, by word and deed and in the light of particular conditions and a particular context, offers every person and community, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives, a reorientation which involves such things as deliverance from slavery to the world and its powers; embracing Christ as Saviour and Lord; becoming living members of his community, the church; being enlisted into his service of reconciliation, peace and justice on earth; and being committed to God’s purpose of placing all things under the rule of Christ.²³⁷

My interest in this area grew through a combination of my background, my experience at St. Simon’s, and the struggle that I have seen the Anglican Church of Canada engage in as it begins

²³⁷ Bosch, 420.
to speak about the ministry of evangelism. I think it is important to note one distinction at this point. Evangelism, while not totally removed from church growth, is distinct from church growth. As is implicit in Bosch’s explanation, evangelism is that process by which the church deliberately invites people to faith in Jesus Christ, and it cannot simply be measured by a church’s statistics. The challenge this poses for my study is that this is not always the language that Anglicans use; I will, therefore, need to construct my research in a way which explores these ideas in a language familiar to the participants. Furthermore, for this study, growth which is demographic in nature will need to be distinguished from growth which is a result of the ministry of evangelism.

I have been ordained for over fourteen years, and as I developed in my role as an Anglican priest, I began to realize that evangelism was an important component of my understanding of faith. I think I can attribute this to being raised Pentecostal, a Christian tradition in which evangelism is very much at the forefront of mission and ministry. While I now recognize that evangelism is a complicated subject and that the realities around evangelism are not as simple as I first thought, I still believe that there is a significant place where the ministry of evangelism can be practised within the Anglican Church of Canada. I was presented, in my Pentecostal tradition, with the view that evangelism is a good thing because the message of Jesus Christ positively changes lives, and that if you have a good thing you need to share it. This focus and the attention on evangelism which my background gave me is something I have never forgotten. My experience in the Anglican Church, as far as evangelism is concerned, has been quite different. In my experience, evangelism is a concept and a practice that Anglicans seem to struggle with. In fact, I have heard Anglicans talk about evangelism as a question of survival and a way of reversing the trend of declining church attendance rather than as something that is
grounded in a sense of ministry or theology. What I would like to bring to the Anglican Church is the understanding that evangelism can be done in a sensitive way which is not based in the desperation for survival but rather is key to the mission of the church. I think that with my background, which allows me to see the importance of evangelism as a genuine ministry of the church, I can help the Anglican Church to have a conversation about evangelism in such a way that it can be seen as a true, genuine and grounded part of our mission.

Being at St. Simon’s further ignites a passion in me for evangelism. I inherited a relatively new church, in Anglican terms, which has in its living memory the experience of being a growing community. I also inherited a church that communicated to me that it wanted to continue this growth cycle and that expanding its ministry base was important. Despite the fact that St. Simon’s has been a growing church for fifty years, we have challenges. In 2001 we received a demographic study commissioned by our diocese, Niagara, which told us two very important things. First, the study claimed that 60,000 additional people would be moving into our neighbourhood over the next twenty years. Second, we were informed that, demographically, we were significantly underrepresented in the fifteen to forty-four-year age range.238 For St. Simon’s the significance is that, while we have experienced some organic growth, which is a by-product of the significant residential development in our parish, we have not experienced any growth as a product of a deliberate evangelistic effort on our part. These two factors really present us with two possible approaches to our future, in terms of expanding our ministry base. The first is a business as usual approach, which should produce the same results as before: measured predictable growth consistent with demographic projections. The second is a new approach: deliberate evangelism that could result in a more rapid expansion of our ministry base.

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Another factor in my time at St. Simon’s that has pushed me in the direction of evangelism is my experience of the North-East Oakville Ministerial Association, which is a multi-denominational group of clergy who meet every second month in an atmosphere of camaraderie and support. I have found that my experience of this group has challenged me in two ways. The first is to take me out of the culture of Anglicanism in which I spend so much of my time. At these ministerial meetings, I hear about different ways of doing ministry from other professionals in the field. I hear about different approaches and even different problems that are dealt with, and I have found it interesting and informative to compare what I deal with to what my colleagues deal with. This group has also challenged me in the area of evangelism. What I hear from this group is recognition of the rapid growth that is happening in our neighbourhood, in terms of residential development. I also hear from them that those who make it their business to study such things have deemed our area one with the most potential in terms of church growth. While I have not verified whether this is actually true, what I do know is that there is significant church planting by other traditions going on in my parish and that many churches are experiencing more than organic growth. This leads me to believe that it is possible for St. Simon’s to experience more than just organic growth and that, in fact, if we do not pursue the opportunities for evangelism that are presented to us, we will have missed a vital ministry, part of what it means to be the church.

The last motivating force, in terms of directing my interest in the area of evangelism, has been a systemic one. I belong to the Anglican Church of Canada, and the bishop, now retired, at the time of my arrival to St. Simon’s, challenged the diocese with a vision of a new three-legged stool on which to ground our ministry. That three-legged stool is stewardship, leadership and
evangelism. His direction, it seems, comes out of a greater overall conversation in the Anglican Communion about the whole ministry of evangelism. The Anglican Church, along with all other mainstream denominations, declared the 1990s to be the decade of evangelism. This came partly out of the reality of diminishing numbers but also out of a desire to redefine ourselves in an ever-changing world. While I am pleased that the Anglican Church of Canada, and specifically my diocese, is talking about evangelism and making some preliminary steps, I have not seen a wholesale acceptance of the ministry of evangelism to date. Recognizing that we as a church are beginning to think in terms of evangelism, I would like to share my experience because I believe it is relatively rare among ordained Anglicans, and I hope to contribute in a positive way. I would like to be able to weigh in with my experience and to be part of this transition which is meant to make the Anglican Church one where evangelism is a legitimate, significant and vibrant ministry of the church.

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II Statement of the Research Problem

While evangelism has been part of the ministry of the church since its beginning, there are three significant issues that have developed over the last 300 years that have impeded its efficacy. These are the actual development around the ministry of evangelism, the legacy of Constantine, and the societal shift from modernism to postmodernism.

William Abraham explores the practice of evangelism in recent times in the seminal work *The Logic of Evangelism*. He argues that, when you begin looking at the practice of evangelism over the past 300 years, a good place to begin is in the schools that train professionals for ordained ministry. For him, evangelism, for the most part, has been marginalized in the mainline traditions and relegated to the fundamentalist and evangelical seminaries. The result, according to Abraham, has been that those denominations referred to as “mainstream” have shied away from evangelism in practice and in the formation of their seminarians. This has meant that the ordained persons in the mainstream denominations have had no training in the area of evangelism and no practical experience either. Additionally, there has been little theological attention given to the subject of evangelism. One of the primary reasons for this has been that, within Christendom, church and state were so intertwined that it was assumed that evangelism in the West was really not needed. Furthermore, according to Abraham, in the last 300 years of evangelism in Protestantism, there has been a steady decline in the theological ability of many.

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242 Abraham, 8.
243 Abraham, 1.
244 Abraham, 4.
well-known evangelists. This can be clearly seen when we examine the writings and practice of evangelists over this period.

In the eighteenth century, John Wesley was highly regarded as both an evangelist and a theologian, and Jonathan Edwards, regarded as one of the greatest theologians of all time, was an active pastor who was intimately involved in the great religious awakening of his time. This began to change in the nineteenth century. Charles Finney, one of its premier evangelists, was an astute thinker but not a disciplined academic. His successors Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday had no serious theological substance at all. This has carried through to today: the world’s most well-known, respected and beloved evangelist, Billy Graham, has not been a broad thinker when it comes to theological reflection on evangelism, and he would be the first to recognize his limitations. Then there are the television evangelists, media personalities mostly from the evangelical wing of the Christian Church who, despite the trappings of learning, in no way represent any attempt to theologically reflect on the work they are engaged in and often demonstrate moral failings that have led to questioning of their sincerity. While Abraham is quite pessimistic in his view of the practice of theology when it pertains to evangelism, I think that we need to recognize that there have been some who have engaged in the theological reflection of evangelism faithfully. In my studies I have found Michael Green, John Bowen, David Bosch, Brian McLaren, and Lesslie Newbigin to be well respected, thoughtful and insightful when it comes to the practice and ministry of evangelism. That said, it is fair to say that there has been no one theologian or school of thought that has come forward as the

245 Abraham, 9.
246 Abraham, 9.
247 Abraham, 9.
248 Abraham, 9-10.
definitive voice of evangelism for the church today. The limitations and challenges are very much a part of the work of evangelism that I am engaged in. I will need to identify and address these limitations around the theology of evangelism by building a comprehensive and broad theology which fits within the parameters of the Anglican polity.

Another major impediment to the practice of evangelism in the church today is how the church has related to society. In Western society, the church that is found in the scriptures and that existed in the first three centuries was profoundly changed when Constantine made Christianity the official religion in AD 352. Prior to this, the church had existed in a place of inferiority and had suffered periodic persecution. One result was that the early church was truly separate from the state, and the meaning of history for Christians was found in the church, not the state. However, once Christianity became the official religion of the empire, the distinctions were not so absolute. Evangelism was as much a concern for the state as for the church, and the goals of the state were seen as those of the church. A good example of this was that in official documents from AD 776 the annals of the empire cited enemies as adversus christianos – that is, “against the Christians.”

The Anglican reality of the lack of separation between church and state is captured very well by Stephen Neil who has written perhaps the most formative history of Anglicanism, though not without flaws. His description of this reality for the Anglican Church is as follows:

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251 Clapp, 24.
252 Clapp, 159.
253 Clapp, 160.
Early Anglican expansion can be conveniently summarized under the not unattractive association of “Gain and the Gospel.” English interests were propagated by companies of merchant adventurers; where these went, they took their chaplains with them, and in most countries secured the right to maintain worship according to the order of their own Church, though often in the face of considerable opposition and under rigid limitations.\footnote{254 Stephen Neil, Anglicanism, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. (Exeter: Mowbray, 1993), 61.}

This resulted in the unique cultural phenomena of the Church of England spreading over much of the world and doing so in a way in which its heritage and its ethos remained much the same from country to country. Notwithstanding Neil’s enthusiasm, while this is a historical fact that speaks to the spread of Anglicanism worldwide, we must not forget about the legacy of colonialism. The Church of England was a colonial church, and as a result its expansion was done in many exploitive ways. It also operated under the assumption that if you were British you were Christian and it was the new peoples who were being encountered who needed to be evangelized. This approach culminated in the conquest of the New World, the Americas, first by the Spaniards and then other Europeans. What was practised was coercive evangelism as can be seen in how the governments regulated the conquest of the Americas in the name of the Crown and of Christ.\footnote{255 Clapp, 161.}

This viewpoint, though, started to be challenged as North America prepared to celebrate 500 years since Columbus’s landing. People did not en masse accept at face value this story of discovery and progress, and other voices were starting to be heard, most significantly those of
the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas who had an entirely different story. Furthermore, not only were other voices speaking, but other voices were being heard. Native Americans’ voices were being taken seriously.\textsuperscript{256} As the merits and legacy of colonialism came to be challenged, the ministry of evangelism which had grown up in this societal context also was challenged. In fact, there came to be a widespread acceptance that coercive evangelism was not reflective of either biblical evangelism or of the ministry of Jesus. This was important to the Anglican Church of Canada not because it was ever a state church but rather because of its deep roots in the Church of England which gave it a legacy of expansion via colonialism. The result is that today as Anglicans we live with the tension that evangelism was mandated by the state and yet, ideally, evangelism is a ministry which should be grounded in theology and scripture.

Another challenge to evangelism in the Canadian context is the belief that, since we now live in a multicultural society, we should, out of respect for our diversity, not evangelize at all for fear of offending someone. This viewpoint, in my opinion, is based on the belief that, since we no longer have a homogenous religion, we should no longer talk about any religion. This perspective fails at many levels. First, a true multicultural society is one in which there is a great mix and engagement between cultures and the many faiths and religions that are a part of them. The richness of multiculturalism is in the free-flowing exchange of ideas which contribute to the fabric of life and society. To deny one group’s dialogue with another, which is one aspect of evangelism, is to tear at the very fabric of multiculturalism itself.

On the flip side, it also needs to be recognized that according to the 2001 Canada Census, 85% of the population in Canada still claims a Christian heritage.\(^{257}\) If 85% of Canadians are Census Christians there is nothing culturally exploitive about introducing a concept that forms part of our society’s collective consciousness and that introduces people, once again, to something that they are familiar with. In my opinion, an open society is one that allows different ideas to be discussed freely and in a way that honours and respects others. The ministry of evangelism needs to be practised in a way that recognizes that Canada is a nation of peoples with many different religious realities, as well as people with no formal religious heritage, and that a formative voice within that religious landscape is Christian.

The last significant impediment to the practice of evangelism is the intellectual shift being created as we in Western society move from a modern understanding of our world to a postmodern one. While it is difficult to establish an exact beginning, the period of modernity started somewhere between 1470, the beginning of the Italian Renaissance, and 1700, the dawn of the Enlightenment.\(^{258}\) Modernity, according to John Dewey, had four foundational pillars. First, modernity no longer cared about the supernatural, focusing instead on the natural world. Second, it moved from the medieval reality of ecclesiastical authority to a belief in the power of the individual. Third, it believed in progress. Finally, modernity conceived of nature as something to be studied and subjected for social benefit.\(^{259}\) From a societal perspective, this meant that the spirit of modernity was one of progress.\(^{260}\) The four pillars of modernity led to the belief in Western culture that humanity could take things into their own hands and solve all the


\(^{258}\) Middleton and Walsh, 14.

\(^{259}\) Middleton and Walsh, 14.

\(^{260}\) Middleton and Walsh, 15.
challenges, problems and mysteries of the universe. Hence, linking back to the first problem we identified, the discovery of the Americas was about humanity progressing into unknown domains and bringing the truth of the Western European position to those who had not been so enlightened.

This world view has started to be seriously challenged. One of the early challenges came from the existentialist writers of the post–World War II period. While the term existentialist is a loose title for various philosophies and philosophers, it does speak of a group that shared some common themes; the centrality of the individual, the experience of choice, and the absence of a rational understanding of the universe. This group of writers wrote from a sense of lost hope, angst and dread, deeply questioning the meaning of life. History no longer supported the progress myth. The horrors of World War I, followed by the Great Depression and the Second World War with its twin evils of the Holocaust and the atomic bombing of Japan, led to the destruction of the belief that progress had marked Western civilization. Additionally, once these horrors were recognized, it was realized that this crisis in the belief in progress had been prefigured by the monumental pollution of the nineteenth century, the child labour associated with the English factory systems, and the 300 years of slavery upon which European and American progress had been built. Out of the cracks which began to appear in modernity and the questions raised by the existentialists, the movement now known as postmodernism started to arise. The most famous statement of the postmodernists, found in Jean-François Lyotard’s 1984 book The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, is “Simplifying in the extreme, I


262 Middleton and Walsh, 23.

263 Middleton and Walsh, 23.
define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives." This statement is based on Jacques Derrida’s critique that Western society’s philosophical foundation is rooted in oppression because, as James Olthuis states, the unity of truth (“metanarrative”) is purchased at the cost of violence. This oppression is called “totalization” because it denies all human thought that does not recognize the unity of the perceived foundations of society and either co-opts, dominates or eliminates that which is perceived as “other.” Both modernity and postmodernity have challenged the church and in their own way have impacted and shaped how we have done evangelism.

In modernity, with its belief in progress and with its history of colonialism, evangelism was about bettering the “savages” that Europeans encountered in their quest to subdue the world. There was nothing wrong with stripping a people of its culture in order to “enlighten” them concerning the truth of the gospel and the supremacy of the church. In the Canadian context this type of evangelism is illustrated by the Anglican Church’s relationship with indigenous Canadians. There are two primary examples. The first is the legacy of the residential schools; native children were taken from their homes to schools run by the church where they were forbidden to speak their own language or practice their heritage. Instead, they were taught how to live like the white colonizers. The second is in the actual worship and practice of the Anglican Church. Natives were taught to worship like Europeans and there was no place for elements of their spirituality and heritage, fundamentally because it was seen as inferior to the British way. Thankfully both these realities are being addressed, but it is fair to say that the rectification of these past practices is still a significant part of who the Anglican Church of Canada is today.

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264 Middleton and Walsh, 70.
265 Middleton and Walsh, 34.
266 Middleton and Walsh, 35.
As far as postmodernism is concerned, its practice in terms of evangelism is just starting to be known. There is the emphasis on the story and the human journey together which, despite the difficulty of defining postmodernism, seems to be a common theme. The person is important, the journey with God is important, but there is always the challenge not to express one’s journey or faith in a totalizing or violent way. Options are presented, the message of the gospel is shared, people are invited in, dialogue is engaged in and stories are told. What postmodernism will ultimately mean to evangelism is still not entirely clear but there are real attempts to do evangelism in ways which move beyond the foundations of modernity and take part in the experience of the postmodern.

A book that explores this postmodern phenomenon is Brian McLaren’s *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*. This book is indeed a tale of two new friends, one a practising evangelical preacher and the other a former Episcopalian priest from the Caribbean who is now a schoolteacher. Through a long dialogue, they explore the meaning of postmodernism. In this story, McLaren explains that the modern/postmodern divide is partly determined by the generation you are part of. He postulates that 30 to 40% of people belonging to the boomer generation have postmodern tendencies, whereas among the group born in the 1980s and after less than 40% are still heavily entrenched in the modernist world view. While this is anecdotal evidence, it illustrates the absence of clear definitions and boundaries. This ambiguity will be a challenge, as societal context changes and as the church relearns the ministry of evangelism in the twenty-first century.

These three significant problems very much echo my experience as an Anglican priest within a mainstream Christian denomination. I have found that often evangelism is marginalized

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as something that should only concern the more fundamentalist, evangelical traditions such as Baptist or Pentecostal. I experience a definite resistance on the part of many of my colleagues to even talk about evangelism. In my view, the problem with this perspective is that evangelism is something that all churches are called to. I believe that it can and should be done with sensitivity and respect for religious differences. I would even go so far as to say that it is not only compatible with mainstream Christian belief; it is a theological imperative. We do have good news to share, which can positively change people’s lives, and it is incumbent upon us to share the good life-changing news that we have. Broadly speaking, I would like to ground the practice of evangelism in a sound theology that will be a voice to the whole church and that identifies evangelism as one of our core ministries and a matter of identity and theology.

The practical result is that we, as Anglicans, have a very limited skill set in terms of doing evangelism. As we begin the twenty-first century, we need to develop ways of doing evangelism that make sense in our culture and are compatible with who we are as Anglicans. We need to have a solid biblical and theological foundation. We need to recognize the divide which has been created between the modern and postmodern outlooks. We need to learn from our past successes and failures. We need to look at tools outside the church which are effective at getting a message out, tools such as marketing which are familiar to the world in which we live and which need to be applied in the context of the whole ministry of evangelism and not in isolation.

Through this study I want to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that incorporates marketing that is theologically based and culturally appropriate.
III The Theoretical Framework and Assumptions Involved in the Study

a. Theory at Work in the Study

As I present my work on evangelism I will clearly name and identify the biblical, pastoral and theological issues that are relevant to evangelism. The four foundational pieces to my work will be a theology of evangelism, scripture, ecclesiology and marketing.

The study will begin with an examination of the theological foundation for the practice of evangelism. This will be done by identifying the different theological foundations of evangelism and then integrating them into a working theology for St. Simon’s Church. Included in this will be a theology of culture which will speak to why evangelism is important from the perspective of faith and culture.

The scriptural foundation will show how evangelism has been a biblical imperative throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and into the New Testament through a detailed examination of John Bowen’s book *Evangelism for Normal People*. Additionally, particular attention will be paid to the passage known as the Great Commission, Matthew 28:16–20, and to the experience of the early church by reflecting on the experiences of the early followers of Jesus found in the Acts of the Apostles.

Ecclesiology will follow. Ecclesiology speaks to the definition of the church and how it sees itself and how it acts. While I will recognize that not every member of the church’s ministry is involved in direct evangelism, some ministries have evangelism at their core. Ministries to which evangelism is not central will also be identified so that their importance can be recognized separately from the ministry of evangelism. This will mean that, from an ecclesiological
perspective, evangelism is seen as a core ministry of the church but that not all core ministries have an evangelical focus.

The last foundational piece, which will be applied to my theory at work, is a set of marketing tools that can be brought to the work of evangelism. The business world knows a lot about promotion and growth, and there is a whole field dedicated to helping people get to know a particular product and purchase that product. That field is marketing and it is a tool which has been sorely neglected by the church. This study seeks to establish a solid theological position on evangelism which is compatible with mainstream Anglicanism and which allows me to use marketing tools to promote St. Simon’s Anglican Church in northeast Oakville. In my view, a challenge to the churches is to use the insights and expertise from marketing to further the goals of a sensitive and theologically sound approach to evangelism. Marketing is very effective in the promotion of ideas and creation of values around ideas.²⁶⁸

The authors who will be integrated into this study include John Bowen, who will give a biblical foundation of evangelism; Reginald Bibby and Myrlene Boken, who will establish the demographic parameters and realities; Michael Ingham, Rodney Clapp, and Brad Kallenberg, who will help with the discussion around how to do evangelism within a pluralistic society; George Lindbeck and Lesslie Newbigin, who give us a post-liberal theological framework; William Abraham and Michael Green, who will give a history of evangelism from the perspective of the Christian Church; and, finally, Brian Walsh and Brian McLaren, who will frame our discussion around modernism and postmodernism.

b. Assumptions Operative in the Study

1. Evangelism is an integral part of the church’s God-given mission.

2. The way the Anglican Church of Canada speaks about and practices evangelism is in need of restructuring.

3. There is a theology of evangelism that is compatible with the history and practice of the Anglican Church.

4. Marketing tools can be used by the church in its evangelism.

5. Demographics have a role to play in evangelism.

6. Knowledge is context driven and studying the context of St. Simon’s Church in relationship to the issue of evangelism will provide new insight.

7. The separation of church and state is a desired thing.
IV Action-in-Ministry Component

In order to answer my research question on evangelism, I will be conducting an action-in-ministry, which will consist of a case study and a questionnaire. This means that I will be conducting a mixed-method study involving both qualitative and quantitative research. The case study will involve two Anglican churches and their methods of evangelism, these two churches being Trinity in Aurora and St. Thomas’s in Brooklin. The questionnaire will be administered at my ministry base, which is St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville.

A case study is a qualitative method that “is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.” 269 A “bounded system” is bounded by time and place and is the case being studied, which can be a program, an event, an activity or individuals. 270 In this case study the “bounded system” will be Anglican churches in Southern Ontario that exist within areas experiencing rapid population growth.

In the case study I will explore how these churches have gone about doing evangelism in their recent history and will establish which methods were effective in terms of reaching out to their community in response to growth potential and how this translated into the ministry of evangelism. In particular, I will be paying attention to processes that reflect methodologies and practices of marketing. I have chosen Trinity and St. Thomas’s because they fit the “bounded system” I have created. Also, I have been in contact with the Bishop of Toronto’s secretary who, through conversations with the bishop, has suggested that I examine these two churches. I chose not to conduct my case study in the Diocese of Niagara, which is my diocese of ministry.

270 Creswell, 61.
because I was unable to find churches that fit the “bounded system” I wanted to create, and I also think it is helpful to step away from my diocese of employment where I have had continual interaction with many of my fellow priests.

By way of introduction to the participant churches: Trinity Church in Aurora was pastored by Philip Poole, now Area Bishop of York-Credit Valley in the Diocese of Toronto, through a period of extensive community development where there was a significant population base added to the city. During this time, he was able to significantly grow the church and to expand its ministry base. While Aurora is no longer expanding at quite the rapid pace it once did, because Trinity’s experience of growth is so recent, I think there is significant learning to be had from that experience, in terms of both successes and failures, in the area of evangelism.

St. Thomas’s in Brooklin is at the other end of its population growth. It is just coming into a period of a population boom as the communities of Whitby and Ajax expand and grow into one another. This is a church that is very aware of its opportunities for growth and expanding its ministry base. I would like to study what is working well for them so far and what they think may work well for them in the future.

The case study will take place within the churches themselves and will follow the methodology outlined by John Creswell in his book *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Creswell refers extensively to R. Stake and R.K. Yin, two formative researchers in the area of case study. This study will include some of Yin’s method of data collection, which includes documentation, archival records, interviews, and direct observations.  

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271 Creswell, 63.
Documentation and archival records will include vestry books and reports, ad campaigns, promotional material, and any other material that has been used by the churches in their evangelism efforts. The interviews will consist of talking to a blend of leaders, including rectors, staff, wardens, and members of parish councils and of evangelism committees as well as some of the newer church members regarding their experiences of integration. The rector of the parish will identify potential participants, and their names and contact information will be given to me. Then I will send them a letter asking them to participate and to directly contact me if they are willing to do so. I will conduct the direct observations at Trinity and St. Thomas’s as I will be functioning as the lead researcher in this study. My direct observation will consist of attending two worship services at each church on a Sunday morning. The purpose of my direct study will be to contextualize and directly see an aspect of the churches I have been studying.

The quantitative study will be done at my ministry base, St. Simon’s in Oakville. A questionnaire will be mailed to all members on the parish list along with an addressed and stamped return envelope. This survey will be done in a way in which the participants will be able to maintain their anonymity. Its purpose will be to identify what were the factors in helping current members of St. Simon’s first attend and then commit to St. Simon’s.
Outline of the Action-in-Ministry

In order to gather the necessary data for the case study I will do the following:

Step 1 (November 29 – December 4, 2009) Gather the data from Trinity Church in Aurora.

a. Prior to November 29, identify interview candidates (as specified in step c) with the rector and then mail them a letter inviting them to participate in an interview by contacting me. See Appendix A.

b. Gather archival data and documentation. This will be a combination of vestry reports, parish records, newsletters, bulletins, websites, analysis of physical space and any other data which can be identified with the parish archivist.

c. Conduct interviews with ten people: the past and present rector of Trinity; four people involved in leadership at Trinity, two who were involved five to ten years ago and two who have been involved in the last five years; four newcomers to the parish, two who began to attend five to ten years ago, two have begun in the last five years. The interviews will be conducted according to Appendix B for the leaders and Appendix C for the newcomers.

d. Direct observation. This will be done by attending all Sunday worship services on a Sunday and through observations as I spend a week in the parish doing my research.

Step 2 (December 6 – December 11, 2009) Gather the data from St. Thomas’s in Brooklin.

a. Prior to December 6, identify potential interview candidates (as specified in step c) with the rector and then mail them a letter inviting them to participate in an interview by contacting me. See Appendix A.

b. Gather archival data and documentation. This will be a combination of vestry reports, parish records, newsletters, bulletins, websites, analysis of physical space and any other data which can be identified with the parish archivist.
e. Conduct interviews with ten people: the past and present rector of St. Thomas’; four people involved in leadership at St Thomas’, two who were involved five to ten years ago and two who have been involved in the last five years; four newcomers to the parish, two who began to attend five to ten years ago, two have begun in the last five years. The interviews will be conducted according to Appendix B for the leaders and Appendix C for the newcomers.

f. Direct observation. This will be done by attending all Sunday worship services on a Sunday and through observations as I spend a week in the parish doing my research.

Step 3 (January 2, 2010) Initiate Quantitative Study at St. Simon’s.

a. Mail out questionnaires with a cover letter. See Appendix D and Appendix E.

Step 4 (January 15, 2010) All data will have been collected.
V Qualitative Research Methodology Operative in the Analysis of the Action-in-Ministry.

Justification for Methodology

This mixed-method study will employ a case study and a questionnaire in order to answer my research question about evangelism. I have chosen this method because a case study allows me to create a “bounded system” that will let me look at evangelism and its application in a very specific context, and it will also allow me to apply the learning to my ministry base, St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville. Additionally, the case study is the method of qualitative research that is richest in data from the widest possible sources, employing as it does documentation, archival records, interviews, and direct observations. As the lead researcher, I think that evangelism is something that is incredibly complex and multi-faceted. The ability to gather extensive data is appealing to me because I will be able to examine evangelism in its entirety within the “bounded system.” The data for the case study will be collected in a manner that is consistent with the data-gathering methodology outlined in Creswell.

I will employ a piece of quantitative research by using a questionnaire to gather data at St. Simon’s. I chose to move in this direction for some practical reasons. St. Simon’s is a church with which I am intensely familiar. I do not need to include it in a case study on evangelism since I am intimately aware of what we do in the area of evangelism, and the point of my case study is to learn from others. Additionally, it would be difficult to conduct a case study of St. Simon’s and not fall into a conflict of interest. That said, I need some data from St. Simon’s, namely identifying what has worked in terms of connecting people with our church community. The easiest and most comprehensive way of accomplishing this is through a questionnaire where, with assured anonymity, these questions can be asked.
Data Analyses and Interpretation

The data that will be gathered by this mixed-method study will be analyzed separately. The case study will be analyzed according to the methodology explained in Creswell’s book and the questionnaire by categorizing and cataloguing the data.

According to Creswell, in order to analyze the data gathered in a case study, you begin with a detailed description. Then you continue by making categorical aggregations and direct interpretations, and by looking for patterns. Finally, naturalistic generalizations are made.\textsuperscript{272} This is how I will proceed. I will begin by giving a detailed description, as Creswell advises, by constructing a narrative of the case study.\textsuperscript{273} Next I will make categorical assertions, which is when the researcher “seeks a collection of instances from the data, hoping that issue-relevant meanings will emerge.”\textsuperscript{274} I will follow this by making some direct interpretations. This means pulling the data apart from single instances without looking for multiple instances.\textsuperscript{275} I will then look for patterns in the data I have collected. Finally, I will make some naturalistic generalizations, which means I will create from the data learning experiences where people can learn about this study.\textsuperscript{276} For me this will be learning experiences I can apply to my ministry base, St. Simon’s Church.

From the questionnaire I will divide the respondents into two categories. The first category will be longer-term members, defined as having belonged to St. Simon’s for more than five years. The second will be newer members, defined as belonging to St. Simon’s less than five

\textsuperscript{272} Creswell, 153-154.
\textsuperscript{273} Creswell, 152.
\textsuperscript{274} Creswell, 154.
\textsuperscript{275} Creswell, 154.
\textsuperscript{276} Creswell, 154.
years. In each category of respondent I will put all the answers from the questionnaire into four areas. 1. How I found out about St. Simon’s. 2. What brought me to St. Simon’s the first time. 3. What made me feel as though I belonged to St. Simon’s. 4. How the participant grew in their relationship with God. I will then construct some commonalities in these answers by grouping them into like-minded areas. Once all the data are grouped, I will cross-reference them to the naturalistic generalizations made in the case study to see if commonalities exist. This learning will then be used as the basis to construct our evangelism plan for St. Simon’s.

**Study Evaluated**

1. Did the study stayed focused and on topic?

2. Was the case study conducted in accordance with John Creswell’s method outlined in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*?

3. Did the action-in-ministry answer the research question?

4. Was there consensual and informed participation by the various participants?

5. Did the study have the appropriate contingencies for when things did not go as originally planned?
VI Ethics

This study will be conducted within the guidelines approved by The Ethics Review Board of the University of Toronto.
VII  Risks and Limitations of the Study

The limitations of my study are that I am simply looking at one “bounded system.” This is an artificial construct that came out of how I defined my church and the context in which we do ministry. While the data is extensive in a case study, there will still be a considerable amount of data that is not collected; data can be infinite and data collection needs to be finite. The risk of this study is twofold. From a methodological perspective, if there is no participant buy-in then I will have a very limited data sampling. From an application perspective, the tendency will be to take the data I have analyzed and make too broad a conclusion. I need to remember that the data I have collected and analyzed are from one very confined “bounded system” and that I should not make generalizations from my findings. I also need to recognize that within my “bounded system” the churches involved are not identical.
VIII Contribution of the Study

I think this study will help form my ministry from the perspective of evangelism at St. Simon’s. It will give me the tools that I need to deal with both the challenges and the opportunities facing me in my ministry. Additionally, it will allow me to think critically about what is happening around me and will challenge me to think in a way that is consultative and grounded in the actual practice of ministry in which I am engaged. As far as learning for the greater church is concerned, I think that, while my learning is limited to only one church’s context in the midst of many contexts, there is something in the process of what I am doing that all churches could learn from. I also think that there could be a book in this, which the Anglican Book Centre could publish, that would communicate my findings to the Anglican Church in Canada far and wide.
IX Bibliography


Statistics Canada 2001 Census: Selected Religions in Canada, Provinces and Territories-20% Sample Data, 17 March 2008

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Religion/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Code=01&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Canada&B2=1>.
Appendix A

Letter of Permission for Interview Participants for Subject Churches

TST LETTERHEAD

Dear ,

Address

My name is Darcey Lazerte and I am the rector of St. Simon’s Anglican Church in Oakville. I am presently working on my Doctor of Ministry in the area of evangelism and I am trying to answer the following question:

Through this study I want to develop an evangelism plan for St. Simon’s that incorporates marketing that is theologically based and culturally appropriate.

I am interested in your experience at ______________. Your rector is forwarding this letter on my behalf and I would like to ask for your help and participation. What I am asking for is an hour long interview where I can talk to you about your experience at__________.

If you are able to take part in my study please contact me either at 905-220-4721 or through email at rector.stsimons@bellnet.ca.

The interview will contain nothing that puts you at risk or harms you. The interview process will also not directly benefit you and no compensation will be provided. The data collected from you will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed upon the completion of my studies. Your
information will be kept confidential through the use of generic statements and pseudonyms. The information I do get from you will be published as part of my thesis. If you would like to know my research results, please notify me and I will provide them to you.

If you have any questions or concerns during the study, please feel free to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. John Bowen, at john.bowen@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3534. Also be assured that at any time, for any reason, you may withdraw from this study, and the information you have provided will not be used. Furthermore, please be aware that at any time you can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if you have questions about your rights as a participant. Also please feel free to keep a copy of this letter for your own reference.

Thank you for considering my request,

The Reverend Canon Darcey Lazerte

I (insert participant’s name) have had the study explained, have had a time for my questions to be answered and agree to participate in this study.

____________________
(signature)

A sentence explains that participants can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if they have questions about their rights as participants.
Appendix B

Interview with Leadership at Participant Churches

Interview Protocol

Project: Exploration of Evangelism at ______.

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

(Briefly describe the project)

Questions:

1. What leadership roles have you held at _________?

2. In your time in leadership were you involved in discussions about the subject of parish growth? What did you observe happening in this area?
3. In your time in leadership did you look at and/or implement anything to do with evangelism? If yes what?

4. In your time in leadership did you look at and/or implement anything to do with marketing? If yes what?

5. What do you think is essential in order for outsiders to discover __________?

6. Is being a part of ________ conducive to deepening one’s relationship with God? If so how?

7. How did you personally discover ______________? What is key to keeping you at________?

(Thank individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses.)
Appendix C

Interview with Newcomers at Participant Churches

Interview Protocol

Project: Exploration of Evangelism at ______.

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

(Briefly describe the project)

Questions:

8. How long have you attended ________?

9. How did you first hear about ________?

10. Can you tell me the steps by which you began attending ________?
11. Can you tell me about the steps by which you went from attending to belonging ________?

12. Can you tell me why you continue to belong to ________?

13. What has the leadership of ________ done to help you discover, belong to and continue at ________?

14. Can you specify some ways you have grown in your relationship with God through attending ________? How has that happened?

(Thank individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses.)
Dear St. Simon’s,

At this time I am in the midst of completing my Doctor of Ministry in the area of evangelism. I would appreciate it if you would give me some of your time by filling out the following questionnaire and mailing it back to the church.

Please understand that you are under no obligation to do this and that at any time you may cease your participation. I also want you to know that John Mackenzie is handling this portion of my research and that he is doing so in such a way that all responses will be handled in a confidential manner and I will at no time know the identity of any of the respondents.

If you choose to participate please do so by completing the questionnaire. You can do so by pressing “reply” to this email, answering the questions and then pressing “send”.

I would further ask that you complete this questionnaire by February 1st so that I can proceed with my studies in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,
The Rev. Canon Darcey Lazerte
Appendix E

Questionnaire

Biographical Data

Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

Age Range: 18-25 ( ) 26-35 ( ) 36-45 ( ) 46-55 ( ) 56-65 ( ) 66-75 ( ) 76-85 ( ) 86+ ( )

I have been attending St. Simon’s

   Less than a year ( )
   1 to 5 years ( )
   6 to 10 years ( )
   Over 10 years ( )

Faith Background

   Lifelong Anglican ( )
   Convert to Anglicanism from another denomination/faith tradition ( )
   No early faith and found Christianity as an adult ( )
   Other ( ) ________________________________

Involvement at St. Simon’s

   Attendance
- Frequent
- Infrequent
- Major festivals such as Christmas and Easter
- Never

Are you active beyond attending on Sunday - yes or no (please circle one)

If yes, please indicate in which ways.

- Contribute Financially ____.
- Involved in Sunday Worship____.
- Do you presently sit, or have you sat, on a Committee or Cluster in the past ten years____.

Question #1 – How did you first hear about St. Simon’s Anglican Church?

Question #2 – What were the steps by which you began to first attend St. Simon’s Anglican Church?

Question #3 – What were the steps that helped you to decide that St. Simon’s was your church?
Question #4 Can you specify some ways you have grown in your relationship with God during your time at St. Simon’s?

Yes/No/Some

Better knowledge of the Bible ……………
Better able to pray…………………
Better able to speak about my faith to others………………
Better able to trust God………………
More generous with my money………………
More able to ask forgiveness and to give forgiveness ……………
Fuller involvement in liturgical worship………………
Better able to see God at work in my daily life………………
Better understanding of the Christian faith………………
I believe I am a more loving person………………
Other ……………………………….
December 15, 2009

Dr. John Bowen
Toronto School of Theology
Wycliffe College
5 Hoskin Ave.
Toronto, ON M5S 1H7

Dear Dr. Bowen and Canon Lazerte:

Re: Your research protocol entitled “Evangelism in the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm”

ETHICS APPROVAL

Original Approval Date: December 15, 2009

Expiry Date: December 14, 2010

Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that a member of the Social Sciences, Humanities & Education Research Ethics Board has granted approval to the above-named research study, for a period of one year, under the REB’s delegated review process. Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your study. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry, as per federal and international policies.

All your most recently submitted documents have been approved for use in this study.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

If your research has funding attached, please contact the relevant Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project. Yours sincerely,

Daniel Gyewu
Research Ethics Coordinator

McMurrich Building, 12 Queen’s Park Cres. W, 2nd Floor Toronto, ON M5S 1S8
TEL: 416-946-3273 FAX: 416-946-5763 EMAIL: ethics.review@utoronto.ca