

THE MISSION-FOCUS OF THREE CONGREGATIONS

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ABSTRACT

As part of an assignment for the TEE course 'Doing Ministry for a Change', a study was conducted to assess the relative strengths and growth areas in three diverse congregations, in order to increase their mission-focus. Data were collected from approximately 20 leaders in each congregation using a self-administered, summated rating scale. Data were analysed at both item and subscale levels. The comparative results indicated striking differences between the three congregations. Congregation 1 emerged as hesitant about moving out into the mission field, preferring to establish a healing Christian community into which people could be drawn. Congregation 2 was assessed as being pregnant, with potential to move out of the church building and into the community, but still needing to take that final step. Congregation 3 had already moved out into the mission field and emerged as being strong on both building the Christian community and expanding the Kingdom of Christ. Recommendations for each congregation are made.

INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted in partial fulfilment of the course 'Doing Ministry for a Change' at the Theological Education by Extension College (Southern Africa). Learners were required to conduct a study on the question, "How mission-focused are our churches?"

The intent of this study is to provide three congregations in the Pretoria area with a comparative thumbnail sketch of the perceptions of mission in their congregations. It was hoped that this would help these congregations better understand their relative strengths and growth-areas in respect of mission.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question that this study addresses was:

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How mission-focused are three congregations in relation to each other?

The objectives of this study were to determine the degree to which each congregation:

- Recognises God's passion for and the Church's responsive participation in the restoration of God's Kingdom.
- Has assessed the needs of the local community in which it is called to be the light of the world.
- Is empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.
- Is involved in evangelism.
- Is involved in social transformation.
- Is developing as a genuine Christian community that is a sign, foretaste and instrument of the Kingdom.

The purpose of this study was:

To increase the mission-focus of each congregation by highlighting relative strengths and areas of growth.

METHODOLOGY

The study took the form of an anonymous survey conducted at three churches in the Pretoria area, using a self-administered, closed-question, measuring tool. A descriptive, quantitative approach was adopted. Questionnaires were distributed by the minister of each congregation to her/his members and collected. The researcher captured the questionnaires in a spreadsheet and analysed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used. Due to the small sample size, no inferential statistical analyses were performed. Data were analysed by visual inspection.

SAMPLE

Two-stage purposive sampling was used for this study. In the first stage, three congregations were purposively selected according to several criteria. In the second stage, 20 participants in each congregation were purposively selected according to one criterion.

Stage 1. The three congregations were selected for participation in the study based on the following criteria: ease of access to the researcher, they were from different denominations within the Christian community, they had different demographic profiles, and they were from different socio-economic communities.

The three congregations' characteristics were as follows:

1. Congregation 1 is an Anglican church located in an established, middle-to-upper class, suburban, predominantly White community.
2. Congregation 2 is a Methodist church located in a lower-to-middle class, established, peri-urban African township.
3. Congregation 3 is a Reformed church located in a lower class African township, comprising RDP houses and shacks, thus impoverished.

All three congregations are about the same size – relatively small churches – and all three have a dedicated, qualified pastor. All three congregations appear to be growing and active.

Stage 2. Within each congregation, the 20 participants were selected based on the criterion that they were in a leadership position, as these people would have the best insight into the mission-focus of their congregation.

In total, adequately completed questionnaires were obtained as follows:

- 22 from Congregation 1
- 18 from Congregation 2
- 23 from Congregation 3

Data Collection Instrument

A closed-ended, self-administered, pencil-and-paper instrument was developed for this study using the following approach:

1. A definition of mission was adopted, based on a range of literature, most notably the workbooks provided for the 'Doing Ministry for a Change' course at TEEC (2006a; 2006b; 2006c) as well as several other sources (eg. Bosch, 1991; General Synod Board for Mission and Unity and the Partnership for World Mission, 1987; Hall and Mountford, 2000).
2. The definition was broken down into its main elements.

3. These elements were defined.
4. It was decided to use a standard five-point Likert scale, based on degree of agreement. Items were formulated to be completed by church leaders on behalf of the entire congregation, rather than personally (thus the first person plural is used).
5. Items were generated by reviewing the available literature on each element, identifying key themes emerging from this literature and formulating the themes into items. Five to seven items were formulated for each element.
6. Items were reviewed for content validity to ensure that (a) they were relevant to the mission definition and element, (b) they adequately covered the whole domain of the element, (c) they used simple language and (d) they adhered to the commonly accepted rules for item formulation.
7. The instrument was finalised for distribution.

The study is based on the following definition of 'Christian mission', as formulated by the researcher:

Christian mission refers to our Spirit-empowered and active participation in God's passion for the restoration of His Kingdom, in which the whole of creation is reconciled and united under Jesus Christ, by means of evangelism, social transformation and the creation of Christian community.

The definition was broken down into the following six elements, which together are thought to comprise 'Christian mission':

- The mission of God (*Missio Dei*).
- Needs-based.
- Spirit-breathed.
- Evangelism.
- Social transformation.
- Christian community.

From the list above it can be seen that five of the six elements are directly extracted from the preceding definition, thus establishing a close link between the researcher's theological understanding of mission and the

measurement of mission. The sixth element, which has been added, is 'needs-based'. This was considered important to ensure that the missional outreach of the congregation is based on the real and felt needs of the local community rather than merely on the interests and personal preferences of the congregation.

These six elements were defined as follows:

- The mission of God (Missio Dei) refers to the recognition of God's passion for and the Church's responsive participation in the restoration of God's Kingdom.
- Needs-based refers to the congregation's assessment of the needs of the local community in which it is called to be the light of the world.
- Spirit-breathed refers to the congregation being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.
- Evangelism refers to the congregation being involved in presenting the Gospel to others with the intention of bringing them to faith in Jesus Christ and thus to salvation.
- Social transformation refers to the congregation being involved in facilitating profound and sustained change in a community so that it is characterised by justice, reconciliation and love.
- Christian community refers to the congregation developing as a genuine Christian community that is a sign, foretaste and instrument of the Kingdom.

The data collection instrument, in which the items are grouped under each of these six headings, is included as Appendix A to this paper.

RESULTS

The tables below provide comparative summaries of data, per mission element, across the three congregations. Scores have been converted into percentages that can range from 0 to 100. High scores consistently indicate a high level of mission-focus. Average scores for each item are provided, as well as an average score across items. Detailed reports were compiled on each congregation, but are beyond the scope of this paper.

Mission of God. The results for the first element, "Mission of God", are presented in the table below.

<i>These first questions address your congregation's recognition of God's passion for and your responsive participation in the restoration of God's Kingdom.</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
1. We teach that God's passion is to reconcile the whole creation to Himself.	84.1	97.2	98.9
2. We teach that Jesus' key purpose was to proclaim the Kingdom of God.	88.6	100.0	89.1
3. We teach that God calls all Christians to share in God's mission.	83.3	97.2	97.8
4. We teach that mission is motivated by God's love for humanity.	79.5	95.8	94.6
5. Most church members are willing to risk discomfort when serving God.	22.7	66.7	52.2
6. We are eager for Jesus to come back again.	64.8	83.3	80.7
Average	70.6	90.0	85.7

The table above indicates that, to a large degree, all three congregations teach a theology that is consistent with *Missio Dei*, namely that God is at work in the world to reconcile humanity to himself and that our role is to participate in and advance this reconciliation. Thus, at the level of teaching, all three congregations appear strong.

All three congregations, however, scored lowest on items 5 and 6. This suggests that the congregations have difficulty extending themselves out of their comfort zones, which implies reservations about actually participating sacrificially in the Mission of God.

Furthermore, the relatively low levels of eagerness for Jesus to come back again suggest that congregations are not eschatologically focused. Perhaps the focus tends to be on the here-and-now, rather than on the future. While this is an important and valid focus, it may need to be contextualised within God's long-term plan for the restoration of the world to its pre-fall state.

Overall, it can be seen that Congregation 1 obtained a much lower score on this dimension than the other two congregations, which obtained similar scores. This suggests that Congregation 1 has a comparatively low focus on God's work in the world, and the belief that mission is our

participation in God's work. However, it is significant to note that this was the highest scoring dimension for Congregation 1, suggesting that while it may be weak compared to other congregations, it is this congregation's strength compared to the other dimensions.

Needs Based. The results for the second element, "Needs Based", are presented in the table below.

<i>These next questions address your congregation's assessment of the needs of the local community in which you are called to be the light of the world.</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
7. We have thoroughly assessed the needs of our local community.	27.3	66.7	85.9
8. We spend time listening to the needs of the local community.	34.1	61.1	82.6
9. We update our assessment of the community's needs at least once a year.	39.8	62.5	56.8
10. We are involved in at least two local community forums.	45.5	69.4	65.2
11. We regularly review our response to the needs of the local community.	42.0	52.8	76.1
Average	37.7	62.5	73.3

The results of this section are interesting, in that each congregation emerged with a different profile, unlike in the previous section, where the three congregations were similar.

Congregation 1 scored the lowest overall. None of the individual items in this dimension reached a score of 50%, suggesting that it is a very weak area of the congregation's mission focus. The two weakest areas concern conducting a local community needs assessment and spending time listening to the needs of the local congregation. These findings suggest that this congregation's participation in mission may not be based on a careful understanding of community needs. Perhaps their participation is based on their own interests or the talents of the congregation. Or perhaps there is, in fact, little participation at all.

Congregation 2 obtained a better overall score, although this dimension was the lowest scoring dimension for this congregation. As with Congregation 1, this suggests a mission programme that may be driven more by the congregation's own interests than the needs of the local

community. The weakest areas were the listening to local needs and the regular review of responses. These suggest that this congregation may have adopted a plan of mission that is not based on local needs and that the plan may be implemented in a non-reflective, non-critical way.

Congregation 3 obtained the highest average score across the three congregations, although this was also their lowest scoring dimension overall. Scores for assessing the local community and listening to community needs were very high in relation to all the other scores in this section. This suggests that this community is deeply engaged in the life experiences of community members. However, the assessment is not regularly updated and may thus be outdated. The congregation is also not very involved in community forums. This may be an area for growth – a place where the congregation can maintain contact with the needs of the community and also influence the meeting of community needs.

Spirit-Breathed. The results for the third element, "Spirit-Breathed", are presented in the table below.

<i>These next questions address how your congregation views being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
12. We provide teaching on the Holy Spirit at least once every three months.	55.7	86.1	64.1
13. We help members identify what spiritual gifts God has given them.	70.5	93.1	86.4
14. We encourage members to exercise their spiritual gifts.	65.9	97.1	85.2
15. We celebrate the empowering role of the Holy Spirit in mission.	50.0	93.1	84.8
16. We continuously seek God's will through prayer.	80.7	100.0	96.7
17. We listen for how God is calling our congregation.	56.8	88.9	83.7
Average	63.6	92.9	83.3

All three congregations obtained comparatively low scores on the first item in this section: the provision of regular teaching on the Holy Spirit. This may, in part, be because none of these congregations are members of Pentecostal or Charismatic traditions. However, given that the Holy

Spirit is the one who equips and empowers Christian's for mission, the lack of teaching may be an oversight.

Congregation 1 also scored low on item 15, suggesting a lack of celebration of the Holy Spirit's power. Perhaps this congregation is cautious about overt expressions of charisma. This may, unintentionally, inhibit the working of the Holy Spirit and leave congregants feeling unempowered by the Spirit.

Congregations 2 and 3 both scored low on item 17, suggesting a lack of listening to God's call. It is interesting that this item scored much lower than item 16, given that the items have similar content. Perhaps congregations are engaged in prayer, but the focus is on speaking to God and not sufficiently on listening to God. Congregations that are active in mission may fall into a trap of being too busy serving God to be quiet and listen to God.

Evangelism. The results for the fourth element, "Evangelism", are presented in the table below.

<i>These next questions address the degree to which your congregation is involved in evangelism. Evangelism is defined as the presentation of the gospel with the intention of bringing the hearer to faith in Jesus Christ and thus to salvation.</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
18. We provide training to members on how to share their faith with others.	34.1	79.2	83.7
19. We emphasise the importance of personal salvation.	54.5	90.3	88.0
20. Our congregation has a sense of urgency about evangelism.	25.0	77.9	80.7
21. Most church members live a life that attracts others to Christ.	48.9	65.3	76.1
22. Most church members are active in bringing people to Christ.	25.0	70.8	81.8
23. Most church members are involved in making disciples of others.	30.7	66.2	73.9
Average	36.4	74.9	80.5

This dimension scored low for all three congregations, especially congregation 1. The highest scoring item, for all congregations, was item 20 – that congregations emphasise the importance of personal salvation. Congregation 1, however, scored significantly lower than the other two

congregations, suggesting a greater evangelistic emphasis in Congregations 2 and 3, consistent with denominational affiliation.

Congregation 1 scored lowest on items 20 and 22. There is a lack of urgency about evangelism that may stem from congregants' fear of extending themselves (which links back to item 5) or a lack of eschatological focus (item 6). Lifestyle evangelism (item 21) scored higher than direct evangelism (item 22), suggesting reservation about speaking to people about the Gospel. This congregation prefers to express the Good News of Jesus through how they live their lives. They are, however, willing to disciple people who have already indicated an interest in Christ.

Congregations 2 and 3 present a similar profile. Both indicate concern about the Christian lifestyle of their congregations. They also obtained low scores for discipleship. On the other hand, they obtained higher scores for direct evangelism. This is in direct contrast to Congregation 1. These two congregations seem willing to speak of salvation through Jesus, but may not effectively model a saved life and may not be sufficiently involved in growing new Christians to maturity.

Social Transformation. The results for the fifth element, "Social Transformation", are presented in the table below.

<i>These next questions address the degree to which your congregation is involved in social transformation. Social transformation is defined as "the profound and sustained change of a community so that it is characterised by justice, reconciliation & love".</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
24. Most church members are active in social transformation.	33.0	68.1	83.7
25. We give particular attention to the needs of those who are marginalized (eg the homeless, people living with HIV).	54.8	81.9	96.6
26. We give particular attention to those who are poor.	43.2	75.0	97.7
27. We stand up for justice in our local community.	40.9	76.4	83.7
28. We strive to reconcile people to each other.	48.9	76.4	73.9
29. We provide practical assistance to those in need.	64.8	75.0	83.7
Average	47.6	75.5	86.2

This dimension yielded a diverse portrait, with few commonalities across the three congregations.

Congregation 1 obtained their highest score for the provision of practical assistance to others. A very low score, however, was obtained for the active participation of congregants in social transformation. This suggests that any involvement in social transformation is limited to a small number of committed members and is not reflective of the body as a whole. This may tie back to the first dimension (Mission of God). This congregation also scored low on standing up for justice, reinforcing the impression obtained so far of a cautious and reserved congregation who are reluctant to take an overt stand for Christ.

Congregation 2 obtained a high score for providing care to those who are marginalised. However, lower scores were obtained for the involvement of most congregants in social transformation. In addition, lower scores were obtained for provision of care to the poor (which appears to contradict item 25) and the provision of practical assistance to those in need. Perhaps this congregation, who themselves are relatively poor, need to develop outreach programmes that specifically target those who are poor.

Congregation 3 obtained high scores for all items, particularly items related to caring for the poor and marginalised. In this way, this congregation appears to be striving to give expression to Jesus' pro-poor stance. Most of the items clustered together, with three items obtaining a second ranking score of 83.7%. The lowest ranking score concerned the effort to reconcile human relationships. Perhaps this congregation is primarily involved in meeting people's survival needs and has not yet found the time, energy or vision to address interpersonal needs as well. Based on the responses to the items in the Needs Based dimension, this may be a reflection of the actual needs of the community they serve.

Christian Community. The results for the sixth and last element, "Christian Community", are presented in the table below.

<i>These last questions address the degree to which your congregation is developing as a genuine Christian community that is a foretaste of the Kingdom.</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
30. We are a culturally diverse congregation.	61.4	83.3	76.1
31. Our church is a place of forgiveness and healing.	72.7	94.4	90.2

<i>These last questions address the degree to which your congregation is developing as a genuine Christian community that is a foretaste of the Kingdom.</i>			
	C1	C2	C3
32. Our church is a place where people feel welcomed.	79.5	97.2	98.9
33. Our church celebrates the contribution of each member.	58.0	87.5	91.3
34. Our worship is relevant to our local community.	64.8	95.8	89.1
35. Relationships in our church are characterised by the fruit of the Spirit.	61.4	91.7	89.1
36. We develop a sense of purpose in our church members.	55.7	88.9	87.0
Average	64.8	91.3	88.8

This dimension was high scoring for all three congregations. Although there were commonalities across the congregations, each obtained a different profile. Nevertheless, all three congregations obtained their highest score for item 32, viz. that their church is welcoming of people.

Congregation 1's second highest scoring item, in contrast to the other two congregations, was item 31, indicating their vision to create a healing community. This may suggest that this congregation's missionary approach is to draw people into their Christian community for healing and wholeness. The lowest scoring items, however, related to celebrating the unique contribution of each member and facilitating congregants' identification of individual purpose and direction. This may suggest that while this congregation is welcoming, it is not a place where one discovers God's call on one's life.

Congregation 2's second highest scoring item, in contrast to the other two congregations, was item 34, indicating their vision to create a worshipping community. This may suggest that this congregation attempts to create a community that encourages culturally relevant worship. The congregation, however, scored low on celebrating the contribution of individual members, suggesting a lack of focus on the individual Christian's call. The congregation also scored low on cultural diversity, reflective of the church's location in a township.

Congregation 3's second highest scoring item, in contrast to the other two congregations, was item 33, indicating their vision to create a servicing community. This may suggest that this congregation attempts to help each

member discern what God desires from them as individuals as part of a larger body of believers. In contrast, however, this congregation scored relatively low on item 36, suggesting a lack of attention to individual calling. This contradiction may be spurious, since the scores for individual items are very similar. As with Congregation 2, this congregation, which is also located in a township, scored low on cultural diversity.

Dimension-Level Assessment. The table below provides the overall results for the six dimensions that were assessed in this survey.

	C1	C2	C3
Mission of God	70.6	90.0	85.7
Needs based	37.7	62.5	73.3
Spirit-breathed	63.6	92.9	83.3
Evangelism	36.4	74.9	80.5
Social transformation	47.6	75.5	86.2
Christian community	64.8	91.3	88.8
Average	53.5	81.2	83.0

The table above confirms what has been revealed in the previous sections, viz that Congregation 1 obtained significantly lower scores than Congregations 2 and 3, which obtained similar scores.

All three congregations obtained their lowest average scores for Needs Based and Evangelism. Evangelism was the lowest for Community 1, while Needs Based was lowest for Communities 2 and 3. It seems all three congregations would benefit from a more attentive listening to the real and felt needs of the local community and an increased focus on evangelism.

All three congregations obtained a high score for Christian Community. This was the highest scoring dimension for Community 3 and the second highest for Communities 1 and 2. These congregations strive to create a space for worship, fellowship and communion, which they hope will serve as a light to the community around them, of the reconciliatory results of faith in Jesus Christ.

Congregation 1 scored highest on Mission of God, suggesting strong teaching and a relatively keen awareness of God's mission in the world and our participation in it. Congregation 2 scored highest on Spirit-Breathed, suggesting a strong awareness of the centrality of the Holy Spirit in equipping and empowering the Church to engage in mission. Congregation 3 scored high on Social Transformation, suggesting a strong commitment to making a tangible difference in the local community.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Based on the results presented above, the mission-focus of each congregation is assessed.

Congregation 1. The overall profile of Congregation 1 is significantly weaker than the other two congregations. This may be a reflection of this congregation's limited participation in mission and/or it may reflect a more self-critical stance towards the assessment. Surveys such as this, which invite self-assessment, are vulnerable to the degree of self-criticism of the participants.

The results of the Mission Survey suggest a congregation that is more inward looking than outward. Congregants seem to have a relatively clear sense of God's mission in the world and their responsibility as Christians to participate in this mission. However, they appear reserved and reluctant to step out of their own environments into other environments to do mission work.

The forms of outreach that they are involved in are limited and cautious. They provide practical assistance to those in need – perhaps putting a food parcel together or paying money to some needy cause. They prefer to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom through lifestyle and discipleship than through direct evangelism. The outreach projects that they are involved in are based on their own interests and abilities, rather than on a close listening and responsiveness to the needs of the local community. Few congregants are personally involved in social transformation, and there is very limited attention to providing care to the poor and marginalized.

This congregation appears to be striving primarily to create a healing community in which the Holy Spirit is active in bringing forgiveness and reconciliation within the body of believers. This approach to mission entails creating a community that is a foretaste of the Kingdom. In effect, their hope is that people will notice and be attracted by the love that they

have for each other. This will draw people into the congregation, where healing and forgiveness can be found. While this appears inward looking and non-missional, it is a valid form of mission in that it draws people into the Kingdom, as opposed to going out into the world, much like the Old Testament approach to mission as attraction.

Congregation 2. This congregation obtained a sound mission profile, on a par with Congregation 3. Their high scores may be a result of an inflated self-assessment and a lack of self-criticism and/or it may be a true reflection of a congregation that has a vibrant and growing mission focus.

The results of the Mission Survey suggest a congregation that is developing an outward focus, but is in need of further growth and development. There is a clear understanding of God's vision to reconcile the world to himself and God's mandate to the Church to participate actively in this reconciliation.

This congregation's strengths, relative to Congregation 3, lie in their awareness of the mission of God, their embracing of the Holy Spirit's role in equipping them to participate in this mission, and their commitment to establishing a Christian community that is a sign to the Kingdom. Although their overall score was similar to that of Congregation 3, they obtained noticeably higher scores than Congregation 3 in these three domains.

These domains, however, all take place within the walls of the local church. They are dimensions that focus on the development of the congregation itself. These dimensions do not extend beyond the church perimeter. Thus, it seems that this congregation is still girding itself for outreach. It has not yet begun to reach out in earnest. In comparison with Congregation 1, however, which seems to have settled into an inward stance, Congregation 2 appears to be on the brink of outreach.

Congregation 3. This congregation obtained a sound mission profile, on a par with Congregation 2. As with Congregation 2, however, the high scores may be a result of an inflated self-assessment and a lack of self-criticism, and/or it may be a true reflection of a congregation that has a vibrant and growing mission focus.

The results of the Mission Survey suggest a congregation that has a well-established focus on meeting the needs of the community outside. Whereas Congregation 1 has elected to do mission work inside the church

and Congregation 2 is on the brink of stepping out, Congregation 3 has already left the building and moved into the community.

This is most clearly evidenced by the finding that Congregation 3 scored higher than Congregation 2 on being in tune with the needs of the local community, evangelism and social transformation. All three of these dimensions are located outside the church perimeter, and indicate a congregation that has moved into and engaged with the local community.

With a strong outward focus, there is always the risk that the inward focus can be neglected. This does not, however, appear to be a significant risk for this congregation, as they scored relatively high on all six dimensions, including those related to the work of the Holy Spirit and the building of Christian community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congregation 1. Congregation 1 could enhance its focus on creating a Christian community that draws people into the church by considering the following:

- Increasing teaching on and attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in worship, relationships and witness.
- Actively inviting people to visit the church to experience the Christian community for themselves.
- Marketing the church in surrounding areas.
- Improving the follow up of visitors to the church.

The congregation should, however, explore the possibilities for extending the Christian community out into the local community. Given the reservation of congregants, this could be incrementally facilitated by:

- Convening a small group of congregants, who are committed to mission, to conduct a needs assessment of the local community in order to focus the congregation's outreach efforts.
- Providing training in outreach and friendship evangelism.
- Creating structured outreach programmes that require only limited time, commitment and threat, so as to gently encourage congregants to step out of the church building.

- Increase teaching on the role of the Holy Spirit in equipping and empowering Christians for service.
- Inviting people to give testimonies of how they came to personal salvation or of their experiences of mission work.
- Identifying one social justice issue that the congregation can rally around to develop a prophetic voice.

Congregation 2. Congregation 2 should begin to explore a range of options to give expression to the strong Christian community that has been established. If the congregation does not begin to move outwards, it is possible that it could collapse in on itself. This could be achieved by:

- Engaging the majority of congregants in a community assessment, perhaps using a structured door-to-door survey.
- Establishing visibility in a relevant community forum in order to track community needs and address community issues at a macro level.
- Benchmarking with churches that are already engaged in outreach to determine practice models that may work for this congregation.
- Creating structured outreach programmes that require only limited time, commitment and threat, so as to gently encourage congregants to step out of the church building.
- Identifying one social justice issue that the congregation can rally around to develop a prophetic voice.

Congregation 3. Congregation 3 has a well-developed mission programme that has probably already extended the congregation's human resources. Further expansion of outreach activities may therefore be inadvisable. The following could be considered as ways to sustain a missional stance:

- Ensure the continuation of a strong teaching foundation in *missio Dei* and the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering and equipping the people of God.
- Increase congregational visibility in community forums.
- Conduct an annual review of community needs and the congregation's mission programme. This will help in ensuring that

the congregation is involved in relevant outreach activities and not just maintaining an outdated programme.

- Create quiet days where congregants can reflect on and contemplate God's calling on them as individuals and the congregation as a body.

CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that all three congregations are striving to give expression to God's call on the Church to participate in realising his objectives for the cosmos. Teaching is provided, the equipping of the Holy Spirit is sought and people are encouraged to get involved in mission.

However, it is also apparent that the three congregations are not equally involved in mission work. Congregation 1 emerges as the most timid, preferring to stay in church and hoping that people will visit. Congregation 2 is on the brink of reaching out, but has not yet made the crucial step. Congregation 3 is actively engaged in mission work and needs to work to maintain a strong home base from which to move out.

It is the researcher's hope that this survey will be helpful to all congregations, in terms of both an inward reflection and a comparison with other congregations.

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APPENDIX A: MISSION SURVEY INSTRUMENT

My name is Adrian Van Breda. I am a theological student at the *Theological Education by Extension College* in Johannesburg. Thank you for your willingness to assist in this research project. If you have any comments or queries about this questionnaire, please phone me after hours at _____.

This questionnaire was developed to measure the mission-focus of various congregations. The questions ask you to reflect on the life of your *whole congregation* rather than on yourself personally. The questionnaire is anonymous – please do not write your name on this questionnaire. Read each question carefully and select your answer from the five options. Colour in the circle that best reflects your answer. Please answer all the questions.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
These first questions address your congregation's recognition of God's passion for and your responsive participation in the restoration of God's Kingdom.					
1. We teach that God's passion is to reconcile the whole creation to Himself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. We teach that Jesus' key purpose was to proclaim the Kingdom of God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. We teach that God calls all Christians to share in God's mission.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. We teach that mission is motivated by God's love for humanity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Most church members are willing to risk discomfort when serving God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. We are eager for Jesus to come back again.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These next questions address your congregation's assessment of the needs of the local community in which you are called to be the light of the world.					
7. We have thoroughly assessed the needs of our local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. We spend time listening to the needs of the local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. We update our assessment of the community's needs at least once a year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
10. We are involved in at least two local community forums.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. We regularly review our response to the needs of the local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These next questions address how your congregation views being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.					
12. We provide teaching on the Holy Spirit at least once every three months.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. We help members identify what spiritual gifts God has given them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. We encourage members to exercise their spiritual gifts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. We celebrate the empowering role of the Holy Spirit in mission.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. We continuously seek God's will through prayer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. We listen for how God is calling our congregation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These next questions address the degree to which your congregation is involved in evangelism. Evangelism is defined as "the presentation of the gospel with the intention of bringing the hearer to faith in Jesus Christ and thus to salvation".					
18. We provide training to members on how to share their faith with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. We emphasise the importance of personal salvation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Our congregation has a sense of urgency about evangelism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Most church members live a life that attracts others to Christ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Most church members are active in bringing people to Christ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Most church members are involved in making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
disciples of others.					
These next questions address the degree to which your congregation is involved in social transformation. Social transformation is defined as "the profound and sustained change of a community so that it is characterised by justice, reconciliation & love".					
24. Most church members are active in social transformation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. We give particular attention to the needs of those who are marginalized (eg the homeless, people living with HIV).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. We give particular attention to those who are poor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. We stand up for justice in our local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. We strive to reconcile people to each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. We provide practical assistance to those in need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These last questions address the degree to which your congregation is developing as a genuine Christian community that is a foretaste of the Kingdom.					
30. We are a culturally diverse congregation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Our church is a place of forgiveness and healing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Our church is a place where people feel welcomed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Our church celebrates the contribution of each member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. Our worship is relevant to our local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. Relationships in our church are characterised by the fruit of the Spirit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. We develop a sense of purpose in our church members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. The name of your congregation:

38. Today's Date:

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

T.E.E. JOURNAL
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Apart from academic articles by TEE College students, the main theme of this issue of the TEE Journal is the debate on homosexuality and same-sex relationships within the Churches. It includes articles on the issue from various perspectives.

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CONTENTS

Editorial introduction	2
Student articles :	
An examination of the theological understanding and practical commitment of the John Wesley College seminarians to the values they have set for 2007 – Luvuyo G. Sifo	7
Christ saving the South African economy: seeking God's reconciliation for South Africa's two economies – Sean McGuigan	33
The mission-focus of three congregations – Adrian van Breda	58
On homosexuality and same-sex relationships:	
A theological reflection on human sexuality – Bishop David Russell	80
Jesus and homosexuality: a reflection – Bishop Peter Lee	89
A testimony – Natasha Davies	102
The Presbyterian Church and homosexuality – Rev Dr Douglas S. Bax	104
The Dutch Reformed Church and homosomatic relationships – Marius A. Odendaal	116
The Catholic Church and homosexuality – Anthony Egan SJ	129
Same-sex relationships – a personal view from an evangelical perspective – Col. Dr Brian Tuck	137
Homosexuality and hermeneutics: the use of scripture in Biblical ethics – Caroline Tuckey	143
Gay marriage and the Church – Bishop David Russell	155
Conversations on homosexuality and marriage: conservatism without condemnation? – Dr Tony Moodie	158