

ABSTRACT

WORSHIP CHANGE TO REACH NON-CHRISTIANS IN TRADITIONAL DANISH EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES

by

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The purpose of the study was to examine how churches which reach non-Christians in a traditional Danish church context have transitioned their worship experience and to learn which emphases and forms characterize their worship.

The sample population consisted of twenty churches of different denominations that consistently reach non-Christians through their worship services.

A researcher-designed questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used as instruments.

The findings of the study show that effective churches use diverse worship experiences in a variety of formats inspired by the Great Commission and aimed at or sensitive to non-Christians.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The Problem

We believe in God but church is boring and irrelevant, say more than 40 percent of Danish teenagers. Meanwhile, the majority of Danish churches celebrate their services in much the same manner as they have done for more than a hundred years. No wonder the Danes do not attend worship (Lundgaard and Oestergaard 209).

The culture of Denmark, as in all of Western Europe, is often referred to as post-Christian. Christianity was accepted as the official religion of Denmark beginning in 960. After the Reformation was put in effect in 1536, Lutheranism became the official faith of the nation and its king in 1660, and has been since then. Secularization has ravaged the churches in post-enlightenment Denmark, and the presence of Christianity is no longer widely appreciated. The strong alliance between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the state has turned Christianity into a cultural heritage that appears to hold little meaning for the population.

The High Mass in the Evangelical Lutheran Church is part of the Danish cultural heritage and has heavily influenced the general Danish perception of worship.

Church services on all Sundays and festival days in the ecclesiastical year follow an official rite that is approved by the bishops and authorized by the Queen. The fundamental elements in a Danish church service are the sermon, baptism and Holy Communion. It is also strongly characterized by organ music and hymn singing. The Danish hymnal is called the unofficial creed of the Church, since, more than any other book, the hymnal has contributed to forming what in Denmark is understood as Christianity. (Folkekirken)

In an article in the journal Ny Mission Hans Raun Iversen states what he

understands as the Danish perception of worship. He labels the majority of Lutheran Folkekirke members as Culture Christians. Culture Christianity is, in Iversen's understanding, part of the legacy of the Danes, it is not born by faith, nor does it live by faith (Iversen 20). Due to their cultural heritage the majority of the Danes' perceptions of life are marked by Christian values and yet distant to a Christian life.

In the year 2000, 85.1 percent of the Danish population were members of the Lutheran Folkekirke, which thus had a monopoly position. (Andersen and Riis 83)

According to Denmark's 1998 statistics, 70 percent of all children were baptized, 79 percent confirmed, 53 percent were married in church and 93 percent received a Lutheran burial in 1997 (Kirkestatistik 1997 10).

A well-researched survey of teenagers and their faith in 1995 revealed that a significant number of Danish teenagers are religious. Forty percent of them said they believe in God, 25 percent do not believe in God, and 35 percent do not know. Forty-three percent believe Jesus is the Son of God, and 25 percent believe Jesus rose from the dead. The survey also revealed that 50 percent of the teenagers find church boring, and 80 percent find the sermon boring and irrelevant (Hansen 50, 74ff, 85, 87, 90, 92, 104ff).

A similar survey was conducted in 2000. This survey shows that the teenagers have become more religious. In the 2000, survey 43.5 percent say they believe in God. Forty-seven percent say they believe Jesus is the Son of God. Eighty-two percent say worship services are too long, and the sermon is boring (Lundgaard and Oestergaard 62, 63, 64, 66, 67). Comparing the 2000 survey with the data from the 1995 survey, Lundgaard and Oestergaard conclude, "More than 60 percent of the teenagers that used to go to church, say that they do not attend worship anymore, because it was boring" (69).

Lundgaard and Oestergaard ask the question, “What does the church want to give teenagers, when the church in the eyes of the teenagers is unable to neither make the worship service exciting nor solemn?”

In a study of life strategies, values, and outlook on life in 2001 of young (eighteen to twenty-four-year-olds) Danes, Thomas Willer and Soeren Oestergaard state that “faith is becoming only a small part of life, which not necessarily has the extensive basic meaning in life” (79). Their point is that faith no longer is a basic assumption in the lives of young adults; rather it has become one of the fragments of life. “Faith is just a place one zaps by” (79).

In 1981, 1990, and 1999 an extensive research project on the values of Europeans was conducted. The Danish results of this research are reported and evaluated in the book Danske Livsvaerdier 1981-1999. Peter B. Andersen and Ole Riis state that the data show that “the part of the population that expresses a faith in God is stable around two thirds.” They further comment that this does not throw light on how important faith in God is to the Danes (Andersen and Riis 87). When asked how important God’s role is in their lives, 9 percent in 1999 answer very important, and 39 percent answer totally important. Fifty-two percent say that God’s role in their lives is somewhere between very important and totally important (88). When the Danes are asked to be specific about what they believe, 38 percent say they believe in a specific, spiritual power. Twenty-five percent say they believe God is personal. Nineteen percent do not know what to believe, and 18 percent do not believe in the existence of any sort of spiritual power or personal God. Inger-Marie Boergesen, who has conducted extensive interviews with people in different parts of Denmark concerning the role of the church in their lives, says, “There is empiric support

to the assumption, that religiousness is of growing importance in the personal orientation and thought world of many people” (236). In spite of the growing religiousness and the many people who say they believe in God or in a spiritual power, people are only reminded of the church through the physical presence of church buildings that do not demand any personal involvement. Joergen I. Jensen describes this situation in Den Fjerne Kirke (the Distant Church): “The distant church does not do missionary work nor is it a fighting church, it is merely the church that is present in the country, it has settled and become part of the landscape and of people’s image of life” (60).

This “distant church” has 85.1 percent of the Danish population as members. However according to the Lutheran Folkekirke, only an estimated 3 to 4 percent of the members of the denomination take part in church services on a Sunday (Folkekirken). The most recent figures (1991) say that 1.3 percent are members of non-Lutheran churches. On a given Sunday (1991) 0.51 percent of the Danish population attends worship in these churches (Roulund-Noergaard 60).

How have the churches responded to the low worship attendance and the large number of nominal Christians? Many churches have not responded at all.

Most Lutheran churches follow the official, approved rite for the Sunday morning high mass. A significant number of Lutheran churches have kept the traditional Sunday high mass and attempted to draw larger crowds for special worship experiences like children’s worship, musical or drama services, or preaching by a well-known actor, actress, or author. A small number of Lutheran churches have (within the approved boundaries) found ways to renew and change the high mass to reach non-Christians. The Lutheran pastor Anne Margrethe Raabjerg Hvas says about the urgent need for the

churches to change their worship: “When a large part of the members of the Folkekirke through not attending show that they experience the church as strange and irrelevant, we must create worship services that speak to those people” (Hvas 67)

Per Ramsdal, who is pastoring an experimental youth church within the Lutheran Folkekirke, sees the high mass that follows a fixed liturgical pattern all over the country as a product of unified culture that existed a hundred years ago. Today this homogenous unified culture has vanished, and Ramsdal concludes, “Therefore as a church we have to accept that the society now is composed of many different cultures. I think we have to do several different kinds of worship services aimed at different groups” (Ramsdal 45).

The congregations’ understanding of worship in small Danish evangelical free churches like the Baptist Church, the Covenant Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Apostolic Church, the Lutheran Free Churches, and the United Methodist Church is presumably impacted by the common Danish perception of worship, with one major difference. Most evangelical free churches have a revival heritage. A central part of their identity is the desire to lead non-Christian people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Since 1880, evangelical free churches offered worship for seekers. Much music and joyful singing of revivalist songs, accompanied by piano and guitar, characterized these services, called “Sunday evening services,” “revival meetings,” or “evangelistic meetings.” The atmosphere was casual and informal. The preaching explained and applied the gospel to daily life, and it was usually followed by an altar call. People shared testimonies, prayed, experienced God’s presence, and they were blessed. Some became Christians; some were healed; and, some received a call to full-time ministry. A clear

distinction was made between the Sunday morning and the Sunday evening service.

Sunday morning was for the congregation, the Christians, while Sunday evening was for the seekers.

Once the Sunday evening services attracted large crowds of people, but in the late 1960s attendance began to decline. The surrounding culture changed rapidly; the services did not. The leaders and pastors were sure that what had worked well before would work again, if only the present generation of Christians would be more supportive, or more spiritual, or try harder. The people who actually attended were pressured, old testimonies were repeated, altar calls were given, and the same people responded over and over again. The methods that once worked with good results did not work anymore. Most churches eventually abandoned the Sunday evening service and did not replace it with anything else to reach seeking people. They did nevertheless keep the traditional Sunday morning service for the Christians without any changes.

Some denominations soon began to realize the need for change, but only a small number of local churches (mainly charismatic oriented) have actually made a transition into a more contemporary worship service to reach non-Christians. Many churches are still at the beginning stages of a change process, while others are struggling in the middle.

Throughout the world, the face of worship is changing; local churches are creating, developing, and experimenting with innovative styles of worship. In Denmark, however, the over-all picture is that only a very few churches make purposeful attempts to reach non-Christians through their worship and are successful doing it.

Through fifteen years of ministry, I have found that Danes are not opposed to worship or to the Christian message, they just do not find a traditional Danish service, be

it a Lutheran high mass or an evangelical free church worship service, particularly relevant or meaningful. Christian Schwarz's research, which also was conducted in churches in Denmark, supports that observation: "When worship is inspiring, it draws people to the services all by itself" (Natural 31). Meaningful worship becomes a major key in reaching non-Christians, and churches that desire to reach non-Christians have to make the necessary changes for their worship to become an inspiring experience. A strong tension exists in many churches between people who desire contemporary worship forms and people who want to hold onto a traditional worship service.

For several years I have been involved in this "worship war," and I have discovered that the motives of the opponents are exactly the same. Both parties are fighting to get or to hold onto the style of worship they personally prefer and from which they expect to gain most. The worship war is a war without a winner but with a certain loser: the non-Christian. Moving from a worship service that is highly introspective to a worship service that is targeted towards non-Christians is a difficult process. It is a transformation process that touches the highly explosive area of worship as well as changes the core values of the church from being introverted to being extroverted. This research project wrestled with the process of changing worship, the considerations that drive the process, and the effect of the transformation in terms of the worship service's effectiveness in reaching non-Christians.

Purpose

I have entitled this research project, "Worship Change to Reach Non-Christians in Traditional Danish Evangelical Free Churches." The purpose of the study was to examine how traditional Danish churches that reach non-Christians have transitioned

their worship experience and to learn which emphases and forms characterize their worship.

In 1994, Christian Schwarz conducted research to provide the background for his Danish edition of Natural Church Development, which emphasizes inspiring worship service as one of eight characteristics of a healthy church. Schwarz's research supports the findings of a research project conducted by the Danish ecumenical DAWN committee in 1991, Goer Danerne Kristne. The aim of the 1991 research project was to give a clear picture of the church situation in Denmark. To my knowledge, these two works are the only research that has been done on the value of inspiring worship in a Danish context. Only a few Danish books have been written on worship renewal, and most or all of them are written from a Lutheran Folkekirke perspective. I hope the findings of this research project will be applicable and helpful to a large number of evangelical free churches that desire to reach non-Christians and to use the worship service as one of the major ways of doing it.

Research Questions

The purpose statement of this study naturally separates into two components: the change process and the considerations behind the process. The research questions that guided the study reflect these two components.

Research Question #1

What characterized the church's worship model prior to the change, and what characterizes the worship model today?

Research Question #2

What theological and strategic considerations guided the decision to change the

church's worship?

Research Question #3

During and subsequent to the change process, what effect can be measured on the worship service in terms of the number of non-Christians attending the service and attendance in general?

Research Question #4

Of what was the change process composed, and what was learned in the process?

Definition of Terms

Worship is God's children, be they Christians or non-Christians, gathered to encounter him and to rediscover their true identity. *Worship* is theological and anthropological. It is theological in the sense that it is focused on the triune God. It is anthropological in the sense that it is embodied and embedded in a specific time and cultural context.

In this dissertation, the term *worship* is used synonymously with *service*, *worship experience*, and *worship service*, meaning a gathering of people in a certain setting to worship.

Liturgical worship refers to worship characterized by hymns, organ music, written liturgy, liturgical clothing, and a strong emphasis on the sacraments.

Traditional worship refers to worship characterized by hymns, organ or piano music, use of hymnbooks and use of approximately the same liturgy or program every week.

Blended worship refers to worship that uses traditional as well as contemporary elements.

Contemporary worship refers broadly to a variety of forms and styles of worship used in churches today, which focuses on cultural accessibility and relevance.

Praise and worship refers to the form of extended worship time using contemporary praise songs led by a worship leader and with congregational participation. It does not refer to a specific worship format.

Non-Christian, seeker and unchurched are used as synonymous terms to refer to people who do not live in a conscious personal relationship with Jesus Christ; they may or may not be religious or curious about the Christian faith. Hans Raun Iversen has introduced the term Culture Christian, and though this term is frequently used in debates among Lutheran Folkekirke pastors and theologians I find the term inaccurate (Iversen 6-43). I concur with Henrik Hoejlund who in his critique of Iversen points to the problem of labeling the majority of the Danes as Culture Christians. Historically and culturally a strong connection exists between the Danish people and the Lutheran Folkekirke. However the term Culture Christians neglects the basic understanding that a Christian is somebody personally related to Jesus Christ. The Danes no longer hold a Christian worldview, which is affirmed by several statistics. “We inoculate people against genuine Christianity, when we incessantly affirm and even make theology about their I am a Christian in my own way” (Hoejlund 55). In the secular Danish context, I find the terms non-Christian, seeker or unchurched to be the most exact.

Evangelical free churches is used as a joint term for the evangelical denominations outside the Lutheran Folkekirke that have been included in this work. They are the Apostolic Church, the Baptist Church, the Covenant Church, the Lutheran Free Churches, the Pentecostal Church, and the United Methodist Church.

Lutheran Folkekirke or just *Folkekirken*, in Danish “the church of the people,” is a Lutheran denomination. In an official description of the denomination and its status in the Danish society, it says,

The Danish Constitution guarantees religious freedom, but it also obliges the state to support the established church, “Folkekirken”. So while the law states that there is freedom to practice different religions, it also requires the state to provide support for the Lutheran Folkekirke. Thus, religious freedom is not the same thing as religious equality, since the established church enjoys a status different from that of other religious communities. (“An Introduction” 5)

Evangelical used in *Evangelical Free Churches* and in *the Evangelical Lutheran Church* is understood as Protestant, and not as a theological orientation.

The Sample Population

This study focuses on worship transition in evangelical free churches to reach non-Christians. This delimitation is not intended to devalue the worship renewal that has and is taking place in local churches in the Evangelical Lutheran Church or in the Roman Catholic Church. As I am a pastor in the United Methodist Church, which in Denmark is one of the small evangelical free churches (approximately 1,500 members), I have chosen to focus on the evangelical free churches. Some common characteristics of the evangelical free churches in Denmark are (1) they have a revivalist origin; (2) they are all minority churches in a context heavily affected by a Lutheran perception of worship; and, (3) the majority of their churches presumably reach no non-Christians through their worship services.

The interview population was composed of pastors in the Apostolic Church, the Baptist Church, the Covenant Church, the Lutheran Free Churches, the Pentecostal Church, and the United Methodist Church. Together these denominations have a total of

185 churches.

To identify churches that are distinguished by reaching non-Christians in their worship services week after week, four criteria were established for the selection of the sample population (twenty churches).

1. The church must reach non-Christians in their worship services week after week.

2. The church's worship must have gone through or be in a process of significant change. This criteria ensured that a significant change (from one style of worship to another) has or is occurring and that the change is not merely a few adjustments of the worship service.

3. The worship service must have changed or be in the process of changing towards a style of worship associated with growing attendance and reaching non-Christians.

4. The church must have a vision to reach non-Christians through their worship service.

Instrumentation and Methodology

The study was conducted as an exploratory study. In the study I used two instruments. First, a researcher-designed questionnaire enabled me to sort out the churches that do not meet the criteria I have established. And Second, a researcher-designed semi-structured interview of four questions was used. Interview questions were pretested to improve their suitability and to strengthen the interview format. Feedback from this field testing was incorporated into the final instrument.

Collection of Data

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with pastors of churches that attract non-Christians to their worship services every week. The interviews were conducted over the phone. Each interview attempted to elicit answers that provided insight into the change that has taken place, the considerations underlying the worship transition, the components of the process, and the experiences made in the process. The interviews were audiotaped and, with advice of my mentor Dr. Howard Snyder, all significant parts of the interviews were transcribed to provide a verbatim record. The transcribed interviews were analyzed according to the research questions. Information that was not related to the research questions was recorded as it could provide valuable additional information to the study.

Theological Reflections on the Study

From previous reading on worship, from debates I followed in the media, and from debates in which I have participated inside and outside of my denomination, I have gained the impression that much of the controversy related to worship is about form and style. The debaters still widely assume that participants in Christian worship all share a foundational biblical knowledge, theological awareness, and Christian commitment. One example is Paul Borgman, who in his excellent dissertation, “Principles to Assist the Introduction of Change in Congregational Worship,” describes what change in worship might mean. Even though the context of justification through faith is his theological framework, his main concern is still the forms of worship. To Borgman worship is for the Christians. His project was to examine the process of making change in worship “that will strengthen and edify those who come to worship” (1). He concludes, “[I]t is possible

to use change positively for nurture and growth for Christians who want to offer Jesus Christ the very best they have to give and, at the same time, build up and encourage the brother and sister in love” (125).

Frequently, different forms such as traditional worship, praise and worship, liturgical worship, or seeker-sensitive worship are compared, discussed, and even criticized. We need to go deeper than form and style if we desire to understand worship that reaches non-Christians. Leander Keck argues,

Renewing any institution requires revitalizing its core, its reason for being. Unless this core is refocused and funded afresh, renewal becomes a matter of strategy for survival. Accordingly, the churches’ renewal becomes possible only when their religious vitality is energized again by a basic reform of their worship. (25)

Renewal or change of worship is about the life of the church. It demands a refocus of the core of the church. Ron Crandall writes, “As in any effective Christian congregation, Sunday morning worship is the most important event in the weekly life cycle. More than any other single factor, alive and culturally appropriate worship is what holds these congregations together” (142-43). David Bosch points to the effect such a church has on the society when he says,

The missionary dimension of a local church’s life manifests itself, among other ways, when it is truly a worshipping community; it is able to welcome outsiders and make them feel at home; it is a church in which the pastor does not have the monopoly and the members are not merely objects of pastoral care; its members are equipped for their calling in society; it is structurally pliable and innovative; and it does not defend the privileges of a select group. (373)

Worship presumably has a missionary dimension that attracts non-Christians. Thor Strandenaes affirms the missionary dimension in his perception of Christian worship. Strandenaes emphasizes the centrifugal and the centripetal dimension of

worship. “Worship is not only the Christians called to worship and send out from there. It also calls people, who do not share the Christians faith” (Strandenaes 13). However, this will only be a reality if the church does not defend the tastes, habits, rituals, traditions, or preferences of a specific group.

In an intriguing article entitled “Beyond Contemporary Worship,” Robert Webber addresses a new tendency in worship. In a survey among “twenty somethings” he has observed a change in worship taste towards depth, substance, and contemplation. The desire is “an authentic experience of worship, an encounter with God that has life-changing results” (12). Perhaps some worship has focused so much on God’s immanence, that it has lost sight of his transcendence. Some worship has been for the people without expecting any participation or response.

Four characteristics or emphases of worship that reaches non-Christians have emerged: immanence and transcendence, inculturation, evangelism, and means of grace. These four emphases appear to me to be helpful in the understanding of worship that reaches non-Christians. They are further examined in Chapter 2.

The change process towards a worship service that reaches non-Christians can easily become a highly technical matter. We live in a rapidly changing society, and much literature has been devoted to the subject of change in society, in people’s lives, and in the business world. Much of this material appears to offer valuable insights; however, if we consider change in the context of worship, a theological perspective on change is necessary.

A soteriological approach would be to look at the meaning of change through the New Testament concept of μετανοια, that is the change of mind and heart God

miraculously provides in a person through faith in Jesus Christ. Another soteriological approach would be to look at change through the New Testament concept of sanctification.

However, for this study a missiological perspective seems to be more appropriate. Such a missiological perspective is found in Paul's understanding of the incarnation that seems to drive him to call on the Church to give up its own to reach people with the gospel. Paul urges the Philippians to let the same mind be in them that was in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:6-11). The following verses 12-18 of Philippians 2 appear to focus on the readers' works of salvation. However notice that Paul urges the Philippians to work out their salvation like "children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world." Paul not only uses the Christological hymn in a soteriological perspective but also in a missiological perspective. As Christ gave up everything, emptied himself, to reach us who are lost, so we should give up everything for the greater purpose of reaching the lost people of this generation. Paul models the same attitude in Athens (Acts 17:16-34), and he is addressing the same issue in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

The Church's understanding, of what is biblically binding and what is not is an important aspect to consider in relation to the change of worship. This hermeneutic will determine to what extent the worship is going to change. Today's church must consider whether it should slavishly imitate the customs and practices of the early Church, even when a given practice is not consistent as it is the case with worship. Further more the church must consider the use of forms of ministry that are not found in the Bible as long as they do not in any way differ with or contradict the teaching of Scripture?

Worship is one of the biblically-based functions of the Church. The forms of ministry should serve the functions of ministry. The forms are temporary, changing, and built on culture; while the functions are timeless and unchanging mandates. To accomplish the function of worship the Church is free to change towards whatever forms are appropriate and to change those forms when desired.

Delimitation and Generalizability

This study exclusively considers worship changes in Danish evangelical free churches, which reach non-Christians through their worship week after week. The project does not consider meetings of the church other than the Sunday services. Worship consists of many components, and the sermon is a central component to many people. However, the present study views worship as a unified whole and does not include particular considerations of the sermons delivered in the worship service.

The growing degree of interest in spirituality and in Christian worship in contemporary Danish culture makes this a timely and much needed study. Although the project is designed to examine evangelical free churches that are consistently reaching non-Christians in their worship after a process of change, the study presumably has some applicability to other evangelical free churches that are contemplating entering into a similar process.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 of this work establishes the biblical, theological and technical context for the proposed study. Chapter 3 presents the research design. Chapter 4 reports the research findings, and Chapter 5 provides a summary and interpretation of the research findings.

CHAPTER 2

PERSPECTIVES ON WORSHIP AND CHANGE

What is worship? The question may seem simple, but it is not. Worship has become a sensitive and opaque issue in churches, among pastors, and among theologians. In the debate on worship in Christian magazines and books, many of the authors appear to be most occupied with advocating their own preferred style of worship and accusing other styles of worship of not being fully genuine expressions of worship. Several authors seem to agree that no such thing as one biblical form of worship exists, neither was one form of worship typical for the early Church.

Gordon D. Fee makes the point that because of the situational nature of Paul's letters they do not describe a systematic presentation of the worship of the early Church. What we learn is in response to problems and is, therefore, fragmental. According to Fee, Paul understood the gathered church first of all as a worshipping community, and the key to their worship was the presence of the Holy Spirit (154). Donald P. Hustad says, "It seems apparent that the first Christians were left free to develop their worship rites as they saw fit" (105). Rick Warren boldly states,

Every church likes to believe its worship style is the most biblical. The truth is, there isn't a biblical style of worship. Each Sunday true believers around the world give glory to Jesus Christ using a thousand equally valid expressions and styles. (241).

This chapter will not seek to determine whether a biblical style of worship exists; rather, it will examine qualities that characterize worship services that reach non-Christians.

Christian Schwarz identifies inspiring worship as one of eight quality characteristics of growing churches. Presumably growth implies that these churches are

reaching non-Christians. According to his book Natural Church Development Schwarz's research has shown that no one single factor leads to church growth. It is the interplay of all eight elements. Schwarz identifies what he calls the divine growth automatism, which he says are particularly evident in worship services. "When worship is inspiring, it draws people to the services all by itself" (32).

Schwarz also makes the interesting observation that numerous pastors, with whom he has spoken, are in the process of changing their worship services into seeker services, but they have not investigated whether this specific form of evangelism is appropriate for their context. Schwarz says his research shows that seeker services are just one of several good tools that work in different contexts. Church growth is not determined by liturgical or contemporary worship or whether it targets Christians or non-Christians; instead, Schwarz states that his research shows that the deciding factor is whether "the worship service is an inspiring experience for the participant" (Natural 31). Schwarz defines the word "inspiring" in the literal sense of "inspiratio," which means an inspiredness, which comes from the Spirit of God. "Whenever the Holy Spirit is truly at work (and His presence is not merely presumed), He will have a concrete effect upon the way a worship service is conducted including the entire atmosphere of a gathering" (32). Schwarz says people attending truly inspired services typically indicate that "going to church is fun" (32). The use of the word "fun" may indicate that Schwarz's definition of the word "inspiring" does not correspond to the understanding of his interviewees.

Like Schwarz, Rick Warren points to the significance of the presence of God in worship. "Worship is a powerful witness to unbelievers if God's presence is felt and if the message is understandable" (241).

Patrick Keifert gives three sources of religiously relevant information: tradition, culture, and faith experience. Keifert suggests that each of these must be respected and integrated into worship for it to prove engaging and meaningful for the participant stranger or long-time adherent. While each element of the triad is necessary, he says that “the first and foremost relevant source for worship planning is the Christian tradition and its norming norm for the scriptures” (143).

Keifert also argues that tradition should not be used in a vacuum. Instead, the insight of tradition must be employed through the lens of faith experience and culture. A responsible approach to worship, in Keifert’s estimation, is one that allows the wisdom of the tradition to serve the urgencies of the contemporary culture and faith experiences in a healthy tension. On one hand, tradition should not mean forcing ancient liturgies, although historically accurate or worthy, upon modern experience, regardless of circumstances. On the other hand, the insight of culture and personal experience wanders aimlessly without the wisdom and guidance of tradition.

In my attempt to reach a theological understanding of the qualities that characterize worship that presumably reaches non-Christians, I looked at worship from four different angles: (1) worship as immanence and transcendence. (2) worship as inculturation. (3) worship as evangelism. (4) worship as means of grace.

Worship as Transcendence and Immanence

In his dissertation The Transcendence of God in Worship, T. Bradley Manley argues that worship is significantly affected by our view of transcendence. He sees adoration occurring within the context of security sustained by confidence that the love offered comes from the God whose power and authority cannot be eclipsed (31). God is

transcendent, exalted over all his works; he is the Creator, the Ruler, the Preserver, and the Lord. He controls the course of nature and history therefore, he deserves our total praise and adoration.

The New Testament like the Old Testament views the transcendence of God as the prominent impetus to worship. Worship, as an act of assigning glory, finds its only appropriate object in the person of the triune God. His exalted nature is reflected in the doxologies of the New Testament (Rom. 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 2:11; 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18; Jude 1:25; Rev. 1:6; 4:11; 5:13; 7:12) and in the Psalms of the Old Testament (Ps. 8:1; 44:1-8; 66:1-9; 92:1-4), which attribute glory, honor, and authority to him.

While God is transcendent, he is also immanent; he is near to all his creation. “God’s immanence does not contradict his transcendence; rather his transcendence implies immanence. Since God perfectly knows and controls all things, he is intimately involved in everything that happens in creation” (Frame 13). God is present everywhere and at all times (Ps. 13:13-15, 139:7-8, 15-16; Prov. 15:3; Rom. 14:12; Heb. 4:13). The ultimate revelation of God’s immanence is found in his incarnation in Jesus Christ: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). In her research paper, The Almighty Weeps: Some Thoughts on the Relationship of the Transcendence and Immanence of God, Sarah L. Hurty argues for a relational understanding of God’s immanence, when she says,

Could it be that God knows and experiences us in two different ways, one from his transcendence and one from his immanence? In his transcendence He knows all about us before we are even born. He knows the number of hairs on our head and the number of days of our life. He

knows each place we go, the smallest things we do, and indeed our very thoughts without them knowing it. It is all knowledge concerning that person, with no detail lacking. But perhaps this is knowledge from a distance.

Could it be that in his immanence God comes to know us in relationship? It is this experiential intimacy that is the primary element of the biblical meaning of knowledge. Could it even be said that he experiences us in a new way as we relate with Him? This would not be unlike how Jesus must have come to know His own creation when He became man. If so, this would give new meaning to our relationship with Him. We know that he delights in our praises, but how and why? It is not because He is a dispassionate God who sits from afar, approving His people's worship of Him on the earth-stage below. We are not performing for Him for His amusement. Rather in prayer and praise and worship, we are attending to the reality of God. We are telling Him we love Him as we engage in mutual relationship. (11)

Transcendence and Immanence in the Christological Hymns

God is not only transcendent and immanent in relation to his creation in general; he is also in a special way transcendent and immanent in relation to his believing people. He is the Lord, their transcendent ruler (Ps. 93:1-2). He is also their immanent savior and deliverer (Hos. 13:4-5).

We see the relationship between God's transcendence and immanence in the Christological hymns in the New Testament (John 1: 1-14; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:2b-4). Ben Witherington, III, argues that the early Christological hymns had a characteristic V pattern chronicling the preexistence, earthly existence, and post-existence of the Son. He sees them as exercises in narrative Christology tracing the full career of the Son, not just his earthly ministry (Many Faces 79). Christ's role in the creation as well as in the redemption is presented.

Let us now take a closer look at one of the Christological hymns, Philippians 2:6-11:

Though he was in the form of God,

he did not regard equality with God
 as something to be exploited,
 but emptied himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
 being born in human likeness.
 And being found in human form,
 he humbled himself
 and became obedient to the point of death—
 even death on a cross.
 Therefore God also highly exalted him
 and gave him the name
 that is above every name,
 so that at the name of Jesus
 every knee should bend,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 and every tongue should confess
 that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.

As characteristic of the Christological hymns according to Witherington, this hymn moves directly from the birth to the death of Christ, focusing on the moments of soteriological and christological importance during Jesus' earthly life (Many Faces 79). The hymn begins in transcendence; Jesus is equal with God. Witherington says, "He not merely appeared to have the form of God, but he had a form that truly manifested the very nature and being of God" (80). When Jesus was in heaven, he made the decision to empty himself and enter into the deepest immanence the world has ever seen. "He stripped himself, which likely means he set aside his rightful divine prerogatives or perhaps his glory in order to be fully and truly human" (80). God incarnated himself in Christ and took on the form of a slave to serve all others. Christ became human, he became flesh and blood, and in obedience he sacrificed himself.

The second part of the hymn is the exaltation. Because of his sacrifice, God highly exalted him, and Christ was given God's very name and deserves this sort of homage (Witherington, Many Faces 81). Christ returned into transcendence, and at his

name all knees shall bend and all tongues confess to the glory of God the Father that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We can assume that the large amount of liturgical material, like the prayers and hymns the apostles included in their epistles, were treasured and used in the young churches in Asia and Europe (Hustad 109). Through this hymn in Paul's letter to the Philippians, the worshipping communities acknowledged God's transcendent greatness in reverence and awe, in praise and adoration. They acknowledged their need for salvation through Jesus Christ, and they rejoiced in God's immanence that he had chosen to draw near to this world in Jesus Christ. They also bowed down recognizing and confessing him as their Lord and King. The hymn is a balanced account and worship of the transcendent God who became immanent through his incarnation in Christ. He is the Christ who is exalted and reigns in transcendence, and he is the immanent Christ who saves the people of this world.

European Heritage or Made in America

In his book Discontinuity and Hope, Lyle Schaller distinguishes between what he calls the "made in America" religious traditions and those that represent a western European heritage. Churches with a western European heritage tend to emphasize the transcendence of God, while the American tradition emphasizes a personal relationship with Jesus the savior. The European heritage tends to design worship to strengthen the faith of the believer, while the American tradition assumes worship also can persuade the nonbeliever of the truth and relevance of the Christian faith. The corporate worship of God in the western European tradition tends to place a high value on an intellectual approach to the faith, while the "Made in America" traditions usually place a greater

emphasis on an experiential approach to the faith (26-29). Schaller's description of the American churches appears also to be a fairly accurate description of the evangelical free churches in Denmark.

If Schaller is right, an imbalance towards a more transcendent and intellectual understanding of God in western European Christianity might possibly affect our understanding and practice of worship. This imbalance can be observed in Folkekirken, and it may be present to some extent in the Danish evangelical free churches as well.

A Balanced View of Transcendence and Immanence

Frame says, "A biblically balanced view of worship must take into account both God's transcendence and his immanence, his exaltation and his nearness, his majestic holiness and his immeasurable love" (14). The hymn's final confession that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:11) implies this balanced worship of the transcendent and immanent God revealed to us in Christ. Manley also argues for this balance between transcendence and immanence, when he says,

On balance, transcendence apart from immanence leaves the creature without the knowledge of God much less providing a cause for adoring worship, for revelation itself intimates a kind of drawing near. So then, any biblical sense of worship requires the complementing truths of transcendence and immanence. (31)

What are the consequences if this balance in worship is not maintained? Manley makes the observation that while giving attention to those expressions of God's character are indicative of his immanence, goodness, love, mercy, and grace as preeminently displayed in the atonement, the attributions of transcendence, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, righteousness, and holiness, are frequently neglected in some contemporary worship (30).

A strong focus on God's divine transcendence may on the positive side create a sense of awe in the presence of the almighty, holy, jealous, majestic, and powerful God. On the negative side, it may make God appear distant, aloof, and unapproachable. This may be the danger in Manley's strong emphasis on God's transcendence. The same danger may be present in some of the deeply devoted worship practices as presented by Thomas Bjerkholt. "In praise and worship I must forget everybody else. In that I will behold the Lord in his glory and might" (13). Though Bjerkholt emphasizes that worship comes from the heart and leads the worshipper into a closer relationship with God, he does not leave much room for God's immanence.

A strong focus on God's immanence, like that of Sarah L. Hurty's, on the positive side may create a sense of God's unconditional love and presence in the life of the believer. On the negative side, it may lose Manley's sight of God's majesty, holiness and omnipotence. Howard A. Snyder emphasizes the importance of *koinonia* for an ongoing experience of the fullness of God's transcendence and immanence.

Believers need those times of solemn corporate worship in which the High and Holy God is honored with dignity and reverence. But in the midst of the dignity and reverence many a lonely believer inwardly cries out for the warm, healing touch of *koinonia*. Believers need to know by experience that the Most High is also the Most Nigh (Isaiah 57:15). If traditional corporate worship is not regularly supplemented with informal opportunities for *koinonia*, believers easily drift into a practical deism while the church becomes the sacred guardian of a powerless form of godliness. On the other hand, form and liturgy take on new meaning for Christians who are living and growing in *koinonia*. (Problem 97).

In Snyder's thinking, *koinonia*, the close community experienced in a small group or possibly experienced in a corporate worship setting is what makes an experience of God's immanence possible.

Methodist theologian Geoffrey Wainwright welcomes a move towards greater

immanence in the relations between God and the world. “It [immanence] seems to me the appropriate speculative counterpart to the liturgical datum of a worship whose proper address is to Abba” (351). Wainwright sees the address “abba” as a true expression of the proximity between God and humanity in terms of a personal relationship. This personal relationship also allows us to conceive God’s transcendence in a way that avoids false remoteness. God upholds and transforms his creation from within. In his upholding and transforming, he is transcendent. Because he does it from within, he is immanent. “In the terms of personal relationship by which Christian worship is unashamedly characterized, the transcendent immanence or immanent transcendence of God expresses itself as God’s love for his creatures” (351). William A. Beckham expresses the same when he suggests an interpretation of transcendence as the way humanity relates to God in his Godness and of immanence as the way God relates to humanity in his humanness (84). Wainwright understands liturgy as the ritual focus of our love for the one who first and always loves us. That worship takes place in the Spirit is a sign of the closeness of a God who can be immanent without forfeiting his transcendence. He is among us and within us to transform us into his moral likeness as love, which is the best worship we can give him (352). This would be to “let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

Helge Pahas simply and clearly expresses a balanced view of transcendence and immanence in the following way.

We have the goal, that worship should be to the glory of God, so that he is glorified and honored, and so that we are filled with him. If we haven’t encountered God as it is our hearts’ desire, when we gather for worship, we feel a little disappointed when we go home. (15)

Worship as Inculturation

The adaptation of worship to indigenous cultures and customs is a process that has taken place on the Christian missionfields since the beginning of the Christian movement. The theological foundation of this process dates back to Paul's arrival in Athens on his second missionjourney (Acts 17:16-21).

Indigenous Preaching in Athens

Athens was in Paul's time far from its former glory. With its approximately five thousand inhabitants, Athens was without any political significance and totally in the shadow of flourishing Corinth (Larsson 379). Paul's visit in Athens had limited impact on the ongoing Christian mission, and though we hear of a few persons who came to faith (Acts 17:34) no large Christian community was founded in the city. Yet clearly Luke wanted to emphasize this event as a climax on the second missionjourney (Fougner 278). The reason for doing this is that Athens exposed all pagan religion and idolatry. In no other place in the Greco-Roman world were so many and such magnificent temples found. Athens was the center of Hellenistic culture and the domicile for the great philosophical schools and the most excellent educational system. However Paul found no pleasure in all the beautiful buildings; he was *παρωξυνετο* (Acts 17:16), greatly distressed, indignant (Larsson 379-80).

When Paul walked around in the *αγορα*, the center of ordinary life, he dialoged with a group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, the leading and most fashionable philosophical schools of that time.

The Epicureans were named after their founder, the philosopher Epicure (341-270

BC). His philosophical system was built on Democrit's teaching that all things basically consist of atoms, even man and the soul of man. Epicure did not believe in any sort of life after death. He taught that all the atoms will be spread in the wind after a person's death, and the personality will dissolve. The Epicureans were agnostics. They believed that the gods lived in a divine heavenly world, but they denied that the gods had even the slightest interest in the life of humankind. Epicureanism was a materialistic philosophy, and the keyword was pleasure. A person should seek to gain as much pleasure as possible; however, spiritual pleasure was regarded as more valuable than sensual pleasure (Larsson 387; Fougner 279-80).

The Stoics were materialists like the Epicureans. Their founder Zenon (336-264 BC) was a materialist and an atheist, but Stoicism developed into a more pantheistic way of thinking. The Stoics taught the existence of a universal reason, pictured as a fire that saturates everything. To the Stoics, the meaning of life was to live in agreement with this universal reason, which meant to love and accept one's destiny. The ideal to the Stoics was to live in *απαθεια*, meaning to not complain about one's destiny but to do one's duty. They believed that after death the human soul would ascend and unite with the universal reason. Any understanding of a resurrection, not to speak of a resurrection in the flesh, was outside of their comprehension (Larsson 387; Fougner 279-80).

The Epicureans and the Stoics responded to what Paul said by calling him a *σπερμολογος*, a seedpicker, an expression used to describe a person who picks up words of wisdom from different teachers and then presents himself as a philosopher. Others said that he was preaching new gods. They seem to have misunderstood Paul's strong emphasis on *Ιησουν και την αναστασιν* and thought he was adding a couple of new

gods to the Olympus, in the shape of the “Healer” and his wife, “Restoration.” The idea of the dead rising was a novel one to Greeks, and Ben Witherington, III suggests that this might be the reason why they assumed Paul was using a name, not referring to a concept or event (Acts 5:15).

Paul carefully examined the cultural and religious context, and he was ready to preach when they took him to the Areopagus. He began by commending the Athenians for their religious sincerity. Then he moved directly to his observation of an inscription on an altar, “To an unknown God” (Acts 17:23). The case for monotheism is fully presented using the inscription as a launching pad for an exposition of the one true God as opposed to the inadequacy of polytheism. The precise origin of the altar to an unknown God is not certain, and conflicting accounts exist among ancient writers. However several sources speak of altars to unknown gods (Larsson 380).

The Greeks seem to have had two main reasons for raising altars to unknown gods. One was that unknown gods were considered authors of good fortune; another was that the Greeks feared that they would pass over some deity.

Having pointed out the shallowness and the insecurity of polytheism to the Athenians, Paul proceeded from the impersonal and indefinite deity to which the Greeks could easily relate and presented the personal and specific Christian God to them. Paul did not quote the Old Testament, which would have shown a lack of sensitivity and would have been meaningless to the Athenians. The quotations he uses are from Greek poets, but his doctrine of God and Jesus Christ was totally biblical. Paul contextualized his message. The content of the gospel was preserved while the mode of expression was tuned to the ears of the recipients (Newbigin, Galskab 10).

Paul displayed God as the unique creator: God does not live in temples; he does not need to be served, (Acts 17:24-25) he does not need anything. He is the giver of everything. Here Paul quoted Psalm 50:9-12 indirectly. Luke uses the word *κοσμος*, a word seldom used in the New Testament which means fullness of the world. The use of *κοσμος* here is an example of how Paul used a Hellenistic vocabulary in his sermon.

In verse 25, Paul combined the Epicurean belief that God does not need anything from humans and cannot be served by them with the Stoic belief that God is the source of all life. Paul tried to have as much common ground with his audience as possible all the way through his sermon, even as he undermined their position (Fougnier 283-85).

God the creator is then shown to be the sustainer of humankind whom he has made of a common stock, which was an ungratifying thought to the Greeks who had very high thoughts of themselves and considered other peoples to be inferior and uncivilized. Paul's underlining of the unity of all nations was obviously directed against this ethnic prejudice (Fougnier 284).

Paul then quoted the Greek poets Epimenides, "In him we live and move and have our being," and Aratus, "For we too are his offspring" (Acts 17:28) in order to preach Christian doctrine, namely that personal beings owe their origin and significance, their life, and everything to a personal creator God. The specifically Christian content of the sermon begins here, at the point where the audience has been jolted into an awareness of their moral responsibility to the creating and sustaining God. No idol, no abstraction, but the man God has appointed is set before them, together with a challenge to *μετανοειν*, to give up their old thoughts and to think and live in a new way, to change their direction, to change their attitude to the supreme God. The God, who through the man he has

appointed, will judge the world in the virtue of that man's resurrection.

Paul made use of his knowledge of the Greek worldview, which David Burnett defines as the "shared framework of ideas held by a particular society concerning how they perceive the world" (13). Paul studied the Greek culture through observation and dialogue. Paul's approach to ministry in Athens and his preaching on the Areopagos gives us some understanding of how the early Christian missionaries used inculturation when they communicated the biblical worldview in a Greco-Roman culture.

Inculturation in Worship

The process of inculturation used to refer to ways in which Western liturgies were adjusted to the local culture. In recent years the term inculturation has been applied to a process by which the insights, attitudes, and practices of indigenous cultures and traditional patterns of worship are creatively combined to give birth to new forms of Christian liturgical expression (S. White 186). The process of inculturation involves respect for the varieties and gifts of differing peoples as legitimate expressions of worship. The reality is the acceptance of cultural diversity as one of God's gifts to humanity and a willingness to incorporate this diversity in various expressions of worship. For centuries Western Christianity has emphasized European ways of worship, while a whole world has been singing God's praise (J. White Introduction 38).

Viggo Soegaard in his article "Dimensioner i Kristen Kommunikation" makes the point that, "pastors cannot prepare a good sermon without basic information about the listeners and their context, and such knowledge can only be achieved through research" (56). This research to gain knowledge about the listeners and their context was what Paul did when he came to cities like Athens.

From other passages in Acts, we know that Paul's preaching was different in the different cities and communities in which he ministered, depending on local cultural circumstances (Acts 9:22; 13:16-41; 19:8-10; 20:18-35; 22:3-21; 26:2-29). Susan J. White points out that this process of inculturation continued for at least the first four centuries of the Church's existence (187). James F. White, who made the observation that a recognizable unity exists among the various churches in the first four centuries of the Christian church but great regional variety, supports this view. "The period gives abundant precedents for inculturation" (Brief History 42)

However, the political leaders had a growing desire to use Christian worship as part of a strategy for unifying the empire, and thus the original liturgical diversity began to be restricted. In the fourth and fifth centuries, increasing concern about worship as a potential vehicle for the expression of heretical views further reduced the creativity in worship, until the end of the sixth century when total uniformity of Christian liturgy was the desired goal. Even the native languages were deemed unacceptable for use in public worship, and Latin became the only acceptable language of Christian liturgy (S. White 187). Some of the original diversity in worship was restored with the Reformation in the sixteenth century; however, not until the twentieth century that missionaries seriously began to consider local culture and customs as a decisive factor in the shaping of Christian worship (188).

A. F. Noerager Pedersen points to the fact that worship historically has changed both in terms of content and format due to cultural shifts.

It has been a striking feature that whenever Christianity has come to a tribe or a nation it has always manifested itself through worship of some kind. In the same way worship in its traditional form has always come in the center of attention when ideas are shifting during cultural changes and

crisis within the Christian environment. (13)

Paul's sermon in Athens shows us that one of the strengths of the gospel lies in the fact that it can be expressed through countless particularities of human culture. This is not only true when Western missionaries minister in Africa or Asia, it is even true when a Western church engages in ministry and in conducting worship in its own cultural context. The cultural and religious pluralism of the Western society must be taken into account by all that are concerned with Christian worship.

Most Danish churches have failed to recognize the growing diversity in their local communities as they become more ethnically, culturally, and religiously plural. One example of this is the continued widespread use of favorite Danish hymns by Niels Frederik Severin Grundtvig, Thomas Kingo, and Hans Adolph Brorson in worship.

Behold a host, arrayed in white,
 Like thousand snowclad mountains bright;
 With palms they stand.
 Who is the band
 Before the throne of light?
 These are the saints of glorious fame,
 Who from the great affliction came
 And in the flood
 Of Jesus' blood
 Are cleansed from guilt and blame.
 Now gathered in the holy place,
 Their voices they in worship raise.
 Their anthems swell
 Where God does dwell
 Mid angels' songs of praise. (Brorson 550)

Built on the Rock the Church shall stand
 Even when steeples are falling,
 Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;
 Bells are still chiming and calling,
 Calling the young and old to rest,
 But above all the soul distressed,
 Longing for the rest everlasting. (Grundtvig 529)

Like the golden sun ascending,
 Breaking through the gloom of night,
 On the earth its glory spending
 So that darkness takes to flight
 Thus my Jesus from the grave
 And death's dismal, dreadful cave
 Rose triumphant Easter morning
 At the early purple dawning.

You have died for my transgression;
 All my sins on you were laid.
 You have won for me salvation;
 On the cross my debt was paid.
 From the grave I shall arise
 And shall meet you in the skies.
 Death itself is transitory;
 I shall lift my head in glory. (Kingo 147)

These hymns rely almost exclusively on images from an idealized, rural past, where green fields, beech wood forests, and sunrises were common, everyday experiences and when the Danes still had an understanding of Christian doctrine and language usage.

Susan J. White makes the interesting observation that when we speak of inculturation of worship we tend to focus on the ways in which our “normal” worship can be changed to fit the needs of other cultures. However, the speed with which our own culture changes means that we may use forms from a culture we have moved beyond (190). Lars Kolind points to Jesus’ use illustrations and stories from the everyday life of his listeners in his preaching and teaching. “He didn’t use rituals and modes of expression from times past. And if he had lived in the middle of today’s society, he would have used today’s media and vocabulary” (144).

Worship Is Countercultural

Paul’s ministry in Athens shows us what inculturation and contextualization in

form and style may mean without compromising the content. Paul's project is to make the world credible to the gospel, not to make the gospel credible to the world. That is the very tension of the inculturation of worship. Can churches reach non-Christians through worship simply by genuinely worshipping God? Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon deal with this tension. They identify the Christians as resident aliens and call us to

influence the world by being the church, that is, by being something the world is not and can never be, lacking the gift of faith and vision, which is ours in Christ. The confessing church seeks the visible church, a place clearly visible to the world, in which people are faithful to their promises, love their enemies, tell the truth, honor the poor, suffer for righteousness, and thereby testify to the amazing community creating power of God. The confessing church has no interest in withdrawing from the world, but it is not surprised when its witness evokes hostility from the world. The confessing church moves from the activist church's acceptance of the culture with a few qualifications, to rejection of the culture with a few exceptions. (46-47)

The church's worship should not to be so alien that it does not relate with the culture around it, but at the same time it dare not be so resident that it waters down the gospel and robs it of its transforming power. Wainwright uses incarnational terminology to make the same point. He speaks about "Christ the transformer of culture" and says, "The pattern of death and resurrection displayed by the incarnate Christ means, when repeated in history through dying to sin and living to God, at least the beginnings of a transformation of existing human life and culture" (394).

Lesslie Newbigin emphasizes that worship in itself is counter-cultural in at least two areas. Reverence, which is the attitude that looks up in admiration and love to one whom is greater and better than oneself. Reverence is generally regarded as unworthy to human dignity. Thanksgiving, which occurs when the church gathers as a community

which acknowledges that it lives by the amazing grace of a boundless kindness, while our contemporary society speak of human rights. In Christian worship the language of rights is out of place except when it serves to remind us of the rights of others. In Christian worship we acknowledge that if we had received justice instead of grace we would be on our way to condemnation (Gospel 227-28).

While Christian worship must be inculturated to reach non-Christians, the Church must be aware of the countercultural and culture-transforming nature of its worship.

Worship as Evangelism

When worship is viewed primarily through the lens of evangelism, worship becomes the gathering where Christians make their public affirmation and witness. The Christians meet to say who and what they are, and in doing so they reinforce their identity. The Christian *kerygma*, the proclamation of Jesus Christ as crucified and risen from the dead, creates the community. In Thor Strandenaes' understanding worship offers its "most important contribution to mission by celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and by communicating its consequences. (Strandenaes 29)

Worship—the Public Work of Christians

In the history of the Church, the *kerygma* has been proclaimed in a variety of ways in the liturgy. The apostle Peter says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2.9). The public work of the Christians is to proclaim God's mighty acts in Christ so that the world might believe.

The word "liturgy," which is a common synonym for worship, comes from the

idea of worship as a “public work.” Susan J. White explains that it originates in two Greek words, λαος, meaning people, and εργον, meaning work, and the New Testament λειτουργια is used to describe the general ministry of all Christians (11). Paul uses the word in 2 Corinthians 9:11-12:

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry [λειτουργιας] not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

According to Susan J. White, this means that “the liturgy” is a ministry not only of thanksgiving and praise but also of service to the community (11). The point is that worship is not something that is done for the worshippers; worship is done by the worshippers. As Robert E. Webber says, “Worship is a verb. It not something done for us, but by us” (Worship 2). The worship attenders are not the audience while the worship leader, pastor, choir, organist, and musicians are the actors on stage, as seems to be the case in so many Danish churches: Everyone present is a worshipper and together they form the worshipping community.

The Church’s First Priority: Worship or Evangelism?

Sally Morgenthaler points to worship as the first priority of the Church. “It is the ultimate purpose of the church and has been ever since its beginning” (38). She finds the scriptural evidence for this position in passages throughout the New Testament, where Jesus accentuates worship above everything else. He prioritizes Mary’s worship over Martha’s business (Luke 10:41-42). He defends a woman, who out of the intensity of her adoration, poured precious oil on his head, while the disciples complained that the oil should have been sold and the money given to the poor (Matt. 26:10-11). When a Sadducee asked Jesus what commandment was the most important Jesus replied, “The

first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ (Mark 12:30)

Morgenthaler sees worship as the main attraction of the early Church as it is described in Acts 2:42-47 (39).

However, worship as the number one purpose of the Church seems to conflict with what many churches, like the United Methodist Church, believe to be the main occupation and purpose of the Church. “The Mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ” (Book of Discipline 114). How do we deal with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19, where Jesus commands us to go and make disciples of all nations?

Morgenthaler affirms that evangelism is an imperative of Jesus to the Church, but she sees the imperative in the light of Jesus’ words in John 4:23: “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.” Her solution to the possible tension between worship and evangelism is that the true goal of evangelism is to produce more and better worshippers. In Romans 15:8-11 Paul says,

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,
 “Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
 and sing praises to your name”;
 and again he says,
 “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people”;
 and again,
 “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
 and let all the peoples praise him.”

“Although evangelism is one of the central tasks of the church, it is worship that

drives evangelism, not vice-versa” (Morgenthaler 41). Webber has the same understanding. He says, “The church is first a worshipping community. Evangelism and other functions of ministry flow from the worship of the church” (Worship 7-8). Frame takes a different approach; he understands the Great Commission as the central mandate to the Church. With evangelism so central to the Church’s calling, everything the Church does will have an evangelistic aspect, including Sunday worship (22). He opposes the view that worship is primarily a gathering for Christians, who then depart from worship to evangelize non-Christians (21). Howard A. Snyder constructs an ecological model that identifies the basic elements of the Church’s life as worship, community, and witness. These three functions are directed towards what Snyder identifies as the purpose of the Church: “the glory of God.” Although Snyder speaks of worship as one of three interrelated, basic elements of the Church’s life, he appears to give some priority to worship. “Worship—praising God and hearing him speak through the Word—is the heart of being God’s people” (Radical 121).

Snyder argues that “given the proper biblical and practical rhythm of worship, community and witness, the church maintains a spiritual ecological balance that keeps it lively and faithful” (Radical 119). This becomes especially interesting when he speaks about the relationship between worship and witness.

A church weak in worship has little will for witness. Nor does it have much to witness about.... Viewed ecologically, witness is not the primary purpose of the church but the inevitable and necessary fruit of a worshipping and nurturing community. (124)

From the perspective of evangelism, evangelistic fruitfulness enlivens both the church’s worship and its community life (134).

Worship and Non-Christians

If worship and evangelism are closely connected we must ask the question, how does worship evangelize? If worship in itself evangelizes, what specifically is the evangelizing impact of worship? Morgenthaler says,

It happens in two ways: first, as unbelievers hear the truth about God (through worship songs, prayers, communion, baptism, Scripture, testimonies, dramas and so on); and second—and more importantly—as they observe the real relationship between worshippers and God. (88)

Morgenthaler argues that Scripture never says that seekers do not belong in worship. “Nowhere does it say that seekers cannot be moved by observing God’s interaction with believers” (81). Mary J. Scifres concurs and says,

I believe that seekers can and should be welcome to worship with followers. Any style of seeker worship can be worship appropriate for followers of any maturity level. In the Book of Acts, there are no indications that separate worship events were offered to differentiate new Christians, or non-Christians from longer term Christians. (56)

Morgenthaler quotes 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 and concludes that the presence of the stranger or seeker during corporate worship was a common occurrence in the New Testament (81).

Frame is less categorical. He sees the non-Christian visitor as an anomaly in the New Testament and refers to the same passage in 1 Corinthians. However, he argues that the New Testament does not exclude non-Christians from worship; rather, it encourages the church to plan its worship with the unbelieving visitors in mind. He understands Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 as an encouragement to proclaim the fullness of God’s word with the utmost clarity, forcefulness, and offensiveness. “What could be a better testimony to the unbeliever than the sight and sound of God’s people praising their Lord for their salvation in Christ and announcing God’s judgement on the wicked?” (21-

22).

Rick Warren makes the same point. Only believers can worship God, but unbelievers can watch believers worship. They will notice how the believers are changed by the worship, and they may sense that God is supernaturally moving (241). Lee Strobel writes about the time he first came to Willow Creek Community Church: “Some irreligious people like Leslie and me when we were unchurched, aren’t comfortable in worship settings because they find it difficult to praise a God they do not believe in” (163). Yet Strobel’s encounter with Christians in worship made a difference. “What I found amazed me: These people really believed this stuff. I didn’t agree with them, but I couldn’t dismiss their sincerity and conviction” (200). Strobel’s experience may be what Morgenthaler means by saying “God not only intends for seekers to observe our worship. God intends seekers to become worshippers” (83).

Worship as Means of Grace

In the Wesleyan theological tradition, worship is understood as a means of grace. Worship expresses God’s reality and presence in ways through which people can both hear and respond to the gospel. The issue for Wesleyans is not whether a specific worship service is textually correct or historically in line with the early Church, but whether worship effectively communicates the saving story of God’s work through Jesus Christ to the world. Helge Pahas puts this way of thinking into a Danish context, “Worship is our best means of evangelism-to win new Christians. Therefore there must be room for conversion” (17).

The goal of every worship service is to effect a new relationship between God and every person present (Langford 62). As the Word of God is read, proclaimed, and

responded to, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are shared, and gathering for fellowship in community occurs. God offers salvation and calls people to faithful discipleship.

The Wesleyan tradition emphasizes both God's actions and human response in worship. According to Langford, Wesley claimed that worship, in which God's gift of grace unites with individual faith through the ordinary established patterns of the church, is the primary means through which God offers salvation (64).

Langford further observes that Wesley's liturgical approach holds both gospel and human experience in tension. On the one hand, Wesley faithfully holds on to classical orthodox Christianity. On the other hand, he is remarkably sensitive to the context in which he is ministering. Wesley returns to traditional theology in his concern for human salvation, and at the same time he possesses a remarkable awareness of the intellectual, social, and moral ethos in which people live. Langford ascribes Wesley's astounding success to the holism Wesley achieved in his sensitivity to both dimensions (64).

Wesley's theology was highly practical; he was not concerned with abstract definitions of God or philosophical reflections on the nature of life. His theology was intended to change lives. His practical theology brings gospel and life together, which has profound implications for worship.

The polar dynamic between preacher and hearer, between essential message and existential human reality, between what should be said and what can be heard, between the gospel that transforms life and lives that can be vitalized by the gospel is impossible to separate. The preached and received Word are so tightly intertwined that they cannot be pulled apart without damage to both. Preaching is intended to evoke response; the

gospel is proclaimed in order to transform life. While the message to be proclaimed is foundational, likewise the context in which the message is proclaimed must be understood equally with due sensitivity and adroit interpretation (Langford 64-65).

Wesley's theology had several implications for his worship and ministry. He moved outside of the churches and preached and celebrated the sacraments outdoors. He did not use a lectionary in his open-air meetings but chose his texts for particular audiences and settings. His brother Charles wrote new hymns and often set them to existing popular tunes. John Wesley encouraged ordinary people to speak in church. He broke many established liturgical traditions because of his theological perspective that worship exists for the sake of the spiritual formation of people through the power of the gospel (Malm 55-78). Morgenthaler calls this exchange between the God of Scripture and God's people "supernatural exchange" (48). God speaks through his Word, and we are convicted and repent. God extends mercy through Jesus Christ, and we respond with adoration. To Morgenthaler, real worship provides opportunities for God and God's people to express their love for each other. Our Western culture breeds spectators, but God had something else in mind when worship was created. God wants relationship. Worship calls for total involvement; it demands nothing less than the complete, conscious, and deliberate participation of the worshippers. According to Morgenthaler the final litmus test of worship is transformation (52). Snyder has the same perception of the life-changing nature of worship.

Here is the key. In worship the curtains of time and space are thrown back, and we see anew the realm of the Spirit. Worshipping God in spirit and truth gives us a window on eternity. It changes our lives as we see again that we really do live in two worlds. We begin to see from God's perspective. (Radical 122)

Worship is a true encounter with God that leaves us with changed hearts and calls us to changed lives. It is a transformation from the inside out.

Change in the New Testament—A Theology of Change

The New Testament grants the Church much freedom for its forms of ministry.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23,

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Paul writes that though he has certain rights within the realm of Christian liberty, he is willing to set them aside to reach the lost people of his time. According to Malphurs, "Paul does not advocate disobedience to biblical imperatives. He discusses various Christian liberties allowed by those imperatives" (Pouring 170). Paul speaks to a Gentile culture and argues that gospel and culture are dynamically related. "Culture is a vehicle to convey the gospel, but culture is not the gospel. Accommodation is necessary, but conformity is not" (Langford 68).

Paul writes that he became like those under the law to reach them with the gospel. He became like those outside the law to win them with the gospel. This is what we saw Paul practice in our earlier examination of his ministry in Athens (Acts 17:16-34). Becoming all things to all people is necessary in order that the gospel might be adequately and effectively conveyed. The desire to reach people with the gospel appears to drive Paul to change and to adapt his form and style to his audience.

Paul's understanding of the incarnation seems to be another source that drives him to call on the Church to give up its own to reach people with the gospel. Paul encourages the Church in Philippi to imitate Christ (Phil. 2:6-11). The verses 12-18 of Philippians 2 emphasize the Philipians' work of salvation. Paul urges the Philippians to work on their salvation like "children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world." Paul uses the Christological hymn in a missiological perspective as well as in a soteriological perspective. As Christ gave up his divine privileges and emptied himself, to reach us who are lost so should we give up everything for the greater purpose of reaching the lost people of this generation.

Paul models the same attitude in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) and he is addressing the same issue in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:19-23) As stated previously in this chapter, the New Testament does not mandate a certain form of worship. Langford argues,

The Bible has never dictated only one way to worship. The incarnation – God taking on human form – witnesses to God's affirmation of humanity in a particular cultural context. Jesus, the word become flesh, preached inside and outside the synagogue and temple and took the gospel to a lake, mountainsides, homes, and streets. Peter invited gentiles into the church, and Philip witnessed in a chariot to an Ethiopian eunuch. At the first Jerusalem Conference (as found in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 15), Peter, James, and Paul determined that gentiles would become Christians without first becoming Jews. Paul on Mars hill in Athens preached in Greek about an unknown God already worshipped by the Athenians. (68-69)

Malphurs states that the problem for most typical churches is that they have not made the adjustments necessary to remain biblically relevant to the culture. A culturally relevant ministry is the result of understanding the theology of change. A correct theology of change, according to Malphurs, focuses on the issue of knowing what a

church can and must not change and then making the appropriate applications (Pouring 169).

The functions of ministry form the basis for and make up what the church does. These basic functions must be derived from Scripture. The functions are further characterized by having a meaning. Some examples would be evangelism-telling people how to have a relationship with Christ, prayer-talking with God, communion-remembering Christ's death (Malphurs, Doing Church 102). Since these functions are biblically based, they are eternally unchangeable. The Christian Church will always base its ministry on them. They form the essential ingredients that make up the ministries of the church (Pouring 170).

The forms of ministry are built on the functions of ministry. They affect how and when a church does what it does. Forms serve the functions. The forms consist of the church's methods for ministry. Some examples are the church's style of worship, the church's style of evangelism, or the church's mode of baptism (Malphurs, Doing Church 103). Malphurs argues for several applications of this understanding to the practices of the church. First, the church needs to distinguish between what is actually biblically and binding and what is not. Second, the church must be willing to discard their cultural practices when they are no longer relevant. "They must put other people, lost people before themselves" (Pouring 171). Third, the church must exegete its culture as well as the Bible. Fourth, the church should constantly evaluate its ministry forms. "Outside of biblical functions there should be no holy cows" (171).

When Malphurs distinguishes between what is actually biblically binding and what is not, he distinguishes between the essentials and the nonessentials of the faith. The

essentials are doctrines such as the Trinity, and the deity, and the substitutionary atonement of Christ, while the nonessentials may be the form of church government, the mode of baptism, and the time and place when church meets (Doing Church 15-20). Malphurs argues against the understanding that the church today must slavishly imitate the customs and practices of the early Church (27) He finds the rationale in his two general hermeneutic principles: (1) We should interpret the Bible literally, unless there is a strong indication in the text to do otherwise; and (2) When we interpret the Bible, we should take into account the historical, linguistic, and cultural gaps between ancient times and today (29). Concerning worship Langford arrives at the same conclusion, “[T]he Bible has never dictated only one way of worship” (68).

Malphurs moves one step further when he writes about a positive hermeneutic to determine whether we must find our church practice in the New Testament.

The positive hermeneutic argues that though a practice isn’t found in the Bible, we are still free to perform it as long as it does not differ with or contradict in any way the clear teaching of scripture. This qualification is imperative, for God’s Word is always the final authority regarding what the church can and can’t do. (Doing Church 69)

Malphurs sees the church’s challenge as being able to think biblically. The church’s focus should not be on what is either present or absent from the Bible; rather, the concern is the normative teaching of God’s word on any and all matters related to the ministry of the church (Doing Church 71).

Malphurs’ theology of change is summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1
A Theology of Change

Functions	Forms
Timeless, unchanging (absolutes)	Temporal, changing (non-absolute)
Based on scripture	Based on culture
Mandates (ministry precepts)	Methods (ministry practices)
All churches must pursue (found in the Bible)	All churches free to choose (agrees with the Bible)
Accomplishes the church's purpose	Accomplishes the church's functions

Source: Malphurs, Doing Church 107

Christian Schwarz, in his book Paradigm Shift in the Church, presents a bipolar ecclesiology where ideally a reciprocal flow exists between a dynamic organism pole and a static organizational pole. Through his research he has identified “inspiring worship service” as one of eight health characteristics of a church, and he argues that the organizational pole and the organic pole are functionally related to each other for all eight (20-21). Schwarz considers church history to be characterized by the tension between change and tradition (151). However, he solves the tension by his bipolar approach. He regards traditions and other institutional elements from a functional point of view. They are neither positive nor negative; they are neutral, and the church must decide what to do with them (157).

Schwarz argues that a functional approach to tradition assumes that we can learn an enormous amount from the experience of our spiritual mothers and fathers. The same

willingness to learn from good experiences includes a willingness to learn from mistakes (Paradigm Shift 157).

Schwarz further makes the point that a functional understanding of tradition cannot ignore the fact that some traditions must be broken. He argues the bipolar approach to the relationship between tradition and change includes the aim of encouraging the church to dare to be more creative and innovative.

Worship and Change

Worship is clearly mandated in Scripture as a function of the church (Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 14:26). However, if Malphurs is right, the local church is free to choose whatever forms are appropriate to accomplish the function of worship and even to change those forms when desired.

Certain emphases can describe the church's understanding of worship such as immanence and transcendence, inculturation, means of grace, and evangelism. These emphases and the focus group the church is trying to reach will determine the forms of worship. The struggle will be to determine which forms best accomplish the function of worship, with the emphases we perceive worship needs to have, if it shall minister to non-Christians. The question will no longer be "if" but "how" do we change?

Change Processes

In the rapidly changing Western culture a significant need exists for knowledge about change specifically in areas of business, organizations, and corporations.

Change is a process that can be viewed from different angles. Everett M. Rogers, in his book Diffusion of Innovations, sees it as a social process in which subjectively perceived information about a new idea is communicated.

Diffusion is a kind of social change, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and are adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs (6).

Rogers identifies four main elements in the diffusion of new ideas.

(1) **Innovation** is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by the person or group of adoption (11);

(2) **Communication channels** are the means by which messages get from one individual to another (17-18);

(3) **Time** is a variable that comes into play in several elements of the diffusion process: (a) in the innovative decision process by which an individual passes from the first knowledge of the innovation to either adoption or rejection, (b) in the relative earliness or lateness with which an innovation is adopted, and (c) in the rate of adoption, usually measured as the number of members of the system that adopt the innovation in a given time period (20); and,

(4) The **social system** is defined as a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal (23).

Rogers describes an innovative decision through a five step process. The first step, called knowledge, occurs when an individual or a unit learns about the existence of an innovation. The second step, called persuasion, occurs when an individual or other decision-making unit forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the innovation. The third step, called decision, occurs when an individual or other decision-making unit engages in activities to the adoption or rejection of the innovation. The fourth step, implementation, occurs when an individual or other decision-making unit puts an innovation into use.

Finally the fifth step, **confirmation**, occurs when an individual or other decision-making unit seeks reinforcement of an innovation-decision that has already been made (20).

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, in their book Behavior of Organizational Management, present a slightly modified version of Kurt Lewin's three-phase change process of unfreezing, change, and refreezing. The aim of unfreezing is to make the group ready to change and break down customs and traditions. Once the individuals are ready for change, they can be provided with new patterns of behavior. This part of the process occurs by identification or internalization.

Identification occurs when individuals learn new behavior patterns by identifying with them and trying to become like them. Internalization occurs when individuals are placed in a situation in which new behaviors are demanded. The new behavior patterns are learned primarily because coping behavior induces new high-strength needs. The most effective change, according to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, will often be the result of combining identification and internalization. Refreezing is the process by which the newly acquired behavior is integrated into the individual's or the group's identity. The concern in the refreezing process is to prevent extinction of the new behavior pattern (481-83).

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson further refer to Edgar Schein's idea of psychological safety in the change process. Schein speaks about two types of anxiety in the present way of functioning. "Anxiety 1" is caused by fear of changing. "Anxiety 2" is caused by fear of not changing. Psychological safety in this situation can be accomplished by a powerful vision that reduces fear of changing and increases the fear of

not changing. The purpose is to focus on anxieties 1 and 2, which implies that the approach must build confidence in the new direction and increasing anxiety about the present way of operating (485).

William Bridges adopts a similar line of thinking. He distinguishes between change and transition. He defines change as situational and external, while he defines transition as the internal psychological process through which people go to come to terms with the new situation (3). Transition begins with letting go of something. However before the organization reaches the new reality, it must pass through a neutral zone, a no-man's-land, This psychological transition process is the difficult part of change, according to Bridges (3-6). Daryl R. Connor says,

No one likes existing in a state of limbo because the in between periods in our lives are filled with instability, conflict, and high stress. This volatile phase of the change process occurs, when the equilibrium of the present stage has been disrupted, but the stability of the desired state is yet to be attained. (88)

Robert E. Quinn emphasizes the need of strong leadership in the change process. He focuses on the process within the leader that will enable the person to find the inherent leadership power to initiate the change. Quinn refers to this process as deep change. While deep change must take place in the leader it must also take place in the organization. Quinn asserts that over the time an organization is in danger of losing sight of its mission and furthermore of losing alignment with the changing external reality. As a result, customers go elsewhere for their products and services. The organization now faces a choice: either to adapt to the new situation or to take the road of slow death (3-5). “Usually the organization can be renewed, energized, or made effective only if some leader is willing to take some big risks by stepping outside the well-defined boundaries”

(5). This deep change effort will, according to Quinn, distort existing patterns of action and involve taking risks (3).

Quinn sees the change process as a Transformational Cycle running through four distinct phases: initiation, uncertainty, transformation, and routinization. “When the system keeps circulating through the various phases, it stays healthy” (168). However, as Quinn realizes, that an organization has difficulties to keep on moving. He lists four traps into which the organization or the individual might fall: illusion, panic, exhaustion, and stagnation. Quinn argues that the transformational cycle must be completed for deep change to continue (169).

Everett M. Rogers points to the central role of the change agent, who is the person that will lead the change process. He identifies seven roles through which the change agent must pass through in the process of change:

- (1) To develop a need for change;
- (2) To establish an information-exchange relationship with his or hers clients, where the change agent is perceived credible, competent, and trustworthy;
- (3) To diagnose the problems of the client;
- (4) To create an intent in the client to change;
- (5) To translate an intent to action through influencing clients’ behavior in accordance with recommendations based on the clients needs;
- (6) To stabilize and prevent discontinuance through reinforcing messages to clients who have adopted, thus freezing the new behavior; and,
- (7) To achieve a terminal relationship through developing a self-renewing behavior on the part of the clients. “The change agent seeks to shift the clients from a

position of reliance on the change agent to one of self-reliance” (337).

Kotter’s Change Process

John P. Kotter, in his book Leading Change, emphasizes the critical need for leadership to make change happen. He describes a process of change and suggests the following eight consecutive stages in the process.

Step one: a sense of urgency must be developed. Without a sense of urgency people will not give the extra effort and make the sacrifices that are needed. If many do not feel the same sense of urgency, the momentum for change will die far short of the finish line. Many organizations have a strong sense of complacency: no crisis are highly visible, the pace is leisurely, standards are not high but average; the focus is on the organization rather than on the customers or the potential customers, external feedback is not collected and many are satisfied with what has been and is accomplished. A magnitude of forces reinforce complacency are present and help maintain the status quo.

Kotter suggests a number of ways to increase the urgency level. Make use of crisis. Set the goals so high that they cannot be achieved by business as usual. Eliminate obvious examples of excess. Insist that staff and board members talk regularly to unsatisfied customers. Use outside consultants and other means to force more honest discussion in board meetings. Be honest and public about the organization’s problems and stop CEO “happy-talk.” Bombard people with information on future opportunities with information on the organization’s current inability to pursue the opportunities (35-49).

Step two: a guiding team or coalition must be created. This team must have the right composition and sufficient trust in the organization to be highly effective under

the new circumstances of change. Four key characteristics must be present: (a) Position power; enough key influencers must be on board, so that those left out cannot block the process; (b) Expertise; enough knowledge and experience must be present to ensure that informed, intelligent and spiritually mature decisions will be made; (c) Credibility; there must be enough people with good reputations so that the team's pronouncements will be taken seriously; and, (d) Leadership; the team must include leaders who are able to drive the change process and should be balanced between leaders and managers (Kotter, 51-66).

If the guiding coalition is not powerful enough, if not all or too few of the key influencers experience an urgency for change, then leadership does not have the power to overcome natural resistance (Kotter 6-7).

Step three: a vision must be created. An effective vision must be imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible and communicable. In the change process, the vision has some essential functions: (a) It clarifies the direction of change; (b) It facilitates major changes by motivating action that is not necessarily in people's short-term self-interest; and, (c) It helps align individuals (Kotter 69-70).

If a strong guiding vision has not been created, decisions and plans will be made randomly because no vision is present to guide the process. Even the smallest decision can generate a heated conflict that saps energy and destroys morale (Kotter 7-9).

Step four: the vision of change must be communicated. When the guiding team has full ownership of the vision, it is ready to be communicated.

If the vision is not communicated sufficiently, or if the communication has not been credible in word and deed, people will not buy into the vision, and the leadership

will be undermined (Kotter 9-11). Kotter estimates that under-communicating the vision by a factor of ten (or even hundred or thousand) is one of the most common mistakes in a change process (9).

Step five: employees must be empowered for broad-based action. Barriers to empowerment can be leaders in different areas, formal structures, information systems, and lack of needed skills. The CEO and the leading staff must identify and deal with these barriers. The vision must be communicated on all levels, structures must be made compatible with the vision, training must be provided, and information and personnel systems must be aligned to the vision (Kotter 101-15).

If obstacles like organizational structures or key leaders who are not on board with the vision are permitted to block the vision, managers on lower levels are disempowered and change is undermined (Kotter 10-11).

Step six: short-term wins must be generated. Wins do not happen by chance. They must be carefully planned. Kotter says that a good short-term win has three characteristics: (a) It is visible; (b) It is unambiguous; and, (c) It is clearly related to the change effort. Short-term wins provide the evidence that sacrifices are worth it. They give the opportunity to relax and celebrate for a few minutes. They help to fine-tune the vision; they undermine resistance. They keep the leaders on board, and finally, they build momentum (Kotter 122-24). Kotter suggests that momentum for the change process are preserved if celebrations occur no more than eighteen months apart (122).

If no or too few short-term wins are created, the urgency level falls, and momentum is lost (Kotter 11-12).

Step seven: Gains must be consolidated and more change produced. Good

leadership will help everyone in the organization understand the big picture, the overall vision and strategies, and the way each project and area fits into the whole. The people serving in different areas all aim for the same long-term goal. After some change and some wins a pressure will emerge to stop the process. At this point the leaders should not let up before the job is done. Critical momentum can be lost and regression may follow (Kotter 133).

The guiding team must use the credibility afforded by short-term wins to tackle additional and bigger change projects. Managers in different areas of the organization provide leadership for specific projects and manage those projects. Time is needed for changes to sink down into the culture of the organization (Kotter 131-44).

If victory is declared too soon, all sense of urgency disappears, and momentum is lost. The change will not be incorporated into the culture of the organization, and the leaders will have severe difficulties in getting the change process going again (Kotter 12-14).

Step eight: The change must be anchored in the culture of the organization.

The changes have not happened until they are anchored in the norms of behavior, in the identity and in the shared values of the organization.

Culture changes only after people's actions have been altered successfully, after the new behavior produces some group benefit for a period of time, and after people see the connection between the new actions and new positive results. Cultural change happens late in the change process. It depends on results and demands a significant amount of communication (Kotter 145-58).

If changes are not anchored firmly in the organization's culture, the change will

not have become part of the identity of the organization and the people. The lack of cultural change will usually show when the organization chooses a new CEO (Kotter 14-15).

Change in the Church

How can these theories of change be applied to the life of the church, specifically in the area of worship?

Aubrey Malphurs' approach to a change process in the church is evidently taken from Kurt Lewin's three-step model: unfreeze the present situation, move to a new level, and refreeze at the new level (Pouring 129).

Unfreeze the present situation. A feeling of discontent with the present situation must be created. Malphurs sees two ways for that to happen. One is that God creates a significant dissatisfaction with the status quo. Another is that the leadership acts by warning of an impending crisis, proclaiming the church's best interests and desires and showing how the status quo works contrary to this, presenting change and innovation as opportunities rather than treats, or challenging the congregation to become the best they can (Malphurs, Pouring 129-33).

Move to a new level. To initiate the change, the leader must cast vision. The vision must be clear and challenge to action. The leader must develop a plan to implement the vision. Finally the leader must recruit a visionary team that is able to implement the dream (Malphurs, Pouring 133-39).

Refreeze at a new level. The ever-present temptation is to slip back to the way things were before; the change must be stabilized. Malphurs suggests that one way to accomplish this is by regularly evaluating all the programs of the church in light of the

vision (Malphurs, Pouring 139-41).

Malphurs emphasizes prayer and faith as key elements in the change process in the church. The leaders must constantly remind themselves of the critical role of prayer in revitalizing people and initiating change (Malphurs, Pouring 144-46).

Malphurs is presumably inspired by Kurt Lewin when he describes three levels of change in the church, First is, change by compliance, which is forced change. People change because they feel they must. These changes are on the surface, not in the heart, and the results are minimal. Second is, change by identification. We identify our own wants and needs for change, and we identify attractive models that exhibit the change we desire. The process may be conscious or unconscious. Third is, change by internalization. This type of change takes place in the heart, and internalization accomplishes maximum change. It takes place because people want it and incorporate it into their lives (Malphurs, Pouring 153).

The Congregational Transformation Model presented by Herrington, Bonem and Furr in their book Leading Congregational Change, is as stated by the authors, inspired by Kotter (xiii) and Quinn (5). The model has three major interdependent and interactive components: an eight-stage process for change, spiritual and relational vitality, and four essential learning disciplines.

Spiritual and relational vitality is seen as the central component in the change process. Herrington, Bonem and Furr argue that a church needs an adequate level of vitality and a strong sense of community to sustain significant change (12).

The eight-stage change process is (in spite of different names of the stages) essentially similar to Kotter's previously-described change process. The major difference

is the insertion of a step before “Creating Urgency” entitled Making Personal Preparation. This is presumably inspired by Quinn’s idea that deep change must take place in the leader before it can begin to take place in the organization. Herrington, Bonem, and Furr apply this theologically when they say, “If the leaders of the congregation are not spending significant, consistent time seeking God’s direction—through Bible study, meditation, solitude and fasting—it will be impossible for meaningful and lasting transformation to occur” (31). They also address the subject of honest self-assessment. The leaders must have a realistic understanding of their own capabilities and shortcomings. “Therefore they spend time looking at their motives, fears, gifts, and faults” (32). Accountability and addressing of specific issues are other elements in the preparation process.

Herrington, Bonem, and Furr do not explain why they have omitted the Short-Term Wins step from Kotter’s model. The remaining steps are all described in the same ways as Kotter’s steps; however, they are applied to a church context.

The four learning disciplines, Creative tension, Mental Models, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking, are perceived as essential to the leaders in the transformation process by Herrington, Bonem, and Furr. “Creative Tension occurs when a compelling vision of the future and a clear picture of current reality are held in continuous juxtaposition” (100). The continued sustaining of that creative tension is needed for change. Mental Models are used synonymously with paradigms. They are understood as the images, assumptions and stories we use to interpret our world and guide our actions (113). Team Learning is defined as “the process of enabling a team to produce results far beyond its combined capabilities as individuals” (128). Systems Thinking is defined as

the consideration of interactions between different parts and causes that may not seem obvious. According to Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, system thinking helps to integrate the other three learning disciplines. They state, “The comprehensive and interactive thinking of a systems perspective improves a leader’s ability to perceive current reality, discern vision, and improve mental models” (144).

While my focus on the change process is related to the change of worship, Herrington, Bonem, and Furr’s perception of worship’s significance in the change process is of interest. They argue that in helping congregations focus on spiritual and relational vitality as a key component of transformation process, worship is integral to the process. Spiritual and relational vitality also means encountering the holiness of God in corporate worship. “When worship is at the heart of planning, we are more likely to focus on aligning all our lives-individually and corporately-with the ongoing activity of God among us” (20).

Conclusion

Christian Schwarz’s work teaches that inspiring worship is one of presumably eight quality characteristics of healthy growing churches. Inspiring worship does not necessarily lead to church growth; however, the majority of the sources I have consulted appear to agree that inspiring worship generally has a positive effect on the number of non-Christians attending a worship service.

Schwarz defines “inspiring worship” as an encounter with God (31). Rick Warren also points to the significance of God’s presence in worship. He sees worship as a powerful witness especially if the message is understandable. (241) In the attempt to reach a deeper understanding of the type of worship that reaches non-Christians, we have

looked at worship from four different angles. Worship as immanence and transcendence, worship as inculturation, worship as evangelism, and worship as a means of grace.

A biblically balanced view of worship must value both God's transcendence and God's immanence. A worship that gives attention to both will be characterized by a sense of awe in the presence of the almighty, holy, jealous, majestic and powerful Triune God and by a sense of the same triune God's unconditional love and presence in the life of the believer. Christian worship is characterized by the transcendent immanence or the immanent transcendence of God expressed through God's love of humankind in Jesus Christ. In worship, God encounters the worshipper and transforms the person from within towards the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Inculturation is the process by which the worshipping community creatively combines the insights, attitudes, and practices of the cultures to which they are ministering, with traditional worship patterns to create new forms of Christian worship. The inculturation process acknowledges cultural diversity as one of God's gifts to humanity and incorporates that gift in different expressions of worship. The process of inculturation finds its theological foundation in Paul's ministry, particularly in his ministry in Athens (Acts 17:16-26). Paul inculturates and contextualizes his ministry and message in form and style without compromising the content. While Christian worship must be inculturated to reach non-Christians, the Church must be aware of the counter-cultural and culture-transforming nature of its worship.

Worship is perceived as the first priority of the church. Evangelism flows from the worship of God in the Christian community and not vice-versa. Most research supports that non-Christians cannot worship; however, it also supports that the worship of

believers can have a positive evangelizing effect on the non-Christians present.

This seems contradictory to the idea of inculturation as the non-Christian would be unable to understand the worship. However it seems to confirm the notion that people are attracted to a worship experience that offers an opportunity to encounter the divine. In a culture that focuses on spirituality and seeks spiritual experiences, this could be considered as inculturation.

The Wesleyan tradition emphasizes both God's actions and human response in worship. Worship expresses God's reality and presence in ways through which people both hear and respond. Worship should communicate the story of God's saving work through Jesus Christ. In his highly practical theology, Wesley was most concerned with changed lives. Worship is a means of grace in the sense that it is a true encounter with God, which leaves the worshippers with changed hearts and a call to a changed life.

With the four characteristics of worship that presumably reach non-Christians. The focus of worship services that presumably reach non-Christians could be expressed as (1) genuine encounter with the triune God, (2) incultural content and forms, (3) encounter with worshipping Christians, and, (4) response to and transformation through the encounter with God. The four characteristics and the cultures, the church is trying to reach, will determine the forms of worship.

The New Testament does not mandate a specific form of worship. Rather the church is granted a significant amount of freedom in forming its ministry. The desire to reach people with the gospel seems to have driven the early Church to change and adapt its forms and styles. The incarnation is used as a model for the Christian community to give up its own needs for the greater purpose of reaching the lost people (Phil. 2:6-18).

The church's hermeneutic will determine to what extent the worship is going to change, as the church considers what is biblically binding and what is not. Should today's church slavishly imitate the customs and practices of the early Church, even when a given practice is not consistent as it is the case with worship? Can the church use forms of ministry that are not found in the Bible as long as they do not in any way differ with or contradict the teaching of Scripture?

Worship is one of the biblically based functions of the church. The forms of ministry are built on the functions of ministry to serve the functions of ministry. The forms are temporary, changing, and built on culture while the functions are timeless and unchanging mandates. To accomplish the function of worship, the church is free to change towards whatever forms are appropriate and to change those forms when desired.

Changing the worship service to reach non-Christians is a major change in the core of the life of a church. Change theories are helpful in understanding the dynamics of such a change process. The process must pass through certain stages in preparation for the actual change to occur. The leadership must make sure that sufficient urgency is present for people to make the sacrifices and put forth the effort needed for change to happen. A group of leaders must be gathered to guide the change process. The main leader must have a clear vision for the change, and the change must be communicated. After this unfreezing stage, the actual change can begin to happen. Structures can be changed, leaders can be empowered, new procedures can be put in place, and the vision can slowly be implemented. The first results of the change can be celebrated. The gains can be consolidated, which increases the credibility of the leadership and enables it to initiate further change. When the change has occurred, the process must be re-frozen. The

new way of doing things, the new and better performance must be anchored in the corporate culture.

Applying the insights of the corporate world to a theological framework for change is imperative if the church is to stay aligned with its mission and purpose. In the church, spiritual dynamics as well as psychological dynamics, social dynamics, and leadership dynamics guide a change process.

Change does not only take place in the church as a community, it also takes place in the leader. The leaders of the congregation must spend significant and consistent time seeking God's direction-through Bible study, prayer, fasting, and Christian conferencing. Presumably change within the leaders has to take place before change can take place in the church.

Spiritual and relational vitality is the central component in the change process. A church needs an adequate level of vitality and a strong sense of community to sustain a significant change process, such as the process of changing worship to reach non-Christians.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Summary of the Problem and the Purpose

For the past two decades, a growing awareness of the need for worship renewal has grown among evangelical free churches in Denmark. Some local churches have made a transition into a worship service that consistently appeals to the congregation and reaches non-Christians. A significant number of churches are still in the beginning of a change process, while others are struggling in the middle of a change process.

In many churches a strong tension exists between people who desire a renewal of worship and people who want to hold on to the present or even the former worship service. Moving from a worship service that is highly introspective to a worship service that is targeted towards non-Christians is a difficult process. It is a transformation process that not only touches the highly explosive area of worship, it changes the core values of the church from being introverted to being extroverted.

This study wrestles with the change process, the considerations that drive the process, and the effect of the change.

The purpose of this study was to examine how churches that reach non-Christians in a traditional Danish church context have transitioned their worship experience and to learn which emphases and forms characterize their worship.

Research Questions

The purpose statement of this study naturally separates into two components: the change process and the considerations behind the process. The research questions that guide the study reflect these two components. The first question identifies to what extent

change in worship has taken place in comparing the present worship with the worship before the change process was initiated. The second question identifies theological and strategic considerations that guided the change process. The third question focuses on the effect of the change on the attendance of non-Christians and on attendance in general. The fourth question identifies the components in the change process and describes what was learned in the process.

Research Question #1

What characterized the church's worship model prior to the change, and what characterizes the worship model today?

The answer to this research question provides a comparable description of the former worship model and the present worship model.

To prevent the pastors from describing worship in categories (like contemporary, liturgical, or traditional), the pastors were asked to describe the worship through the different components of the service. Describing worship through its components also makes the descriptions comparable.

Research Question #2

What theological and strategic considerations guided the decision to change the church's worship?

The study of biblical texts that relate to worship and change have pointed to the importance of a guiding theology and a guiding strategy for changing worship.

Presumably all change in worship will consciously or unconsciously be guided by a theology and a strategy. This question seeks to uncover theological and strategic considerations that formed the basis for change of worship in the individual churches.

Research Question #3

What effect can be measured on the worship service, during and subsequent to the change process, in terms of the number of non-Christians attending the service and on attendance in general?

To determine to what extent the change has affected the church's ability to reach non-Christians through its worship is impossible without this reading.

Certain factors, such as evangelistic campaigns or newspaper articles, about the church, could cause a short-term growth in attendance. These possible sources of error are taken into account by asking the pastor for the annual average attendance figures.

Research Question #4

Of what was the change process composed and what was learned in the process?

The study of literature on change has pointed to several different theories of change and to how these theories might be applied in a church context. The answer to this question shows which components made up the change process, and furthermore, the answer provides insight in learnings from the process.

Population and Sample

This study focuses on worship transition in evangelical free churches to reach non-Christians. This delimitation is not intended to devalue the worship renewal that has taken place and is taking place in local churches in the Evangelical Lutheran Folkekirke or in the Roman Catholic Church. As I am a pastor in the United Methodist Church, which is one of the small, evangelical free church denominations in Denmark (approximately 1,500 members), I have chosen to focus on the evangelical free churches. The evangelical free churches in Denmark are alike in that they are minority churches in

a context heavily affected by a Lutheran Folkekirke perception of worship, and the majority of their churches presumably reach no or few non-Christians through their worship services.

The interview population was composed of senior pastors in five of the largest evangelical free church denominations in Denmark, the Apostolic Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Covenant Church, the Baptist Church, and the United Methodist Church, and furthermore of senior pastors in Lutheran free churches. The total number of churches was 185.

To identify churches distinguished by reaching non-Christians in their worship services week after week four criteria were established for the selection of the sample population of twenty churches.

(1) The church must reach non-Christians in their worship services week after week;

(2) The church's worship must have gone through or be in a process of significant change. This criteria ensured that a significant change (from one style of worship to another) has or is occurring, and that the change is not merely a few adjustments of the worship service;

(3) The worship service must have changed or be in the process of changing towards a style of worship associated with growing attendance and reaching non-Christians; and,

(4) The church must have a vision to reach non-Christians through their worship service.

Instrumentation and Methodology

The study was conducted as an exploratory study. In my research I used two instruments.

First, I used a researcher-designed questionnaire that consisted of a number of multiple choice questions using the four criteria I have established. This questionnaire enabled me to sort out the churches that did not meet the criteria. The questionnaire was pretested on two pastors and discussed with them. The feedback and considerations on the feedback did not cause me to make any changes in the questionnaire.

Second, I used a researcher-designed, semi-structured interview of four questions. The interview questions were pretested on two pastors in churches that nearly met the 4 stated criteria. To improve their suitability and to strengthen the interview format the feedback from this fieldtesting was discussed with my Congregational Reflection Group. This discussion caused me to incorporate a few additional emphases into the final instrument. Question 1 should give information about elements in the service specially designed for children. Question 2 should clarify whether external influence has inspired the change. Question 4 should give information about what the respondent considers to be the most important element in the change process. If the respondent's answers did not cover these emphases, I probed for clarification and elaboration in a non-directive way.

The pretest determined that nine minutes needed to be spent on question 1 to give the respondent sufficient time to describe the worship experience years ago and the worship experience today. Approximately seven minutes needed to be spent on questions 2 and 4 that describe the considerations behind the decision to change and the change process itself. No more than six minutes were needed to spent on question 3, which

provided information that enabled me to determine to what extent the change has affected the church's ability to reach non-Christians. The pretest indicated that interviews would have a length of twenty-six to thirty minutes.

Collection of Data

The following steps comprised the procedures for collecting data in regard to the interviews.

First, I e-mailed the developed questionnaire (see Appendix A) to all the pastors in the interview population in late October 2001. Within three weeks I received sixty-six replies. After one month I sent a reminder e-mail in case some of the pastors should have forgotten my initial enquiry. Nineteen pastors sent their reply to my second e-mail, which left me with a total of eighty-five replies.

Second, I contacted the denominational headquarters to ask them to identify possible churches that consistently reach non-Christians through their worship. This was in the attempt to ensure that I would not miss any churches significant to the study. As a result of this step, I contacted two additional pastors by telephone to verify their willingness to answer the questionnaire and possibly take part in a phone interview.

Third the collected data was analyzed, and the sample population of twenty churches was selected. To increase the internal reliability, I and a second observer, a member of the congregational reflection group Louise Aaen, analyzed the data. In selecting the sample population first of all, the stated criteria were considered. Second, the distribution in terms of denomination, attendance, geographical location, and age of the church was considered. The pastors that responded received a thank you e-mail for their participation.

Fourth, to inform the sample population that I would like to interview them, a telephone call was made and appointments were set up for a telephone interview. In addition I gave information about the purpose of the interview and the areas the interview questions would cover. William Wiersma mentions several advantages of telephone interviewing over face-to-face interviews. As I had limited resources in terms of time and money for this study, three points seemed particularly applicable:

Respondents can be sampled from a greater accessible population since travel time to individual respondents is eliminated. Data collection and data processing can be done with greater speed. If there is no answer to the call, much less time is lost than if a potential respondent does not keep an interview appointment. (201)

Wiersma writes that face-to-face interviews provide greater flexibility in conducting the interview and that they can accommodate more complexity. However, Wiersma concludes that “there is no evidence that cooperation is greatly reduced by the telephone approach” (202).

Fifth, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the sample population. Each interview attempted to elicit answers that provide insight into the change that has taken place, the considerations underlying the worship transition, the components of the process, and the experiences of the process. The interviews were audiotaped. I was planning to fully transcribe and translate interviews; however, consulting my mentor, Dr. Howard A. Snyder, I was instructed to transcribe and translate the interviews from Danish to English to an extent that would satisfactory state what was expressed by the interviewees and furthermore to make sure that all significant explanations and statements were accurately transcribed and translated to English. This should provide an appropriate verbatim record.

Sixth, in the interview situation, a number of guidelines were followed in an attempt to eliminate potential sources of error and to increase the internal reliability. An amount of time corresponding to what the considerations of pretest determined was spent on each question. The interviews were kept at a length between twenty-five and thirty-five minutes. Wiersma argues that most interviewees will tire of a phone interview after about twenty-five minutes (201). I was careful not to imply any preferable answers (200). If the respondent's answer was unclear or incomplete, I probed for clarification and elaboration in a non-directive way (Fowler and Mangione 33).

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data was a continuing process that began to take place as soon as the research was initiated. However an extended analysis took place after all data was collected (Glesne 85).

The transcribed interviews were analyzed according to the research questions, and information that was not related to the research questions was recorded as it might provide valuable additional information to the study.

In the analysis of the data, I, as recommended by Wiersma, kept written accounts of my own thoughts and opinions formed in the process. These accounts included any possible personal bias, changes in working design, and new hypothesis suggested by the data (Wiersma 215), and as the interview process progressed their validity was discussed with my congregational reflection group.

When the audiotaped interviews were transcribed and translated in English according to the guidelines given by my mentor, Dr. Howard A. Snyder, I had on hand ninety-five pages of material to analyze. The data analysis was a process composed of

categorization, description, and synthesis. The process was one of successive approximations toward an accurate description and interpretation of worship that reaches non-Christians and of the change process that leads to it. The emphasis was on describing the worship in its context of change, of reaching non-Christians, and, on that basis, interpreting the data.

To examine the collected data, I followed the following procedure in an effort to remain as consistent as possible with each interview.

First, each interview question was assigned a color in order to colorcode the interview manuscripts. This procedure was designed to help me organize the large amount of information and to identify that which was pertinent to my research.

Second, I carefully read through each of the twenty interviews several times before I finally marked the appropriate responses according to the color assigned to each question.

Third, significant statements or stories that might be possible quotations were assigned a special color in addition to the colors assigned to the four questions.

Fourth, I paid careful attention to the fact that while answering one question, the interviewee would share something that applied to another question. These responses were judiciously colorcoded as well even though I might end up with more than one color under one question.

Fifth, I developed large tables with columns assigned to each of the twenty respondents and with the rows assigned what appeared to be common denominators in terms of figures, statements, values, experiences and learnings. These tables were designed to give me an overview of the data on each question.

The generalizability of the study suffers from having a sample population of only twenty churches, which is approximately 11 percent of the interview population.

Although the project was designed to examine evangelical free churches that are consistently reaching non-Christians in their worship after a process of change, the study has some applicability to other evangelical free churches that contemplate entering into a similar process. Further external validity is left to the readers of the study.

CHAPTER 4

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The purpose of the interviews was to gather information on how churches that reach non-Christians in a traditional Danish church context have transitioned their worship experience and to learn which emphases and forms characterize their worship.

This purpose naturally separates into two components: the considerations behind the process and the change process itself.

Four questions have guided this study. What characterized the church's worship model prior to the change, and what characterizes the worship model today? What were the theological and strategic considerations that guided the decision to change the church's worship? During and subsequent to the change process, what effect can be measured on the worship service, in terms of the number of non-Christians attending the service and on attendance in general? What was the change process composed of and what was learned in the process?

Profile of the Interview Population

Over the course of three months from December 2001 to February 2002, I conducted interviews with twenty pastors representing twenty different congregations over the telephone. The following twelve demographic variables provide information about the interview participants and their churches: name, age, theological education, gender, race, ministry experience, present ministry, position, denomination, location and population, age of congregation, and worship attendance

The average age of the participating pastors was forty-one. The youngest person was twenty-seven, and the oldest was fifty-nine. In regard to theological education, one

held a Doctor of Ministry, five had earned Master's degrees, seven had earned bachelor's degrees or equivalents, six had spent one or two years in Bible school, and one had no theological training at all.

The participants were all male Danes. Female pastors also served two of the churches; however, none of these pastors was available at the time of the interview.

The participants' ministry experience ranged from one to thirty-four years. The average was thirteen years in ministry.

The number of years the pastors had served their present church ranged from one to thirteen years. The average was five years.

Sixteen out of the twenty interviewees were senior pastors. Four were assistant pastors. Ten of the participants were the only pastor in the church they were serving.

The participants came from five denominations: five from the Baptist Church, three from the Apostolic Church, five from the Pentecostal Church, three from the Covenant Church, two from Lutheran Free Churches, and two from the United Methodist Church.

Five churches were located in towns with a population less than ten thousand. Six churches were located in cities with a population between eleven thousand and a hundred thousand. Four churches were located in cities with a population between a hundred thousand and 250,000. Five churches were located in Copenhagen with a population of 1.2 million people.

The age of the churches ranged from six to 142 years. The average age of the churches was sixty-six years.

Worship before and after the Change

Research question one focuses on how the worship service has changed. The respondents were asked to describe worship up to ten years ago and then to describe a typical worship service today. The answers contained descriptions of the worship elements as well as attitudes, values, and tendencies.

Worship Then

The answers showed several similarities in the ways that the pastors characterized the worship services up to ten years ago (see Table 2). A characterization is only included if it was mentioned specifically by a respondent.

TABLE 2

Characterization of Worship Prior to Change (N=20)

Characterization	n	%
Charismatic expressions	8	40
Fixed pattern	16	80
Focus on the congregation	18	90
Traditional worship-formal	6	30
Blended worship–mix of formal and informal	9	45
Contemporary–informal	3	15
Praise and worship–informal	2	10
Use of hymns	8	40
Use of a mix of hymns and praise songs	10	50
Children not accepted in worship	6	30
Sermon: Bible interpretation	13	65
Traditional to the denomination	15	75

Traditional to the Denomination–What Does It Mean?

The worship elements and the liturgy were different from denomination to denomination. However the majority of the pastors said that the services followed a fixed

pattern (N=16 or 80 percent) and characterized them as traditional or typical to their denomination (N=15 or 75 percent). Jurgen Eisen in the Apostolic Church in Aarhus said, “Worship then was introduction, hymn, praise and worship, a sermon, and then finished. And we thought we renewed our worship when we sang a few praise choruses.” Lars Ulrik Jensen from the United Methodist Church in Copenhagen explained that the worship service followed “a fixed pattern composed of organ, music, hymns, sermon, prayers, and a few praise songs.”

Whether the service was formal or informal and used hymns or praise songs or both seems to depend on the denominational tradition.

The three Apostolic Churches (N=3 or 15 percent) all describe their former services as traditional and charismatic. The worship style was a mix of formal and informal and they sang both hymns and praise songs. Four of the five Baptist churches (20 percent) describe their former services as traditional. The worship style was either formal or a mix of formal and informal and they sang hymns. Jens Ibsen in the Baptist Church in Oester Vraa characterizes the worship service as “a hymn-sandwich, four hymns accompanied by organ filled in between the different elements of the service. There were a few praise songs, a children’s sermon, Scripture lesson, and a traditional sermon.” Two out of three Covenant churches and both United Methodist churches describe worship then as traditional and formal. They used hymns and sometimes a few praise songs. Four of the five Pentecostal churches described their services as traditional and informal. The singing was a mix of hymns and praise songs. Three Pentecostal churches pointed to charismatic expressions like tongues, interpretation of tongues, healing prayer, and prophecy as being part of their services.

Exceptions seem to be the four younger churches (20 percent): the Pentecostal church in Skjern, the Baptist church in Taastrup, the Lutheran Free church in Copenhagen and the Lutheran Free church in Aarhus. They do not describe their former services as traditional or typical. They all answer that their services were very informal with an extensive use of praise and worship. Anders Michael Hansen in the Lutheran Free church in Aarhus described the church's former worship services as very informal to a Lutheran tradition with only a few liturgical elements. He said, "In the beginning it was much like a meeting with elements of worship."

Six of the pastors (30 percent) say that children were not welcomed at the services. Jens Christensen in Aarhus Baptist Church expressed; "Children were considered a disturbing element." This attitude does not seem to have been related to a specific denomination or theological tradition.

Worship Is for the Christians

"The atmosphere was fairly intense and devoted, and at the same time worship was very inward focused. Guests had to participate on the congregation's terms," said Jan Due-Christensen pastor in the Pentecostal church in Odense. This inward focus on the congregation appears to have been a general attitude, as 90 percent of the pastors refer to it. Joergen Mortensen in the Apostolic church in Copenhagen said, "The atmosphere was God-fearing, hot spiritually, very private and focused on the congregation." In the twelve year old Taastrup Baptist Church, "there was an openness and willingness to receive new people; however, the church soon turned inwards," said Leif Munk.

The same inward-focused approach seems to have been reflected in the sermons. "The sermons were inward focused on the church and on the Christian life. It was one-

way communication,” said John Lorenzen from the Covenant church in Grindsted.

Soeren Vifstrup (Vejle Apostolic Church) calls the preaching “introspective” and “local.”

“It was about us gathered for worship.”

Bible Interpretation

Thirteen of twenty pastors (65 percent) describe the former way of preaching as Bible interpretation, Bible teaching, or exegetical. Some used a common lectionary and some developed their own. “The sermon was Bible teaching, focused on sanctification and on living the Christian life,” said Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church). Some pastors like Joergen Riis in the Pentecostal church in Holstebro emphasized that the preaching was considered relevant. “The sermons would address social, ethical, and political, as well as spiritual issues,” said Ole Joergensen from the Baptist church in Hvidovre. Lars Due from the Pentecostal Church Copenhagen Culture Center called the preaching “life affirming with a philosophical touch.”

Worship Formats

From my analysis of the data (see Table 3) three worship formats have emerged. I have grouped the responses in three formats

TABLE 3
Three Worship Formats (N=20)

Format	Characterization	n	%
A	Traditional to the denomination Fixed pattern Formal Hymns perhaps some praise songs Focused on the congregation-the Christians Sermon was Bibleinterpretation	6	30
B	Traditional to the denomination Fixed pattern Formal/Informal Praise songs and hymns Focused on the congregation–the Christians Sermon was Bible Interpretation	10	50
C	Nontraditional to the denomination Changing pattern Informal Praise songs Focused on the congregation–the Christians.	4	20

The worship services characterized by format A were found in two Baptist churches, two Covenant churches and two United Methodist churches. The worship services characterized by format B were found in three Apostolic churches, five Pentecostal churches and two Baptist churches. The worship services characterized by format C were found in three churches younger than thirteen years, two Lutheran Free churches and one Baptist church. Additionally the worship services in the Covenant church in Stenum used this format.

Worship Today

While the former worship services may be divided into three formats, the picture of today's worship services in the twenty churches appear to be more complex and

diverse (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
Characterization of Worship Today (N=20)

Characterization	n	%
Changed main service	18	90
Added new worship formats	10	50
Worship is considered well prepared	12	60
The style a mix of formal and informal	7	35
The style is informal	18	90
Use of hymns and praise songs	13	65
Use of praise songs	11	55
Use of the arts—drama, dance, multimedia, etc.	9	45
Relevant language	14	70
Worship is considered generally relevant	15	75
Preaching in thematic series	15	75
Charismatic expressions	9	45
Ministry is offered	7	35
Worship is considered mission	10	50
Worship is considered having missiological impact	6	30

Two Ways of Change

In the process of conducting the interviews, I made the observation that the churches seem to have changed their worship experiences in two ways. One way is changing the main service. This has happened in eighteen churches. While Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) characterized the former worship service as “very private and focused on the congregation,” he sees today’s service as “very attentive towards unchurched.”

The other way is changing by adding new worship formats. Half of the churches (N=10 or 50 percent) have added new worship formats. Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus

Lutheran Free Church) said, “Instead of killing a success, the main service, we just started alternative services, which is a good way to make use of the dissatisfied. The dissatisfied are usually the people with vision. This is about turning around energy.” Four of the ten churches have added two formats. In six of the ten churches, an additional worship format replaced a regular service once a month. Two of the ten churches have kept the main service unchanged, while the other eight churches have changed their main services.

Multiple Worship Formats

Further analyzing the data, I have separated thirteen new worship formats introduced by ten of the churches into three general formats (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

Three Worship Formats (N=20)

Format	Church	Characterization	n	%
X			4	31
Café Worship	Aarhus Baptist Church, Hvidovre Baptist Church	Replaces the main service once a month Seeker friendly		
Worship in Time	Copenhagen United Methodist Church	Informal Use of arts Praise songs		
Celebration	Oester Vraa Baptist Church	Prayers Sermon		

Y			6	46
Black Gospel Service	Aarhus Apostolic Church, Aarhus Baptist Church, Copenhagen United Methodist Church	Additional service Seeker oriented Informal Performance of music or drama Little participation from the audience Some praise songs Prayer Sermon		
Innocence	Aarhus Lutheran Free Church			
Youth Service	Hvidovre Baptist Church			
Theatre Worship	Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church			
Z			3	23
In the Master's Light	Aarhus Lutheran Free Church	Additional service Seeker oriented Clearly defined target group Informal Meditative Praise songs and/or secular songs Prayers Guided meditations or sermon		
Peace of Mind Service or Thomas Mass	Viborg Baptist Church Thisted Covenant Church			

Format X. These services replace the main service once a month. These services are by their pastors described as seekerfriendly and informal. A band or music group leads the singing, which consists of praise songs and perhaps a high quality hymn in a modern arrangement. Drama, videoclips, audiovisuals, and other creative expressions are frequently used to illustrate the theme. Prayer and a sermon is part of the service. Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) describes the new worship format as “celebrative, joyful, and exiting, and the name has changed from worship to celebration. The music changed from organ to a band playing Christian pop worship music.” He continues, “The

sermons are thematic, need-oriented and life-changing. We choose themes to stimulate people's curiosity."

Format Y. These are additional services. They are music driven and target a specific group defined either by their musical preference or by their age. The services are described as seeker-oriented, seeker-friendly, or aimed at non-Christians. The music is performed by a choir, group, or band. The musical style ranges from black gospel music to pop and hip-hop. Ole Joergensen (Hvidovre Baptist Church) describes the youth services at his church as very informal. Rappers and break-dancers perform, and "traditional churchgoers wouldn't realize they are in a worship service, they would call it something else." According to Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church), black gospel music shapes the gospel worship services in his church. The participants listen to the music and they may be encouraged to join in a few English praise songs. A short sermon and a prayer are part of the service. The Lutheran Free Church in Copenhagen has developed a "Theatre Worship Service." The pastor, Peter Dyhr Joergensen (Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church) describes the Theatre Worship as a seeker service composed of two modules. The first module is composed of, art, drama, music, video clip, poems, or other creative expressions. The second module is a twenty-minute teaching module, which is a personal teaching sermon. "The attenders are involved as spectators. They are not expected to sing or to be involved in any other way."

Format Z. These are additional services aimed at a specific group of unchurched people defined through their spirituality or specific needs. The "Peace of Mind Services" in Viborg Baptist Church target recovering drug addicts. The services are characterized by meditative music, lighting of candles, and intercessory prayer. This also characterizes

the “Thomas Mass” in the Covenant Church in Thisted. Charley Stephansen (Thisted Covenant Church) emphasizes prayer as a central element in those services. While the Thomas Mass and the Peace of Mind services appear to aim at a general desire for spirituality, Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) describes the “In the Masters Light Service” as a worship experience aimed at people in the new age milieu. “These services are more liturgical, characterized by the use of Taize songs [meditative choruses from the ecumenical monastery in Taize, France], guided meditations, and a different vocabulary. The preaching focuses on healing, and the whole atmosphere is therapeutic.”

A Change in Style

None of the pastors describe the present worship as formal. Poul Asger Beck in Viborg Baptist Church says, “There is a cheerfulness about our worship today. There is spontaneity and yet liturgical order.” This appears to be a tendency in the churches whose former worship was described as formal.

The style of worship seems generally to have developed towards informality (see Table 5 p. 85). “Worship is less predictable. It is informal and yet carefully prepared and purposeful,” states Kenneth Kuhn in the Pentecostal church in Frederiksberg.

A Change in Quality

“Less and less people attend worship every week out of habit. This means that if we do not make sure worship is worthwhile every week we are not able to keep things together,” said Joergen Thaarup in Strandby United Methodist Church. This statement expresses the focus on quality and well-prepared worship experiences that seem to be a tendency in twelve of the churches. Anders Michel Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free

Church) perceives that planning is highly important to make sure of substance. “This then gives room for spontaneity because then there is a mental surplus to do it in a qualified way.” Jan Due-Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church) offers the same insight from a charismatic viewpoint:

We left the unpredictable, which traditionally was a value perceived as a sign of the Spirit’s guidance. However, the reality was that nobody felt secure and because of that, the congregation did not dare to invite their friends to come. So we started to introduce some predictability, which made people start to invite their friends.

Kenneth Kuhn (Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church) says, “The quality of the service has been lifted in all key areas,” and he continues,

The quality has made our services seekerfriendly, as spirituality is sought in the population. It is not in a popular and explanatory way. We think that if spirituality has the proper strength many people experience a quality and a dignity. If they are touched by something real and strong, if there is a sense of security and joy, that is what we want to achieve.

Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) has experienced a higher demand on the preparation of the worship services in order to achieve the desired quality. He said, “No matter what the format is, we want to have as high quality as possible. The demands on the preparation of the services are much higher today.”

A Change of Language and Relevance

“The Bible contains the best message in the world, but sometimes it has the most boring wrapping in the world. It is the wrapping we have tried to do something about,” said Joergen Riis in Holstebro Pentecostal Church, and he continues, “We realized that we needed to become more understandable.” Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) has made the same observation: “I have seen people leave after a some minutes and my impression was that they didn’t understand anything of what was going on.” The use of

language and general relevance are areas in which 75 percent of the churches have been developing and changing their worship experiences. Jurgen Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) points to considerations about music and lyrics: “It is important that music and lyrics are relevant to the people.” Taastrup Baptist Church, according to Leif Munk, has worked with the same issues. “We still struggle with private talk, some worship leaders still refer to people using first names. Some still use inside religious language that is impossible to understand for unchurched people.” He continues, “As we have unchurched people at our worship services we have an obligation to try to make things understandable.”

Joergen Thaarup (Strandby United Methodist Church) said about the development in his church that on one hand the issue concerns using a vocabulary and an imagery to which people can relate and on the other hand it concerns verbalizing a personal spirituality.

The church has grown in welcoming strangers. We use different words in our sermons today and a more contemporary language. Preaching ten years ago had an awareness of the situation in society and of people’s thinking. I think it was contemporary and relevant, but still things have changed. At that time talking about spiritual issues and acknowledging one’s faith wasn’t considered quite appropriate. This has changed. Many people are not afraid to express their spirituality verbally, and that affects our preaching; we have become much more outspoken. Several people have said that in their perception the most significant change in our worship is the change in the usage of language.

The focus on relevance and language appears to have affected considerations about preaching in the churches across all the denominations and about charismatic expressions in Apostolic and Pentecostal Churches.

A Change of Preaching

Eik Bidstrup in the Pentecostal Church in Skjern emphasizes relevance in the

preaching and “attempts to think about the context of the church in the city.” While 60 percent of the pastors (N=12) described the former preaching as Bibleinterpretation aimed at the congregation, today’s sermons appear to be thematic and frequently in series. Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) addresses this change: “Preaching today is evangelism. It is aimed at being understandable, user-friendly, practical, and usable. It can explain what thoughts God has about our lives. Themes could be: marriage, children, or money.”

John Lorenzen (Grindsted Covenant Church) has observed the same change: “The preaching is aimed at non-Christians. We are very conscious about our language, and we avoid church terminology.”

While the starting point used to be the biblical text, Poul Asger Beck (Viborg Baptist Church) points to a new, need-oriented approach.

The preaching today is therapeutic and psycho-dynamic with an emphasis on people’s psychological difficulties, problems, pain, and crisis. It is much more illustrative, more like Alpha. There will be some text and then an illustration or a story. The conclusion of the sermon will set the scene for a transformation on a personal spiritual level.

Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) states, “The sermons are thematic, needoriented and lifechanging. We chose themes to stimulate people’s curiosity.”

What Happened When the Change Was Initiated?

Interview question two focuses on what theological and strategic considerations guided the decision to change the church’s worship service. The pastors were asked to share what happened before and after the decision was made to change the church’s worship service. The answers give impressions of the theological and strategic considerations that formed the basis for the change of worship.

Development or Decision

Sixty percent of the interviewed pastors (N=12) describe the beginning of the change as a decision. “Our change started five years ago as a dissatisfaction over the fact that we had so few visitors at our services,” said Jan Due Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church). Another example is from Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church):

In a new church like ours we had to make the decision whether we wanted to keep on being a youth church and let our people leave to go to other churches, or we wanted to make new services. We differentiated our services to keep the people we already had and to reach new people.

A desire to improve the quality of the worship service led the church to decide to change the worship service, notes Lars Due (Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church):

We made the decision to streamline our worship service. We simply wanted to get better at what we were doing, like arranging the praise and worship section better. We established a worship group that met on a weekly basis to evaluate the past Sunday’s service and to plan the next.

Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) speaks of a turning point when the church made the decision to become a living church. He says,

A turning point was when the leadership realized that we can’t go on being church for ourselves. It was the fellowship and the families that were the mainstay. This situation was presented as a challenge to the church: Do you want to continue being a family church? Or, do you want to become a living, Bible-preaching church that reaches people in Copenhagen with the gospel of Jesus Christ? The church made the decision to become a living church.

Change has been a progressive process in 40 percent of the churches (N=8). Per Hyldgaard in Stenum Covenant Church is not able to identify any decisions that have led to the change; rather, he sees the change as an advancing process. Peter Dyhr Joergensen

(Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church) talks about being in a constant change mode.

“Changing worship has become part of our DNA. We evaluate our worship every eight weeks.” One last example comes from John Lorenzen (Grindsted Covenant Church) who says, “It has been a gradual transition into wanting to become an evangelizing church in all areas of the church.”

Strategic Considerations

A number of strategic considerations form part of the basis for change in the twenty churches. Table 6 lists the primary considerations that have emerged in the interview process.

TABLE 6

Primary Strategic Considerations (N=20)

Primary considerations	n	%
The pastor is the initiator of the change.	16	80
A team or group of leaders is essential in the change.	11	55
The church experienced no growth or decline or need for change.	15	75
The change is inspired from literature, programs, and other churches.	11	55

Strategic Considerations—Leadership

Sixteen of the pastors (80 percent) identify themselves as the initiator of the change. Jurgen Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) considers himself the driving force behind the change from the very beginning.

I immediately started to lead the church in a new direction. From being an inward focused church occupied with its own problems, I wanted, through

visions, mission-statements, and values, to turn it into a church that exists for other people.

Kenneth Kuhn (Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church) sees the coming of a new senior pastor, Josef Kristensen, to the church as a turning point. The new pastor had bigger ideas of what church should be, and he wanted to change the behavioral pattern of the church. Kuhn said,

The pastor's authority, competence, and credibility in ministry, I think, was crucial. He did not point to anything new or strange in an unpleasant way. He did, however, call attention to the fact that what needs to be done needs to be done with greater faith according to the goals that we ought to have. He concentrated very much on prayer, and prayer got a new meaning for the church.

In eleven of the twenty churches (55 percent) a team of leaders or a leadership group appear to have had a significant impact on the change. Ole Joergensen (Hvidovre Baptist Church) states that the church established a work group to create a vision for the church. John Lorenzen (Grindsted Covenant Church) explains that the church council, composed of two pastors and seven laypeople, has led the change process: "The leadership realized that they needed to make a purposeful effort to integrate the church's many unchurched contacts in their worship." He continues,

We do not have to discuss everything at a church meeting anymore. The church council has taken on their leadership responsibility and there is a boldness to make decisions. The council has become more spiritual mature in their leadership. This is not a one-person show. It is a shared leadership that leads this church.

Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) shares that the leadership in his church introduced the new ideas in different forums and among other leaders and finally presented them at a congregational meeting. "We decided on a 6-month trial period. If we could not attract people to the new services, we would go back to the more traditional

format. This gave the congregation a sense of security.”

I have not found any correlation between the way change has been initiated and the emphasis on the pastor or the team as initiator of change.

Strategic Considerations—Why Change?

The urgency for change may have started in the mind of the pastor or in the interaction in a leadership group considering the state of the church. A lack of growth or an actual decline over a number of years or the fact that the church was not attracting any non-Christians has made fifteen churches (75 percent) decide to change their worship service. This consideration appears to be the only major reason for the churches to change.

Ole Joergensen (Hvidovre Baptist Church) said about the analysis of the situation in his church, “The church realized it had no young people and hardly any children, and if they went on with business as usual, they could easily work out when the church would shut down.”

Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) reached the conclusion that this was the last call. He said to his church, “We need to find a way to break out if we want to be church in the future.” He states, “I have said to the church, if we keep on being church as we are today, the last man will put up the shutters in twenty years from now.”

In the Pentecostal church in Holstebro the change process started in 1997. Joergen Riis (Holstebro Pentecostal Church) says,

We realized that our church was far too much a church just for Christians. And we started to think about a vision for our church. We spent one and a half-year doing that. We started to look at our values and we slowly began to make some small changes.

Strategic Considerations–Inspiration

Onsite visits to other churches, seminars, books, and programs were sources of inspiration to eleven of the twenty churches (55 percent).

Jurgen Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) points to Rick Warren’s book, The Purpose Driven Church, and the Natural Church Development program developed by Christian Schwarz as important sources of inspiration to the leadership at his church. Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church), whose church uses the Natural Church Development program, said that the result from the first church profile has led the church into a visioning process. Poul Asger Beck (Viborg Baptist Church) also points to a positive impact of the use of the Natural Church Development program, which has helped his church purposefully to connect its cellgroups to the worship service.

Lars Due (Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church) points out what his church has learned from different sources:

The preaching has been impacted by the leadership’s visit at the Pensacola revival in Florida towards a stronger emphasis on personal holiness. The worship format is influenced by Willow Creek. However, the strongest impact has probably been the Alpha courses with the strong emphasis on relevant communication and seekerfriendliness. The whole idea of belonging before believing.

Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) makes similar observations: “From Willow Creek we learned about evangelism and being seekerfriendly. From Saddleback [Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren] we have learned to organize the church around our purpose.”

Soeren Vifstrup (Vejle Apostolic Church) emphasizes that attending an inspiring conference does not make the church change. External inspiration may, however, help the church in the process that is already ongoing.

Sometimes it becomes popular to say things in a special way. Like the impact of the Willow Creek Conference. However we are not doing anything that we were not doing before; it was inspiring to participate though. I think we borrow some words, and we were inspired by what we saw. It is not external inspiration that sets the agenda, but I do experience that it can help us in our understanding to see what others churches do. It grows out of the life of the church.

Theological Considerations

In the interviewing process, four primary theological reflections emerged (see Table 7). All four considerations are concerned with whether and in which way the worship service will be able to attract non-Christians and to touch their lives.

TABLE 7

Primary Theological Considerations (N=20)

Primary Considerations	n	%
Relevance	19	95
Evangelism, a desire to reach people	13	65
Encountering God, life change	10	50
Charismata	8	40

Relevance

In the interviewing process, the word “relevant” appeared again and again. Ninety-five percent of the pastors referred to considerations on the relevance of the worship service, of the language, or of the preaching when they described what happened when the worshipchange was initiated. “The change is born out of the situation and the consideration of the relevance of the church,” says Poul Asger Beck (Viborg Baptist Church), and he continues,

[w]orship needs to be relevant, down-to-earth, positive, and cheerful. We

have something important to tell. On that foundation, we can talk about serious and difficult issues. It is not being evasive. But it is a positive and honest approach even to the tough things in life.

Kennet Kuhn (Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church) appears to be in the same line of thinking when he said, “The content should have much substance, and the forms should be as relevant as possible.”

Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) stresses the desire to be relevant in communicating the gospel: “We want to preach the gospel in a way that is relevant to people outside the church.”

Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) describes the shift in preaching that has taken place in his church:

We want our worship services to be relevant and to speak into people’s lives. There were a few years from 1996 and ahead when we focused our preaching on the needs of the congregation and on building the church. Now we focus our preaching on people’s needs. We want to be culturally relevant. There is an awareness that people who come to our church are not necessarily Christians.

Eik Bidstrup (Skjern Pentecostal Church) is specific regarding the target group his church wants to reach, “We want to communicate in a way that the average Skjern citizen will understand.”

In Oester Vraa Baptist Church, the service has two interchanging formats that target different groups. Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) relates this situation to the considerations on relevance, “It is not that one worship format is better or more true than the other. The important thing is that the language and the whole content of the worship service are understandable and relevant to the participators.”

The words of Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church), “We want our worship services to be inspiring and relevant,” summarize what appears to be the

overall consideration in the churches.

Evangelism, a Desire to Reach People

Thirteen of the pastors (65 percent) emphasize evangelism as a basic value in their understanding of worship. They point to reflections on becoming a church that exists for the unchurched.

“Out of our biblical reflection grew a realization that we exist as a church to reach non-Christians,” said Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) about the theological reflections that formed part of the basis for change at his church. He proceeds, “We realized that we are not a church that should exist only for our own sake. We have had people coming, and I wouldn’t say they ran away screaming, but they never returned.”

Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) shares about the change in values concerning worship at his church: “It should be understandable, winning, obliging towards the unchurched. It has been value to us to accept the Come-and-see-attitude.”

Joergen Riis (Holstebro Pentecostal Church) describes the change of attitude towards unchurched people in striving towards,

There is a lot of joy and laughter. We work hard to create a friendly and open atmosphere. The preaching is really just a small part of it. It is very important that the congregation becomes aware of the fact that these new people are immensely important to God and so they should be to me.

Encountering God, Life Change

“Worship must feel real; you should be able to experience God here,” said Jurgen Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church), and he points to a value stated by 50 percent of the pastors (N=10), that worship should be an encounter with God. Charley Stephansen (Thisted Covenant Church) makes the same point with different words: “In all that we do, we wish to prepare the way for the presence of God. We want God to be present among

us so that we feel his presence personally and experience and see him.”

People’s actual experience of God appears to be crucial in Joergen Thaarup’s perception of worship. He said, “Worship must through its form and content and through people’s involvement be able to contain the experience of God’s presence. People’s experience of God is extremely important.”

“The seeker-friendly approach can take many shapes,” said Kennet Kuhn (Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church), and he goes on, “Our trademark should be love. There may be things you do not understand; however, if there is a warm and loving atmosphere and if there is a spiritual reality, the worship service can still be appealing to unchurched people.” According to Kuhn’s perception, genuine worship in a loving atmosphere has an evangelizing impact on unchurched people.

Eik Bidstrup (Skjern Pentecostal Church), who wants to communicate in a relevant way to the citizens of Skjern, emphasizes the worshippers’ encounter with God. “As people leave we want them to be able to know that they have encountered God. I see praise and worship as instrumental in accomplishing this.”

Presumably Peter Dyhr Joergensen (Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church) is in the same line of thinking when he shares the leadership’s reflections on the relationship between relevance and the desire for worship to be an encounter with God.

The challenge has been to create a worship format that is contemporary and relevant to all. We do not do seeker services. Our goal is that our worship should be anointed and a place where God is given the room he needs. In praise and worship, in testimonies and in prayers, there should as many points of contact between God and people as possible. And this does not depend on whether the people are Christians or not.

The Charismata

As stated earlier, the focus on relevance has affected considerations about

charismatic expressions in a number of the churches (N=8 or 40 percent). Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) represents one approach to being a charismatic church that wants to reach non-Christians:

Charismatic expressions are natural and common in our church and so we have chosen always to be very explanatory. We decided that all our worship services should be understandable. We will not stop being charismatic and speak in tongues, but we want to explain.

In the Pentecostal Church in Odense the leadership has eliminated charismatic expressions from the worship service. Jan Due-Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church) said,

We try to find the area where the churched and the unchurched can meet. We have eliminated the unintelligible, which creates a barrier for seekers, like speaking in tongues and other spiritual expressions. These expression will be present in our small groups.

Due-Christensen explains the biblical rationale for this change: “We began to take Paul seriously, when he said in 1 Corinthians, that you can’t have visitors coming to church and think you are our of your mind.” The church has realized that it has gone so far in its effort to be relevant that it may in fact have lost some of its relevance. Due-Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church) says, “Recently we have started to realize that we must turn up the heat on spirituality again. There is a growing desire for spirituality in the population.”

Other churches have maintained a strong charismatic emphasis. The Pentecostal Church in Copenhagen has given much more attention to prayer for healing at their services after a series of meetings with the African, healingevangelist Charles Ndifon. Lars Due (Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church) explains, “Several people attend worship with the declared objective to receive prayer for healing.” Kenneth Kuhn

(Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church) makes similar observations concerning the relevance of charismatic expressions in worship:

The quality has made our services seekerfriendly, as spirituality is sought in the population. It is not in a popular and explaining way. We think that if spirituality has the proper strength, many people experience that there is a quality and a dignity. If they are touched by something real and strong, if there is a sense of security and joy, that is what we want to achieve. The keyword is quality. The seekerfriendly can take many shapes. Our trademark should be love. There may be things you do not understand; however, if there is a warm and loving atmosphere, and if there is a spiritual reality, the worship service can still be appealing to unchurched people.

The different approaches to charismatic utterances in worship may not contradict each other but may more likely be due to unlike understandings of the relationship between worship and mission.

Worship and Mission

The change that has and is taking place in the twenty churches is a change in formats. However a deeper level of change appears to be taking place in the minds of the pastors, the leadership, and the congregation. This deeper level of change is reflected in the theological considerations concerning worship, and it appears to lead to a basic understanding of the nature of worship in the correlation between worship and mission.

Two perceptions seem to exist. One is that worship is evangelism. The purpose of the worship service is to reach non-Christians. The other perception is that worship in its substance is missiological. The purpose of the worship service is to worship God; however, worshipping Christians have an evangelizing impact on non-Christians. Joergen Thaarup (Strandby United Methodist Church) says, "It is our experience that when the congregation experiences, this is genuine worship. Then strangers will inevitably encounter God."

Out of a church tradition with altar calls at every service, Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) describes what seems to be an approximation from the second perception to the first: “It has been a theological change for us to understand evangelism as a process rather than an event. To accept that people who are present today may have been here before, but today they are moved a little bit. We used to be more hard-core, using the turn or burn model.”

Five of twenty pastors (25 percent) appear to hold both perceptions together. While eight pastors (40 percent) perceive evangelism to be the main purpose of worship, and five pastors (25 percent) think that worship in itself has an evangelizing impact on non-Christians.

The Effect on the Worship Attendance

Interview question three focuses on the effect on the attendance of non-Christians and on attendance in general that has been measured during and subsequent to the change process.

The churches’ average annual worship attendance at the time of the interview averaged 117 (from a low of thirty-two to a high of 475).

Per Hyldgaard (Stenum Covenant Church), who has experienced a growth in attendance from twenty-five to 160 over the past ten years, said, when asked what he considers to be the reason behind the significant growth,

I think the key is lively and vital worship. And then there is the fact that success attracts success. I guess we have persuaded the young people to see that worship can be relevant to them. There is a lot of joy and good music, and the church is very much aware of what we are about.

The way the twenty pastors describe the makeup of the worshipping congregation before and after the change is diverse. Eight of the pastors (40 percent) say the average

age of the worshipping congregation has dropped. Five pastors (25 percent) mention that more singles younger than fifty years of age are attending worship.

The average growth in attendance since the change process began (which is varying periods of time) has been 62 percent. The highest growth was 220 percent. Two churches, Copenhagen Apostolic Church and Taastrup Baptist Church, have experienced a decrease in attendance over the past five years. However, in the same period, the same churches experienced an increase in the number of non-Christians attending (see Table 8).

In comparison the latest statistics on worship attendance in the Evangelical Lutheran Folkekirke from 1991 say that, 1675 parishes (78 percent) have less than fifty in attendance. In 286 parishes (14 percent), the average attendance is between fifty and one hundred. In 127 parishes (6 percent) the average attendance is between 101 and two hundred. In twenty-five parishes (1 percent) the average worship attendance is between 201 and three hundred. The highest attendance between 301 and four hundred is found in five parishes (0.2 percent) (Roulund-Noergaard 30).

TABLE 8**Worship Attendance**

Church	Average weekly attendance measured over a year			Non-Christians attending worship during one month at all services	
	1991	1996	2001	Before change	2001
Copenhagen Apostolic Church	125	100	85	10-12	20-25
Vejle Apostolic Church	30-40	50-60	80-90	2	10
Aarhus Apostolic	?	30-40	70	2	5
Hvidovre Baptist Church	?	30-40	45	1-2	70
Taastrup Baptist Church	40	150	100	4-5	7-10
Viborg Baptist Church	28	35	43	1-2	15-20
Oester Vraa Baptist Church	55	58	110	1-2	20-25
Aarhus Baptist Church	?	?	90	1-2	18
Grindsted Covenant Church	65	70-75	110	1-2	10-14
Stenum Covenant Church	25	50	160	2	10-15
Thisted Covenant Church	40	50	65	0	5-10
Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church	*	25	70	5-10	10-15
Aarhus Lutheran Free Church	54	72	170	8-12	20-40
Copenhagen Cultural Center Pentecostal Church	*	325	475	10-20	120
Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church	70	110	160	1	5-6
Holstebro Pentecostal Church	40	70	80-90	1	25
Odense Pentecostal Church	75	100	200	5	15-20
Skjern Pentecostal Church	25	25	32	0	4
Copenhagen United Methodist Church	80	63	92	1-2	80
Strandby United Methodist Church	?	?	92	1-2	10

The question marks signify that the average worship attendance was not measured at that time. The asterisk (*) signifies that the church has existed for less than ten years.

Table 8 shows the average weekly worship attendance in the twenty churches presumably measured over the course of a year including all worship services.

Furthermore Table 8 shows the number of non-Christians the interviewed pastors estimated attended during a month before the change, and the number of non-Christians

attending worship during a month at the time of the interview.

Attendance of Non-Christians in the Main Services

When the pastors were asked to estimate how many non-Christians attended the worship service during a month before the change, the majority of the statements (N=12 or 60 percent) said one to two. Four (20 percent) ranged between four and ten. Only two (10 percent) were above ten, and two (10 percent) said none. The average number was 3.5.

At the time of the interviews, the figures ranged from a low of four to a high of 120. The average number was nineteen. The high number of non-Christians attending worship today compared to a very low number at the time before the change explains the extreme growth in percentage terms.

The growth in percentage terms of non-Christians attending worship today as opposed to before the change ranges from twice as many to thirty times as many (see Table 9).

TABLE 9

Growth of Attendance of Non-Christians in Main Service (N=20)

	n	%
200-300 percent	6	30
500-700 percent	6	30
1000-3000 percent	7	35
No information	1	5

Joergen Riis (Holstebro Pentecostal Church) shares about the change that has occurred at his church: “If we were lucky there would be one unchurched person a

month. It was a very rare sight. No one dared to bring anyone cause they never knew what would happen. Worship was frequently a toe-curling experience.” Riis estimates that today twenty-five non-Christians attend worship during a month:

Most of them are invited by regular attenders; a few of them have heard about our church. Christians have befriended themselves with non-Christians and invited them to worship. And they do not come because they want to hear about God. They come because they like their friends, and they see that their friends have a good life.

The pastors were asked to estimate how many non-Christians attend their service in a month. The answers do not give any direct information about how many non-Christians attend on a given Sunday. However if the stated figures are divided by four, the result will presumably be close to the number of non-Christians attending on a given Sunday (see Table 10). From these figures I calculated the percentage of non-Christians attending on a given Sunday.

TABLE 10

Percentage of Non-Christians Attending the Main Service Today (N=20)

	n	%
1-2 percent	5	25
3-5 percent	9	45
6-10 percent	3	20
More than 10 percent	2	5
No information	1	1

While Table 9 shows considerable growth in the numbers of non-Christians attending worship today compared to the time before the change, Table 10 shows that in the majority of the churches (N=14 or 70 percent) less than 5 percent of the attenders are

non-Christians.

Jan Due-Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church) who has one of the highest attendances of non-Christians in percentage terms at his church (8 to ten percent) says, “The church lived only by young people from other Pentecostal churches moving to Odense to study. Few people in the congregation were natives of Odense.” The pastor estimates that no more than five unchurched people would attend worship during a month at that time. Today he estimates that fifteen to twenty non-Christians attend an ordinary worship service.

Attendance of Non-Christians in the Additional Services

As described earlier in this chapter, some churches have developed and added new worship services to reach non-Christians. Table 11 shows that these additional worship services, in terms of percentage attract a significant amount of non-Christians.

TABLE 11

Non-Christians Attending Additional Services Today (N=9)

Number of non-Christians attending	n	%
10-25 non-Christians attending	5	55
40-70 non-Christians attending	3	33
100 non-Christians attending	1	11
Percentage of non-Christians in the total attendance	n	%
25-40 percent	3	33
60-80 percent	6	67

Among the interviewed churches, the meditative services described as “Format Z” (see Table 6 p. 88) attract relatively small numbers of people, ranging from twenty-five to

forty. In percentage terms the “In the Master’s Light Services” targetting New Agers have 71 percent non-Christians attending and other meditative services attract 25 to 33 percent. Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) says, “The In the Master’s Light Services attract about thirty-five, out of which twenty-five are unchurched. The majority are women between thirty and fifty years old.”

The “Format Y” services (see Table 6 p. 88), particularly the gospel services, attract the largest crowds of people ranging from one hundred to 150, out of which 60 to 80 percent are non-Christians. Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) estimates that the gospel services at his church attracts one hundred to 150 people out of which he considers at least 70 percent to be non-Christians.

Peter Dyhr Joergensen (Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church) has made the observation that some of the ordinary churchgoers stay away from the additional services. He says “It might be because they do not think they gain anything from it. There is no intercessory prayer, no worship, and the preaching is different, and so they may stay at home out of comfortable and selfish reasons.”

Compared to the percentage of non-Christians attending the changed main services, the additional services are able to show significantly higher figures.

The Change Process

Interview question four seeks to uncover of what the change process was composed and what was learned in the process.

The majority of the pastors (N=16 or 80 percent) shared extensive general descriptions of the change process concerning the worship service as part of a general change process in the whole church. Analyzing the data I was able to identify four

specific areas that appear to be important in the change processes in the twenty churches. In each of these areas, pastors shared significant observations and learnings.

The Process

“It is a complete change process. Worship is only a part of it,” said Poul Asger Beck (Viborg Baptist Church) about the process that started in his church 1995 when the church spent one year thinking about what kind of a church they dreamed of becoming.

In 1999 the opportunity suddenly appeared to buy a new facility. Within a month we sold our old church and raised \$ 75.000 to buy the new facility. This really gave us a push forward. In the process we have learned that freedom, patience and time is essential. There is no limit to what is possible if you take time and give people liberty.

Beck further explains that the change “has grown out of the life of the church. It has seemed natural to say, now we are going this way.”

In describing the initiation of the change process many pastors pointed to leadership as an important factor (see Table 7 p. 96). Likewise leadership is emphasized when pastors describe the change process.

Per Hyldgaard (Stenum Covenant Church) accentuates the importance of credibility in a leadership that takes the church through a change process.

There has been a permanent leadership in which the church has confidence. The leadership has the finger on the pulse, and they know when it is time to make changes. If we sense some insecurity, it is important to take time to explain why we are doing as we are doing. It is a development. Not that we have reached the goal, but I think we have seen it in our hearts all along.

Hyldgaard points to four values that guide the change process in the Covenant Church in Stenum:

First, a leadership that knows where it’s going is basic in our change process. Secondly, our focus on spiritual gifts and on leading people into ministry. Thirdly, purposeful preaching. And then prayer plays a central

role in the life of the church.

Jurgen Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) said, “The process does not just concern worship, it concerns the whole church. The change started in the leadership. A few changes were made. Suddenly there was a growth of especially young people.” He sees the leaders’ conviction of the necessity to change as basic. “It is a very tough process, and it is only possible because the leaders are so convinced that this really is necessary.” In the process Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) points to the importance of following up on relationships:

In a change process, it is important to follow up on relationships. While you change. We have learned that change has a price, and you inevitably step on somebody’s toes. It is a process. It is imperative to involve a wide range of leaders. It is like driving a bus-some get on and some get off.

Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) explains that some have stepped down from a leadership position and withdrawn themselves from the congregation. He sees two reasons why this happens: “One is differences in opinion of where the church needs to go. Another is the higher level of commitment that is demanded of the leadership.”

Jan Due-Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church) has come to understand change as a complex system consisting of several components that must function together. He said,

Growth is not the result of just one thing. There are several different elements in a growth environment. While we used to look for the method or the miracle cure, we have now realized that the church is a complex system composed of different elements, that need to work together to create an environment with room for people’s well-being and spiritual development.

Joergen Riis (Holstebro Pentecostal Church) understands the composite change process as an ongoing process in which the church has found encouragement in seeing

non-Christians coming to the church.

We realized that our church was far too much a church just for Christians. And we started to think about a vision for our church. We spent 1 ½ years doing that. We started to look at our values, and we slowly began to make some small changes. It is a long process. And it is still an ongoing process. If we do not continue to change we will stagnate. We have learned that it is worth the effort. When you sit in church and you week after week see non-Christians coming to worship and after some time you see them give their lives to the Lord, not after ten minutes but in a process. When you see your friends come to a pre-marriage seminar or attend an Alpha course. Then you really know it is worthwhile. All the tears you have cried, all the times when you were ready to give up, it really is worthwhile, wow! This is what we live for! And this is confirmed every weekend. This has become part of the thinking among the majority of the people in the congregation.

Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) focuses on the relationship between change and crisis. In his twelve year old church, the urgency for change has not emerged from years of decline but rather from of a growth-crisis. Hansen says,

Change is to make use of the possibilities in a crisis. Crisis came when we reached 130. People started to say this is not our church anymore. If we should break the two hundred-barrier we realized that as the church grew bigger, it also had to grow smaller. From 1997 to 2000, we doubled our worship attendance. This made some people feel alienated. There were financial problems. People asked, “will this continue or is it temporarily?” Success creates crisis.

Hansen gained some help and inspiration from other churches in how to understand and to deal with the crisis.

At conferences I attended at Willow Creek and at Saddleback, I learned to identify growth crisis and to describe them to the church and to the leadership. What do you do? How do we deal with this situation? It is very important to communicate the diagnosis and the cure.

To maintain a focus on being a church that wants to reach non-Christians, all potential members must join an Alpha course. Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) emphasizes that “all potential members and all seekers must join an Alpha course because we want

new members to be able to walk together with seekers. At the Alpha course, new members learn what it means to be church when they are in dialogue with seekers.”

Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) speaks about team leadership and approachability in the change process saying, “The change process is shaped by dialogue, team work, and consideration. The pastors dialogue with people about the life of the church and signal that they are approachable.” Jensen proceeds,

I think the positive reception of the changes are due to the dialogue, the openness, and the teamwork. Our values state that involvement, freedom, and security are important. The church should be a safe environment where people are free to express themselves.

Jensen accentuates the personal spiritual life among the things the leadership in his church has learned in the process.

We have learned that major decisions must be made in dialogue. Leadership is teamwork. We need to focus on our own spirituality in order to be able to make the necessary changes. In that area we still need to grow.

Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) considers a six-month preparation period before a six-month trial period to be crucial in the change process they have gone through in his church. During the preparation phase, the church started a new worship band. They changed a traditional children’s Sunday school format to a children’s church format. The leadership visited a church that reaches non-Christians to gain inspiration from their services. The church developed a new worship format and moved from one to two Sunday services. “From the very first Sunday, we had ten to fifteen non-Christians in worship. This really did something to our people,” said Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church). He continues, “It is important not to put too much pressure on people. Ten small steps are better than one big step. The keyword is patience. You need to be well

prepared.”

Soeren Vifstrup (Vejle Apostolic Church) sees the Great Commission as the pivotal point of the change process in his church. He says,

We are in a transitional process. Our starting point is the Great Commission, which means that we must organize everything we do according to that. We have been thinking about our goal, and we ask ourselves: Who are we not reaching? The process has been to identify what it all is about. Where we are going? Who are we today? Where are we today? And then to focus on the difference between what we are and what we want to be.

Vifstrup (Vejle Apostolic Church) points to the following elements in the change process: “Obedience to the Great Commission, the love for Jesus, and the love for other people.” He sees leadership in the ongoing change process as a team effort.

Our leadershipgroup is the kneading group. We need people to knead the dough. You can’t lead a church well as only one person. We have learned that change is an ongoing process. We need to continue to follow up on what we are doing.

Mission

“The process has affirmed that it is necessary to move from maintenance to mission,” said Ole Joergensen (Hvidovre Baptist Church) when he describes the change process and some of his theological considerations in the course.

It is not enough to make worship and other activities missionoriented if you are not aware of why you are doing it. It is imperative to gain the basic understanding that a church without mission, meaning a conscious effort to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, is coasting. A state church may survive in a coasting mode, but a free-church cannot. As a church we need to discover that we are not the Lord’s objective. We are his means the world is the objective. This is where much evangelism thinking gets off the track. People start behaving as if the church was the objective and the world was the means for the growth of the church. Seekers become trophies.

Joergensen (Hvidovre Baptist Church) puts into words what appears to have

happened in the churches that have become occupied with reaching non-Christians through their worship service. Nine pastors (45 percent) mention a focus on the mission of the church, as expressed in the Great Commission, as essential in the change process. Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) shares about the stronger focus on the mission of the church that has evolved through the change process in his church. “The desire to bring the message of Jesus Christ to the people has been the fundamental element in the change process. A stronger focus on our mission. Why and for whom are we supposed to be church?”

Peter Dyhr Joergensen (Copenhagen Lutheran Free Church) speaks about the desire to be a congregation in mission. “Our values are what pushes us forward. We desire to be a congregation in mission. That is what we are about. We want to be attractive Christians that attract other people.” In continuation of that, Dyhr Joergensen speaks of the purpose of his church: “Our main purpose is to create whole-hearted worshippers of Jesus Christ through creating committed members, mature disciples, equipped coworkers and seeker-sensitive missionaries.”

Lars Due (Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church) characterizes the change that has happened in his church concerning the congregations awareness of the meaning of the church:

The two major changes are the composition of the worshipping congregation and that the church has broken its isolation from the surrounding world and is in touch with the non-Christians in Denmark. I would think that we are in touch with more than thirty thousand non-Christians throughout a year. The focus is not as much me needing to be fed but that the church must reach other people.

The pastors in Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church have focused on networking with non-Christians using the slogan, “Make a friend, and through that you

will change the world.”

In the process of transitioning his church back to its mission, Jens Ibsen (Oester Vraa Baptist Church) has found that the starting point is worship.

The process has been to move the church into its mission, getting back to the roots in all areas; however, the startingpoint was worship. You get a desire to reach people outside the church and to make the necessary sacrifices. It is obvious that if you want to reach people outside the church, you need to make some sacrifices. You need to give up some things.

Churches that are reaching non-Christians appear to have reached the understanding that the church is not here for its own sake, but has a mission beyond itself.

Vision

Two fifty to sixty year old Pentecostal churches in downtown Copenhagen joined forces and in 2000 they moved to a new facility called Copenhagen Culture Center. An immediate result of the move was an increase in worship attendance of one hundred people. Lars Due shares about the vision of the church.

The thinking around Copenhagen Christian Culture Center was that we wanted to be more than just a church in Copenhagen. We wanted to reach further than a traditional church concept would do. We wanted a facility that would be able to contain more than an ordinary church. The leadership talked this new vision and concept through with all the staff and volunteers. It happened internally in smaller groups and in larger, leader assemblies. Important was the senior pastor's ability to communicate the vision through sermons and speeches.

Due states about the communication of vision, “You cannot communicate enough. And you cannot communicate simply enough.”

Lars Due (Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church) is one of thirteen pastors (65 percent) that emphasize vision as a central element in the change process.

Lars Ulrik Jensen (Copenhagen United Methodist Church) speaks of communication of the vision and of the church gaining ownership of the vision.

The vision must be communicated. It is not a vision until the congregation has grasped it and made it its own. The vision is to reach the people in Copenhagen with the message of Jesus Christ. And a specific part of that is that we want to be a thousand people in worship.

Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) emphasizes that the leader through preaching and teaching must create a readiness for a change that works towards solutions that include the whole church.

You must create ownership and a readiness for change. You must talk about it and write about it. Everyday you need to be futureoriented. Stopgap solutions do not work. You need system solutions. Otherwise, you will not survive the crises. And then you need to create some excitement.

According to Hansen this happens as the vision draws people and resources into the center of the church. "I have been very visiondriven. The vision has drawn people and resources into the center of the church. Another important key element is the ability to communicate and to see possibilities where other people see limitations."

Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) shares about his vision when he took on the position as senior pastor at his church:

My clear vision, when I accepted the position as senior pastor, was that the church should a people-winning church. That is consistently the direction in which I am moving. It is obvious that some have left us and some have joined. And especially the young like it. In the past year, many new people have joined, and now the old people can see it. If it becomes larger, it may irritate them, but at the moment they can still cope with it.

Opposition

Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) touches on the tension and even conflicts that to which many pastors have pointed as part of the change process.

Thirteen of the twenty pastors (65 percent) speak of experiences of opposition and several exemplify how they handled it. Jurgen Eisen (Aarhus Apostolic Church) tells

about the opposition he experienced in his church. “It was very difficult for the older part of the congregation, and it still is today, to understand why we suddenly were doing things so differently. They are not yet convinced that this really will reach the new generations.”

Joergen Riis (Holstebro Pentecostal Church) said about the leadership’s strenuous experiences of opposition, “It has been a difficult process. It really has cost us blood, sweat, and tears. There has been a lot of opposition. Often times people say they long for revival, but they do not consider revival is change.”

Lars Due (Copenhagen Culture Center Pentecostal Church) shares some insights about the psychological dynamics that come into play when the congregation and the leadership are exposed to change.

In the process we have learned that change has its costs, and the pressure on leadership is tough. The fact that you are no longer able to go by well-known ideas and words and that you see new faces all around you is a disturbing experience to most people. Very few people experience this as pleasant. We all have to learn how to deal with this. And I am not just talking about the congregation. I am talking about the leadership as well.

Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church), who has decided to hold on to the traditional worship service and make the changes through additional worship services, emphasizes consideration of the older people’s needs.

We can’t just scrap the old people because they do not want to go anywhere. We have to try to understand them even if it is difficult. We have to understand that they grew up in a more static environment, while my children never experienced anything but change from week to week.

Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) says, “The young adults are not afraid of change. They are serious and committed, and they want to be church.” Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) and his youth pastor provide the young adults with the

opportunity to bring out their creative ideas in a gospel music service and a café service.

Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) shares about the tension they experienced at his church:

When the leadership told the congregation that they would aim at making the worship services understandable and winning, the pastor frequently preached on themes related to hospitality. One question soon emerged: “What about us? We come to hear a good sermon. This is our church too.”

Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) points to the following learnings from the tensions in the process, “It is very important to be faithful to the values in which one believes. Even when people get tired of listening to them, it can’t be said enough.”

Eik Bidstrup (Skjern Pentecostal Church) appears to have similar experiences. He remarks,

It is important to be persistent. When God gives us a vision we cannot just run away with our tails between our legs. We have had core people who became upset about something and left. And you say, okay this really hurts, but we continue. God has given us a vision to fulfill.

Jan Due-Christensen (Odense Pentecostal Church) emphasizes dialogue and explanation as means to deal with opposition. He said about the change process,

It is hard work. We have learned to slaughter holy cows and not to be overly sensitive to criticism. We have learned to see criticism as a positive means to move on. While we used to see ourselves as untouchable because we were inspired by the Holy Spirit, we are now willing to listen, to explain and to discuss the things we are doing.

In Hvidovre Baptist Church, they dealt with the dissatisfaction that emerged after the leadership presented a new vision and hired a young staff person to work with youth. They decided to hire a mature senior pastor, Ole Joergensen, to bring some stability. Joergensen explains, “Some had become annoyed and offended and said, “You are ruining our church.” Then a year after hiring the young staff member, the church hired

me to bring some stability and security.”

Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) points to the conviction success carries: “When you have thirty or sixty people on an Alpha course and you tell about it at a service, you really create excitement. And there are not too many people who want to discuss whether what you are doing is reasonable.”

Holding On

Pastors like Soeren Vifstrup (Vejle Apostolic Church) see change as an ongoing process. Six of the twenty pastors (30 percent) call attention to the fact that the change process can be difficult to retain. Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) said, “I have had to realize that I can catch the fact that things cannot stay the way they are, but it is very difficult to change. It is so hard to let go.”

Leif Munk (Taastrup Baptist Church) speaks about breaking out of an inward-focused approach to worship and to become aware of what the desire to reach non-Christians should imply for the worship service. He says, “It is very difficult to change. We can talk a lot about change, and then one or two Sundays later we slip back into our old ways. It takes time to change people’s way of leading worship.”

Joergen Mortensen (Copenhagen Apostolic Church) has experienced it as a temptation to slip back into becoming the comfortable pastor who does a great job except for leading the church where it needs to go.

It is so easy. I can look back and see several months when I was just laid-back and becoming the comfortable pastor who delivers a great sermon that people enjoy and compliment. But I have to say, this is not what you need, you were flying, but did we get any closer to doing what we should be about? It is so easy to slide back.

Summary

This concludes the analysis of data gathered through interviews with twenty pastors in churches that have changed their worship services and consistently are attracting non-Christians to those services. The presented data can be summarized in the following three statements.

First, the change that has occurred can be described as an alteration from a format anchored in the respectively denominational traditions and aimed at Christians to becoming a diverse worship experience modeled out of the Great Commission and aimed at or sensitive to non-Christians. This change in worship can be described as a change of the mainservice and/or an addition of one or more worship experiences.

Secondly, the churches' effectiveness in attracting non-Christians to their worship services can be described to a certain extent as correlating with the intentionality with which the churches target the worship service at non-Christians. The most effective churches were the ones being intentional about reaching non-Christians through their worship service.

Thirdly, the change process can be described through a number of interwoven theological and strategic considerations and elements mutually affecting each other. Though each pastor describes a unique process, a common core of considerations and elements emerge as basic to the change process that affects not only the worship service but the whole life of the church. These elements and considerations are relevance, evangelism, leadership, urgency, vision, and the mission of the church.

An in-depth analysis and discussion of the interview findings is presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the collected data, I have identified seven major findings that provide clues as to how change processes and the considerations behind them are accomplished in churches that are trying to reach non-Christians through their worship service.

Once these insights are grasped and integrated into the ministry of a pastor and a local church, they will provide basic understanding concerning the change of worship for the purpose of reaching non-Christians in a traditional Danish context.

A synopsis follows of my reflections on the findings from the interview data concerning the considerations behind the change process and the process itself.

1. While Worship before the Change Largely Was Shaped by the Tradition of the Denomination, the Pastor's or the Church's Perception of the Nature of Worship Shapes the Worship after the Change

As stated in the summary of Chapter 4, the change that has occurred can be described as an alteration from a format anchored in the respective denominational traditions and aimed at Christians to becoming a diverse, worship experience aimed at or sensitive to non-Christians. These new worship experiences are modeled out of the pastor's or the church's perception of the character of worship. This perception can be described as shaped by the Great Commission rather than by a specific denominational form or tradition. The collected data has not pointed to any clear common denominators in the new worship formats among churches belonging to the same denomination.

This leads to the conclusion that the common denominators that I have found analyzing the data all are independent of denominational positions, traditions, or doctrine.

They are, however, closely related to a desire to reach or attract non-Christians to the worship service.

2. Worship Services Can Be Changed into a Variety of Formats That Reach Non-Christians

Churches are able to reach non-Christians through a wide variety of worship formats. The analysis of the interviews does not point to any new core elements in the worship formats that reach non-Christians today. However, a number of qualities and values that characterize worship services that reach non-Christians, such as relevant language, thematic preaching, creativity, and casualty, have emerged in the interview process.

The analysis of the data does not point to one specific style or formula that is particularly effective in reaching non-Christians. Churches have shown that changing and developing worship services from ones that attracted almost no non-Christians to a variety of outward-focused worship experiences that attract significant numbers of non-Christians is possible. The new worship formats were developed uniquely for every church. Some found inspiration in other churches' experiences, in seminars or literature, and added their own flavor to the elements and styles they now incorporate in their own worship services. Some churches have developed new innovative worship experiences to reach non-Christians such as "Innocence" in Aarhus Lutheran Free Church or the youth services targeting hip-hoppers in Hvidovre Baptist Church.

My analysis of the data shows that no specific worship format is generally more effective than other formats in reaching non-Christians. This finding supports Christian Schwarz's research that shows that seeker services are just one of several good tools that

work in different contexts. (Natural 31) The worship formats that were ineffective in reaching non-Christians ten years ago, may have been very effective fifteen or twenty years ago. Worship formats that effectively attract non-Christians today may be less effective tomorrow as the speed with which our culture changes means that churches may use forms tied to a culture we have moved beyond. This means that changing worship into new formats must be an ongoing process in churches that desire to reach non-Christians. Such churches are willing to discard their culturally-inspired worship practices when they are no longer relevant and search for new, innovative ways to reach non-Christians through their worship services.

3. Additional Worship Services Aimed at a Specific Group Reaches in Terms of Percentage More Non-Christians than Changed Main Services Aimed at a Broadly-Defined Group

The main services in churches are generally aimed at a broadly-defined group as the churches desire to involve the whole congregation in its worship service. This is even true of churches that want to reach non-Christians. These churches change the worship format; however, they still aim the main service at a broadly-defined group, and they are successful as they reach growing numbers of non-Christians.

All twenty interview participants reported an increase, in terms of percentage in the number of non-Christians attending their main service. In contrast to the main services, the new worship experiences (services) that churches added to their main services are typically aimed at a specific group. Their musical preference, age, social need, culture, or spirituality characterizes these target groups. Worship experiences shaped by a specific musical style tend to attract more non-Christians than a worship

experience shaped by a specific spirituality or a specific need.

Nonetheless, when one looks at the percentage of non-Christians in the total attendance, all the different additional services targeted at specific groups show high figures.

Furthermore, the percentage of non-Christians attending the additional services is several times higher than the percentage of non-Christians attending modified main services.

4. The Pastor's or the Church's Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Worship and Mission Determines the Change of the Worship Service

The change of worship that has and is taking place is a change in formats.

Reflection upon the twenty interviews has, however, revealed deeper considerations in the minds of the pastors and in the mind of the leadership of the churches, which has led to the present worship format.

This deeper level of deliberation is reflected in the theological considerations concerning worship leading to a basic understanding of the nature of worship and the correlation between worship and mission.

Analyzing the interviews, I have observed, that most pastors have one of two common perceptions of the relationship between worship and mission. One is that worship is evangelism. The purpose of the worship service is to reach non-Christians. The other is that worship in its substance is missiological. The purpose of the worship service is to worship God. Worshipping Christians have an evangelizing impact on non-Christians. The first perception causes the pastor and the church to focus on eliminating the barriers that prevent non-Christians from attending a worship service or that prevent the churchgoers from inviting their non-Christian friends. The pastor and the church view worship as an evangelistic tool, and they emphasize inculturation, relevant vocabulary,

and intelligible elements.

The second perception causes the pastor and the church to focus on giving people the opportunity to encounter God through the worship experience. The pastor and the church perceive genuine worship as having a life-changing impact on the participants, and they emphasize inculturation, explanation of spiritual expressions, and a devoted spiritual atmosphere.

Most churches changed their worship format on one or the other of these perceptions. However some pastors hold both perceptions together in a creative tension between worship and mission and perceive this to be a more complete understanding of worship.

5. Leadership and a Sense of Urgency Are the Main Factors in the Initiation of Change in Worship

Years of stagnation or decline or the fact that the churches are not reaching any non-Christians creates urgency for change in the hearts and minds of pastors or leadership teams. The interviewed pastors expressed their sense of urgency in different ways, but the substance was the same. They reached a point where they knew things could not go on the way they were. Jens Christensen (Aarhus Baptist Church) realized, “[T]his was the last call” for his church, and out of this realization, he began to act.

No matter whether the change was initiated through a specific decision or in a progressing process, interviewees generally pointed to the senior pastor as the initiator of the change. Generally the senior pastor experienced a sense of urgency and began to address the complacency in the church and to establish a sense of urgency for change. While the senior pastor provided the impetus in the opening stage of the process, several

of the interview participants underscored the value of working in conjunction with some sort of leadership team in the ongoing change process.

Per Hyldgaard (Stenum Covenant Church) expresses what appears to be the essence of the experiences in the majority of the twenty churches: “A leadership that knows where it’s going is basic in our change process.”

6. Focus on the Mission of the Church and a Clear Vision Enable the Leadership to Lead the Church in the Change Process and to Overcome Opposition

Emphasis on the Great Commission and a clear vision for where the church needs to go have enabled leadership to guide the church in the process of changing the worship service to reach non-Christians. Jurgen Eisen shares his desire to turn his church into one that takes care of people: “From being an inward-focused church occupied with its own problems, I wanted, through visions, mission-statements, and values, to turn it into a church that exists for other people.”

This finding is the natural continuation of the preceding one. I heard pastors say again and again that they considered the Great Commission to be the pivotal point in the change process. Taking this compelling mission as their starting point, the interview participants repeatedly emphasized vision as a central element in the change process. Anders Michael Hansen (Aarhus Lutheran Free Church) explains why vision is so important in the change process: “[T]he vision draws people and resources into the center of the church.”

John P. Kotter points to several reasons why vision is essential in a change process. Vision clarifies the general direction for change (68). Vision motivates people to take action in the right direction, even if the initial steps are personally painful (69). This

becomes particularly important when the leadership encounters opposition.

Nobody enjoys change, and congregations are no exception. The interviewees have shared quite a few stories about tension and opposition in their churches due to the difficult process of changing worship in order to reach non-Christians. The stories contain all sorts of ways to deal with opposition. However, reflection upon the stories has revealed that a sense of urgency for change and a clear vision really have been the elements that enabled the leadership to deal with opposition in a constructive way.

7. Churches That Have Changed or Are Changing Their Worship Service in Order to Reach Non-Christians Are Led by Pastors Who Exercise a Conscious Leadership in a Change Process That Affects the Full Life of the Church.

Few of the interviewed pastors were able to articulate clearly the exact steps in the change process through which they are leading their church. Nonetheless, extended reflections upon the twenty interviews showed that the vast majority of the pastors who led their church through a change process to reach non-Christians exercised a conscious leadership in which they carefully thought through and evaluated what they were doing and will be doing in the future.

Members of my congregational reflection group have made the point that the twenty interviewed pastors in all probability have different ways of thinking. Some may be very linear in their thinking and have a clear perception of the different steps in the change process they are leading. Others may act more intuitively as leaders, and yet the different kinds of leaders are accomplishing the same goal, which underlines the consciousness and the quality of their leadership.

The importance of seeing the change of worship as part of a complete change

process in the church was underscored by a number of pastors. Christian Schwarz's research has shown that no single factor leads to church growth; rather, growth is the interplay of eight quality characteristics of which inspiring worship is one (Natural 31). Though pastors may be inspired by other churches, seminars, and literature, they are not looking for a method or a model rather for experiences, values, and qualities to strengthen and develop the process. They understand change as a complex process composed of several components that mutually affect each other. Herrington, Bonem, and Furr point to the significance of worship in a change process in the whole church. In helping the congregation to focus on spiritual and relational vitality as key components of the change process, they see worship as integral to the process (20).

Though the focus in this dissertation is worship change to reach non-Christians, it has become obvious to me that the change of worship is an important part, but still only a part, of the complicated process of changing a local church to become an outward-focused and mission-oriented church.

An Unexpected Finding

Herrington, Bonem, and Furr put spiritual and relational vitality at the heart of the change process. Without an adequate level of vitality, churches will not be able to sustain significant change (12). Spiritual and relational vitality means encountering God corporately. It also means that the change leader or leadership team consistently must encounter the holiness of God (20).

Taking these considerations into account, I would have expected to hear pastors address prayer and fellowship as key components in the life of their churches. However in only four out of twenty interviews did a pastor mention prayer. Three of the four spoke

about fellowship. In addition to that, another two pastors mentioned fellowship.

Statements by Kenneth Kuhn (Frederiksberg Pentecostal Church) underline the validity of what Herrington, Bonem, and Furr says. Kuhn says about the senior pastor, “He concentrated very much on prayer, and prayer got a new meaning for the church.” He says about the change process: “The church began to experience itself as a fellowship with power to move on.” He continues, “Prayer and the charismatic element came into focus.”

The fact that so few pastors explicitly mentioned prayer and fellowship as important in the change process cannot lead to the conclusion that Herrington, Bonem, and Furr’s statements are invalid. Nor can it lead to the conclusion that only a few churches and pastors value prayer and fellowship. It does however point to the obvious risk that pastors and churches get so focused on being cuttingedge, relevant, and trendy that they lose sight of the foundation for change, growth, and reaching new Christians, which is the spiritual and relational vitality of the church. However, I realize that part of the issue here is my methodology. If I had asked specifically about prayer and fellowship, I might have found that the interviewed pastors would consider them as being important elements in the change process.

Theological Reflections

In the process of reflecting upon the literature research and the interview data, four theological considerations have surfaced. These four reflections are, in my understanding, essential when a church and its leadership engage in changing its worship service to focus on non-Christians.

Worship and Evangelism Are Inextricably Linked with Each Other

Does worship drive evangelism? Is worship in itself evangelism? Can worship be one of the church's evangelizing tools? These questions I have pondered again and again during this dissertation project.

Worship definitely contains a centrifugal impulse, as the worship service equips and sends the worshippers out into the world with the gospel. Evangelism so to speak flows from the worship of the church. This perception, which is widespread in Denmark, originates in the understanding that the mission of the church is to worship. The weakness of this understanding is that it may keep worship as a gathering primarily for Christians. One or two non-Christians might visit by accident.

While worship contains a centrifugal impulse, it also contains a centripetal impulse as worship must attract Christians as well as non-Christians. This perception derives from the understanding that evangelism is the church's primary task. When the Great Commission is understood as being the church's central mandate, everything the church does, including worship, must evolve around it. Worship must impel the church to share God's love with other people and to lead them to a close fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.

I suggest the existence of a dialectical relationship between worship and mission. In worship God encounters and serves his people through his grace with his Word, in prayers and through the sacraments. In worship people are given the opportunity to respond to God's deeds of salvation. Acknowledging this dialectic leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of worship as a church engages in changing its worship service or in developing new innovative worship experiences to reach non-Christians.

Inculturation Must Shape the Format of Worship

Churches may minister in a rural or urban environment. Their worship services may attract people with a postmodern or modern way of thinking. Their worship services may attract people with a specific musical preference or a specific spiritual orientation. Their worship services may attract single women, teenagers, or couples with children. Irrespective of the makeup of the attracted people, all churches that through their worship services purposefully attract non-Christians are engaged in some sort of inculturation or contextualization. They make an ongoing, conscious effort to be as relevant as possible to the people they try to reach. This effort involves respect for the varieties and gifts of differing peoples as legitimate expressions of worship. The process of inculturation is, in a historical perspective, a step back to the time before the uniformity of Christian worship became the widely accepted norm. In the process of inculturation, pastors accept cultural diversity as one of God's gifts to humanity, and they are willing to incorporate this diversity in various expressions of worship.

The question arises, what do we want to inculturate? The starting point must be the very core of what the Christian church is. This may be expressed in the Apostolic Creed and the Nicene Creed or simply in the kerygma, "that Jesus Christ Son of the living God is risen from the dead." In the words of Joergen Riis from Holstebro Pentecostal Church, "the Bible contains the best message in the world but sometimes it has the most boring wrapping in the world. It is the wrapping we have tried to do something about." The core belief of the church is, on one hand, strange to the world around the church and, on the other hand, is the good news that invites to renewal and restoration. In addition to the core beliefs, a core identity and certain core values will

exist in the local church, such as charismatic utterances, social emphases, liturgical traditions, or special giftedness in creative areas that the church may want to inculcate. Innovations in worship have been made throughout the ages in response to changing cultures. Effective worship demonstrates that sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and to changing cultural situations enables the church to express the gospel in ways that are relevant and attractive to particular cultures and generations.

Considering the issue of inculturation will enable the pastor and the leadership in the local church to maintain substance in the worship service while forms, creative expressions, and vocabulary changes in order to be as relevant as possible to the people the church tries to reach. Then we need to be reminded of Sally Morgenthaler's words: "In the end, cutting-edge relevance matters much less than being real" (139).

True Worship Connects or Invites to a Connection with God

Worship is countercultural in our Western culture of spectators since it fundamentally calls for total involvement. True worship is never just a performance or a show. Worship must, independent of its expressions, be able to contain the experience of God's presence.

Even in worship experiences with a low level of participation, the leadership must still, for the worship to remain true, point to the acting triune God and encourage the attenders to respond to his acts of grace. Worship must communicate God's saving story in Christ to the world and call for the participants to respond in some way. Worship is a genuine encounter with the triune God, which leaves a person with a changed heart and a call to a changed life.

When the church attempts to become as culturally relevant as possible, it runs the

risk of becoming so relevant that it no longer has anything to say to the culture. Instead of having a transforming influence on people's lives, it has been caught up in trendy ways of doing church. Craig Kennet Miller addresses this issue suggesting that people participate in worship "because they are having an experience of the presence of God. By creating settings that move people closer to God, growing congregations offer spiritual experiences that speak to the heart" (140). According to Miller, "most people do not see themselves as unbelievers, secular people, or even as seekers; they see themselves as believers. They may not be Christian believers, but in their mind they are believers in something." (139) When these people attend a worship service, they want to know what the church can teach them about spirituality and Christian faith. Miller continues, "You may think that the best strategy would be to water down what you have to offer, in order to make to easier to digest, but the opposite is true" (140).

Worship evangelizes when it takes people somewhere. Worship transcends the culture with the truth of the gospel and takes people into the awesome presence of God and encourages the participators to respond to Christ's love. God's unmistakable presence, not to forget the love and acceptance, vulnerability and authenticity expressed in the worship of the congregation, will make a decisive difference to the non-Christian visiting the worship service.

Worship is a Process Rather than an Event

From the perspective of the non-Christian, a particular worship service may be considered one single event that he or she decides to attend, it may be a main service, it may be a service aimed at a specific group, or it may even be a wedding or a funeral. The challenge the church faces is to move the new participators from attending once or twice

out of curiosity to become frequent attenders. This requires the leadership and the church to understand worship as a process rather than an event.

Worship repeats itself week after week. Themes, content, and forms change, but every week the church gathers for worship. Some worship services are only offered monthly, but still they take place with a fixed frequency. In spite of the repeated occurrence, evangelical free churches in Denmark widely consider the worship service as a single event. To some this means that newcomers ideally should encounter God and be saved, and to others this perception means that having a reasonable number of non-Christians attending worship is sufficient.

When worship is understood as a process, the purpose of every worship service becomes to move each individual worshipper one step closer to an encounter with God and decision to follow Christ. Every worship service should encourage each worshipper to take another step in discipleship. This aligns worship with the overall purpose of the church, to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Limitations of the Study

When a researcher attempts to find the explanation for the things that are being said, attention must be paid to the vital importance of understanding the context of the interviewee. However even if the researcher is able to imagine the context of the interviewee, the researcher still has his or her own preconceived ideas about the issues of the study, which will affect the interpretation of the statements of the interview participant. This means that the analysis of the interview data is a result of a dialectic process between the researcher's preconceived ideas and the reality described by the interview participant.

The small sample population of twenty churches, approximately ten percent of the total number of evangelical free churches in Denmark, limits the degree to which valid generalizations can be made. I do, however, hope to have brought some concepts not previously seen or fully appreciated to the attention of the reader. The reader who may want to make use of the present work must interpret the research results and make judgments about their generalizability.

Implications for the Existing Body of Knowledge

Worship is frequently discussed in the media and in church magazines. A number of sociological and theological studies have been conducted to analyze the religious ideas and faith of the Danes including their relationship to church and their perception of worship. A growing dissatisfaction concerning the High Mass appears to exist among members and pastors in the Lutheran State Church. A few books have been written about worship renewal all of them from a Lutheran State Church perspective. Small studies and booklets on worship renewal, in the evangelical free churches have not reached readers outside the denominations.

Multiple innovative worship projects have been started in the Lutheran State Church to reach out to unchurched people. These projects do not involve change of an existing worship service. They are either additions of new worship formats or the creation of a new worship experience without a close connection to an existing congregation. Up to now only smaller reports about the experiences of the leaders of these projects are available.

Much literature on worship from the United States is known and used in Danish churches; however, the significantly different context makes applying the knowledge in

the Danish churches difficult. A considerable need exists for studies of worship and change in the unique Danish context.

To my knowledge the present study is the first extensive study on changing worship to reach non-Christians in a Danish context outside the realm of the Lutheran State Church. This dissertation examines how churches that reach non-Christians in a traditional Danish church context have transitioned their worship experience, and it describes the emphases and forms that characterize their present worship services. It seeks to provide the opportunity to listen to the stories and the experiences of pastors who have led or are in the process of leading churches towards a change of worship to reach non-Christians. The dissertation attempts to describe the change process, the considerations behind it, and the effect of the change in churches that consistently reach non-Christians through their worship services.

The interviews and the findings of this study will supply new knowledge for future research and writing on the subject of worship in Denmark.

Practical Applications

In the process of research, interviewing, analysis, reflection, consultation with the congregational reflection group, and writing, I have discerned a number of practical applications concerning the process of changing worship in a Danish context. These applications are influenced by my own experiences as a change leader.

Be Changed

All change begins in the leader. First of all, the leader's heart must be broken for the thousands of people in Denmark who do not know Christ. Through the pastor's consistent encounter with the holiness and the love of the triune God, the pastor must

begin to see that non-Christians should be so important to the church, that the church is willing to do anything to accomplish the Great Commission, which even implies changing the worship service.

Secondly, the leader must discover the urgency for change. The church cannot be about doing business as usual, maintaining the institution, and taking care of the Christians. The urgency must be outward focused on the non-Christians, and not unhealthy rallying around a cry to preserve the institution rather than following Christ. The pastor must realize that to be faithful to the Great Commission the church must consistently reach non-Christians and lead them into discipleship. When the pastor starts to communicate the love for non-Christians and the urgency created through the biblical mandates, it will lead to openness to God and greater willingness to change. This communication will create a sense of urgency in the church and establish a powerful early momentum to push the process in the right direction.

Focus on Qualities and Values Rather than on Models

In times of stagnation and decline churches usually experience a growing desire for a miracle cure. Pastors begin to look for a recipe to follow or a model to use that will make the church grow. Christians Schwarz's research points out that no such recipe exists. Rather than studying models and copying successes from other churches, pastors, and leadership teams should focus on which qualities and values they think characterize and ought to characterize the church.

Emphasizing the qualities and values of the church will help the leadership to focus on changing the identity of the church. The leadership may be inspired by models and worship formats in other churches; however, the qualities and values of the church

will shape the forms and content of worship and align the worship services with the mission and the vision of the church.

Study the Culture

As Paul studied the Greek culture through observation and dialogue, so must the pastors who desire to lead their churches in a process to change the worship service to reach non-Christians become students of culture and context.

Today's Danish churches need to regain the Pauline perception that one of the strengths of the gospel is that it can be expressed through countless particularities of human culture. The churches must recognize the growing diversity in their local communities and begin to study those cultures to become able to minister to them.

A Team Is Needed

“Transforming an established congregation, particularly one that is large or old, is a daunting undertaking. It cannot be accomplished without God, and it should not be attempted as a solo enterprise of the pastor” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 41). Seeing church leadership in evangelical free churches in Denmark as a team effort is still a fairly new concept. Pastors are still reluctant to give up power; however, a team leadership does not diminish the pastor's authority or responsibility. The values of shared leadership are many. The team leadership contains a large number of different spiritual gifts. The diversity of the team can reflect the makeup of the congregation. The team contains a variety of experiences and abilities. If the team is well put together, it will have high credibility in the church and be able to lead through difficult changes and handle opposition well. The leadership team will be characterized by mutual support and accountability. Last, but not least, the leadership team will serve as the visioning

community in the church.

Putting together the right leadership team in the local church and building up the team as the visioning community with the burning passion to seek God's will is a worthwhile effort that will enable the church to become all God intends it to be.

Know Where You Are Going, Think Through How to Get There, and Start Going

Three churches are on a picnic at the beach when the sky starts to turn dark and a thunderstorm draws near. The pastor of the first church gets up and shouts, "Get up and follow me." He starts walking, but when he realizes that only two people follow him he yells, "I said everybody, let's go, now!" The pastor of the second church says, "We will soon have to move. Let us follow this plan. We all stand up take each other's hands and begin to walk towards the shelter. Please stay calm and no running." The pastor of the third church says, "It is going to be raining and lightning in a few minutes. Why do we not go over there to the shelter? There is plenty of room for everybody; we could even invite others to join us. We will stay dry, and we can continue our picnic."

This story says why vision and the communication of vision are essential in a change process. If the pastor or the leadership team does not know where to go, why to go, and how to get there, they will not be able to lead the church to change the worship service.

The vision must originate in the mission of the church and paint the picture of the desired future. Furthermore the vision must be accompanied by what Herrington, Bonem, and Furr refer to as a "visionpath" (51). The leadership needs to share with the church how they think the worship is going to get where it needs to be.

It Is Not Just Worship

This dissertation deals with the change of worship to reach non-Christians, yet the change of worship needs to be seen in a wider perspective. The change process is ongoing, and it not only concerns worship, it concerns the whole church.

For the church to reach non-Christians through its worship services, the whole ministry of the church needs to be focused on reaching non-Christians and on making disciples. Leaders may be excited seeing significant numbers of non-Christians attending worship, but the church needs to go further. It needs to be able to encourage people to take steps towards a personal faith, to create settings where people can encounter God, and to offer opportunities to grow in discipleship.

I conclude this study by emphasizing the need for churches that intentionally reach out to the thousands of non-Christians in Denmark. The fact that the majority of the Danes have little desire to be anything but culture Christians represents a huge challenge to the Christian churches. Far too long have churches been worshipping as usual and hardly paying any attention to the thousands of non-Christians that do not find worship as usual very appealing or relevant. Some churches have started to address the needs and to make use of the opportunities. In the coming years, undoubtedly, several other churches will follow. My hope and prayer is that this dissertation may serve as an inspiration and a helpful tool to those churches as they consider entering into the complicated yet rewarding process of changing their worship services to reach the thousands of people in Denmark who do not yet know Christ.

6. Which creative expressions were used in your Sunday morning worship in 1990?
(you may check more than one)

Choir Dance Drama
 Multimedia projection Soloist Song group

7. Which of the following characterize your Sunday morning worship today?
(you may check more than one)

Hymns Modern hymns Worship songs/choruses
 A fixed liturgy Changing liturgy Informal program
 Liturgical dress Formal dress (suit and tie) Informal dress

8. Which instruments are used in your Sunday morning worship today?
(you may check more than one)

Bass Drums Guitar
 Keyboard Organ Piano

9. Which creative expressions are used in your Sunday morning worship today?
(you may check more than one)

Choir Dance Drama
 Multimedia projection Soloist Song group

10. If you look at your Sunday morning worship over the period of the past ten years to which extent would you say has it changed? (check one)

Not at all Hardly at all Some Considerably Completely

11. When you look at your present Sunday morning worship, which values control your planning of form, style, and content? Rate the importance of the following values. 1=The least important 5=The most important
(use each number 1 to 5 only once)

- ___ We have a desire to attract passive members to worship.
- ___ We have a desire to reach non-Christians through our worship service .
- ___ We have a desire to attract the younger people in the church to worship.
- ___ We a desire to engage the whole congregation in meaningful worship.
- ___ We have a desire to make worship contemporary in form, style, and content.

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Interview Question 1

- a. Think back to a typical worship service 10 years ago and describe it to me.

Note: Additional questions may be asked if the following areas are not covered: music style and use of musical instruments, atmosphere and style, use of liturgy, dress style of pastor, prayers, use of the Bible, emphasis of content in music and preaching, use of the arts, use of technology, and elements designed for children.

- b. Walk me through a typical worship service today.

Note: Additional questions may be asked if the following areas are not covered: music style and use of musical instruments, atmosphere and style, use of liturgy, dress style of pastor, prayers, use of the Bible, emphasis of content in music and preaching, use of the arts, use of technology, and elements designed for children.

Interview Question 2

- a. Tell what happened before and after you made the decision to change your worship?

Note: Additional question may be asked to clarify the theological and strategic considerations that led to the decision to change the worship and to clarify whether external influence has inspired the change.

- b. Tell what your values of worship are today.

Interview Question 3

- a. Tell me about the makeup of the congregation attending worship prior to the change.

Note: Additional questions may be asked to determine the number of non-Christians attending.

- b. Tell me about the makeup of the congregation attending worship today.

Note: Additional questions may be asked to determine the number of non-Christians attending.

Interview Question 4

- a. Tell me about the change process.

Note: Additional questions may be asked to clarify which components made up the process and which of these components the respondents consider most important.

Furthermore additional questions may be asked to clarify what was learned in the process.

APPENDIX C

Letter Introducing Questionnaire

Chr. Alsted
Præst i Jerusalemskirken, Metodistkirken
Stokhusgade 2, 3. sal. 1317 København K
Tlf. 33 12 96 06 Fax 33 12 96 06
email calsted@worldonline.dk

Dear Pastor

I am working on my dissertation for my Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. The title of my work is “Worship Change to Reach Non-Christians in Traditional Danish Evangelical Free Churches”.

Part of my work is to do a survey of churches that have changed or are in the process of changing their worship service to reach non-Christian.

I turn to you because I kindly ask you to fill out and return the attached questionnaire.

As I receive the questionnaires, I will analyze the data and select twenty churches that meet the criteria I have set up for my study. It is my hope that the pastors of the twenty churches will allow me to interview them over the telephone.

When the selection is made, I will mail you again to let you know whether you are one of the pastors I would ask to participate in an interview.

I thank you for your time and wish you God’s power and joy in your ministry.

Sincerely,

Christian Alsted

APPENDIX D

Letter Reminder of the Questionnaire

Chr. Alsted
Præst i Jerusalemskirken, Metodistkirken
Stokhusgade 2, 3. sal. 1317 København K
Tlf. 33 12 96 06 Fax 33 12 96 06
email calsted@worldonline.dk

Dear Pastor

You may not have had the time to read my previous e-mail. I would, however, greatly appreciate if you could possibly find the time to spend some minutes reading and responding to this e-mail.

I am working on my dissertation for my Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. The title of my work is "Worship Change to Reach Non-Christians in Traditional Danish Evangelical Free Churches".

Part of my work is to do a survey of churches that have changed or are in the process of changing their worship service to reach non-Christians.

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I thank you for your time and wish you God's power and joy in your ministry.

Sincerely,

Christian Alsted

APPENDIX E

Thank You Letter to Respondents

Chr. Alsted
Præst i Jerusalemskirken, Metodistkirken
Stokhusgade 2, 3. sal. 1317 København K
Tlf. 33 12 96 06 Fax 33 12 96 06
email calsted@worldonline.dk

Dear Pastor

I would like to thank you for taking the time to fill out and return the questionnaire I sent you. Your answers are very valuable to my research, and they will be part of the data I will analyze and use for my dissertation project.

As you may remember, I am working on a dissertation towards a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. The work, which is entitled "Worship Change to Reach Non-Christians in Traditional Danish Evangelical Free Churches," is expected to be finished in the spring of 2002.

After my graduation in late May 2002, I expect to publish the result of my research in my dissertation on a web site, from where it will be available for you to read. As soon as the dissertation is published on the web, I will let you know by e-mail.

Once again I appreciate that you took the time to assist me, and I wish God's blessing over your ministry.

Sincerely,

Chr. Alsted

APPENDIX F

Overview of the Sample Population

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Joergen Mortensen		
Age	49		
Theological Education	Bachelor's Degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	25 years		
Present ministry	6 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Apostolic		
Location and population	Copenhagen	1.2 million	
Age of the congregation	81 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	125	100	85

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Soeren Viftrup		
Age	63 years		
Theological Education	None		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	17 years		
Present ministry	8 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Apostolic		
Location and population	Vejle	52,000	
Age of the congregation	73 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	?	?	92

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Jurgen Eisen		
Age	31 years		
Theological Education	2 pastor and leadership school		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	7 years		
Present ministry	5 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Apostolic		
Location and population	Aarhus	204,000	
Age of the congregation	?		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	?	30-40	70

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Ole Joergensen		
Age	57		
Theological Education	3 years in Seminary		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	23 years		
Present ministry	2 ½ years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Baptist		
Location and population	Hvidovre	49,000	
Age of the congregation	105 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	?	30-40	60

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Leif Munk		
Age	59 years		
Theological Education	4 years in seminary		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	34 years		
Present ministry	12 years		
Position	Pastor		
Denomination	Baptist		
Location and population	Taastrup	50,000	
Age of the congregation	12 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	40	150	100

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Poul Asger Beck		
Age	40 years		
Theological Education	Master's Degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	8 years		
Present ministry	8 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Baptist		
Location and population	Viborg	30,000	
Age of the congregation	54 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	28	35	43

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Jens Ibsen		
Age	35		
Theological education	One years bible School		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	9 years		
Present ministry	3 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Baptist		
Location and population	Oester Vraa	2,000	
Age of the congregation	54 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	55	58	110

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Jens Christensen		
Age	58 years		
Theological Education	Master's degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	32 years		
Present ministry	9 years		
Ministry position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Baptist		
Location and population	Aarhus	204,000	
Age of the congregation	90 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	?	?	70

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	John Lorenzen		
Age	37 years		
Theological Education	Three years in seminary		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	10 years		
Present ministry	5 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Covenant		
Location and population	Grindsted	10,000	
Age of the congregation	85 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	65	70-75	110

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Per Hylgaard		
Age	34 years		
Theological Education	One year bible school		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	12 years		
Present ministry	6 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Covenant		
Location and population	Stenum	1,000	
Age of the congregation	More than 100 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	25	50	160

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Charley Stephansen		
Age	34 years		
Theological Education	Four years in seminary		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	One year		
Present ministry	One year		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Covenant		
Location and population	Thisted	13,000	
Age of the congregation	115 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	40	50	65

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Peter Dyhr Joergensen		
Age	35 years		
Theological Education	Master's Degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	6 years		
Present ministry	6 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Lutheran Free Church		
Location and population	Copenhagen	1.2 million	
Age of the congregation	6 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
		25	70

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Anders Michael Hansen		
Age	37 years		
Theological Education	Master's Degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	5 years		
Present ministry	5 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Lutheran Free Church		
Location and population	Aarhus	204,000	
Age of the congregation	12 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	54	72	170

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Lars Due		
Age	35 years		
Theological Education	One year bible school		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	15 years		
Present ministry	5 ½ years		
Position	Right hand of the Senior pastor		
Denomination	Pentecostal		
Location and population	Copenhagen	1.2 million	
Age of the congregation	See below		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	?	325	475

Age of the congregation: Two Pentecostal Churches (both 50 to 60 years old) in downtown Copenhagen joined and bought a new facility together.

The church employs six full-time pastors. Jarle Tangstad is the senior pastor. He is 48 years old; he has no formal education. Tangstad has been in pastoral ministry for 31 years. He has pastored one of the joining churches since 1991 and was called to pastor the new church.

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Kenneth Kuhn		
Age	32 years		
Theological Education	Bachelor's Degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	8 years		
Present ministry	3 years		
Position	Pastor		
Denomination	Pentecostal		
Location and population	Frederiksberg	1.2 million	
Age of the congregation	71 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	70	110	160

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Joergen Riis		
Age	41		
Theological Education	Two years bible school		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	3 years		
Present ministry	3 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Pentecostal		
Location and population	Holstebro	40,000	
Age of the congregation	30 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	40	70	80-90

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Jan Due-Christensen		
Age	37 years		
Theological Education	One year bible school		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	17 years		
Present ministry	5 years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Pentecostal		
Location and population	Odense	180,000	
Age of the congregation	70 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	75	100	200

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Eik Bidstrup		
Age	27 years		
Theological Education	Bachelor's Degree		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	4 years		
Present ministry	1 ½ years		
Position	Senior pastor		
Denomination	Pentecostal		
Location and population	Skjern	7,000	
Age of the congregation	20 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	25	25	32

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Lars Ulrik Jensen		
Age	39 years		
Theological Education	Education in the Methodist Church		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	10 years		
Present ministry	5 years		
Position	Pastor		
Denomination	United Methodist		
Location and population	Copenhagen	1.2 million	
Age of the congregation	142 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years ago	Today
	80	63	92

Variable	Characteristic		
Name	Joergen Thaarup		
Age	44 years		
Theological Education	Doctor of Ministry		
Gender	Male		
Race	Danish		
Ministry experience	21 years		
Present ministry	13 years		
Position	Pastor		
Denomination	United Methodist		
Location and population	Strandby	3.000	
Age of the congregation	73 years		
Worship attendance	10 years ago	5 years go	Today
	?	?	92

Transcripts of the interviews are available upon request to Christian Alsted Nielsen,

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