

**BALANCING LEADERSHIP PATTERNS TO PROMOTE SENSE OF COMMUNITY
DURING CELL-CHURCH TRANSITIONING: A GROUNDED THEORY OF
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE**

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to develop a substantive grounded theory describing the process of change and the management of organizational inertia, or resistance to change, by strategic leaders transitioning churches from a programme-based to a cell-based model. The grounded theory was developed using the conventions of the Straussian version of the grounded theory method, and relying largely upon the collection of incidents through interviews with leaders of churches that embarked upon the cell-church transition. In all, 38 interviews were conducted with leaders of churches representing a range of denominations located in a number of provinces in South Africa.

Based on the premise that substantive theories are contextually bound rather than context free, the contextual characteristics of this study are highlighted. Drawing from organizational theory, it is recognised that churches can be conceptualised as solidary organizations, normative organizations, congregations and voluntary organizations or associations. Viewing churches as solidary organizations highlights the role of solidary rewards in the change process, while viewing them as congregations, emphasises their religious character. Furthermore, the context of the study is embedded in the nature of the specific type of change being embarked upon, as represented by the cell-church transition. Drawing on concepts derived from the change management literature, the type of change I investigated, I classified as intangible, episodic, teleological, second-order change, highlighting the importance of social interaction.

The grounded theory that was constructed describes the phases of the change process, and how the actions of leaders interact with the sense of community of the church. Three effective patterns of leadership were identified (i.e. the freewheeler, the focused-pioneer and the reflexive-accommodator) along with their ineffective counterparts (i.e. the static non-leader, the rigid combatant and the popular people pleaser). It was argued that effective leadership involves balancing the three effective patterns over time, and that a failure to achieve this balance produced an ineffective pattern. Furthermore, ineffective leadership damaged the

credibility of leaders, as their actions harmed the sense of community. A loss of credibility compromised the leader's ability to lead change.

A number of approaches to understanding organizational inertia or resistance to change were examined in an attempt to locate the grounded theory in the literature and to use the literature to shed light on the findings of this study. While this literature did provide some useful insights and confirmations, no single theoretical perspective seemed to supply a comprehensive explanation. Instead, social capital theory offered a more encompassing explanation, and as such, showed much promise as a body of literature that can be used to develop an understanding of organizational change. Finally, recommendations are made for future research and the value of this research is discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

THE CELL CHURCH

When God moves, small groups are established to contain His work;
this is the lesson of history.

(Bunton, 2001, p. 89)

Evident within numerous churches both within South Africa and internationally, and across cultural, economic, ethnic and denominational lines (Mouton, 1999, p. 1), is the occurrence of a form of teleological (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), second-order (Bartunek & Moch, 1994), episodic change (Weick & Quinn, 1999) involving the transitioning of churches from a programme-based to a cell-based church design (Comiskey, 1998; 1999; Finnell, 1995; Kreider, 1995; Neighbour, 1990).

This organizational change in churches has been occurring within South Africa against a backdrop of significant political, economic and social transformation that has affected religious life and practice in the country. The watershed event in South Africa's recent history would be the 1994 democratic elections, signalling the end of political Apartheid. This political change ushered in a period of sweeping constitutional and legislative change that has affected the church directly and indirectly.

Politically, the role and position of Christianity and organized religion has been redefined. Although the 2001 census indicates that more than three quarters of the population professes to adhere to the Christian faith (MacFarlane, 2004, p. 28), no longer did the new constitution declare the country a Christian nation, but rather recognized the diversity of beliefs, according them equal status and guaranteeing freedom of religion (Constitution of the Republic of SA, Act No. 108 of 1996). Simultaneously, discrimination on grounds of race, sex, gender, belief and sexual orientation, among other factors was outlawed (Constitution of the Republic of SA, Act No. 108 of 1996). Furthermore, the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act No.

108 of 1991 had nullified discriminatory legislation such as the Group Areas Act (which had segregated residential areas along racial lines). Increased racial integration in suburban areas began to translate into an increasingly diverse racial profile in a number of churches, perhaps most notably within formally White congregations located in suburban areas.

Even prior to 1994, national church conferences and declarations such as the 1982 Belhar Confession (Naude, 2004; Smit, 2003) and the Rustenburg Declaration (1990) were indicative of the debates about changing church-state relations and the role of the church in society and church unity. With the new constitution in 1996 and its implications, these debates became more pressing as the church in South Africa tried to redefine its role in a society that now upheld the freedom of all religions and placed them on an equal footing (e.g. Coertzen, 2002; Fourie, 2003; Koopman, 2002; Krog, 2003; Naude, 2003). Church denominations were also called to account for their actions during the Apartheid era at the 1997 Faith Community Hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Meiring, 2003). There have also been structural changes within denominations as they began to dismantle their racially organised structures (e.g. Coertzen, 2003).

South Africa's recent history has not only been characterised by political changes, but has also been a period of social upheaval and uncertainty. In an increasingly urbanised, post-modern and secular society (Tucker, 2003, pp. 169-189), the role of religion is being questioned on the one hand, but there have also been concerns about a moral decline in the country (Williams, 2003) and the church has been called to contribute to moral regeneration (Duncan, 2002; Richardson, 2003; Williams, 2003). Furthermore, MacKinnon (2004, pp. 292-297) identifies HIV/AIDS and crime as two significant challenges facing South Africa at present. Violent crime in particular has reached very high levels (Lebone, 2004), serving as a trigger for emigration (Myburgh, 2004) and compelling many who remain, to adopt increased security measures. Some churches have responded to this challenge by, for example, offering support services to the victims of crime (e.g. Erasmus & Mans, 2005). The prevalence and future trends of HIV/AIDS infection rates began to hit home for many South Africans as the incidents of full-blown AIDS increased, as did the mortality rate (MacFarlane, 2004). Given

the scale of the pandemic, the church has been challenged to formulate and implement appropriate responses (e.g. Hendriks, 2002; Pillay, 2003).

It is against this background of a nation in transformation, the church in a state of flux, and both still facing up to tremendous challenges, that this study on the cell-church transition is set. While for some churches, the cell-church model may have been seen as a solution to some of the challenges they faced, to others, it may have amounted to yet another change thrust upon church members. On the other hand, it may have fortuitously put in place a support mechanism to help them cope better with what was happening around them.

My personal interest in this research began when I was a member of a church from 1995 to 1998 that had recently embarked upon a cell-church transition. It was still in the process of change at the time of my departure at the beginning of 1999, when I accepted a job offer in another city. I am currently a member of a church that, in the second half of 1999, decided to change to a cell-based church, and I lead one of its cell groups. Besides my personal experience, my disciplinary background in the fields of industrial/organizational psychology, and management also shapes my outlook towards the cell-church phenomenon and this research. It is primarily from the perspective of these disciplines that the cell-church phenomenon was approached, and not from a theological or sociological one. However, a topic of this nature cannot be enclosed, and while I maintain the prominence of the change management and strategic leadership literature, I have also drawn on concepts and research in other fields.

My intention in this research is not to promote or censure the cell-church model, nor uphold it as the ideal church model, but to simply use it as a context to better understand the way in which change is managed within the setting of a church. My assumption is that contextual factors create unique demands upon leaders who lead change in the church, compared to leading change in other organizational contexts (such as the private or public sector), and perhaps even other types of change in a church (such as the merging of congregations, or church renewal). The site of investigation of this research is in some of those South African churches that have embarked on the cell-church transition. The research problem focuses on

the way in which this process of change is managed by the leadership of the church, and in particular, how organizational inertia is managed when it arises.

In this first chapter, part of the context of the research is developed. That is, the cell-church phenomenon is introduced and the organization of the cell-church is contrasted with other similar organizational designs. The growth, structuring and transitioning of cell-based churches is then described, before reporting on the research that has been conducted on the cell-church phenomenon. Thereafter the purpose of this research is briefly noted, before providing an outline of the chapters to follow.

1.1 The Cell-church Phenomenon

Small groups have been an intrinsic part of the church at least since the reformation (Bunton, 2001), but it has been suggested by Comiskey (1998, p. 24) that the contemporary cell-church movement can be attributed to Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea. Yonggi Cho (1981) first introduced the concept of cell groups to his church in the late-1960's. Mouton (1999, p.1) identifies two other main exponents of the small-group movement in churches, in addition to the "cell-group" model of Yonggi Cho and others. These are the idea of "base communities" originating from South America and the "House Church" movement of Europe and Australia. The cell-based church as an alternative to the programme-based church seems to have been largely popularised by books written by, inter alia, Ralph Neighbour (1990) and Joel Comiskey (1998, 1999). These small groups are variously referred to as cell groups, cells, home cells, home groups, home cell groups, care groups, house churches and house groups.

According to Mouton (1999, pp. 1-2), the current small group movement in South Africa can be traced to at least the mid-1990's, with the dominant model being the cell-group model. This movement has occurred across denominations, and in instances such as that of the Apostolic Faith Mission, has involved the entire denomination. The Apostolic Faith Mission earmarked 1996 as a "Year of Transition".

1.1.1 Comparison of programme-based and cell-based churches

Finnell (1995, pp. 13-28) has contrasted traditional (or programme-based churches) with cell-based churches. He portrays programme-based churches as being run by a professional leadership who organize the church along bureaucratic lines with the focus on having many meetings or programmes, mainly taking place at the church building, with some activity aimed at bringing non-Christians to the church, usually by using confrontational evangelism. In contrast, cell-churches are characterised as focusing on building relationships and meeting the needs of members and non-Christians, with most activities taking place in the community and in homes, on the premise that all members should be engaged in ministry, or service. The cell group is the basic unit of church life in a cell-based church (Finnell, 1995, p. 23). Comiskey (1999, p. 109) defines a cell group as “A group of people (five to 15) who meet regularly for the purpose of spiritual edification and evangelistic outreach (with the goal of multiplication) and who are committed to participate in the functions of the local church”. For Comiskey (1999, p. 110) the three definitive functions of a cell group are seeking God, relationship building and reaching out to non-Christians. Drawing from various sources (Finnell, 1995, pp. 13-28; Khong, 2000, pp. 45-67; Mouton, 1999, pp. 2-3; Neighbour, 1990, pp. 38-58), a comparison between programme-based and cell-based churches is summarised in Table 1.1.

1.1.1.1 The cell group meeting

When the cell group gets together, there is usually a specific format that is followed in the meeting, although some flexibility is encouraged to keep people interested (Comiskey, 1999; Finnell, 1995). A popular format has been referred to as the 4-Ws, referring to Welcome, Worship, Word, Witness/Works (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 111-112). The welcome makes use of an icebreaker to get people talking, and is especially important to help newcomers and non-Christians to feel at ease. Worship is a time of singing and prayer. The word section is a participative discussion, usually using the Sunday message as a framework, but focusing on the application of the message or Biblical principles. Finally, the Witness/Works section is to encourage and plan for personal and cell-based evangelism and outreach activities.

TABLE 1.1
A COMPARISON OF PROGRAMME-BASED AND CELL-BASED CHURCHES

Dimension	Programme-based	Cell-based
Focus	Programmes	People and intimate, helping relationships
Location of activities	Centralised at the church buildings	Decentralised in the community
Evangelistic thrust	Confrontational. Invite non-Christians to attend church programmes	Relational. As cell groups, members plan to meet and reach non-Christians where they live and work
Discipleship	Through classes and notes	Spiritual growth occurs through discussion, modelling appropriate behaviour and shaping personal values and lifestyles
Basis of organization, leadership and ministry	Large, impersonal group structure with bureaucratic, professional leadership. Clergy-laity distinction. A few educated specialists run programmes designed primarily to teach the inactive majority	Small, intimate, supportive group structure with goal-oriented servant leadership. All members have a calling and spiritual gifts and the cell-group serves as a platform to equip them for ministry

1.1.2 Cell-based churches and alternative means of organizing small groups

In a programme-based church, it is possible and probable that small groups will be found, perhaps even in the form of cell groups or home cells. However, they would then form one of a number of programmes offered by the church and would operate in the programmatic

manner described above. For the purpose of this study, in addition to the programme-based arrangements, it is necessary to differentiate cell-based churches from other organizational arrangements of churches that incorporate small groups. There seem to be four other main types.

Firstly, there are house churches. According to Neighbour (1990, pp. 203-207), house churches constitute a community of 15 to 25 people who usually meet on a weekly basis. Neighbour (1990, p. 203) suggests that house churches differ from cell-based churches, in that they do not recognize any structure beyond themselves, and do not have a vision for church growth. In other words, the church is made up only of the members of the single, independent small group gathered together.

Secondly, there is the meta-church model that has been attributed to Carl George (1992, 1994; Comiskey, 1999, pp. 103-104). Comiskey (1999, p. 105) identifies the following characteristics of the meta-church. Firstly, there are a variety of types of groups fulfilling a variety of purposes, with virtually any type of small group being considered acceptable. Secondly, flexibility and freedom of choice is emphasized in the scheduling of small group meetings, the content of the meetings and the decision to multiply the group or not. Thirdly, in the exercise of administrative control, the small groups are loosely organized. Small groups in a cell-based church tend to be more homogeneous in nature, and more tightly organised than in the meta-church model.

The serendipity model (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 107-108) of Lyman Coleman resembles the meta-church model in its variety of types of small groups that are formed. Its uniqueness lies firstly in its collegiate system, whereby individuals can progress from one small group or class into another, and secondly in the small groups having a definite beginning and end. In contrast, a cell-based model places more emphasis on continuity of relationships and the continuity of groups.

Finally, Comiskey (1999, pp. 108-109) describes the covenant model as a closed group of three to twelve Christians meeting regularly for mutual edification and covenanting with one

another to fulfil particular purposes or goals or to study particular topics. Long-term community and mutual accountability is attained, and unlike cell-based churches, the group has no intention to multiply.

In this study, the spotlight is upon churches transitioning to cell-churches and not the other structural arrangements described above. Thus, the key elements identifying a congregation qualifying as an appropriate unit of analysis (Babbie, 1992, pp. 92-97) for this study are South African churches that at some stage in their recent history, aspired to be cell-churches characterised as follows: (1) Church activities revolve primarily around small group activities or cell groups, that may be supplemented or complemented by church-wide activities such as Sunday celebrations. Cell groups are therefore not merely an appendage to the church but are central to its functioning. (2) Cell groups are seen as a permanent and on-going feature of the church, with cell group members forming close, relatively long term relationships, disrupted only in some instances by cell multiplication. (3) Cell group activities are not viewed as another programme on the church calendar, but as an expression of a lifestyle. These activities centre on evangelism, edification and discipleship. Programmes that do exist in the church are mainly there to support the functioning of the cell groups. (4) Evangelism is based primarily on building relationships through the small group, with non-Christians. Evangelistic events or programmes may be used to complement these relationship-building endeavours, but do not replace them. (5) Numerical church growth is desired, and the strategy is that growth in the church should occur through growth in the small groups. That is, the initial contact of most newcomers to the church is ideally with a cell group and then with the church thereafter. (6) All believers are seen as being able to contribute to the functioning of the church and having a ministry that is primarily developed and exercised within the cell group context. (7) The various cell groups share a collective identity and purpose within a larger structure, namely the church.

While these seven features delineate the character of a cell-church, this is not to say that all the churches represented in the study conformed to these characteristics at the time of data collection. Rather, the dynamic nature of church history is recognised. Churches were primarily selected because they had elected to take the road of the cell-church transition at

some stage in their recent history. There were, in fact, only a few instances where at the time of the interview, the interviewee would have described their church as a pure cell-church. There were also some churches that were still moving towards this model. Others had abandoned this road altogether, reverting to a programme-based church model, while yet others had redefined the small group character and priority that was now aspired to in the church.

1.1.3 The growth and structure of a cell-based church

Various approaches to structuring a cell-based church exist. This basic structure determines in turn, the pattern of growth of the cell group and the church. One of the earlier structures proposed was developed by David Yonggi Cho, and is commonly known as the 5X5 or Jethro model (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 106, 137-140). Neighbour (1990, pp. 193-196) has also endorsed such a structure. In this structure, approximately five individual cell groups meeting weekly and each led by a cell leader, are guided by a zone servant. The twenty-five or so cell groups of about five zone servants constitute a congregation, under the guidance of a zone pastor. These congregations are often geographically determined and meet occasionally for worship, equipping (i.e. training) or evangelism events. The various congregations would together constitute a citywide church, under the leadership of a senior pastor, and would meet regularly - usually weekly - for mass celebration meetings. In the Jethro model, growth occurs through the multiplication of cell groups and congregations, with new leadership being developed from within the cell and congregation (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 138-139; Neighbour, 1990, pp. 217, 233, 432-433). A major disadvantage of this method of growth is the severing of close relationships that occurs with the multiplication of a single cell or congregation into two (Comiskey, 1999, p. 139). Another disadvantage is that the congregation is geographically defined and so cells are usually expected to grow and multiply within the confines of the geographical area (Comiskey, 1999, p. 139).

Cesar Castellanos of the International Charismatic Mission in Bogota, Columbia developed an alternative to the Jethro model, which is known as the G-12 structure (Comiskey, 1999, p. 140-142). Here cells are arranged based on homogeneity rather than geography. Beginning

with the pastor, a group of twelve forms a group that is disciplined by the leader. Each member of the pastor's group then forms their own group of twelve, who each form a group of twelve, and so on, to ultimately produce a non-geographical network of cells consisting of members who are being led in one cell and are leading another cell. This structure overcomes the disadvantages of the Jethro model, as relationships are maintained and new cells form based on relationship not geography. This structure is less hierarchical in nature than the Jethro model, but has potential weaknesses such as demanding a greater time commitment, a potential reluctance among members to commit to a permanent discipleship group, and the degeneration of the vision as cell groups multiply on the periphery.

While the Jethro model and the G-12 model are quite distinct in their design and method of growth, there are various other approaches, which have been adopted, that are often a blend of the two. For example, the Bethany World Prayer Center was initially designed along the lines of the Jethro model, but in 1997 their own version of the G-12 system was implemented (Comiskey, 1998, pp. 112-117; Stockstill, 1998). At the Bethany World Prayer Center, cell multiplication is emphasized, and is promoted in one of three ways. Internal multiplication involves bringing new people into an existing cell group for a short period, before forming a new group with the new members as its nucleus under the leadership of someone from the original group. External multiplication entails the member of an existing cell group going out into the community to start a separate homogenous cell group. The third method, referred to as mother-daughter multiplication, resembles the traditional multiplication approach of the Jethro model. A second example is that of Faith Community Baptist Church (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 221-226) which has combined a geographical district structure with a specialised ministry structure. Specialised ministry areas include a youth zone, a music zone and a handicap district. Finally, the Little Falls' J-12 structure is a hybrid of the Jethro and G-12 models that essentially maintains the Jethro structure but introduces G-12 principles (Cell Church International, 2005).

1.1.4 Transitioning to a cell-based church

While cell-based churches may be established as new churches, some programme-based churches have made a deliberate decision to change – or more popularly, transition - to a cell-based church. This transition from a programme-based to a cell-based church has been described in various stage models. Some of these models describe the change process, while others offer advice on steps to follow in implementing the change or transition.

1.1.4.1 The process of transition

Comiskey (1999, pp. 179-187) describes a four-stage process of transition that appears to be patterned largely on Lewin's (1952) unfreeze-change-refreeze model. These stages are creating the need for change, making the change, preparing for the reaction and finally, freezing the changes. In addition, Comiskey (1999, pp. 189-201) identifies seven deliberate steps that need to be taken to become a cell-based church. These are to firstly ensure senior pastor agreement; secondly to analyse the church in terms of its background and history, growth patterns, current ministries, and implications for future cell-church goals; thirdly analyse other cell-churches; fourthly envision what you want to become; fifthly win support through relationship building; before beginning well and lastly ending well.

Comiskey (1999, pp. 196-200) notes two main approaches to transitioning. The first approach, which he calls the “Go for it” approach is a “big bang” approach, involving a dramatic, wholesale introduction of a cell-based structure and system, virtually overnight. Comiskey (1999) observed that this approach succeeded in conditions where there was the presence of a strong, visionary pastor who was not challenged by the church's members and who enjoyed the goodwill of a comparatively healthy church. In addition, the leader had a keen understanding of the cell-church phenomenon, had effectively communicated the cell-church vision to the church, and prepared key leaders beforehand.

The alternative approach is referred to as the “Model-Group Approach” (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 198-200). This approach begins with the senior pastor forming a temporary prototype cell

group with key leaders of the church, wherein the cell-church vision can be “caught rather than taught” from the modelling behaviour of the leader. The members of the prototype cell then impart what they have learnt to others in the church, and are ultimately released as leaders of their own groups. While the prototype cell is in operation, sermons are preached covering aspects related to cell-church vision and values.

A study of four Dutch Reformed Churches in the Western Cape Province of South Africa reported that the two churches that seem to have made more successful transitions had adopted a model-group, or leader-group model of transition (Mouton, 1999, p. 104, 112). Neighbour (1990, pp. 404-422) appears to support the model group approach when he provides the following advice to pastors wanting to transition to a cell-based church. Firstly, ensure that such a transition is God’s will and not mere frustration with the status quo. Secondly, consider the cost and feasibility of embarking on such a transition. Thirdly, profile the members of the church according to Rogers and Shoemaker’s (1971) five “diffusion of innovation” groups. These groups - innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards – are defined according to the stage or time at which they would embrace change, with innovators leading the introduction of the change at one end, and laggards at the other, always remaining opposed to it. Fourthly, develop indicators of effectiveness. Fifthly, the church leader should start a cell group that he or she personally leads and with whom church life is shared. Sixthly, introduce change within a part of the programme-based design structure. Seventhly, introduce the cell-church concept to the entire church. Hereafter, entire departments of the programme-based design structure are transformed into a cell-based design and functioning. Progress should be monitored through an evaluation system. Finally, when the majority of the church is committed to cell life, begin to drop conflicting programmes still in existence and adjust the church staff structure accordingly.

1.1.4.2 Problems encountered in cell-church transition and recommendations

Several accounts of cell-church transitions have been published. Some of these cases are discussed here, to give an appreciation of some of the challenges encountered and how they were overcome, as well as to identify the recommendations made from these experiences.

As the forerunner of the model cell-church movement, Yonggi Cho (1981) learnt much through trial and error. When Yonggi Cho (1981, p. 21-23) first presented the plan for home cell groups to the church leadership (i.e. the deacon board), they accepted the Biblical argument for the concept, but thought it was not practical. Their thinking was that the pastor was being paid to do what he wanted them to do, that they were not trained to run home cell groups, and that they did not have the time or inclination after a busy day at work. Eventually, Yonggi Cho (1981, p. 23-29) introduced home cell groups, using the women of the church to lead them – a decision that sparked much controversy in the church, due to the patriarchal nature of Korean society at the time.

Yonggi Cho (1981, p. 31-47) identified seven sets of obstacles to the introduction of cell groups. The first set of obstacles related to initial implementation and included objections from the men to the leadership role delegated to women, a lack of leadership training, and a lack of direction in what should be covered in the home cell group meeting. In response, delegation of authority was emphasised, training provided and notes given on what to cover in the meetings. The second set of obstacles was related to a lack of discipline in the length of meetings and in various hosts competing with one another as to what food was served at the meetings. The meetings took on the character of a party. Strict time limits were introduced and the food limited to tea and cookies. Thirdly, problems arose in the inviting of guest speakers to the meetings and the taking up of an offering for them. Thereafter, approval had to be obtained for outside speakers and offerings were only to be taken up for the church. The fourth problem encountered was financial and involved the borrowing and lending of money amongst members of a group at interest, or investing in another member's business and then losing the investment due to poor business practises. These financial activities were stopped. Another financial problem arose from leaders borrowing money from the offering that had been taken and then not always paying it back. Registrars and treasurers were appointed in each cell to ensure accountability in the handling of finances and to stop these practices. The growth of home cell group membership presented a problem in itself. Applying what is now known as the Jethro model of growth solved this. That is, once membership reached fifteen families, the group multiplied into two groups. The final obstacle encountered was church

splits, where ministers in the church tried to foster personal loyalty, and then formed their own church. In response to these splits, Yonggi Cho introduced a policy and procedure for ministers who desired to have their own church to achieve this ambition, with his support and backing. Having dealt with these problems by putting the necessary policies and procedures in place, using the cell-church model, Yonggi Cho (1981, p. 47) reports that at the time of writing his book, at least 75 churches had been started internationally.

Reflecting on his first unsuccessful experience in implementing cells, Billy Joe Daugherty – the senior pastor of Victory Christian Center - remarked: “[S]ome of the worst things one could imagine happened in those home groups. Some people cast devils out of people and others put devils into people. Some taught ‘revelations’ no one had heard before or since.” (Hurston, 2001, p. 31) As a result of this experience, Daugherty disbanded the cells and did not even consider small groups for more than two years. After attending a 1983 church growth conference hosted by Yonggi Cho in Korea, small groups were reconsidered and cells re-launched. A defining characteristic of Daugherty’s cell-church model has been its flexibility and creativity, combining four different group models to create a church that boasts a variety of 35 different types of groups.

When Khong (2000, pp. 180-194) launched cell groups at Faith Community Baptist Church, about a quarter of the 1200 church members initially joined the cells. However, within a month most stopped attending, as they found the meetings boring and unstructured. They were accustomed to the structure of a Bible study. Determined to realise the cell-church vision, the cells were relaunched year after year, following a few weeks of preaching on the subject each time. Eventually, the leaders began to make a mental transition, and along with the development of systems and structures and “a season of repentance and revival”, the cell-church concept became established. Khong (2000) notes that the first and most critical source of resistance to change that needs to be dealt with is among the leadership. Various recommendations are made to mobilise support among the leaders, including jointly formulating the cell vision and strategy, learning together, maintaining personal interaction and starting a leadership cell. Furthermore, from his observations of other churches attempting to transition, he identifies four common pitfalls that churches have fallen into.

Firstly, the amount of time taken to transition is underestimated; secondly, churches fail to learn from the experiences of other churches; thirdly, there is a tendency to use solutions from the old paradigm to confront transitioning difficulties, leading to the cell-church model being diluted; and finally, leaders get engulfed in administration and lose sight of the principles that they should be following.

As senior pastor of the Indianapolis Christian Fellowship, Gustitus (2000) shares his personal experience in a successful cell-church transition. Based on his experience, he advises churches to transition only if they believe it is what God is calling them to do. He highlights the importance of the senior pastor's support for the transition and for ongoing prayer. Ongoing communication with the congregation is encouraged, and many questions can be anticipated and need to be answered. Not everyone will agree with the cell vision, but these people need to be affirmed and if need be, helped to move to another church that they can better identify with. Vision and value changes were brought about through teaching, and modelling by the senior leadership was also important. Finally, he acknowledges that the transition will take several years, and so leaders need to exercise patience on the one hand, but also make necessary changes on the other, such as adopting a transitioning method, introducing a cell system, establishing a Biblical model of church governance, allocating the church budget according to new priorities, and constantly reminding the church of the cell vision.

Leadership at various levels in the church is another critical concern when transitioning. One source of problems has to do with the fit of the leader with the notion of a cell-based church. Comiskey (1999, pp. 127-131) identifies a number of characteristics of an effective cell-church pastor, including being a person of prayer; having a desire to reach the city with the gospel; capturing, articulating and implementing God-given dreams and visions; being personally involved in cells; and effective delegation of ministry to laypeople. Furthermore, it has been recognised that a major impediment to cell-church growth is a leadership shortage. Based upon the premise that anyone can be a cell leader, Comiskey (2000) reviews a number of approaches to leadership development, including a number of churches' training or equipping tracks, recommending that these be studied and used to develop a training system

that meets a particular church's requirements. He also notes the role that mentoring is playing in leader development.

Commenting on the South African situation, Mouton (1999, p. 4-5) notes that the small-group church model has its critics and that often, strong opinions are held either for or against the idea. Consequently, the introduction of a cell-based approach has at times led to much conflict and division within a local congregation and the departure of some congregational members. In particular, a rapid transition to a cell-based church seems to create a great deal of tension (Mouton, 1999, p. 110).

1.2 Research on Cell-Churches

Up until this point, an understanding of the cell-church phenomenon has been constructed relying primarily on various books that have been written on the subject. While some of these books may have a rigorous research base, they are largely written for practitioners rather than researchers, and so the detail of the research methodology is usually not documented. Many of the books also rely quite heavily on anecdotal or personal experience rather than research evidence. Now that a basic understanding of the cell-church concept has been developed, this section devotes more attention to the research that has been documented, both internationally and in South Africa.

1.2.1 International research

In January 2002, two international searches were conducted using the key words "church and cell". Using the OCLC FirstSearch Dissertations database, 81 studies were located, while 48 studies were located on the ATLA Religion Database of 1999. For me, the more relevant of these studies consider problems such as the theological rationale of the cell-church, growth and impact of cell-churches, the development and evaluation of training programmes to assist with lay leadership development and cell ministry, and the use of the cell-church model in missionary and evangelistic endeavours.

Only a few of the studies are of direct relevance to my research, namely in addressing the problem of managing the cell-church transition. Stetzer (1998) looks at ways of building common purpose and vision in a church through an assimilation programme. Turner (2000) examines the experience of transition of four Australian churches as a basis for comparing the potential and use of four small group models in churches. She concludes that the meta-church model has the greatest potential for church growth and developing community in the Australian context, with the growth potential of the cell-church being acknowledged. However, she identifies the great expectations it places on leaders as its main limitation. In search of an evangelistic strategy, Davis (2000) reports on the impact of four cell-churches located on three continents, and he considers the implications for the intended transformation of his own church. Alves (2000) reports on the use of a survey feedback method, based on the natural church development model (Schwarz, 1996) and questionnaires, as a means of facilitating the transitioning of a church to a cell-church. Tan (1994) documents the transition of four pioneering churches of the cell-church movement, identifying various transitioning routes adopted and their rationale. While the research methods in these studies were not always stated explicitly in the 24-page previews, it would appear that four of these research projects used a case study method, the exception being Alves' (2000) survey.

Kwon and Ebaugh (1997) report on an ethnographic study conducted within a large Korean Christian church located in Houston, Texas where they examined the structure and function of cell ministry. The church cells were established on a geographical basis with the cells being rearranged on an annual basis to facilitate greater interaction and a broader sense of community. Official meetings took place monthly in a cell member's house, with the venue rotating among members. Meeting activities consisted of a worship service, the serving of food and socialising. Such meetings were instrumental in meeting the various challenges faced by Korean immigrants who were trying to settle. Besides facilitating this settling-in process, the cell groups provided emotional support, the opportunity for Korean entrepreneurs to make business contacts and served as a vital source of social status and prestige. Official positions in the church such as cell-leader compensated for the loss of social status that was frequently experienced with immigration. The high social status of lay leadership also had its problems though, leading to a bi-polar power structure within the church, with the pastors at

one pole and the lay leaders at the other. When these two groups were in disagreement, it was difficult to reach consensus and this led to divisions within the church. A second problem that Kwon and Ebaugh (1997) encountered amongst second-generation immigrants in particular was that while the church had facilitated the successful integration of immigrants into the church community, this had eliminated the need for support outside the church and became detrimental to their integration into the broader American society.

Hurston (2001), used interviews, observation, questionnaires and training material to document and describe the cell-church model used at Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Flexibility and creativity is one of the main factors that Hurston (2001) ascribes to the success of the Victory Christian Center, in that it was prepared to incorporate a number of different models into a small group model that best worked for them.

A follow up search in September 2005 on the PsychInfo database (which incorporates UMI digital dissertations) for Dissertation Abstracts, generated no further studies of relevance.

1.2.2 South African research

According to the Sabinet Online “Current and Completed Research” Database (Accessed in January 2002 and again in September 2005), using “church and cell” as the key words, the work of eight researchers who commenced studies on Cell-Churches in South Africa has been registered. The earliest study, that by Hendricks’ (commenced, 1993), has no completion date and is simply titled “The home church or cell congregation”. Other studies are from the perspective of church renewal (Baresel, commenced 2001), leadership development (Botha, 2000; Joubert, commenced 2000; Preston, commenced 1998), missiology and evangelism (Van der Merwe, commenced 1996), and family ministry (Smit, 1996). It would seem that Mouton (commenced 1997) began his studies by looking at training, and then changed focus to look at the implementation of cell group ministry (Mouton, 1999).

Mouton’s (1999) study consisted of an opinion survey among church members and structured interviews with ministers, conducted in four Dutch Reform churches, to determine the way in

which the implementation of the cell-group ministry was experienced. Most of these churches introduced cell-groups in response to the failure or shortcomings of their existing models of ministry (Mouton, 1999, p. 32). Ministers had been exposed to the cell-church concept through formal theological studies, conferences, books and/or visits to cell-churches (Mouton, 1999, pp. 88-106). Members of the churches, who attended cell meetings as well as those who did not, were surveyed. Mouton (1999, pp. 108-109) concluded that the difference between attendance and non-attendance of cell groups could be explained by factors such as age, different value systems and different views of the role of the church. Reasons given for not attending cell groups often amounted to unsubstantiated negative perceptions and criticisms of the cell concept, highlighting the need for continual communication (Mouton, 1999, p. 110). Other reasons identified for members of the church not embracing the cell concept, included lack of pressure from the pastor to get involved, and perceptions that they would not be welcomed in a cell group (e.g. formation of cliques, cells were full, tendency of cells to be inwardly focused). This served to highlight the importance of support being shown for cells through the message preached and by giving frequent invitations from the pulpit for people to visit the groups, as well as the need for proper training and equipping of cell leaders (Mouton, 1999, pp. 110-112).

Tucker's (2003) PhD research through the University of Pretoria is not listed on Sabinet. He investigated the development of the cell-church concept in the Western Cape Province, concluding from a survey among 27 cell-churches and one randomly selected cell-group in 16 of them, that it appears to be a more effective praxis in a society that is becoming increasingly secular and post-modern (Tucker, 2003; Vos, Nel, Tucker & Smit, 2004).

1.3 Conclusion

It appears that the cell-church phenomenon internationally and in South Africa has not been extensively researched, in particular, with little attention being given to it from a change management perspective. The transition from a programme-based church to a cell-based church is presented as involving more than an organizational restructuring of the church or addition of another church activity (Finnell, 1995; Neighbour, 1990), and effectively requires

of the church's members to redefine in their own minds, what the identity of the church is and what it does.

The unique features of churches as organizations raises many questions regarding the way in which change in such organizations would unfold, and how organizational inertia would be manifested and managed. Answers to these questions would be of value to church leaders and leaders of similar types of organizations wanting to embark on organizational change endeavours. The aim of this research is to develop a substantive grounded theory that describes the process of change and the management of inertia by organizational leadership, in the transition of churches from being programme-based to cell-based.

This chapter has given attention to the context of the research. It has focused on the nature and importance of the programme-based to cell-based transition in churches in contemporary South Africa and as an international church development. In Chapter Two, this study is located within the organization theory and organizational change literature. The concept of leadership is also examined from the perspective of church leadership's endeavours to lead organizational change and manage the organizational inertia that occurs during the change process. Chapter Three discusses the methodological considerations of this research, both reporting on the current state of development of grounded theory as an approach to research as well as describing how this study was conducted. In Chapters Four to Seven the findings of the research are presented descriptively and conceptually to collectively form a grounded theory. Chapter Eight discusses the findings and attempts to locate the grounded theory within the organizational change literature, while Chapter Nine concludes the thesis, indicating directions for further research and reflecting upon the value of the research.

CHAPTER 2

LEADING CHANGE IN CHURCHES

The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook.

(William James, 1842 – 1910 on line. Available at <http://www.quotationspage.com>)

A way of seeing is a way of not seeing.

(Poggie, 1965 in Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 510)

In the first chapter, the background of this research was presented, namely the transition of some South African churches from programme-based to cell-based forms. Given that this study focuses on the management of change in this process of church transition, the purpose of this chapter is to locate the context of the research within the substantive fields of organizational theory and organizational change. In doing so, I do not attempt to provide a comprehensive review and critique of this vast literature, but rather provide a concise descriptive account of various theoretical perspectives and studies that help to provide further illumination of the theoretical context of this study. Effectively, this will delimit the field of discovery in the construction of a substantive grounded theory.

Besides serving the methodological interests of grounded theory, there are other reasons why the theoretical context of this study is emphasised. Firstly, given the large volume of literature that is available on organizational change, it is necessary and practical to delimit this study within this expansive field. This is done largely through considering a number of typologies of change that have been developed. Secondly, although there is much literature on organizational change, as is the case with many other fields of organizational theory, it has mainly focused on, or been developed through, investigations in the private and public sectors, with churches and other non-private, non-governmental organizations receiving scant

attention. The applicability of this large body of knowledge to the church context is therefore questionable (see for example, Chapman, 1998; Webb, 1974), though largely uncontested. It is proposed that the type of organization that churches are, could have a major bearing on the way in which change unfolds and needs to be understood and managed. Therefore, an understanding of the unique organizational form of churches is an important prelude to understanding behaviour of and in churches during a process of change. For this reason, various organizational theories are examined to develop an understanding of churches as solidary organizations (Clark & Wilson, 1961), normative organizations (Etzioni, 1975), congregations (Harris, 1998), and voluntary associations/organizations (Harris, 1998; Scherer, 1972).

The study is delimited not only by the context of cell-church transitioning, but also by its focus, which is on the management of organizational inertia by the leadership of the church. The concept of organizational inertia is explained briefly later on in this chapter. This is followed by a discussion of strategic leadership. The literature on church leadership is quite limited and so the strategic leadership literature is primarily used as an orientating theoretical framework for leadership action. Since church leaders are the main actors engaged in the management of change, an understanding of the activities of strategic leaders as organizational actors will shed some light on the management of organizational inertia.

2.1 Churches as Organizations

In basic terms, organizations can be defined as “goal-directed, boundary-maintaining and socially constructed systems of human activity” (Aldrich, 1999, p. 2). Little attention has been given to the organizational aspects of congregations or churches by social scientists (Benson & Dorsett, 1971; Harris, 1998). This is partly due to the difficulties attached to conceptualising the church as an organizational entity (Harris, 1995; Harris & Startup, 1998; Haspel, 2004; Lee, 1989; Liburd, 1990/1991; Mason, 1996; Niebuhr, 1956; Watkins, 1991). In fact, the idea of a church as an organization has been an anathema to some, but can be a useful way to conceptualise the church for the purposes of managing change (see for example

Liburd, 1990/1991). Beyond considering churches as organizations per se, it is also instructive to consider exactly what type of organization they are.

Romanelli (1991, pp. 82-84) notes that there are numerous organizational typologies and that there is no commonly accepted classification of organizational forms. Furthermore, while some authors see the value of establishing such a consensual typology, others are of the opinion that it is the investigative interest of the researcher that will ultimately provide guidance in selecting appropriate classificatory criteria or typologies. In this study, several theories of organizations provide useful insights into understanding churches as organizations. This section first turns to the theories of organizations (as formulated by Clark and Wilson [1961] and Etzioni [1975]) to describe the type of organization churches are, and the implications of these classifications for change management. Thereafter, churches are examined as congregations and as voluntary organizations (or voluntary associations), where once again the implications for change are highlighted.

Churches as solidary organizations

Clark and Wilson (1961) classify and describe organizations in terms of their incentive systems. They identify three types of incentive systems, namely material, solidary and purposive; and suggest that the incentive system in an organization is the primary determinant of organizational behaviour and member contribution. The function of the executive of the organization is to maintain a net surplus of incentives that can be distributed to organisation members in order to elicit member contributions. These resources are scarce, unequally distributed and have diminishing marginal utility.

Material incentives such as salaries, wages, and fringe benefits tend to be tangible and have a clear monetary value, while solidary and purposive incentives are intangible and cannot easily be translated into a monetary value (Clark & Wilson, 1961, pp. 134-135). Solidary incentives arise “from the act of associating and include rewards such as socialising, congeniality, a sense of group membership and identification, the status resulting from membership, fun and conviviality, the maintenance of social distinctions, and so on.” (Clark & Wilson, 1961, pp.

134-135). While solidary incentives are disconnected from the aims of the organization, purposive incentives are derived primarily from the “stated ends of the association, rather than from the simple act of associating” (Clark & Wilson, 1961, pp. 134-135). That is, the purpose of associating goes beyond relationships and entails attempting to change the status quo through organizational endeavours.

While an organization may appeal to many motives, Clark and Wilson (1961, pp. 136-137) propose that organizations may be distinguished by their principal incentive. Hence, organizations can be described as utilitarian (material rewards), solidary or purposive. It would appear that most churches would be distinguished by their solidary benefits and would therefore be classified as solidary organizations. That is, church members would primarily derive solidary and (to a lesser degree) purposive rewards from associating, with the exception of paid staff that would also enjoy material rewards. There seems to be some support for the notion of churches as primarily solidary organizations rather than purposive ones. For example, Scherer (1972, pp. 96-100) observes that one of the blemishes on the church has been its “goallessness”, emphasising cohesion at the expense of goal attainment or contributing to societal adaptation. Harris (1995, pp. 262-263) observes that part of the reason for a lack of purposive focus in congregations has to do with the difficulties associated with coming to an agreement on what the goals of the congregation should be and which – of a wide range of goals – should be given priority.

Considering the programme-based church to cell-church transition, the emphasis being placed on relationships can also be understood as an increasing of the solidary resources of the organization. Coupled with this, the involvement of more of the membership in ministry, suggests that the purposive elements of the organization are also being enhanced, but probably not enough to warrant the re-classification of churches as primarily purposive. Clark and Wilson (1961, pp. 150- 153) indicate that there are certain limitations that organizations experience if there is an over-reliance on purposive incentives. Firstly, it is difficult to maintain consistent effort as purpose has to be continually communicated and popularised. On the other hand, the popularisation of purpose may highlight failures to attain set goals, causing dissatisfaction. Secondly, purposive incentives seem to be less appealing than material or

solidary rewards, and consequently it is difficult to maintain and build organisational membership, especially if large contributions are required. Finally, the executive of the organization is heavily relied upon to provide many of the incentives through his/her leadership behaviour, as well as by clarifying the purpose of the association and encouraging efforts to attain it.

According to Clark and Wilson (1961, pp. 141-142) the first concern of organizational executives is to acquire incentive resources for the organization, which in the case of solidary organizations include additional organizational prestige, publicity, or good fellowship. This is achieved through for example, the recruitment of members of high status, creating frequent opportunities for members to give public speeches and receive awards, or the rotation of office bearers. Clark and Wilson (1961, pp. 142-143) are of the opinion that solidary organizations will spend much time in consciously pursuing a publicly acceptable and non-controversial purpose or cause, as part of maintaining a positive organizational image. They also suggest that the pursuance of a purpose could serve to restrict organizational membership, and generate a social ranking within the organization. Through the social ranking achieved by exclusions, solidary rewards are reserved for distribution among a more select membership. Thus, purpose fulfils an important, but secondary function in the provision of solidary incentives within the organization and needs to hold the interest of organizational contributors. Therefore, if there is disagreement about the purpose, it will often be adjusted until it is the “lowest common denominator acceptable to all” with organizational activities being adjusted accordingly (Clark & Wilson, 1961, p. 144). Clark and Wilson (1961, pp. 145-146) also suggest that conflict in solidary organizations tends to centre on the allocation of prestige and status, or the admittance of new members if they are seen by the existing members to be personally or socially unacceptable.

Viewing churches as solidary organizations has several important implications for the transition to a cell-church. Firstly, the type of change involved in transitioning to a cell-church implies a significant shift in purpose for the organization as a whole and more so for the purpose of the individual member of the organization. The dilemma that this raises is how to articulate and promote a new purpose as envisaged in a cell-based church, in a clear and

undiluted way that will not threaten the availability and disbursement of solidary incentives. Secondly, the appointment of leaders within a cell-based structure can be seen as a new means of allocating solidary rewards. This in itself could generate conflict between church leadership and those who have benefited from the existing system of reward allocation. On the other hand, the pool of solidary rewards available to the organization would have increased in the process of adopting a cell-based structure, given the creation of many new leadership positions such as those of cell leaders, interns and supervisors. Thirdly, with the intention of cell groups to evangelise, grow and multiply, problems may arise within these groups on the acceptability of new members – a situation that may be more pronounced in a small group setting. Finally, the understanding of the allocation of solidary rewards has a bearing on the method of growth and structure adopted. By promoting growth through the creation of additional small groups, rather than through increasing the size of existing groups, the rewards attached to group membership are not diluted. Conversely, followers of the Jethro model of growth, which entails regularly multiplying the group, may in the process of multiplication disrupt and weaken the solidary benefits being enjoyed by many members of the group, especially if relationships are severed by placing close friends in different groups.

Churches as normative organizations

A second theory of organizations that will be examined here is Etzioni's (1975) classification of organizations according to type of compliance. He maintains that there are three main sources of control - namely coercion, economic assets and normative values – that can be allocated and manipulated to attain social order, and represent three types of organizations – coercive, utilitarian and normative, respectively (Etzioni, 1975, p. xvi). Etzioni (1975, pp. 8-11) further argues that in their pure form, these various sources of compliance produce three types of involvement, namely alienative, calculative and moral.

Power serves as the means of compliance, with coercive power based upon the “application, or threat of application, of physical sanctions such as to inflict pain, deformity, or death; generation of frustration through restriction of movement; or controlling through force the satisfaction of needs...”; remunerative power “based on control over material resources and

rewards...”; and normative power derived from “the allocation and manipulation of symbolic rewards and deprivations through employment of leaders, manipulation of mass media, allocation of esteem and prestige symbols, administration of ritual, and influence over the distribution of ‘acceptance’ and ‘positive response’.” (Etzioni, 1975, p. 5). Normative power can be further sub-divided into pure normative power - which relates to the allocation and manipulation of esteem, prestige and ritualistic symbols – and social power – related to the allocation and manipulation of acceptance and positive response (Etzioni, 1975, p. 6).

Religious organizations are classified as normative organizations and attain compliance almost exclusively through normative power (Etzioni, 1975, pp. 41-42). That is, other means of compliance are not usually available. Consequently, the amount of compliance that can be derived is largely dependent upon the ability of the church to influence the normative orientation of its members through exercising social power by building relationships, and through pure normative power being exercised in socialisation practises such as religious rituals, sermons and the manipulation of symbols. By implication, in the transition of churches to cell-churches, achieving compliance with the transition will have to rely almost exclusively on the exercising of normative power.

By the nature of church activities, church leadership is readily provided with multiple opportunities to be able to exercise influence through the manipulation of symbols. However, as suggested by Hopewell’s (1987) study, the deployment of normative power in churches is fraught with complexity. Hopewell (1987, pp. 5-9) notes that a complex network of signals, symbols and conventions combine to produce a sub-culture. Symbols are embedded within this idiomatic expression of culture that are regarded as essential elements of the life of the church and cannot be altered. Significantly, due to their “multivocality” the meaning of these symbols is not easy to identify, either. They are also not necessarily related to the most critical aspects of the functioning of the church (such as sermons or finance) and are not automatically distinctively Christian in nature either (such as the provision of tea and coffee after a service). This complexity in deciphering the meaning and impact of symbols, points to some of the difficulties that church leaders could encounter during church transition if symbols are added or removed. They will need to determine which symbols reflect the old

and what symbols they should be substituted with; what the response to this substitution is likely to be; what symbols are regarded as unalterable and how they will be handled.

Churches as congregations

As an organizational type, churches can be regarded as one type of congregation, where congregations are defined as “relatively small-scale, local collectivities and organizations in and through which people engage in religious activity” (Chaves, Konieczny, Beyerlein & Barman, 1999: 458). Viewing churches as congregations highlights the religious dimension of this organizational type. Harris (1998, pp. 603-604) argues that viewed as a congregation, a particular church may share common features with congregations of different denominations and religions, since they have broadly similar purposes and share a common, uncertain organizational environment. Congregations have several unique features differentiating them from other non-religious organizations. Three of the features that will be elaborated upon are the values of congregations, the perceptions of the role and authority of clergy, and the nature of organizational goals.

Congregational values

A key feature of congregations is the presence of values that have a religious character. These religious values can either inhibit or drive organizational change in congregations, and are often reinforced by church theology and doctrine (Harris, 1995, pp. 265-271). For example, there are values informing the authority ascribed to clergy and the role of lay members in the church - and women in particular. The cell-church requires the devolution of authority to lay leaders, who undertake a more active role in the church. This may, or may not sit well with existing church and denominational values. Also, there are values related to the character of the church, seeing it as a divinely inspired, living body, which then question the appropriateness of the organizational perspective of churches and the use of managerial techniques. Crucial issues, such as church success and effectiveness are open to debate, not only at the level of their definition, but also in the appropriateness of the use of such terms.

Role and authority of clergy

A second feature of congregations is the special role and authority of clergy. The term clergy is used to collectively represent religious functionaries in various types of congregations (Harris, 1995, p. 262) and would therefore include, for example, ministers, pastors, and rabbis. This feature has enjoyed quite extensive attention, particularly in the sociology literature. It is not surprising then that Weber's forms of authority have been frequently applied in the analysis of congregations (Harris, 1995, p. 267).

To Weber (1947, p. 50), the distinguishing feature of "corporate groups" (*Verband*) is the internal differentiation of hierarchical roles with respect to authority. Weber (1947, pp. 50-60) identified three basic forms of authority, namely rational-legal, traditional and charismatic. Rational-legal authority entails the employment of a body of impersonal, impartial, universal, logically consistent, generalised rules that cover all incidents of conduct within the jurisdiction of the *Verband* as well as delimiting the boundaries of that jurisdiction. Thus, this authority is associated with holding a particular office within the *Verband*. Traditional authority is that which is seen to have always existed, and is therefore regarded as binding, simply because it has been traditionally received as such. Its main elements are firstly, a body of concrete rules that require no justification, since they are deemed to have always been binding; and secondly a defined hierarchical status system that determines who is able to legitimately exercise authority. Finally, Weber's (1947) third form of authority, charismatic authority, rests with an individual leader and is legitimised by his/her followers who then feel compelled or duty-bound to follow obligations imposed by the leader, even when (and particularly when) they conflict with convention. That is, charismatic authority rests in identifying with the revolutionary or "deviant" individual and/or the cause that s/he represents. Clergy usually hold traditional authority, or charismatic authority, or a mixture of the two (Harris, 1995, p. 270; 1998, p. 612).

It is typically believed that the authority of clergy is derived ultimately from God (Harris, 1995, p. 264; 1998, pp. 612-613; Oates, 1982, pp. 69-89). However, Harris (1995, pp. 267-268) cites several studies that report on the loss of traditional authority in congregational settings. This loss of authority seems to present itself in problems between clergy and laity. For example, Harris (1998) conducted case study research among four diverse English congregations, where she notes the special role of ministers in terms of exercising authority and boundary spanning. As boundary spanners, they identified a broader perspective and role for themselves that was not only fulfilled purely within the local congregation. Lay members of the congregation tended to have a localised focus and frequently did not share the broader perspective of their ministers. This resulted in overburdened ministers, power struggles and disputes about relative authority. Harris (1998, pp. 606-607) observed that these problems were moderated (1) by the reinforcement and adherence to a set of strict, shared religious values; (2) by a system of apprenticeship to key voluntary posts; (3) by the possibility of regular face-to-face communication; and (4) possible cultural factors. On the other hand, difficulties in clergy-laity relationships were exacerbated (1) when the authority of the minister was seen by lay members to be open to challenge; (2) when ministers saw themselves as the embodiment of religious congregational goals and therefore unchallengeable; (3) by historical failure to attain goals; (4) by difficulties in implementing lay empowerment; and (5) by positions or causes being justified with arguments based on religious principles.

In considering the relevance of this discussion on the role and authority of clergy to the cell-church transition, it would seem to imply that change by its very nature could temper the traditional authority held by church leaders, which in some cases may already have been limited in the particular congregational setting. This would then require an even greater reliance on charismatic authority, should disputes arise between the clergy and the laity.

Congregational goals

A third feature of congregations is the nature of organizational goals and purpose. Harris (1998, pp. 613-614) suggests that the goals of congregations are relatively fixed, and thus not

open to negotiation. Typically, in a voluntary association, member contributions are exchanged for some say in determining goals. However, in congregations, there is a heavy reliance on member contributions, which are often seen to be obligatory, and yet the goals are usually pre-determined. Consequently, in situations where members do not agree with congregational goals, they may feel obligated to contribute positively rather than out of free choice, and are ultimately faced with the decision of either remaining silent or leaving the congregation. Thus, transitions in churches may be characterised by little discontent being verbalised, and yet an unusually high number of people leaving the church or withdrawing from it.

Churches as voluntary associations/organizations

Organizations have been classified into three sectors, namely the private sector, the public sector and the third sector or non-profit sector constituting an “array of self-governing private organizations, not dedicated to distributing profits to shareholders or directors, pursuing public purposes outside the formal apparatus of the state.” (Salamon, 1994, p. 109). Churches would be classified as part of this third sector or non-profit sector and can be regarded as a type of voluntary organization with a religious purpose (Scherer, 1972). While it is recognized that there is a vast array of types of voluntary organizations and voluntary associations and any particular category of voluntary organization may be not be homogenous even within itself (Wilson & Pimm, 1996), there are certain fairly general characteristics that voluntary organizations tend to display (Warner, 1972).

In her study, Harris (1998, pp. 607-611) noted that the organizational behaviour of congregations was not fully explained by religious factors, and suggests that viewing congregations as a special case of voluntary association can be useful. This view is supported elsewhere (e.g. Webb, 1974, p. 668). Voluntary associations are essentially groupings run by volunteers rather than paid staff, and provide the opportunity for mutual participation and benefit with the express purpose being the realisation of commonly defined interests (Harris, 1998, pp. 607-608). A distinction has been drawn between voluntary organizations and voluntary associations by Thompson (1976, in Pearce 1993, p. 18) where associations refers to

a group of people who jointly pursue a common interest, while organizations are seen as the tool for attainment of goals imposed by the owner, using human labour to carry out its work. If the denominational grouping which the church is part of, or alternatively, the members of the church are viewed as the “owners” of the church, it would then seem that the term voluntary organization would be more applicable to churches, but in the literature, congregations have also been described as voluntary associations. Since this distinction is not critical for the purposes of this study, the terms are used interchangeably according to the usage of cited authors.

Viewing churches as voluntary organizations/associations is insightful for this study, and the following qualities of voluntary organizations/associations will be discussed. Firstly, an important feature is the nature of voluntary membership, where the relative fluidity of organizational entry and exit is typical. Secondly, the social dimension of voluntary associations is significant. This can be seen as an extension of Clark and Wilson’s (1961) description of solidary organizations, which was discussed earlier. A third feature is the existence of various membership roles and the relationships between these various roles.

Permeable organizational boundaries

Smith, Reddy and Baldwin (1972, pp. 182-183) note that voluntary action can be differentiated along at least six clusters of dimensions, control-separateness being one such cluster. Aspects of this control-separateness cluster of dimensions include the autonomy or nature and degree of independence in voluntary action, and another is the dimension of exclusivity-inclusivity of voluntary action. It would appear that churches would generally rate highly on autonomy of voluntary action and would tend to be more inclusive in nature. That is, the organizational boundaries are relatively fluid. Thus, one of the primary characteristics of voluntary associations is voluntary involvement (Warner, 1972, p. 72). While there may be varying degrees of voluntariness, it is generally assumed that participation is optional if free from economic remuneration and legal coercion (Warner, 1972, p. 72). However, the social context may also influence the degree of voluntariness. In some situations the social context

implies that congregational life and participation is not only based on personal spirituality, but is also in reaction to actual or potential judgements and social sanctions from others, resulting in a semi-involuntary institutional view of the congregation (e.g. Ellison & Sherkat, 1999).

Permeability of organizational boundaries has various implications. Warner (1972, p. 72) suggests that the purely voluntary involvement of members can even threaten the viability of the organization, as organizational control and co-ordination is diluted by the potential for members to exercise their option to disengage. For example, Harris (1998, pp. 608-611) notes that members of congregations, who believe their interests are not being served, are able to leave with relative ease. She notes that this has the effect of both diluting the leader's sphere of influence and means of compliance, as well as requiring organizations to devote much attention to pandering to individual members' needs.

Fulfilment of social needs

In keeping with the character of solidary organizations as already discussed, voluntary associations such as churches can be perceived to exist to predominantly fulfil the social needs of the members, with other organization requirements taking second place. Smith, Reddy and Baldwin's (1972, pp. 171-172) describe voluntary actions as:

[A]ll behavior (whether individual or collective) that is primarily a product of commitment to values other than sheer, direct economic benefit, self-preservation, physical force, physiological need, and psychic or social compulsion. Voluntary action may involve helping others, helping oneself, or both. ...voluntary action tends to include all of those activities which most serve to give meaning and satisfaction to life from the standpoint of the individual.

This definition essentially distinguishes voluntary behaviour from three other potential primary motivating forces of individual behaviour, namely bio-socially compelled behaviour,

socio-politically-coerced behaviour and direct economic behaviour (Smith, *et al.*, 1972, pp. 160-163). The distinction between voluntary action and other behaviour is also closely aligned to the difference between expressive and instrumental behaviour (Mason 1996). “Expressive behaviour is action for direct rather than for indirect gratification. It is play for the sake of play; work for the sake of work; energy for the sake of the spending.” (Mason, 1996, p. xi). Expressive behaviour can be thought of as something that people do because they want to as it has direct benefit to them. In contrast, instrumental behaviour is what they do to get something done, but not necessarily for the direct benefits they may (or may not) accrue, and hence produce an output of benefit to their external environment (Mason, 1996, pp. 3-5).

Harris (1998, pp. 608-611) notes that since members are primarily attracted by the opportunity for social interaction, there tends to be a low priority attached to task-oriented activities, resistance to the formalisation of procedures and decision-making, and a good deal of time and energy needs to be spent on consensus building. Furthermore, if churches are primarily a domain for voluntary or expressive behaviour, this would imply that with the nature of involvement of church members being redefined through the cell-church transition, leaders would need to pay careful attention to helping members find personal meaning in their newly defined role requirements. Failure to make this link will lead to opposition to the change, disengagement from church activities and a loss of members.

Roles

A third feature of voluntary associations is the nature of the range of roles in the organization and the interaction of the various incumbent role players. This feature can be looked at from two perspectives. Firstly, there are the dynamics that arise from the interaction between paid staff and volunteers. Secondly, the broader membership of the association is layered, and various types of members fulfil different roles.

Voluntary organizations can experience conflict between full-time staff and its volunteer contingent (Wilson & Pimm, 1996). Wilderom and Miner (1991, p. 368) comment on the

effect paid staff have on voluntary associations when they distinguish between voluntary agencies and voluntary groups. Whereas voluntary groups consist entirely of volunteers, voluntary agencies employ at least some paid staff. They argue that the mere presence of paid staff distinguishes voluntary agencies as having an instrumental character, over and above the expressive character typified by voluntary groups. Scherer (1972, p. 97) illustrates this distinction. He notes that there is often conflict between clergy and laity over the purpose of the church, with the clergy highlighting the instrumental or purposive function and laity the expressive. This is understandable from the perspective of the laity. Voluntary associations such as churches are usually characterised as being of secondary importance to them in comparison to their occupational and family concerns, and are usually consigned to a leisure-time activity where they compete for remaining time and resources (Warner, 1972, p. 73). This is compounded by the fact that voluntary associations tend to fulfil narrow, specialised interests of their members, implying that individuals have multiple affiliations in order to have all of their interests expressed (Warner, 1972, p. 74).

This dual labour characteristic of paid staff and volunteers is not found in other types of organizations, and according to Wilson and Pimm (1996) can obstruct the attainment of high levels of commitment and motivation in a number of ways. Firstly, there can be perceptions of favouritism in the allocation of work to be done. That is, full-time staff members perceive volunteers to be receiving the more interesting or rewarding work, and vice versa. In addition, full-time staff may feel that their jobs are threatened with the recruitment of volunteers. Secondly, a volunteer can often challenge the authority exercised by full-time staff over volunteers, with few ramifications for the volunteer. Finally, volunteers may assume the moral high ground by virtue of their receiving no financial reward from the organization.

Harris (1998, pp. 608-611) takes special note of the ambiguity of the role played by paid members of staff in relation to voluntary members. In particular, there is ambiguity regarding who is ultimately responsible for carrying out the primary tasks of the organization and whether paid staff should fulfil a leading or supportive role in this. This feature is evident in the tension that arises between lay members and their ministers. Sometimes ministers lay

claim to authority, assume the congregation is central to people's lives, and take on the role of primary interpreter of the congregation's mission. The laity often disputes these assumptions.

The second perspective regarding roles in voluntary organizations has to do with the stratified nature of organizational membership. Warren (2005) has described this as a five-tier system, namely the core lay-ministers, the committed maturing members, the congregation of members, the crowd of regular attendees, and the unchurched community. More typically, this has been presented as a dual or three-tiered structure. A common theme in the literature on voluntary organizations is the existence of a dual membership structure within the organization, with a core minority of members assuming oligarchic control (Warner, 1972, p. 76). Clark and Wilson (1961, p. 143) suggest that the dilemma of the depreciating value of solidary rewards that accompanies growth in organizational size is often resolved through the creation of different levels of status of membership. For example, in a comparative study where seven employee-staffed organizations were matched with seven volunteer staff organizations, Pearce (1993, pp. 47-50) reported that this differentiation of volunteers was frequently observed, resulting in a core minority who ruled the organization and were often office bearers, and a peripheral, inactive, apathetic majority. Pearce's (1993, p. 50) research indicated that movement from periphery to core was quite easy and was usually welcomed by the core members because of the little prestige attached to the offices they held, relative to the time and commitment required.

In contrast to this dual structure, Harris (1996, pp. 57-58) discovered a three-tiered structure of volunteers in congregations. This consisted of a group who took on the major responsibilities, a second group who were not part of the core group but undertook voluntary work on a less regular basis and worked fewer hours, and a third group who could not or did not make any contribution to the congregation. Harris (1996, pp. 57-63) also observed problems related to the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Obtaining and maintaining sufficient levels of volunteering was an ongoing challenge, with some volunteers dropping out without notice. Core group members were often over-committed, but felt they could not relinquish their responsibilities without disappointing the congregation. There were strong influences militating against the overt control of volunteers and there was a perception of a lack of

recognition for member contributions. The existence of religious values (such as altruism or serving others) also seemed to obligate some members to volunteer in the first place and to then become over-committed (Harris, 1996, pp. 63-64).

If movement from the periphery to the core is relatively easy, this suggests that the reason the periphery is in the majority is out of choice, rather than because of barriers to entry to the core. It would follow then, that the explanation for the dual membership or three-tiered system may lie in an understanding of the reasons individuals join voluntary associations and why they remain. This area has received a significant portion of the attention of researchers examining voluntary organizations from the perspective of, for example, volunteer motivation (e.g. Clary & Snyder, 1999), the personality characteristics of volunteers (e.g. Elshaug & Metzger, 2001) and altruism (e.g. Gassler, 1998; Knox, 1999).

Implications of organizational theories of churches

In this section, churches have been examined as solidary organizations, normative organizations, congregations and voluntary organizations or associations. Viewing churches as solidary organizations highlighted the role of solidary rewards in the process of transition to a cell-based church. While available solidary resources were expanded through the introduction of a cell-based organizational form, the concomitant change in the basis for the allocation of these incentives may result in organizational conflict. Furthermore, attempts to maintain organizational consensus regarding the organization's purpose, may well lead to the dilution of its intended purpose as a cell-based church. Thus, the need for organizational leaders to manage change in a sensitive manner is highlighted.

While the solidary organization perspective emphasises the requirement for the organization's leadership to be aware of the impact of the transition on the members of the organization, defining the church as a normative organization serves to underline the relatively limited and complex means available to the leadership to leverage compliance in the process of transition.

In viewing churches as congregations, we are reminded of the religious character of these organizations and the expression of this in terms of values, goals and authority. The implication of this for change initiatives is that clergy may well be able to exercise more influence than leaders in other solidary and normative settings, as they may be confronted less often. On the other hand, this same factor could mean that opposition to change may not be vocalised, but could be manifested in other means such as withdrawal from the congregation.

The lack of means of influence over church membership was further amplified in examining churches as voluntary organizations/associations, where the fluidity of organizational membership was noted. Thus the process of change needs to be managed in a way that leaves the fulfilment of members' social needs within the organization, intact. The stratified nature of organizational membership provides useful guidance in managing change. Since the continued successful functioning of the organization lies primarily with the core membership, it is essential for organizational leaders to get this constituency's commitment to the change. Furthermore, it provides a different perspective on the cell-church transition. That is, the transition can be seen as moving a larger portion of the organization's members from the periphery to the core.

These various theoretical outlooks on the church as an organization, have served to highlight some of the organizational issues that may be considered in the transitioning of churches from programme-based to cell-based forms. These organizational features will influence the way in which problems in transitioning are manifested and managed. In the next section of this chapter, attention is given to locating the programme-based to cell-based transition of churches within the organizational change literature.

2.2 Change Management and the Cell-church Transition

In this section, the present study is located within the burgeoning change management literature, in order to develop an understanding of the type of change that the transition of churches to cell-based churches entails. The change is defined as episodic, teleological, intangible and second order, in nature.

Episodic and continuous change

Weick and Quinn (1999) differentiate between discontinuous episodic change and continuous evolving change. Episodic change is infrequent, discontinuous, and intentional in response to “an inertial deep structure and perceived environmental demands” (Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 365). In other words, it can be seen as a response to an organization’s failure to continuously adapt to its environmental demands (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Neighbour (1990, pp. 9-37) highlights the failure of the church at large to respond to the growth in world population and mass urbanisation, and calls for a new type of church that is capable of rapid growth. Citing several examples of successful cell group churches around the world, he proposes that cell group churches, or the cell-church, is the form the church now needs to take in order to be able to respond effectively to its environment. Thus, the transition from a programme-based church to a cell-based church can be defined as a form of episodic change. Although the idea will not be further developed here, it could also be argued that a cell-based church is itself an organizational form that accommodates continuous change and growth more successfully than the programme-based church. That is, while the programme-based church to cell-based church transition is episodic in nature, it serves to position the church for continuous change. The focus of this research is the transition process itself and hence examines episodic change.

According to Weick and Quinn (1999, pp. 368-370), episodic change incorporates three significant processes, namely inertia, the triggering of change and replacement. Inertia refers to the inability of the organization to adapt and keep pace with changes in its environment (Pfeffer, 1997, in Weick & Quinn, 1999). The management of inertia is the central focus of this research and is briefly discussed later on in this chapter, with a more detailed discussion in Chapter Eight. When inertia builds, a change trigger initiates an episode of replacement (Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 370). According to Huber, Sutcliffe, Miller and Glick (1993, in Weick & Quinn, 1999) the triggering of change originates from at least five sources, namely the environment, performance, characteristics of top management, structure and strategy. The process of replacement involves defining what currently exists, determining its replacement,

removing what is there and substituting it with its replacement (Ford & Ford, 1994, in Weick & Quinn, 1999).

Episodic change interventions tend to be planned and intentional and involve both disturbing the current equilibrium and establishing a newly created equilibrium, following Lewin's three stage change process, namely unfreezing-change-refreezing (Weick & Quinn, 1999, pp. 371-373). As such, the change agent is the prime mover creating change (Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 373). In the church context, the change agents are usually the church leadership who initiate and facilitate the change.

Teleological change

Van de Ven and Poole (1995, p. 511) present four basic types of process theories to explain the sequence of events and generative mechanisms – or motors - driving change in social and biological entities, namely life cycle, teleological, dialectical and evolutionary theories. Change that is teleological in nature is characterised as occurring in a single entity and involving a constructive mode of change (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 520). A constructive mode of change is differentiated from a prescribed mode by its unpredictability. Constructive modes of change are emergent and frequently involve unpredictable and unprecedented departures from the past, rather than being stable, predictable and incremental, as typifies the prescribed mode of change (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 522). To conceptualise the process of transitioning from a programme-based church to a cell-church largely as a teleological process promotes clarity about the type of episodic change occurring. It further suggests that the goal and direction set for the change may become clearer as the change progresses, and that there could well be deviations from the initial intentions.

Teleological change is characterised by Van de Ven & Poole (1995, p. 516) as follows. It is purposeful, adaptive and goal directed, consisting of a repetitive sequence of goal formulation, implementation, evaluation, and revision of goals, in pursuit of an envisioned end state. While the organizational entity is seen to be adaptable and the organization itself (or its actors, such as the strategic leadership) serves as the motor or driver for change, it is constrained by the

organization's resources and environment. Goals are socially constructed and enacted based on learning and previous action. Consequently, teleological change occurs when there is "sufficient consensus among the members to permit them to act as a single organizational entity" (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 522).

Intangible episodic change

Huy (2001, p. 603) develops further the notion of the organization itself as the engine driving teleological change and contends that while Van de Ven and Poole (1995) have described the generic motor of teleological change as goal directed and driven by purposeful and adaptive individuals, a variety of "'models of engines' or intervention theories" exist. Huy (2001) describes four ideal types of teleological motors called commanding, engineering, teaching and socialising which are distinguished on the basis of their emphasis of episodic or continuous change and the content of the change being either tangible or intangible in nature. In this classification, Huy (2001) therefore clarifies that teleological change need not necessarily be episodic, although the church transition will be viewed as a case of episodic change.

The ideal types of teleological motors that seem to best describe the cell-church transition are teaching and socialisation, both of which are classified as intangible change. Teaching emphasises the re-education of participants by change agents, with participants actively engaged in learning processes that lead to changes in their personal belief systems (Huy, 2001, p. 607). Utilising cognition-focused research, change agents seek to impart to participants a predetermined set of beliefs and values regarded as the truth (Huy, 2001, p. 607). Frequently outside change-agents are required, since the organization's members are trapped in "psychic prisons" by their own assumptions that need to be surfaced before effective learning and adaptation can take place (Huy, 2001, p. 607). This cognitive liberation is usually attained through allowing participants to go back and forth within their own experiences, to effectively "relive the past and prelive the future in the present", in inner time (Huy, 2001, p. 608). Of interest here, is Mouton's (1999, pp. 88-106) study of four Dutch Reformed churches where it was discovered that a typical way of initiating the cell-church transition was through training

and exposure to cell-churches elsewhere. Many churches in South Africa have been exposed to the idea and practise of cell-churches through training offered by external parties such as Touch Ministries (Mouton, 1999, p. 1) and Cell Church International (www.cellchurchonline.com), or churches that had already made some progress with the transition.

Changing social relationships through socialising (Huy, 2001, pp. 608-610) assumes that a change in behavioural interaction produces a change in beliefs and organizational culture. Thus, change agents are self-motivated members located throughout the organization, who have bought into the necessity for change and first changed their own behaviour. Thereafter, they seek to develop synergy among various groups through acting as role models and engaging in experiential learning with change recipients. From the socializing perspective, organizations are seen as organisms with the primary purpose of change being to develop organizational learning to enhance adaptability to uncertain environments. One of the ways of initiating the cell-church transition is the “Model-Group Approach” (Comiskey, 1999, pp. 198-200). This approach seems to resemble a socialising intervention, as it begins with the senior pastor forming a temporary prototype cell group where the leader models appropriate behaviour.

Second-order change

Bartunek and Moch (1994, pp. 24-25) distinguish between first-, second- and third-order change, according to how extensive the change is seen to be. First-order change narrowly focuses on change at the behavioural level within the boundaries of a set of established organizational beliefs, and is incremental in nature. Second-order change occurs at the cognitive level and entails changes in organizational beliefs or shared schemata, while third-order change transcends schemata, with the shared schemata becoming the object of ongoing transformation.

Of primary interest in this study is second-order change, which has elsewhere been referred to as frame-breaking change or re-creation (Dietterich, 1989, in Liburd, 1990/1991). A

constructive mode of change as typifies teleological theories, usually generates second-order change (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 523). In comparing a programme-based church and a cell-based church as summarised in Table 1.1, it becomes apparent that the change involves more than merely behaving differently. It involves thinking about the church, its purpose and function, and the individual member's role, in a different way. That is, the change is at the schematic level, involving the adoption of a new, shared schema. On the other hand, it does not involve third-order change, as the intention is not to continually scrutinise the newly adopted shared schema, but to operate within them.

Second-order change is grounded in the cognitive sciences. From this perspective, meaning is attached to organizational events and actions by being interpreted through existing schemata (Nielsen & Bartunek, 1996, p. 490). That is, the existing schemata serve as “mental templates that individuals impose on their information environment” (Nielsen & Bartunek, 1996, p. 490), or lenses for viewing the world. Schemata are “dynamic cognitive knowledge structures regarding specific concepts, entities and events used by the individual to encode and represent incoming information efficiently.” (Harris, 1994, in Nielsen & Bartunek, 1996, p. 490). According to Nielsen and Bartunek (1984, p. 355), Weick's term schemata is similar to concepts such as Bartunek's interpretive schemes, Kuhn's shared meanings or paradigms, Sproull's beliefs and master scripts, Beyer's world views or ideologies, Boje, Fedor and Rowland's myths, and Jelinek, Smircich and Hirsch's organizational culture. Schemata assist individuals by reducing data, guiding the search for relevant information and orientating them within their experiential terrain (Nielsen & Bartunek, 1996, p. 490). Consequently, a change in schemata has a significant affective component characterised by feelings of uncertainty and chaos, disorientation, paralysis, and the experience of “a series of deaths and rebirths” (Bartunek, 1984, p. 367).

Bartunek (1948, pp. 364-365; 1993, in Nielsen & Bartunek, 1996, pp. 491-492) advises that powerful influential organizational members initiate the second-order change process. That is, in a time of crisis, they recognise the inadequacy of the extant schemata and propose an alternative. Frequently this sparks off conflict between the advocates of the old and the new schemata, which is ultimately resolved through reverting back to the status quo, imposing the

new schemata or creating another alternative through synthesis in the context of dialogue, negotiation and/or imposition. Bartunek and her co-authors (Bartunek, Davidson, Greenberg & Humphries, 1996; Nielsen & Bartunek, 1996, p. 492) recommend that conversion to new schemata and an understanding thereof, usually requires extensive dialogue, otherwise different understandings of the change will develop within the organization. The ability of organizationally powerful members to straddle both sides of the conflict and act as mediators, determines both the extent of dialogue that occurs and the depth of acceptance and appreciation of the new schemata. Thus, second-order change typically engages organizational members in participative decision-making (Bartunek, 1984, p. 366). Even after a decision has been taken, it may be important to maintain dialogue with those who may have opposed the decision. For example, in dealing with those who opposed change in the church, Liburd (1990/1991, p. 85) describes how as part of the management of change, he met with these individuals and groups, made himself vulnerable to criticism and allowed them to express their disappointment and pain, and cared for them as their pastor.

Nielsen and Bartunek (1996, pp. 493-513) describe the utilisation of single-, double- and triple-loop action learning methods to achieve second-order change. These three forms of learning differ, based on whether actions, values or organizationally embedded tradition-systems are regarded as fixed or open to scrutiny. Single-loop learning scrutinises only instrumental actions. Double-loop learning regards activities and organizational values as variable, while in triple-loop learning, the organization is also willing to change its tradition-systems.

Conclusion of the nature of change in cell-church transitions

The type of change being considered in this research has been classified as intangible, episodic, teleological, second-order change. Within this scenario, of critical importance to successful change is how organizational leaders - as the advocates or engines of change - engage with the organization's membership to promote the adoption of new, shared schemata. The context in which this interaction occurs will have an effect on the quality and nature of this interaction, and it has been argued that a vital contextual consideration is the type of

organization that churches are. As noted previously, leaders will need to proceed with caution, given the relatively limited means of leverage at their disposal and the virtual obligation they are under to continually accommodate the needs of members. This has a bearing on the way in which change unfolds and indeed the probability of successful change, raising the question of how organizational inertia will present itself during change, and how it will be managed by the church leadership.

2.3 Organizational Inertia

In reviewing the organizational change literature, Weick and Quinn (1999, p. 382) conclude that understanding organizational inertia is a prerequisite to coming to an understanding of organizational change. In early writings (Lewin, 1952) and in the more recent literature (e.g. Kinnear & Roodt, 1998) a key element identified in bringing about successful organizational change is to be able to reduce resistance to change. Kinnear and Roodt (1998, p. 44) refer to “the resistance of an organization to make transitions and its inability to quickly and effectively react to change”, as organizational inertia, and argue that this term incorporates all related concepts describing lethargic responses of organizations to change.

At this stage of the study, it is useful to distinguish between two perspectives on organizational inertia discussed in the literature. Boeker (1989, pp. 488-489) notes that there has been widespread debate in the management literature as to whether organizations are inertial or adaptive by nature, and that this debate is represented in the change literature by two groups of protagonists, respectively proposing an inertial versus a strategic choice approach to change. Overstating the case, these two positions would respectively argue that organizations couldn't adapt to environmental changes and that inertia was therefore a natural and inherent characteristic; versus believing that organizations are adaptive, and that inertia was a poor reflection on the way in which change was being led. Referring firstly to the inertial approach, organizational inertia can be seen as structural inertia (e.g. Hannan & Freeman, 1984). That is, there is a lack of correspondence between existing organizational structures of a class of organizations and their (changing) environment. In one study largely supportive of this view that was conducted in the radio industry of the United States, Greve

(1999) showed that initiating organizational change was harmful to large and successful organizations, but could potentially benefit low performers, supporting the theory that fundamental change resulted in organizational performance regressing towards the mean level of performance for the market.

In contrast, protagonists of the view that organizations are in fact adaptive would suggest that episodic change might be initiated in response to the effects of organizational inertia (e.g. Pfeffer, 1997, in Weick & Quinn, 1999). Thus, the second form organizational inertia takes is consistent with the strategic choice perspective (Boeker, 1989), whereby organizational inertia would be regarded as a factor to manage as part of an episodic change process. In this instance, the term “resistance to change” has close association (Roodt, Kinnear, Erwee, Smith, Lynch & Millet, 2001, p. 57). In this study I assume a strategic choice perspective of churches, which appears to be consistent with the idea that programme-based churches are able to transition into a cell-church.

Lewin (1952) seems to have been the first to use the term “resistance to change”. This was used in the context of the individual’s resistance to change and Lewin (1952) suggested that a group could be used to bring about change in the individual member. He proposed that the social value that the individual placed on the group’s standard led the individual to resist attempts to move away from that standard. Thus, according to Lewin (1952) effective change arose from the unfreezing, moving and freezing of group standards. Success in moving the group standard led to the individual changing too, in a relatively permanent manner. This permanence was attributable at least in part, to the individual’s commitment to the group. In Lewin’s (1952) view, this dynamic applies to social units of all sizes, including organizations.

The concept of resistance to change and similar terms in use have evolved, and no longer conform to Lewin’s (1952) original use of the term (Kinnear & Roodt, 1998). Typically various causes of resistance to change are classified as individual-, group- and organizational-level factors (e.g. King & Anderson, 2002). Some recent reviews of the historical development of the term “resistance to change” suggest that a popular understanding that has arisen is that resistance to change is always negative and somehow needs to be removed or

overcome (Mabin, Forgeson & Green, 2001; Perren & Megginson, 1996; Waddell & Sohal, 1998). It has been suggested by these same authors, that rather than seeing resistance to change as the enemy, its presence is symptomatic of deeper problems related to the organizational change initiative, and as such, might even serve a constructive purpose.

Given Kinnear and Roodt's (1998) attempt to integrate various theoretical perspectives under the umbrella of the term "organizational inertia", this term will generally be used in this study. However, it will be used with the understanding that organizational inertia is not always negative and problematic, and needs to be effectively managed, rather than eliminated or avoided. As is recommended for the grounded theory research method being utilised in this study (Charmaz, 1990, p. 1163; Goulding, 1998, p. 53; Strauss, 1987, pp. 281-282), the literature related to the theoretical construct of organizational inertia will not be examined in great depth until data collection and analysis is underway, in order to reduce the likelihood of preconceived theoretical frameworks being imposed upon the data. Therefore, a more detailed review of the concept organizational inertia is found in Chapter Eight. Attention is now given to the subject of leadership. That is, the actors primarily responsible for managing the process of change and the organizational inertia that accompanies it.

2.4 Leading Change

Van de Ven & Poole (1995, p. 516) characterised the organization itself (or its actors) as the motor for teleological change. The leadership of the church is the actor of interest here, and in this section attention is given to defining strategic leadership, and clarifying what it entails in the context of the church.

Had this research been conducted from a theological perspective, it would be located in practical theology. According to Tucker (2003, pp. 1-10) there is little agreement on the definition of practical theology or how the field should be classified. Nevertheless, the strategic leadership role being considered in this study would impact mainly upon organizing and communicating, and to a lesser extent, shepherding (Hiltner, 1958, in Tucker, 2003, p.

14); or alternatively, to the sub-discipline of church development (Heitnik, 1999, in Tucker, 2003, p. 14).

The subject of Christian leadership or leadership within the church context has received a great deal of attention. Unfortunately, most of the books written in this field are not substantiated by rigorous, empirical research evidence, but instead rely upon the interpretation or example of Scripture (e.g. Dodd, 2003; Ford, 1991; Getz, 1995); the personal experience of the author in either leading churches or anecdotal evidence collected while consulting to them (e.g. Schaller, 1988); or borrow from the general body of leadership literature (e.g. Gangel, 1989; Lee, 1989). Much of this literature has focused on describing the type of leadership needed in the church, and the development of leadership characteristics within individuals. Some of the authors include Ron Boehme (1989), Brian Dodd (2003), Kenneth Gangel (1989), Gene Getz (1995; 2003), Eddie Gibbs (2005), Jack Hayford (2001; 2003), John MacArthur (2004), Charles Manz (1999), Tom Marshall (1991), John Maxwell (1993; 1998; 1999), James Means (1989), John Preston (1999), J. Oswald Sanders (1983; 1994; 1999), John Stott (2002), Elmer Towns (1992), and John White (1986). The area of personal leadership is not of direct interest in this study, and so this literature will be used only where it is of help in clarifying aspects related to the role of strategic leadership in a church context and the challenges these leaders face. So, what is of interest is the section of church leadership literature that deals with leadership of the congregation, or strategic leadership in the context of a local church. This section of the literature is also distinguished from the literature dealing with pastoral theology, or ministry in the broader sense, such as the role of the various offices of ministry (e.g. Giles, 1989; Oates, 1982), which will not be examined here.

Strategic leadership

In their seminal work, Katz and Kahn (1966) identify three distinctive categories of leadership in organizations, namely the strategic, operational and the tactical. These categories can be differentiated according to their effects on organization structure, and its origination, interpolation and utilisation, respectively (Katz & Kahn, 1966, pp. 308-335).

More recent perspectives of leadership draw a similar distinction in leadership, differentiating between supervisory leadership, or leadership within the organization, and strategic leadership, or leadership of the organization (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000, pp. 515-516). According to Boal and Hooijberg (2000, p. 516) “Strategic theories of leadership are concerned with leadership ‘of’ organizations ... and are marked by a concern for the evolution of the organization as a whole, including its changing aims and capabilities...”. As such, strategic leadership is generally associated with people at the top of the organization (Cannella, 2001, p. 40) and their concerns for both the internal organizational environments and the external context it operates within (Thorne, 2000, p. 9). This context is increasingly being characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Guillot, 2003).

According to Nutt and Backoff (1996), strategic leadership emphasises the central role of leadership in ensuring successful change endeavours. By concentrating on the organization as an entity, the strategic leadership of an organization is therefore primarily responsible for initiating, implementing and managing organizational change. It has been suggested that leadership theories such as charismatic leadership, transformational leadership and visionary leadership would fall under the umbrella of strategic leadership (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000, p. 516).

As a theoretical construct, strategic leadership has been located within the field of strategic management by Hoskisson, Hitt, Wan and Yiu (1999). Having reviewed the theory and research pertaining to strategic management, they suggest that the current focus of research has moved away from an externally focused contingency perspective and returned to an internal, resource-based view of organizations. The resource-based view focuses on the unique internal characteristics or “inner growth engines” of an organization that account for its success (Hoskisson, *et al.*, 1999, p. 419). According to Hoskisson, *et al.* (1999, p. 438) the principal concept underlying the resource-based view – which was pioneered by Penrose (1959) - is to conceptualise organizations as a bundle of unique heterogeneous resources. Specific types of resources currently receiving much attention are strategic leadership and tacit knowledge (Hoskisson, *et al.*, 1999, p. 437).

Reflecting upon the study of leadership within the field of strategy, Leavy (1996) observes a shift over time from a rational-instrumental orientation in the 1960's, to a strong process tradition in the 1980's, followed by the current shift in emphasis to a more contextualist, social constructionist perspective. Within this broader field of leadership and strategy, the concept of strategic leadership appears to have emerged as a theoretical domain and field of study. Hoskisson, *et al.* (1999, p. 440) trace the early roots of strategic leadership to the writings of Barnard (1938) and Selznik (1957) where one of the roles of top management is described as “to establish and convey ‘organizational meaning’ and maintain institutional integrity”. However, it seems that it was Hambrick and Mason's (1984) seminal work in the form of upper echelons theory that spurred renewed research interest in the effects of strategic leaders on their organizations (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001, pp. 515-516; Canella & Monroe, 1997, p. 219; Hoskisson, *et al.*, 1999, p. 440). In essence, upper echelons theory calls for “an emphasis on the dominant coalition of the organization”, and proposes “Organizational outcomes – both strategies and effectiveness – are viewed as reflections of the values and cognitive bases of powerful actors in the organization” (Hambrick & Mason, 1984, p. 193). Along with positive agency theory, upper echelons theory has come to dominate the empirical literature on top managers (Canella & Monroe, 1997, p. 214).

Strategic leadership research has been characterised by its virtually exclusive focus on the top executives of organizations (Canella & Monroe, 1997, p. 214), and by an exploration of their psychological make-up and its effect on their strategic choices (Canella & Monroe, 1997, p. 219). Canella and Monroe (1997, p. 220) observe that empirical studies in this area often use demographic characteristics as proxy measures of the psychological characteristics of top managers. Since this study is more concerned with the activities of strategic leaders than with their psychological make-up, the literature on the psychological characteristics of strategic leaders is not reviewed here and readers interested in this area may find Boal and Hooijberg (2000) and Canella and Monroe (1997) to be useful starting points. A complementary understanding of the sociological factors contributing to leadership may further enrich the insights gained through the psychological approach (see for example Whittington, 1993).

The activities of strategic leaders

Boal and Hooijberg (2000, pp. 516-518) suggest the crux of strategic leadership lies in three elements. Firstly, the leader needs to create and maintain absorptive capacity (the ability of the organization and its members to keep on learning). Secondly, the leader creates and maintains adaptive capacity, or strategic flexibility. Thirdly, the leader requires managerial wisdom – a combination of discernment and Kairos time. Discernment involves being able to “perceive variation in the environment... and an understanding of the social actors and their relationships”, while Kairos time entails having the capacity to take the “right action at a critical moment” or “kairotic moment” (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000, p. 518). Although Boal and Hooijberg’s (2000) model is presented here in its basic form, there is an appreciation of the complexity of the job of strategic leadership in the work of Boal and Hooijberg (2000) and others.

Richardson (1994) adopts a historical approach in identifying a continuum of nine strategic leader types or roles in the literature. These are the (1) classical administrator, (2) design school planner, (3) role playing manager, (4) political contingency responder, (5) competitive positioner, (6) visionary transformer, (7) self-organizing facilitator, (8) turnaround strategist, and (9) crisis-avoider strategist. Richardson (1994) proposes that the complexity of current organizational situations demands of strategic leaders to be multi-skilled and hence to be able to fulfil all nine roles.

In another representation of strategic leadership, Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2001, pp. 497-513) identify six key actions that strategic leaders engage in so as to bring about the successful implementation of organizational strategy. Firstly, strategic leaders need to determine the strategic direction of the organization, usually crystallized in the form of a core ideology and an envisioned future (Collins & Porras, 1996). Taylor (1997) is of the opinion that currently, organizations are increasingly adopting a more democratic strategy process through encouraging continuous dialogue on strategy formulation, strategic vision and strategy implementation, with all levels of the organization as a way of ensuring strategy is implemented. This activity of formulating and communicating an organizational vision is

often seen to be the most important (Hagen, Hassan & Amin, 1998) and primary task of strategic leadership (Cummings, 1995, p. 24) and is closely related to charismatic, transformational and visionary theories of leadership (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000, p. 516), or the charismatic role of leaders (Kets de Vries, 1996). Vision driven organizations also seem to be more successful financially and in sustaining their competitive advantage (McGivern & Tvorik, 1998).

The importance of a church having a vision and strategy has been embraced by a number of authors writing in the field of Christian leadership (e.g. Barna, 1992; Biles, 1988; Ford, 1991; 99-117; Hocking, 1991; Khong, 2000; Lee, 1989; Schaller, 1988; Shawchuck & Heuser, 1993; Weems, 1993). Some of the issues discussed here, are how to go about determining the vision (Barna, 1992; Lee, 1989, pp. 131-144; Weems, 1993, pp. 45-53), whose responsibility it is to create the vision and how the members of the congregation should be involved and/or informed (Barna, 1992, pp. 131-146; Schaller, 1998, pp. 37-41; Shawchuck & Heuser, 1993, pp. 139-155; Weems, 1993, pp. 54-66).

Secondly, Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2001, pp. 497-513) suggest that strategic leaders need to exploit and maintain core competencies in the implementation of organizational strategy. Thompson (1998, p. 274) believes that the strategic success of organizations relies upon a correct and unique blend of strategic competencies for the organization at any point in time, rather than the mere adoption of the latest management fad. What that correct blend is, will change over time in response to environmental changes, and hence a key role of strategic leaders is to discover, change and maintain the organization's unique competence mix.

Thirdly, Hitt *et al.* (2001) note that human capital needs to be acquired and developed as part of strategy formulation and implementation. Fourthly, an organizational culture that serves as a source of competitive advantage needs to be shaped and sustained by strategic leadership. Closely related to the organization's culture is the emphasis placed on ethical practices within the organization, by the strategic leadership so that managerial opportunism is limited and the organization's best interests served. Finally, strategic leadership needs to establish balanced organizational controls supportive of strategic change and that serve as parameters for strategy

implementation, monitoring and adjustment. This is closely related to the architectural role of leaders that Kets de Vries (1996) identifies, which entails putting systems and structures in place that are a mix of centralised and decentralised elements.

Finally, Rowe (2001, p. 83) sees strategic leadership as a synergy between managerial and visionary leadership and defines strategic leadership as “the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that enhance the long-term viability of the organization, while maintaining its short-term financial stability”. This definition therefore deliberately adds a focus on both present and future organizational concerns (Rowe, 2001, p. 83). Put in words relevant for this study, in bringing about organizational changes that address future environmental demands, strategic leaders are sensitive to the organization’s history, or where the organization has come from, and sensitively balance the need for order with the chaos of change, so that organizational members choose to make decisions that serve both the short- and long-term interests of the church.

Strategic leadership and succession

The topic of succession has received attention for several decades now, but most of the literature and empirical research has been on United States companies (Sakano & Lewin, 1999). In the absence of much succession literature based on the non-profit sector, this literature is used as an entry point to understanding the process of succession. The study of leadership succession has the potential to be an exception to the concurrent research focus in executive leadership. Disappointingly, even though succession has a time dimension, most studies have adopted large sample, cross sectional methodologies (Greiner & Bhambri, 1989). According to Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991, p. 719) “Most research on executive leadership is static in its treatment of time, typically focusing on concurrent associations ...”. These research studies have identified antecedents, or determinants of succession such as organizational performance, C.E.O. characteristics, and power, among others (Allen & Panian, 1982; Beatty & Zajac, 1987; Brady, Fulmer & Helmich, 1982; Dalton & Kesner, 1985; Datta & Guthrie, 1994; Salancik, Staw & Pondy, 1980; Smith & White, 1987; Thornton & Ocasio,

1999). The consequences or outcomes of succession that have been explored focus mainly on various aspects of organizational performance, as well as employee and shareholder reactions (Brown, 1982; Carroll, 1984; Friedman & Singh, 1989; Goodstein & Boeker, 1991; Haveman, 1993; Miller, 1993; Ocasio, 1999; Pfeffer & Davis-Blake, 1986; Sakano & Lewin, 1999; Smith, Carson & Alexander, 1984; Tushman & Rosenkopf, 1996; Virany, Tushman & Rominelli, 1992). Only a few studies appear to have examined both antecedent and outcome variables in the same study (Helmich, 1977; Zajac, 1990).

One of the consequences of particular interest here is the reaction of organization members to succession. Friedman and Saul (1991) identify three main reactions associated with succession, namely disruption, turnover and morale. Disruption refers to the “disturbance in traditional patterns of accepted values and behavior that is manifested in organization members’ sense of instability and insecurity after succession.” (Friedman & Saul, 1991, p. 623). Voluntary staff turnover at both the executive level and lower levels of the organization has mainly been attributed to unfulfilled expectations or other employment opportunities. In addition, involuntary turnover, particularly at the executive level, may result from a strategic reorientation by the new C.E.O. The third reaction to succession is expressed in the morale of organization members. Morale is described as a future-oriented willingness of a group to strive toward the attainment of group or organization goals. Thus, if it was thought that, due to succession, the goals were changing, morale could be affected. Furthermore a change in morale would be associated with a change of members’ assessment of the attainability of goals – whether positive or negative.

Moving on from the cross sectional studies, the handful of studies that have presented a temporal or process perspective of succession will now be examined. Firstly, Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991) argue that there are distinguishable phases or seasons that can be identified within the tenure period of a chief-executive-officer within a post, and that this ultimately affects the performance of the organization. Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991, pp. 727-732) refer to these seasons as (1) Response to Mandate - where the C.E.O. is highly committed to his or her own paradigm of understanding the organization, its environment and how to manage, and within this paradigm works at establishing a track record, legitimacy and a basis

for political influence; (2) Experimentation - wherein the C.E.O. is willing to explore and try out deviations from his or her paradigm; (3) Selection of an Enduring Theme - where there is the recrystallizing of the original paradigm, possibly with the inclusion of elements successfully experimented with; (4) Convergence - characterized by the reinforcing of the enduring theme through incremental actions; and (5) Dysfunction - where the C.E.O. disengages psychologically and so becomes less effective, but is still extremely powerful. Hambrick and Fukutomi's (1991) seasonal model strikes some accord with Kets de Vries' (1995 in Kippenberger, 1997, pp. 19-20) description of the life cycle of chief executives, which consists of three stages, namely the period of entry, the period of consolidation and the period of decline.

The models of both Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991) and Kets de Vries (1995) have power and control as an underlying theme. Denis, Langley & Pineault's (2000) case study research provides greater insight into some of the power dynamics involved in the early stages of C.E.O. tenure. They observed the integration of a new leader in a hospital setting from managerial control and socialization perspectives, depicting the integration process as a mutual adjustment process between the leader and the organization and describe the various mechanisms used to enhance the leader's influence with various constituencies. The six mechanisms used included (1) Performance – increasing credibility by meeting expectations, (2) Infiltration – changing expectations by coupling outside pressures with internal interests, (3) Immersion – learning by listening and observing, (4) Structure – changing roles (and indirectly dominant interpretive schemes) by mobilizing formal power, (5) Stretching – changing expectations by pushing back the limits of acceptance, and (6) Experimentation – learning by trial and error. Denis *et al.* (2000) discovered that the effectiveness of different mechanisms varied according to the constituency with which they were employed.

Ocasio (1994) also examines the political dynamics of succession, introducing two contrasting perspectives on power. He discovered that in the first decade of tenure, a circulation of power theory explained the political dynamics. This model is characterised by shifting political coalitions, frequent power struggles and insiders regularly contesting the position adopted by the C.E.O. However, with increased tenure, an institutionalised theory of power becomes

more predominant. That is, having won the frequent political struggles typical in the early stages of the organization, the C.E.O.'s power gradually increases over time. Subsequently, there is an increased and growing commitment to a given course of action, the actions of the C.E.O. are taken for granted and the C.E.O. continues to consolidate power. As this power is established, it provides insulation for the C.E.O. in times of economic adversity, even when he or she is becoming increasingly obsolete.

Rothschild (1993; 1996) presents a somewhat different perspective on strategic leadership succession by looking at the life cycle of organizations rather than the period of tenure of a single strategic leader. He contends that leaders are not all the same, and that particular styles of leadership are appropriate in different "seasons" in the organization's life cycle (Rothschild, 1993, pp. 9-20; 1996, pp. 16-17). Four types of leaders are identified. (1) Risk-takers stake their reputation and wealth on the success of significant changes they have introduced. (2) Caretakers provide stability and direction. (3) Surgeons attempt to save organizations on the brink of failure. (4) Undertakers close product lines or even organizations and need to manage the emotional response of survivors. Rothschild's (1993; 1996) model would therefore suggest that there could be several different types of individuals fulfilling different strategic leadership roles in an organization over its lifetime.

The perspective of strategic leadership offered by these studies highlights several factors that are relevant in understanding transition in churches. Firstly, taking a cue from Rothschild (1993; 1996) consideration of the stage at which the church is in its life cycle may give insight into the reason for the transition initiative and the type of strategic role being fulfilled. Secondly, the tenure of the leader, the circumstances surrounding the succession and the current season of tenure of the church leader are important considerations in understanding the timing of a cell-church transition and how it may unfold. For example, it is more likely that the cell-church model will be explored in the experimentation stage. On the other hand, a new leader who enters the church with the cell-church model as his or her personal agenda, may persist with this so that it becomes an enduring theme, and may even run the risk of it becoming a dysfunctional model. Thirdly, power is a central theme in leadership succession and so it can be anticipated that it may be present in the church situation, too. Finally, it can be

anticipated that succession will have a disruptive effect on the membership of the church and attention needs to be given to this possibility.

In the church literature, the difficulties associated with leadership succession have been raised. This is particularly so, because of the itinerant ministry model adopted by a number of denominations. Through his personal experience, Kemper (1991a, p. 79) has discovered that the first year of ministry is particularly difficult and also critical in determining the character of the remaining period of tenure. With this in mind, he advises leaders to give priority to building relationships of trust and to place a moratorium on change for at least a year, using this period to listen and learn, and to acclimatise to the culture of the church (Kemper, 1991a, pp. 80-83). Scott (1991, pp. 87-96) has emphasised how important it is for a new minister to understand the history of a church, arguing that its history shapes its future. Finally, Kemper (1991b) provides advice on the management of the minister's relationship with the predecessor. For example, if the minister has retired and will still be with the congregation, it is important to explicitly agree to ground rules on future interaction between the two ministers and with the congregation. On the other hand, in instances when the minister has left, the successor may have to deal with the selective memory of the congregants, who tend to remember the positive aspects of the predecessor's ministry, but forget the negative ones.

Strategic leaders and strategic leadership

With the changing external environment and its growing complexity, Ireland and Hitt (1999) note that the manner in which strategic leadership is being exercised has begun to shift. They note that a "great groups" view of strategic leadership is becoming more appropriate than the individualistic "great leader view"; that strategic leadership is widely distributed within the organization and as a consequence, is executed through the interaction of organizational leadership with the organization community, where insights, knowledge and responsibility for organizational outcomes are shared. In support of this view, Landrum, Howell and Paris (2000) propose that strategic teams may be more successful in turning an organization around than a single charismatic leader. Similarly, in the church leadership literature, the senior

minister is increasingly acknowledged to be responsible for building and managing an effective leadership team (Lee, 1989, pp. 115-128, Schaller, 1988, pp. 98-99; Shawchuck & Heuser, 1993, pp. 183-203; Weems, 1993, pp. 69-97).

As “knowledge sharing and developing entities”, Ireland and Hitt (1999, p. 46) propose that strategic leadership groups have the following characteristics: (1) the acceptance of responsibility for the organization’s outcomes, (2) an openness to learn from any and every quarter, (3) the ability to gather and analyse information in the external environment and convert it into competitive knowledge, (4) keeping a record of each individual’s “knowledge stock” and (5) the ability of the chief executive officer to build and maintain a top management team.

This shift in form that strategic leadership is taking would tend to weaken the argument of upper echelon theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), which suggests that organizations are reflections of top managers’ ideas and values. Instead, organizations could be viewed as the product of social interaction within the organization. In line with this team-based understanding of strategic leadership, an individual’s contribution to strategic leadership can be defined as “a person’s ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization” (Ireland and Hitt, 1999, p. 43). Stated in less individualistic terms, strategic leadership “is the ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to create strategic change as necessary.” (Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 2001, p. 489).

Previous research has not always made the distinction between collective strategic leadership and individualistic strategic leaders explicit, sometimes hindering the advancement of strategic leadership research (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000, p. 524). In my research, the focus will be on leadership as both an individual and a collective activity. However, the study will not examine the structural arrangements of collective leadership such as the governance structures of churches and the debates associated therewith, although it is acknowledged that this may constitute an important factor affecting the strategic leadership of churches (see for example Baig, 1999; Harris, 1999; Rindova, 1999).

Summary of strategic leadership

Following on from the sections explicating the nature of churches as organizations, and the nature of change that is represented by the cell-church transition, this section has examined the strategic leadership literature to develop the perspective of church leaders as the organizational actors serving as the motor of change, and therefore as the actors ultimately responsible for dealing with organizational inertia. In this section, several critical activities of strategic leaders have been identified. In addition, the importance of time as a dimension has been noted, particularly as it pertains to the history of a church's leadership and leadership succession, as well as the organizational life cycle of the church. Finally, it is recognized that leadership can be observed in individuals and collectives and consequently occurs and develops within a social context.

2.5 Conclusion

This study focuses on a particular type of change taking place in churches, namely the transition from a programme-based to a cell-based church. This change has been described as a type of teleological, second order, episodic change that involves moving a substantial contingent of the membership of a church from the periphery to the core of the organization's activity. As organizations, churches are unique in several respects, and the constraints of this uniqueness in managing change have been noted. It is anticipated that these unique features have a bearing on the way in which change is managed and on the role played by the church leadership.

This provides the setting for an appreciation of the distinctiveness of change management in the church context. The aim of this research is to develop a grounded theory that explains how organizational inertia is managed by the strategic leadership of churches during the process of transitioning from a programme-based to a cell-based form. This aim can be broken down into the following six goals: (1) To describe the stages or process of change in congregations

transitioning from a programme-based to a cell-based church. (2) To identify and locate points of organizational inertia within the change process described. (3) To describe how the congregation's leadership managed organizational inertia when it occurred. (4) To describe the consequences of these interventions. (5) To develop the descriptive material into a more conceptual, theoretical account. (6) To locate the grounded theory within the existing body of the change management literature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Choosing a methodology is a time-consuming, personal and reflective process. It requires an evaluation of self in terms of convictions, beliefs and interests. It means being honest about these beliefs, about what one knows and what one thinks can be known and demands commitment to the principles of a paradigm once a decision has been made or, in other words, the establishment of the relationship between individual paradigm, ontology, epistemology and methodology.

(Goulding, 1999, p. 870)

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss matters related to the research methodology and research method followed in this research. In this regard, four interrelated objectives can be identified. Firstly, the decision to adopt the grounded theory method in this research will be justified. Secondly, the origin and development of grounded theory will be explained. Thirdly, my philosophical stance and the research process followed will be explained. Finally, the quality criteria and guidelines relevant to grounded theory research will be identified so that the rigour of my research process can be demonstrated.

To outline the sequential structure of this chapter in more detail, consideration will first be given to the choice of an appropriate methodology, followed by a review of the development and utilisation of grounded theory. Grounded theory has developed significantly since its initial presentation by Glaser and Strauss (1967). These developments are presented as a necessary prelude to motivating for the grounded theory approach adopted in this study. After examining the various developments in grounded theory and its use in management research, consideration is then given to clarifying the goal of grounded theory, which is to produce a theory grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Here

discussion focuses on what a theory is, what can be regarded as a good grounded theory and how the grounded theory that emerges is related to existing theory. Considerations related to enhancing the quality of grounded research are then explored. Having provided justification for the use of Straussian grounded theory in this study, a description of the research approach and method adopted, and the research procedure followed is outlined. Implicit in this description is evidence of how the canons of grounded theory research have been met in this study.

3.1 Selection of a Research Methodology and Method

This research is of a qualitative nature. A prominent view has been that "qualitative research merely provides fodder for quantitative researchers and so occupies a lower rung on the epistemological ladder" (Bryman, 1984, p. 84). Several factors combined to elevate the status of quantitative approaches. Research norms placed value on that which could be viewed as scientific and objective (Downey & Ireland, 1979). This produced an obsession with reliability (Hari Das, 1983, p. 302), which was easier to demonstrate using quantitative methods. Also, advances in statistical methods encouraged the collection of data to which these more sophisticated statistical techniques could be applied (Hari Das, 1983, p. 302).

Despite their supposed advantages, there has been growing disillusionment with quantitative methods (Downey & Ireland, 1979; Fineman & Mangham, 1983; Hari Das, 1983; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, Van Maanen, 1979) and an increasing tendency for qualitative research to be presented as an alternative *modus operandi*, rather than as a subordinate one to quantitative approaches (Bryman, 1984, p. 85). Increasingly, researchers have opted to conduct qualitative research, particularly in the social sciences (Bryman, 1984, Strauss & Corbin, 1994), and quantitative research is no longer viewed as inherently superior to a qualitative study. In management research there is also a strong case put forward in favour of qualitative research. For more than two decades it has been contended that management theory produced by quantitative hypothetico-deductive research has failed to establish a body of knowledge that captures the complexity and dynamism of organizational contexts and guides management practice (Daft and Lewin, 1990; Leonard and McAdam, 2001; 2002; Rothwell, 1980). For

example, the results of quantitative empirical studies of most managerial phenomena are mixed, and in statistical terms often leave much of the variance unexplained. Part of the problem may lie in premature statistical testing of theoretically based arguments (Partington, 2000). That is, if the theories being subjected to empirical research are problematic in their conception, it is little wonder that the results of these studies are not convincing.

Qualitative research is represented by a wide array of research methods and epistemological foundations that a researcher can choose from to suit the uniqueness of the context of a research problem. However, as reflected in the quotation from Goulding (1999) above, any researcher needs to give a great deal of consideration to the research approach to be adopted in a piece of research to ensure consistency between personal beliefs, and questions of methodology and choice of method. How then does the researcher go about deciding on a particular approach and how is its appropriateness assessed?

Morgan (1983b) identified five potential bases for evaluating research strategies. Firstly, synthesising methods to maximise strengths and reduce weaknesses; secondly, attempting to identify a supreme strategy (advocating epistemological supremacy); thirdly, a contingency approach which judges a strategy by the usefulness of its assumptions and knowledge; fourthly, a dialectic approach which combines competing perspectives to derive a new mode of understanding; and finally, an approach that states that anything goes, and that every strategy may have something to offer. Morgan (1983a; c) argued that the evaluation of a selected research approach could not be based purely upon the assumptions of a single epistemological position, but would need to stand independently of all epistemological positions. Failing to establish this independent position, it could then be argued that anything goes (Morgan, 1983a). Thus, criteria beyond epistemological foundations would need to be the basis of evaluation. Morgan (1983b; c) concluded that no one research strategy or inquiring system could be authoritative or complete and that this then implies that the researcher needs to make appropriate choices. Morgan (1983b) thus recommends that instead of seeking out an elusive one best way of doing research, researchers rather adopt a reflective approach and consider what they and others do and do not do, as a way of enhancing their own research strategies (Morgan, 1983b). In other words, decisions regarding methodology and

method are at the discretion of the researcher, who in a considered and defensible way deems a particular methodological approach and choice of method to be internally consistent and fitting to the aims of the research.

In considering Morgan's (1983b) five possible ways of selecting and evaluating a research strategy, I have adopted a contingent approach in this study. These contingencies can partly be identified by referring to Wicker (1989), who suggests that any research endeavour either explicitly or implicitly makes a choice in prioritising three facets of the research, namely the conceptual, methodological and substantive. In my research, priority has been given to the substantive area first, with the selection of the topic of church transition from a programme-based to a cell-based church. This substantive area has been described in the preceding chapters. Second priority was accorded to the choice of method, namely grounded theory, for its usefulness in attaining the goals of the study. That is, by its very nature grounded theory generates a conceptual domain in the form of an emergent, grounded theory. Thus, while the conceptual area of organisational inertia was broadly identified as the phenomenon of interest, its conceptualisation only developed out of the grounded theory process in the form of the theory presented in Chapters Four to Seven and discussed in the light of existing theories of organizational inertia, in Chapter Eight.

If a contingent approach (Morgan, 1983b) was followed, and the grounded theory method was a secondary consideration to the choice of a substantive area, then the appropriateness of the grounded theory method still needs to be justified. Grounded theory was chosen partly because it was a method of personal preference. However, this does not wish away consideration of its appropriateness. Considerations of appropriateness are also philosophical and practical, or in other words, they pertain to issues of both methodology and method.

According to Llewellyn (1993 in Parker & Roffey, 1997) consideration of methodology involves examining and clarifying the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher and the research design, while considerations of method are secondary concerns about the techniques to be used for data collection. Bryman (1984, pp. 80-88) identified two bases for choosing a suitable research method. One is an ontological and epistemological

approach, and the other a technical approach. Using epistemological criteria, the researcher would consider whether the methodology was appropriate for the philosophical assumptions of the study, while technical criteria consider the relative superiority of methods by comparing one to the other. Selection of a method on technical criteria, therefore, examines the appropriateness of a method for the particular research problem (Bryman, 1984; Downey & Ireland, 1979), and is based upon the researcher's personal judgement of appropriateness, rather than on an epistemological basis (Bryman, 1984). In other words, the technical approach effectively ignores methodological considerations. Bryman (1984) has warned that researchers often blur and confuse epistemological and technical criteria. Thus, if a method is chosen on technical grounds, debating the epistemological status and consistency of the techniques is futile, and if the method happens to be consistent, this would be by accident rather than by design. On the other hand, it seems to be feasible to consider the technical merits of various methods that are based on the same ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher. In the case of grounded theory, the choice of methodology and method has become entangled, because there are two dominant versions of grounded theory currently being advocated, based on diverse methodological assumptions. These developments in grounded theory are discussed in detail below. Only thereafter can the methodological position and particular grounded theory method utilised in this research be further clarified.

3.2 Grounded Theory

The aim of this section is to provide an understanding of the current state and use of grounded theory. This is achieved by clarifying what grounded theory is and what it aims to achieve; how it was originally conceptualised and how it has developed since; and finally, how and where it has been used in management research. Five sub-sections follow, discussing (1) the origin of grounded theory, (2) the intention of grounded theory, (3) the classical grounded theory approach, (4) further developments in grounded theory, and (5) its use in management research.

3.2.1 The origin of grounded theory

Grounded theory was developed to provide an alternative to the dominant research norm of the day within Sociology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 1-18). This norm involved the verification of existing, ungrounded formal theories derived by logico-deductive reasoning, or speculation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 2-6; 1971, pp. 176-182; Layder, 1982, p. 105). The main purpose of grounded theory then, “was to bridge the gap between the theoretically ‘uninformed’ empirical research and empirically ‘uninformed’ theory...[as] part of a reaction against extreme empiricism, or ‘Grand theory’...” (Goulding, 1998, p.51). Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp. 32-35) encouraged the development of multiple theories in substantive and formal areas of enquiry to be built up into more inclusive formal theories. This was in direct contrast to the “monopolistic implications of logico-deductive theories, whose formulators claim there is only one theory for an area...” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.35).

Grounded theory has its roots in symbolic interactionist theory, which objected to the functionalist theory prevalent in sociology, on three counts (Kendall, 1999, p. 744). Firstly, the normative, evaluative and conservative nature of functionalist theory was limited in its applicability to periods of rapid change. Secondly, functionalist theory seemed to present life as more orderly and logical than empirical observation suggested it to be. Finally, functional theory was seen to be conservative in that it emphasised the role of the individual in maintaining the status quo in society.

“Symbolic interactionism was developed as an alternative account of social life that viewed society as a fluid and dynamic process of ongoing activity and varied reciprocating interactions. ...Symbolic interactionism, therefore, developed as a perspective that was concerned about the generation, persistence, and transformation of meaning and claimed that meaning could only be established through interaction with others. With whom, with what, and how one interacts becomes a major

determinant in how one perceives and defines reality” (Kendall, 1999, p. 744).

According to Parker and Roffey, 1997, pp. 216-218), assumptions underlying symbolic interactionism are that (1) through their interaction with others, individuals create and define a situation for themselves, (2) people engage in self-reflexive activities, and (3) it is through interacting with others, that people negotiate their relative position. Thus the researcher operating in a symbolic interactionist framework would then be entering the worlds of those under study to try to determine the symbolic meanings that objects such as artefacts, gestures or words have for groups or individuals who are in purposeful, reflexive interaction with one another, in order that the researcher can interpret and construct the social reality of the interactants and understand the contribution of the objects to that reality (Goulding, 1999).

According to Layder (1993, pp. 38-40), two major variants of symbolic interactionism developed, namely the Iowa school, which adopted a positivist approach, and the Chicago School, which was more humanistically inclined, emphasising a *verstehen* approach, where the researcher is more engaged, attempting to describe the world as the actors see it, rather than from the perspective of a detached observer. Grounded theory, and Strauss in particular, is associated with the latter school (Goulding, 2002, p. 40).

3.2.2 The intention of grounded theory

The intention of grounded theory is to generate new theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 21-43; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24; 1994, p. 273; Strauss, 1987, p. 5). The methodology spans the process of systematically collecting data through to the development of a “multivariate conceptual theory” (Glaser, 1999, p. 836). Although grounded theory was intended as a general method applicable to both quantitative and qualitative data (Glaser, 1999, p. 842; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 15-18), it has increasingly been perceived and utilised as a qualitative research method (Glaser, 1999, p. 842; Miller & Fredericks, 1999, p. 538).

According to Layder (1982, pp. 110-113), grounded theory served two primary functions. Firstly, it acted as "an insurance against theoretical stagnation" (Layder, 1982, p. 110) through the encouragement of new theory development (Goulding, 1998, p. 51). Secondly, it established a "tradition of field research as a means and locus of theoretical discovery" (Layder, 1982, p. 111) through grounding theoretical development in data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994).

The starting point of Glaser and Strauss' (1967, pp. 6-15) grounded theory was that the adequacy of a theory depended upon the research process that was used to derive it. Therefore, they presented a methodology of generating theory, based upon the data that were collected. Hence, the theory's hypotheses and concepts are derived from the collected data and are established during the course of the research process by collecting, coding and analysing the data concurrently. This empirical approach to theory development would ensure that a theory is produced that would be applicable and relevant to the situation under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, vi-vii). Such an approach contrasted with traditional logical-deductive approaches, which derived their hypotheses from existing theories, which, by implication, biased data collection and analysis in favour of verification (Locke, 1996, p. 239). In adopting this position on the development of theory, grounded theory explicitly rejected a priori theorising, which placed artificially preconceived boundaries around the development and discovery of theory (Layder, 1982, p. 105). Grounded theory was therefore characterised as a "recursive, process-oriented analytic procedure" noted for its close fit with the substantive area being studied, its comprehensibility to the research participants and its sufficiently complex portrayal of the domain being examined (Locke, 1996, p. 240).

3.2.3 The classical grounded theory process

The classical formulation of grounded theory methodology as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) rests upon two interrelated procedures: theoretical sampling and constant comparison. These procedures will now be briefly examined.

3.2.3.1 Theoretical sampling

Grounded theory introduced theoretical sampling as a unique form of sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 45-77). Theoretical sampling is a process of data collection that occurs concurrently with data coding and analysis, and is dictated by the emerging theory. The researcher collects initial data by posing broadly framed questions. If these questions prove to be irrelevant, new ones replace them. Later on, questions will become more focused as the theory begins to emerge. Categorising the data being collected, and comparing these categories, produces the emergent theory. The emerging theory then indicates to the researcher where to collect further data.

There can be no pre-planned, prescribed set of sample groups for most of the categories. Only at the completion of the research can the number and type of groups that were sampled be identified. To develop a category as fully as possible, a wide, diverse range of groups should be selected, but with the research goals in mind. A conscious selection of groups can control the generality of the conceptual level under study and the scope of the population. Controlling group similarities and differences determines the identification of categories and their properties. Minimising group differences helps to establish the basic properties of a category. Maximising differences then helps to elaborate on this established framework.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), when generating theory, the number of cases studied to derive the concept is not that crucial. "A single case can indicate a general conceptual category or property; a few more cases can confirm the indication" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 30). Thus, the randomness and representativeness of the sample used, is not that important for the generation of theory. Provided the theory was based upon data, this theory would endure - albeit in a modified form - but it would never be totally refuted by the collection of more data. In other words, the criteria upon which theoretical sampling is based, are theoretical purpose and relevance (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is the extent to which further sampling would contribute to the development of the theory that determines whether sampling should be continued or not, and if so, where this sample should be drawn from. It is the researcher who

determines during the research process, if further sampling should take place - based upon the directions indicated by the emerging theoretical categories.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend that sampling particular groups should cease when the category reaches theoretical saturation. That is, when additional data are not developing the properties of the category any further. However, there is a tendency to begin collecting data for other categories before there is sufficient data for the first. Additionally, new categories may emerge even very late in the research process. The question, then, is should these categories also be saturated? As a guideline, Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended that only the core theoretical categories should be saturated as much as possible.

3.2.3.2 Constant comparison method

Constant comparison is used in combination with theoretical sampling. Its aim is to generate categories, properties, and hypotheses, which form the basis of the theory being generated. Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp. 101-115) identified four stages in this procedure. Firstly, incidents applicable to each category are compared. Then categories and their properties are integrated. Thirdly, the theory is delimited, and finally it is written.

3.2.3.2.1 Comparison of incidents

The first step involves comparing an incident with previous ones, and then coding it into as many categories as possible. As the number of incidents grows, comparing of a new incident to each category of incidents would aid in generating the properties of the categories. At this point, through constant comparison and continued questioning, codes or categories are raised to a conceptual level through the specification of the conditions under which the concept occurs, through providing explanations for the occurrence, and by making predictions of when it will occur. This forms the basis of the theory that emerges. The decision to raise a code to a conceptual level or not, is based upon its contribution to describing an event, process or

relationship. This is established by pursuing it further in later data collection, and by relating it to other conceptual categories.

Two rules guide the comparison of incidents. Rule one is that while coding an incident for a category, it should be compared with previous incidents in the same and in different groups of the category. Rule two is that if a conflict in the emphasis of the thinking of the analyst arises, he or she should stop coding and record a memo of the thoughts, taking as much time as is necessary to do so. Memo writing is a vital component of grounded theory, providing the opportunity to record ideas, questions and intentions, and to define what is explicit and implicit in the data. It serves as an opportunity to reflect on the information gathered thus far, and to strategise for future data collection.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended developing a continuum of categories, identifying their dimensions, conditions, consequences and interrelationships. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), two types of concepts emerge, those drawn from the language of the research situation, which is the current terminology utilised to describe the process or behaviour; and those that are constructed by the analyst and are usually explanations for the behaviour or process. The researcher should not prematurely commit to a particular set of categories before there is an intimate familiarity with the data.

3.2.3.2.2 Integration of categories

The second step of theory generation is to integrate categories and their properties. If theoretical sampling and analysis were conducted concurrently, then the integration of the theory would occur naturally, since questions would be geared to collect data that would fill in the gaps existing in the theory.

3.2.3.2.3 Theory delimitation

Hereafter, as a third step, the theory is delimited at two levels, those of the theory and of the categories. The theory is modified to bring clarity, remove irrelevant artefacts and elaborate on others. Reduction occurs as a smaller set of higher-level concepts emerges, producing a more parsimonious theory with a wider scope of applicability. As the theory emerges in this way, the number of categories will also be reduced in accordance with the delimitations of the theory.

3.2.3.2.4 Writing the theory

At this point, the researcher can begin the final step of writing the theory. Here, three requirements need to be fulfilled: The analytic framework must form a systematic substantive theory, it must be accurate and it must be presented in a useable form. Writing and rewriting of the theory can be viewed as a continuation of the discovery process, since further insights into the data may be gained and incorporated into the theory, problems identified, assumptions made more explicit and concepts tightened up.

3.2.4 Further developments in grounded theory

Since its origin, grounded theory as a method has experienced some variation and diffusion in its application (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp. 276-277). This has transpired for several reasons. Firstly, although grounded theory was originally developed for sociology, it has been applied in a wide range of disciplines (Glaser, 1999, pp. 836-841; Goulding, 1998, p. 53 Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp. 275-277; 1997, pp. vii-viii), and this in itself has brought about some variation in its application (Goulding, 1998, p. 53). Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, several distinct differences in approach between the two original authors - Glaser and Strauss - has led to two main schools emerging around these authors (Goulding, 1998; Melia, 1996), sometimes requiring researchers to explicitly indicate which approach is being adopted (Goulding, 1999, pp. 867-868). Other less prominent approaches to grounded theory that have

developed include Schatzman's, "Dimensional Analysis" (Kendall, 1999; Robrecht, 1995); Orton's (1997) iterative approach to grounded theory, which integrates the traditionally inductive grounded theory process into a cyclical inductive-deductive process; and Soulliere, Britt and Maines' (2001) recommendation of including conceptual modelling as a resource for grounded theorists. These will not be discussed in any detail here.

3.2.4.1 The Glaser-Strauss controversy

While Melia (1996, p. 369) believes that the Straussian approach to grounded theory is too programmed, it would appear that the root of difference between Glaser and Strauss lies not in technical differences, but in the different philosophical stances held by the two researchers and their consequential ontological, epistemological and methodological implications (Annells, 1996). In essence, it would appear that Glaser views grounded theory to be situated in a post-positivist paradigm of enquiry, while Strauss has been developing grounded theory from a constructivist stance (Annells, 1996). The main distinctions between the two approaches as discussed below, are summarised in Table 3.1.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108) ontology answers questions about the form and nature of reality, and what can be known about that reality. Ontologically, critical realism (which underlies the Glaserian post-positivist paradigm) suggests that reality can be probabilistically apprehended to generate a grounded theory that actually exists in the data (Annells, 1996). In contrast, the Straussian approach seems to adopt a relativist ontology, implying that "truth" is contained in the currently prevailing consensus created from multiple perspectives of a phenomena (Annells, 1996). This relativist position is evident in the introduction of the conditional matrix by Strauss and Corbin as a vehicle for developing multiple perspectives on a phenomena emerging from the data (Annells, 1996). It is at this point that Glaser (1992, in Melia, 1996) accuses Strauss of forcing theory, rather than allowing it to emerge. However, Parker (1994, in Parker & Roffey, 1997, p. 222) suggests that it has still to be demonstrated that forcing will automatically occur if the Straussian approach was followed.

TABLE 3.1
A COMPARISON OF GLASERIAN AND STRAUSSIAN APPROACHES TO
GROUNDED THEORY

	Glaserian Approach	Straussian Approach
Paradigm	Post positivist	Constructivist
Ontology	Critical realism	Relativist
Epistemology	Realist	Contextualist
Methodological distinctions		
<i>Data type</i>	Quantitative and/or Qualitative data	Primarily qualitative data
<i>Research question</i>	Emergent research question	Predetermined research question
<i>Initial coding</i>	Initial coding through comparison of incidents	Initial coding through open coding
<i>Researcher relationship to the data</i>	Neutral stance of researcher towards the data	Researcher actively interrogates the data
<i>Verification of theory</i>	Verification through subsequent quantitative analysis	Verification through constant comparison and capturing multiple perspectives existing at a historical moment
<i>Theoretical framework</i>	Emergent conceptual scheme	Use of predetermined paradigm model

Epistemology deals with the relationship between the knower, the would-be knower and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Madill, Jordan & Shirley (2000, p. 10) observe that grounded theory can be applied within either a realist epistemology where the findings “are considered to be discovered within the data” (Glaser’s approach) or a

contextualist epistemology where the findings are “the result of the construction of inter-subjective meanings” (the Straussian approach). For Locke (1996, p. 241), this epistemological distinction revolves around the location of the agency for theory development being either with neutral methods and the data, or with the researcher who essentially interrogates the data. According to Annells (1996), classical grounded theory suggests independence between the researcher and the method in the interest of objectivity as understood from a post-positivist position. On the other hand, Strauss defines a more subjective relationship between the researcher and the method, and advocates a more active involvement of the researcher with the method through, for example, suggesting the researcher can draw on his or her existing knowledge to guide data collection, hypothesising and analysing the data (Annells, 1996). Thus, the researcher assumes responsibility for the interpretive role, while also including the perspectives and interpretations of research participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp. 280-281). The systematic application of various procedures of the Straussian version of grounded theory are seen to “help to protect the researcher from accepting any of those voices on their own terms, and to some extent forces the researcher’s own voice to be questioning, questioned and provisional.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280).

These differences in philosophical, ontological and epistemological positions are reflected in methodological distinctions made between the two approaches. Methodological questions deal with how the researcher will proceed to find out about whatever he or she believes can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

One methodological consideration is the type of data that can be collected. Parker and Roffey (1997, p. 214) suggest that Strauss and Corbin have defined grounded theory as a qualitative research method, which by implication seems to exclude quantitative data, while Glaser maintains a more general approach consistent with classical grounded theory, indicating that grounded theory can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative data.

Melia (1996) identifies three main objections of Glaser to the Straussian approach. Firstly, in the derivation of the research question, Glaser objects to the Straussian recommendation that

the researcher can enter the research field with a predetermined research question. For Glaser, the research question emerges during the initial analysis of the data and cannot therefore be predetermined. Secondly, on the nature of initial coding, Glaser is wary of over-conceptualising single incidents through the open coding process advocated by Strauss and Corbin and rather recommends the comparison of incidents with one another to identify patterns that will emerge as categories. Thirdly, Glaser maintains that the intent of the grounded theory research process should be to discover theory and not to verify preconceptions held by the researcher. Here, Glaser objects in particular to the active questioning of the data by the researcher and recommends a more neutral stance by the researcher in his or her questioning.

Annells (1996) points out the methodological distinction that emerges in different approaches to verification. She suggests that the emic stance of the Glaserian School would perceive grounded theory to be an early step in the sequential development of theory, with theory development culminating in more quantitative approaches to capture “reality”. The Straussian school, on the other hand, rejects the positivist and post-positivist notions of verification by subsequent quantitative methods in favour of a constructivist position of knowledge creation that incorporates multiple perspectives presented at a historical moment to produce local and specifically constructed realities that are verified through constant comparison in data analysis (Annells, 1996, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 17-32; 1994, p. 274). Theory is not seen as a pre-existing reality out there that has been apprehended, but is rather seen to be a provisional, fallible, temporary interpretation made from any number of given perspectives (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp. 279-280).

For Kendall (1999, pp. 746-748) the heart of the difference in the Glaserian versus Straussian approaches to grounded theory manifests itself in the introduction of axial coding in the Straussian approach. In axial coding, the researcher attempts to put the data back together using a paradigm model or coding framework consisting of the phenomena, its conditions, context, consequences and action/interaction strategies, while Glaser prefers conceptualisation of the data to emerge and not be forced into a predetermined scheme (Kendall, 1999, p. 747-748). Robrecht (1995 in Kendall, 1999, p. 748) believes the Straussian approach to grounded

theory will produce poorly integrated theoretical explanations because of the preoccupation with operational procedures encouraged by axial coding. However, Strauss and Corbin (1990 in Kendall, 1999, p. 748) defend the use of axial coding and the paradigm model by suggesting it will assist the researcher to think in a more complex, systematic and accurate way about the phenomena under investigation.

It would seem that for Kendall (1999), the danger in axial coding, is that if engaged in too extensively, the researcher can become prematurely committed to a conceptual description from the data that may hinder subsequent selective/theoretical coding and thereby result in a less complex or abstract theory being produced. Kendall (1999, p. 751) reports on her personal experience with axial coding: "...I believe that I became so distracted by working the model to its natural conclusion that I stopped thinking about what the data were telling me in regard to the research question. In other words, working the paradigm model became an end in itself from which it was hard to disengage." On the one hand Kendall (1999) found axial coding interfered with the abstraction of the data to a dense grounded theory and she had to go back to rereading the interview transcripts to develop a conceptual model that answered her research question. But on the other hand, she admits that axial coding assisted her in developing a multi-dimensional depth of understanding and appreciation of the main category being investigated. Kendall (1999, p. 755) concludes that the choice of approach should be dependent on the goal of the research study. Descriptive accounts would benefit from axial coding, while she would recommend a Glaserian approach in theory generation. This conclusion seems to be congruent with Glaser's (1992, in Melia, 1996) assertion that the Straussian approach is another method, which he labels "full conceptual description" rather than grounded theory.

Pragmatic considerations also highlight the distinctions between the two approaches. Parker and Roffey (1997, pp. 223-224) suggest that the more detailed, analytical steps recommended by the Straussian approach are not prescriptive, but may assist researchers in operationalising the method. Indeed, it has been suggested that part of the reason for further works being published on grounded theory methods has been the need expressed by researchers for more

explicit guidelines in its implementation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 7-13; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 277).

3.2.4.2 The critical theory perspective of grounded theory

While the Glaserian-Straussian controversy plays itself out, it currently overshadows possible future developments in grounded theory, namely a grounded theory positioned under the critical theory paradigm (Annells, 1996; Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). This position will not be fully developed here, but its critique of grounded theory positioned in both post-positivist and constructivist paradigms should be noted.

Annells (1996) observed that the use of the conditional matrix would invariably lead a researcher to consider issues very pertinent to the critical paradigm, such as class, gender, race and power. Also, Annells (1996) suggests that, with its primarily pragmatic focus, the evaluation criteria for good, grounded theory that were developed by Strauss & Corbin (1990) would be questionable from the perspective of the critical paradigm. Illustrative of this, a re-reading of Glaser and Strauss' (1965) "Awareness of Dying" by Seale (1999) uncovered a culture-bound and partisan portrayal of the subject under the guise of an objective, scientific methodology.

Madill *et al.* (2000) indicate that the radical constructionist epistemology of the critical theory paradigm would challenge both Glaser's and Strauss' approaches. With regard to the realist epistemology of Glaser, the appropriateness of the concepts of objectivity and reliability would be challenged from the perspective that there are no absolute foundations for knowledge. But aside from this, within the realist context, the radical constructionist epistemology would demand that there be internal coherence of the research, the appropriate treatment of deviant cases and transparency of analysis for the reader to judge its quality. With reference to the contextualist epistemology in Straussian grounded theory, concerns such as the possible face-value acceptance of data obtained from participants, and the danger of not fully appreciating the context-specific nature of knowledge, would be raised. In addition,

researchers adopting either approach are required to articulate their positions and interests in the research to allow the reader to have an indication of how the researcher's background may be affecting his or her understanding of the data. They also call for greater emphasis to be placed on providing readers with sufficient raw data to judge the competence of the analysis.

3.2.5 Grounded theory in management research

With its growing popularity, the use of grounded theory has spilled over into other disciplines, including those related to management, such as total quality management (Leonard & McAdam, 2001; 2002), construction management (Loosemore, 1999), marketing (Flint & Woodruff, 2001; Goulding, 1999), recruitment (Konecki, 1997), educational management and leadership (Blase & Blase, 1996; Harcher & Hyle, 1996), mentorship (Siegel, 2000), leadership (Axelsson, Kullen-Engstrom & Edgren, 2000; Parry, 1998; 1999; Sarros, 1992;), change management (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Gersick, 1994; Gioia & Chittapeddi, 1991; Macri, Tagliaventi & Bertolotti, 2002; Prasad, 1993), inter-organizational relationships (Bouty, 2000; Vlosky & Wilson, 1997) and organizational behaviour (Turner, 1983). Regarding grounded theory research conducted in South Africa, a Sabinet Online search of Current and Completed Research produced 67 results. These studies were in a wide range of disciplines, but with very few studies in the realm of management. Those somewhat related to management are Levett (1997), who examined competition and co-operation between medical practitioners in an increasingly financially constrained health industry; Eager's (1999) exploration of the capacity building role of organization development consultants and Shah's (1990) study of managerial communication of secondary school principals.

For the purposes of this paper, the contemporary use of grounded theory in leadership and change management research is examined in more detail. These studies have tended to be at the level of what Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to as substantive theorising (i.e. limited to a substantive or empirical context), with no examples of formal theories (i.e. theories that attempt to synthesise theory across a number of substantive domains) being found. They have taken place in the contexts of local government authorities in New Zealand (Parry, 1999), hospitals in Sweden (Axelsson, *et al.*, 2000), a rural hospital (Lundrigan, 1992, in Parry,

1998); schools and colleges in the United States (Blase & Blase, 1996; Harcher & Hyle, 1996; Martin, 1993, in Parry, 1998), primary care groups and trusts in the United Kingdom (Gaughan, 2001), accounting firms in the United States (Siegel, 2000), an Italian small manufacturing firm (Macri, *et al.*, 2002), large organizations in Australia (Sarros, 1992) a large, public, multi-campus university in the United States (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), firms in the computer industry in the United States, Europe and Asia (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997), computerisation in a health maintenance organization in the United States (Prasad, 1993), a venture-capital backed firm in the medical products field (Gersick, 1994) and rural communities (McCaslin, 1993, in Parry, 1998).

The most popular form of data collection in these studies is interviewing, but there are instances when interviewing has been combined with or replaced with document analysis, observation and/or open-ended questionnaires. The organizational setting of these studies has been quite diverse. However, Parry (1998) notes that there has been a tendency to focus on leadership at the top of organizations, rather than throughout. He also notes a tendency in some studies to make only partial use of the grounded theory process. I have noticed that this seems to frequently culminate in results that are descriptive in nature, rather than a theory. Several studies also seem to compromise in the use of theoretical sampling, choosing instead to make use of purposive or random sampling. In some instances, authors have been explicit in indicating which approach to grounded theory is being utilised, while in others it is not stated and/or not clear which approach has been adopted.

3.3 The Nature and Role of Theory

Since the aim of grounded theory research is to develop a theory grounded in the data, this raises the related questions of what a theory is and what type of theory grounded theory produces. In this section, the nature of theory as it pertains to grounded theory is discussed, as well as the quality criteria that can be used to judge a theory. A third aspect considered is the role of existing theory in the discovery and development of a grounded theory.

3.3.1 Types of theory

Strauss and Corbin (1994, p. 278) define a theory as consisting of “plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts” while Strauss (1999) suggests that a theory is a type of explanation characterised by the abstraction of explicit concepts that are systematically linked and testable in some way. In grounded theory, the theory generated usually has the form of a basic social process (Goulding, 2002, pp. 84-87). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 144) advise:

“To capture process analytically, one must show the evolving nature of events, by noting why and how action/interaction – in the form of events, doings, or happenings – will change, stay the same, or regress; why there is progression of events or what enables continuity of a line of action/interaction, in the face of changing conditions, and with what consequences.”

Strauss (1999) recommends that different types of theories should be differentiated along various dimensions, rather than thinking of different levels of theory. He identifies several possible dimensions, including degrees of abstraction, scope, range, specificity, conceptual complexity and applicability. Various types or levels of theory pertinent to a discussion of grounded theory have been identified, ranging from theory bits (Glaser, 1999, pp. 843-844) to grand theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 10-12). Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp. 21-43) developed grounded theory partly in reaction to the grand theories prevalent in sociology at the time, and they have distinguished between substantive (or local) theories and formal (or general) theories, indicating that a substantive theory could be developed into a formal theory.

Beginning with the least ambitious type of theory, Glaser (1999, p. 843) defines theory bits as “a bit of theory from a substantive theory that a person will use briefly in a sentence or so ...”. While a theory bit is then not really a theory in the complete sense, Glaser (1999, pp. 843-844) sees the extraction of theory bits from grounded theories as part of the future of grounded

theory, but warns that this should be done in a responsible manner, by pointing out the limited ability of a theory bit to explain a complex and multivariate reality.

“Substantive theories are restricted to a particular setting, group, time, population or problem...” (Creswell, 1994, p. 83). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.32) a substantive theory is “developed for a substantive, or empirical, area of sociological inquiry” and would only be applicable to that substantive area, while a formal theory is “developed for a formal, or conceptual, area of sociological inquiry”. Thus, substantive and formal theories differ in terms of level of generality and ideally, a formal theory should be developed from substantive theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 32-35). Strauss (1999) outlines eight logical possibilities for generating a formal or general theory. Both substantive and formal theory lie within what they refer to as the “middle range” of theory types, between everyday “minor working hypotheses” and “‘all-inclusive’ grand theories” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.32-33).

Thus, the intention of grounded theory is to initially produce a substantive theory with the longer-term view of developing a formal or general theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 79-99; 1971, pp. 176-195) through expanding the research focus to incorporate other topics or populations (Oshansky, 1996, p. 394). Strauss and Corbin (1994, p. 282) suggest that Diane Vaughan’s (1992) “theory elaboration” might be of use here, which, they say, develops extant theory through qualitative case analysis. An alternative route to a formal theory suggested by Oshansky (1996, p. 394), is to develop a programme of grounded theory by maintaining the same substantive area or population, but vary the conditions or circumstances experienced.

3.3.2 Judging the quality of a grounded theory

Having clarified the various types of theories that exist from a grounded theory perspective, the question that now arises is, how will a grounded theory researcher know whether or not they have produced a good theory? Quality concerns can be understood from two perspectives. Firstly, the quality of the research process followed needs to be sound. This aspect of quality is discussed in more detail later. The second aspect of quality – that is of immediate concern – is the quality of the content of the theory produced.

Strauss and Corbin (1994: 279) observe that grounded theories are fluid in nature, as they “embrace the interaction of multiple actors, and because they emphasise temporality and process ...”. For this reason, it is appropriate to focus on the adequacy of a theory, rather than its “truth”. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 23) identify four main criteria to be used in ascertaining the applicability of a grounded theory to a phenomenon, namely fit, understanding, generality and control. To meet the criterion of fit, a theory should reflect everyday reality and be derived from a wide range of data. A grounded theory will tend to be quite complex rather than simplistic, in order to more effectively account for the complexity of everyday life (Turner, 1983, p. 334). A better fit promotes greater usefulness of the theory in everyday life (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 281). The criterion of understanding refers to the grasp of the theory that research participants and practitioners operating in the area that was investigated, have. Generality implies that the theory is abstract enough to have wider application than the local context in which it was derived. The criterion of control indicates that the theory should indicate how concepts are related under a wide range of conditions to enable or guide practitioners to act appropriately.

In discussing the formulation of organizational change theory, Dunphy (1996, pp. 545-546) advocates a position consistent with that of grounded theorists, when he states that the formulation of a single unifying theory of change is unlikely and undesirable. Instead, he supports the idea of several competing (or - perhaps more accurately - complementary) theories focusing on different phenomena, whose merits and limitations can be debated. Furthermore, Dunphy (1996, pp. 542-545) identifies five components that are required for a theory of organizational change to be deemed complete. These are (1) the use of a basic metaphor, (2) an analytical framework or diagnostic model identifying and linking key variables so as to understand the process of change, (3) an ideal model of an effectively functioning organization that serves to guide the direction of change and identify relevant values against which the change intention can be evaluated, (4) an intervention theory specifying when, where and how to intervene to move the organization in the direction of the ideal model, and (5) a definition of the role of the agent of change.

The quality of a theory produced by the grounded theory method can therefore be judged from two perspectives. The first set of criteria arises from the grounded theory literature itself, while the second set arises from the theoretical domain of the research. In the light of this conclusion, the role of existing theory needs to be examined more closely.

3.3.3 The role of existing theory

Since the intention of grounded theory is to develop new theory, this raises the question of the relationship of the grounded theory to existing theory and the role played by existing theory in the development of a grounded theory. Parker and Roffey (1997, pp. 224-225) suggest that the intention of developing theories following a grounded theory approach is not to produce theories that stand in isolation to existing theory within the research domain, but in fact need to be related to them and thereby extend current understanding of the research area being investigated. Often grounded theory succeeds in bringing a new perspective on existing knowledge. Thus, Charmaz (1990, pp. 1163-1164) recommends that the format of the presentation of a grounded theory could be derived from a literature review that is conducted in the final stages of the research process so that the grounded theory is framed in a way that shows its relation to this body of literature.

Grounded theory research is therefore not “atheoretical” (Goulding, 1998, p. 52), but rather, existing theory and literature fulfils several purposes in the grounded theory method and an interaction between existing theoretical knowledge and the field research is recognised. Firstly, an awareness of the literature enhances the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 41-42). Theoretical sensitivity is “the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 42). Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend that theoretical sensitivity can also be enhanced through the use of questions, the analysis of a word, phrase or sentence, through various comparative techniques, and through looking out for “red flags”. These red flags are statements such as “Never”, “Always”, “Everyone” that are noted in the data and demand greater investigation to either test their accuracy or develop a better understanding of the conditions in which the phenomenon occurs.

The theoretical sensitivity of the researcher will facilitate the exploration of these conditions. Secondly, with greater theoretical sensitivity, the researcher can utilise the literature more effectively as a source of inspiration in the development of abstract concepts. Thus, existing theory can serve as another source of information for abstraction in the development of the emerging grounded theory (Goulding, 1998, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 50-53).

Grounded theory acknowledges that the researcher enters the field with personal perspectives, which could potentially shape the research process. This fact is accounted for by not assuming a "tabula rasa" view of enquiry. However, these personal perspectives of the researcher are not reified, but instead are subjected to scrutiny and then used to build analyses. For this reason, it is recommended that a detailed review of the literature in the substantive field related to the phenomena under investigation, should only be conducted when theoretical saturation of the grounded theory is being attained so as to avoid the internalisation of the perspectives and hypotheses of scholars in the immediate substantive field and prevent the researcher from entering the field with strongly held, unchallengeable, preconceived ideas (Charmaz, 1990, pp. 1163-1164; Goulding, 1998, p. 53). This is particularly relevant when conducting research in areas with a long and well-established research history (Goulding, 1999, pp. 868-869). On approaching theoretical saturation the work should then be compared to its existing substantive field in order to demonstrate the relevance and contribution of the theory to the field of study.

In essence, while the researcher's theoretical sensitivity helps to shape the grounded theory throughout the research process, the existing theory is more heavily utilised at two points: before the study to help orientate and focus the investigation, and in the end stages to place the grounded theory discovered within a body of knowledge.

3.4 Research Approach Adopted

Before entering into the debate of which particular approach of grounded theory I have chosen to follow, I would like to address the question of the appropriateness of grounded theory in

general. The choice of grounded theory in whatever form, can be justified on the following grounds. Firstly, grounded theory can facilitate an empowerment approach to research. It can do so by recognising research participants as a source of expertise, and it is their knowledge, perceptions and experience, usually obtained from interviews, which primarily serves as the basis for theory development. This can promote an equalising of the relationship between researcher and interviewee (Rappaport, 1981). Secondly, the aim of this research was to generate new theory related to the management of change in churches, rather than validate existing theories. Glaser and Strauss (1967) designed grounded theory for this express purpose. Thirdly, grounded theory facilitates the formulation of a substantive or localised theory - producing theoretical accounts of small fragments of the world (Turner, 1983, p. 334) - which was an objective of this research. I am not concerned with trying to generalise my results. Rather, I am interested in researching a phenomenon in a rather unique context, to discover how it presents itself in this particular milieu.

The idea of generating a local theory applicable to a particular type of change in churches needs further explaining. It was suggested in earlier chapters, that little research has been conducted in South Africa or internationally, on the programme-based to cell-based church transition, and certainly the focus on organisational inertia in such change does not seem to have been explored at all. One approach to this study could have been to import theory generated about organisational inertia in other substantive domains or contexts. However, I recognise that theory is time, place and context bound (Seidman & Rappaport, 1986, pp. 1-8), and so in fact the phenomenon under investigation couldn't be separated from its context. The uniqueness of the context of the change being investigated here has been explained extensively in Chapters One and Two. Grounded theory provides a way of generating theory of local relevance, while also allowing research conducted in other substantive domains to inform the development of the localised theory, which is grounded in data derived from a local context. In so doing, grounded theory does not glibly accept existing theoretical formulations as the lens through which to view the research domain, but requires that the data collected create new theoretical lenses and serves as the basis for evaluating the appropriateness of existing theory to this substantive domain.

It can therefore be concluded that grounded theory is ideally suited to serving the purpose of this study. Having provided some of the rationale for the choice of grounded theory per se, I now turn my attention to clarifying the particular research approach I have adopted in this study and describing in detail the grounded theory research process followed.

3.4.1 Research approach

In selecting a method in qualitative research, Goulding (1999, pp. 861-863) has observed that ambiguities in methodological procedures often create the situation where methods of differing philosophical foundations are mixed and the canons of a method compromised. On the other hand, having selected grounded theory, Parker and Roffey (1997, p. 235) are of the opinion that "...given the divergent approaches of Glaser and Strauss and Corbin, and the degree of choice and non-specificity of method steps recommended by both sets of authors, it is neither conceptually possible nor arguably desirable to outline or require allegiance to some 'purist' single path of grounded theory methodology. Instead, field research studies can best represent themselves as ... 'being informed by grounded theory methodology'." I disagree with Parker and Roffey (1997) and I have tried to demonstrate above that the two main approaches to grounded theory differ quite substantially, even in their philosophical positions. Also, rather than being non-specific, the Straussian approach in particular has even been accused of being too systematic (see for example Kendall, 1999). It is therefore argued that it is incumbent upon a researcher to in fact demonstrate some allegiance to one grounded theory approach or another, albeit not in an entirely purist form.

I have chosen to follow closely the Straussian approach to grounded theory in this study. The Straussian approach is located in a relativist ontology (Annells, 1996) and contextualist epistemology (Madill, *et al.*, 2000). This implies that the researcher is the primary research tool, interpreting and making sense of the data, or interrogating the data (Locke, 1996, p. 241) in order to construct a transient, contemporary, consensual perspective of reality that is informed by multiple perspectives.

Given the active and subjective role of the researcher within this paradigm, critical theorists (Madill, *et al.*, 2000) would recommend that I declare my interest and background in relation to the subject of research. Firstly, I have been exposed to the fields of organisational behaviour and change management through my studies in Industrial and Organizational Psychology and my current employment as a lecturer in Management – Human Resource Management in particular. Hopefully this background serves only to enhance my theoretical sensitivity and not impose too many preconceptions on the data. Secondly, with job transfers and relocation, I have been a member of various local churches. Through my personal experiences in these churches, I have become enthusiastic about the cell-church concept and generally see it as a more appropriate church model than the programme-based model, while recognising that it too, has limitations and difficulties. I am currently a member of a church that has recently embarked on a change initiative to become a cell-based church, and was previously a member of a church that over a number of years, seems to have successfully transitioned a long way towards the cell-church model. I have been a cell leader in both of these churches. I have also observed and experienced first hand, some of the difficulties associated with transitioning churches to the cell-church model.

From the Straussian perspective, I will be adopting an active approach to making sense of the data. The danger therefore exists that my personal interest in the substantive area could unduly bias data gathering and theory development. However, Strauss (1987, pp. 10-11) legitimises the value of experiential data and furthermore, gives the researcher the mandate to make use of this experiential data when analysing collected data. On the other hand, deliberately building in feedback processes to research participants for their comment, modification and evaluation will help to maintain some critical distance between myself as the researcher and the theory generated.

3.5 Canons of Grounded Theory

Having declared my ontological and epistemological position in this research by adopting the Straussian version of grounded theory, it is now possible to clarify what will be regarded as

good research, consistent with this methodology. Previously, the quality aspect of the content of a grounded theory was discussed. At this point, attention is given to the process aspects of conducting Straussian grounded theory to ensure methodological rigour. This is particularly important in the light of the growing popularity of grounded theory, and associated concerns that it is not being applied rigorously.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, pp. 249-258) suggest that the typical scientific canons of significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalisability, consistency, reproducibility, precision and verification need to be redefined in a way appropriate to the methodological considerations of the study. They suggest that good, grounded theory can be judged on three main criteria. Firstly, the data needs to be valid, reliable and credible. Secondly, the research process should be adequate. Thirdly, the research findings should be empirically grounded. Each of these criteria will be discussed in more detail, examining what the researcher can do to satisfy them, and simultaneously placing the reader in a better position to be able to judge the quality of the research appropriately.

3.5.1 Ensuring good data is obtained

Firstly, a researcher needs to ensure that he or she is working with quality data. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.252) do not explicitly discuss in their book how to generate good data, given the generic nature of this topic to all research, as well as the extensive attention it has received in writings on qualitative research (See for example, Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; and Silverman, 2000). In addition to the general guidelines offered for working with qualitative data, a researcher needs to give care to the guidelines that are peculiar to the data collection method being used.

While grounded theory research can make use of a wide variety and combination of data collection methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 15-18; Strauss, 1987, pp. 26-27; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 55; Turner, 1983, p. 336) interviews are popular. Some of the guidelines for producing quality data in research interviews include proper selection and training of interviewers; planning for the interview and in particular, framing the interview and

structuring the questions to be posed; carefully selecting interviewees, building a relationship with the interviewee and demonstrating empathy; and recording and transcribing the interview (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Frey & Oishi, 1995; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1991). Furthermore, Easton, McComish and Greenberg (2000) provide advice on avoiding common problems associated with equipment failure, environmental hazards such as extraneous noise, and transcription errors.

At this point it is appropriate to raise a cautionary note about the ontological status of interview data. Partington (2000, p. 97) observes that interviews are retrospective, second-hand accounts relayed by the interviewee, rather than accounts directly observed and captured by the researcher. Relying on informants' recollections compromises the basic tenets underlying symbolic interactionism related to the direct observation of social interaction by the researcher who then attaches meaning to it.

Secondly, there is the problem of the unconscious, in that true motivations may remain hidden from the actor (Izzo, 2003), and therefore not divulged in the interview. As a result, the researcher is unable to assess the extent to which there has been either deliberate or unintentional bias in providing either a more socially desirable or logical account. Given this difficulty, Partington (2000, p. 98) proposes that an interview-based grounded theory study should rest on a critical realist ontology (Bhaskar, 1975) which allows for the generation of cause and effect relationships (1) through "creative speculation" by the researcher of plausible alternatives; (2) that were not explicitly linked in the data; and (3) not directly observed by the researcher, but (4) whose 'truth' is ultimately dependent on consensual validation by informants".

Goulding (2002, pp. 62-63) explains that interviews can be seen as conversations whereby the researcher draws upon his or her personal pre-understanding to interpret the interviewee's story, and this allows for any discrepancies in interpretation between the two, to be highlighted, reflected upon, discussed and clarified. But even at this point, caution needs to be exercised, as Goulding (2002, p. 63) maintains "Interpretation is always an ongoing event." And so the process of interpretation continues after the interview. This may then require

returning to the interviewee at a later stage to check a new interpretation. As a result, this is quite onerous for both parties, who each have to exhibit high levels of self-reflexivity, make time for reflection, and need to have a high level of trust and rapport between them (Goulding, 2002, p.63).

To help reduce the amount of interpretive error that occurs, the researcher should also take note of the type of interview data being provided, and value and handle it accordingly. For example Glaser (in Goulding, 2002, pp. 60-62) identifies five different types of data, namely (1) baseline data, which is factual; (2) interpreted data, wherein the interviewee has provided an interpretation of an experience; (3) properline data, where the information has been selected by the interviewee to support a particular point of view; (4) vague data, which may simply be reflective of imprecision, or alternatively, of deliberate concealment; and (5) conceptual data, which is data that amounts to an unsupported opinion or hypothesis.

3.5.2 Ensuring rigour in the research process

The second criteria for judging the quality of grounded theory research is that theories should be traceable to the data that gave rise to them (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274), and thus it is incumbent upon the researcher to leave a trail of evidence for the reader to follow, to evaluate the quality of the process by which the theory was developed from the data. Unless its role in providing evidence of rigour is appreciated, this detailing of the trail of evidence may appear to be tedious and irrelevant for the researcher as well as the reader.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 253) provide seven criteria in question form that can be used to evaluate the research process, which the grounded theory researcher will need to answer so that the reader can evaluate the rigour of the study. These are (1) “How was the original sample selected? On what grounds?” (2) “What major categories emerged?” (3) “What were some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (as indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?” (4) “On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? That is, how did theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative did these categories prove to be?” (5) What

were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (that is among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and tested?” (6) “Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually seen? How were these discrepancies accounted for? How did they affect the hypotheses?” (7) How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made?”

3.5.3 Ensuring empirical grounding of research findings

The third quality criterion highlights the importance of the researcher demonstrating that the findings and theory were derived from the data. Concerning the empirical grounding of the study, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 254-257) pose seven criteria in question form. (1) “Are concepts generated?” (2) “Are the concepts systematically related?” (3) “Are there many conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed? Do they have conceptual density?” (4) “Is much variation built into the theory?” (5) “Are the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon under study built into its explanation?” (6) “Has process been taken into account?” (7) “Do the theoretical findings seem significant and to what extent?”

3.6 Research Process

Up until this point, this chapter has involved a justification of the research design. In this final section, how the study was conducted is described.

3.6.1 Research questions and the process of enquiry

Following the Straussian approach, it is possible (Melia, 1996) and appropriate (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 33-40) to have a predetermined research question that is normally action and process oriented and identifies the phenomenon to be studied, prior to entering the research field. The research question of this research was: How does the strategic leadership of

churches manage organizational inertia during the process of transitioning from a programme-based towards a cell-based church?

TABLE 3.2
ORIGINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Church Background

What would you describe as the distinctive features of this church?

Describe the profile of the current church membership.

What is the purpose or vision of this church? How is it envisaged that this mandate will be carried out?

What are the plans for the church over the next few years?

Stages or process of change in transitioning from a programme-based to a cell-based church.

When and How did the church first become aware of the idea of a cell-church?

When did you begin to consider transitioning to a cell-church, and why?

What key issues did the church face at the time? What issues does it face today?

What did you do to prepare the church for the transition?

What would you describe as the critical points or events in the church's transition so far?

How would you describe a cell-church? To what extent does this church meet up to that description? If it does not, what still has to happen?

Identify and locate points of organizational inertia within the change process described.

What difficulties have you had in transitioning to a cell based church?

Describe how the congregation's leadership managed organizational inertia when it occurred.

How were each of these difficulties managed? By whom?

Describe the consequences of these interventions.

What was the effect of these responses?

The aim of the research was therefore to develop a grounded theory that provided an explanatory answer to this question. This aim can be broken down into the following six goals: (1) To describe the stages or process of change in congregations transitioning from a programme-based to a cell-based church. (2) To identify and locate points of organizational inertia within the change process described. (3) To describe how the congregation's leadership managed organizational inertia when it occurred. (4) To describe the consequences of these interventions. (5) To develop the descriptive material into a more conceptual, theoretical account. (6) To locate the grounded theory within the existing body of the change management literature. Expanding on this research question, initial interview questions were set. These original questions are listed in Table 3.2.

In grounded theory the questions are not used as a standardised list posed to all interviewees. Instead, this list of questions was used as a guide, a reminder of the areas that the research was to cover. In the earlier interviews, much of the interview concentrated on questions related to church background and the process of transitioning. Examples of questions exploring the church's background included: What would you describe as the distinctive features of this church? Describe the profile of the current church membership. What is the purpose or vision of this church? How is it envisaged that this mandate will be carried out? What are the plans for the church over the next few years? As the research progresses in grounded theory, the questions posed both in new and follow-up interviews may become more narrow and focused (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, as the data relating to the background to the transition and the process followed became more complete, less emphasis was placed in these areas, and more on the latter sections. These dealt with problems encountered, how they were managed, and with what consequences. There was also a deliberate glossing over of information or themes that seemed to confirm the data already collected, allowing time in the interview for a deeper probing of novel information being divulged. Examples of these later questions included: What difficulties have you had in transitioning to a cell-based church? How was each of these difficulties managed, and by whom? What was the outcome?

Follow-up interviews were also conducted with a number of the interviewees. The line of enquiry in these interviews tended to focus on developments that had occurred since the last

interview, or to probe specific aspects of the leader's experience, that would fill in the gaps in the emergent theory. Also, these follow-up interviews served as a platform to begin to share the emerging themes - and later, the emerging theory - with the research participants, for their verification or disconfirmation, commentary and further elaboration. By the time interviews were conducted later on in the research process with new interviewees, the emergent theory had become quite established, and also, the likelihood of a follow-up interview was more remote. Consequently, in these cases the grounded theory was related to interviewees as work in progress, at the end of the interview, and comments solicited.

3.6.2 Data collection and capturing

Grounded theory does not prescribe what technique should be used to collect the data, and in fact recommends that a combination of techniques may be useful (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 15-18; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 55; Strauss, 1987, pp. 26-27). Qualitative data collected can originate from a variety of sources in addition to interviews, such as observations or various types of documents (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274). In this instance, data was mainly collected through interviews that were recorded on audiotape. In addition to this, some of the interviewees provided written documents such as church bulletins, outlines of their training programmes, an introduction to the church and its beliefs, and training material. This documentation was only used in conjunction with the information already gained through the interview. That is, documents were not used as the sole source of information on any church's experience, but rather as a supplement to the interview data.

In contrast to positivistic, quantitative studies where the sample is usually probabilistically predetermined, grounded theory makes use of theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 45-77; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, pp. 176-193). Theoretical sampling involves the sampling of "events, incidents, and so forth, that are indicative of categories, their properties, and dimensions ..." (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 177). Theoretical sampling is cumulative, systematic and flexible in nature, progressively increasing both the depth of focus and variation in incidents in order to generate a dense theory. In other words, in this study it would be inaccurate to view the interviewees as the sample, but rather the incidents being

recollected by the interviewees constitutes the sample. While this is so, it is insightful to provide some indication of where these events and incidents were obtained, and in particular, who these interviewees were and what churches they represented.

3.6.2.1 Description of interviewees

A sample of incidents was gathered from in excess of fifty hours of total interviewing time in 38 in-depth interviews that were conducted with ministers who were leaders of churches of various backgrounds, sizes and denominations, in four of the nine South African provinces, namely the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Denominations and affiliations represented include Apostolic Faith Mission, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Church of the Nations, Dutch Reformed Church, Five Fold Ministries International, International Federation of Christian Churches, Methodist, and Network of Community Churches. Most of the churches represented were historically White, English- and Afrikaans-speaking congregations, though many of them currently have a multi-racial demographic composition, and at least one is now predominantly African. The interviewees tended to be White males, with the exception of one White female, one Indian male, and one African male. Interviews were mainly conducted in English, with a few either being conducted in Afrikaans, or a combination of English and Afrikaans.

The interviews were conducted over a 27-month period between September 2002 and November 2004. Of the 38 interviews, four were conducted with two interviewees present, and the remaining 34 were one-on-one interviews. Effectively 33 people were interviewed, but nine of them were interviewed twice. Of the follow-up interviews, three were held 24 months or more after the first interview, while four were between nine and thirteen months apart, and two were two and four months apart. Six of these follow-up interviews were conducted in 2004 towards the closing stages of data collection. The other three in 2003 were follow-up interviews of some of the first interviewees who were interviewed in 2002.

An initial list of prospective interviewees was obtained from the website of Cell Church International (www.cellchurchonline.com). Other interviewees were located through subsequent snowball sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 167) as well as through me having noted their involvement in cell-church conferences and training seminars, and contacting them directly.

With over fifty hours of interviewing, the amount of data collected was more than adequate, and sufficiently varied for a study of this nature, contributing to the attainment of theoretical saturation. However, it is acknowledged that a limitation of the study is that only a small portion of the church in South Africa was accessed. This is not a question of representativeness in the positivist sense for generalisation purposes, but rather, if a wider cross section of church experience could have been accessed, this would have enriched the study. In particular, it is generally believed that the African population of South Africa is more collectivist in their culture than the white population, who are regarded as more individualistic (Mbigi, 1997), although some studies would dispute this generalisation (e.g. Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, pp. 218-226). Hofstede (1982) notes that collectivist cultures may emphasise the subordination of individual goals in order to attain group goals, and that individuals are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups; but they also tend to be more hostile to strangers to the group. It is therefore anticipated that the introduction of a small group model such as the cell-church model in churches that are predominantly African, may be presented with very different issues to those that have arisen here, but this was not possible to explore in this study. Effectively, the sampling of this study limits it to the substantive domain of formerly White English- and Afrikaans-speaking churches.

3.6.2.2 Data capturing

Strauss and Corbin (1990: 30-31) recommend selective transcribing of interview material, with initial interviews being transcribed in their entirety to allow for line-by-line analysis. Later on, the emerging theory should guide the researcher in identifying further portions of interview material that need to be transcribed for more detailed analysis. In this study,

circumstances dictated that a number of interviews had already been conducted before transcribing and analysing them in detail. To get an overview of the nature of the data that had been collected, it was therefore useful to first summarise or paraphrase these early interviews, and then provisionally code the summaries to get a general sense of what themes were emerging. Afterwards, five selected interviews were transcribed and line-by-line analysis conducted. These interview transcripts were each between 15 and 20 pages in length. The five interviews were chosen on the basis of the variety and richness of data that they represented. Later on, additional interviews were transcribed and coded in their entirety, selected on the basis of the richness or novelty of their data. For the remainder of the interviews, the content of the interview was summarised, transcribing some extracts word-for-word as quotations. These quotations were identified and transcribed because of the aptness of the information they represented, or because the wording captured the essence of various concepts or meanings being conveyed by the interviewees. Many of these extracts were then used as illustrative quotes in the account of the findings.

3.6.3 Data analysis

Robson (1993, p. 378) states that analysis is often an iterative or even cyclical process and furthermore distinguishes between formal and informal analysis. Informal analysis is that analysis conducted when busy with the case, while formal analysis takes place afterwards. I found that from the beginning of data collection, I was engaged in a process of informal analysis both during an interview and afterwards, trying to make sense of the data being collected. During the interview, this sense making was evident in follow-up questions to interviewees, or in summaries. After an interview, this informal analysis involved writing memorandums of observations and reflections. The nature of these memoranda varied. Given the focus on organizational inertia, at times I listed the ways in which inertia had been manifested and the response, as described by a particular interviewee. Some memoranda involved noting an insight gained from a particular interview. For example, one memorandum dealt with the concept of synchronising purpose. That is, how leaders tried to establish a linkage between the needs of society, the purpose of the local church in relation to other local churches, and the calling and current functioning of the church. Another one identified the

concept of leadership succession, which was discovered during data collection and seemed to be presenting itself as a significant theme. At times I summarised the key point of each interview conducted to date and related these various ideas in a mini-framework (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 113-114), or otherwise in a mind map. At one point I listed the steps followed in the transitioning process, at another I summarised key ideas that were emerging and questions related to them that still needed to be answered. Some memoranda simply noted or summarised readings or concepts that I had come across that seemed to be of relevance.

Later memoranda tended to be more conceptual in nature, in for example trying to come to grips with the dimensions and properties of themes or categories in data. In one case I discovered that I could not separate out the original change initiatives from the initiatives aimed at addressing organization inertia. In another I began to describe the patterns of leadership emerging. The contents of many of these memoranda found their way into the theory in its final form.

As is characteristic of grounded theory, data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously over a period of more than two years. To analyse the data, use was made of the three forms of coding recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990) that take place concurrently and in an interrelated manner. For explanatory purposes, these three forms of coding are discussed discretely. As the theory being discovered was approaching theoretical saturation, use was also made of Strauss and Corbin's (1990, pp. 158-175) conditional matrix to further explore the context of the theory. This aspect of analysis is discussed after the discussion of the various coding procedures.

3.6.3.1 Coding – open, axial and selective

3.6.3.1.1 Open coding

Open Coding is the “process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). It usually involves microscopic line-by-

line analysis through making comparisons and asking questions resulting in the naming and categorising of phenomena emerging from the data analysis (Strauss, 1987, pp. 28-32; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 61-74). Strauss (1987, pp. 25-26) describes how the data elements – or empirical indicators – should be examined comparatively for similarities, differences and degree of consistency of meaning, in order to generate concepts or coded categories that have “earned their way into the theory”. It must be ensured that the categories or codes are not merely descriptive, but conceptual (Goulding, 2002, pp. 68-69; 75-78; Strauss, 1987, pp. 29-30). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 66) identify two main approaches that can be used in categorisation. The first approach is more microscopic, where the researcher is to focus on a particular concept and compare it to other concepts arising from labelling, and to see if they are related to a similar phenomenon. Alternatively, a holistic approach can be followed, looking at the entire observation set at once and seeing what it is about. The next step in the open coding process involves identifying the properties of these emergent categories and delineating the dimensions of these properties until nothing new is being yielded, or in other words, saturation is attained (Goulding, 2002, pp. 68-70; Strauss, 1987, pp. 25-26; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, pp. 61-74).

In using open coding, I began with a process of coding or labelling the data. Sometimes this step in coding was revised if I noticed that I had lapsed into using labels that were too descriptive. For example one code that had been labelled “allow cell leaders to use their gifting” was later relabelled “autonomy/decentralisation”; while “cells spotlight your life and surface issues” was relabelled “transparency and maturity”; and “no personal visit from minister” as a source of resistance to change, was relabelled “consumerism”. Through comparison, these codes were grouped into a number of categories and sub-categories. While the initial analysis of the interview summaries represented the holistic approach to categorisation, working with the initial set of transcribed interviews was more characteristic of the microscopic approach. At this stage, these categories were much in line with the goals of the research and were given labels such as “Inertia factors” and “Managing inertia”. The “inertia factors” category had several sub-categories that were developed in accordance with the source of inertia (such as the cell leader, individual cell members, the cell group as a whole, programme leaders, the general church membership, and church leaders). The “cell

leader” sub category, for example, had codes such as “cell leader loss of motivation”, “cell leader attrition”, “cell group disintegration”, and “cell group complacency” grouped together. Furthermore, the category of sense of community, that was ultimately the core of the grounded theory, began to emerge, and was originally labelled “Becoming the Body of Christ”. This in vivo code reflects the Biblical metaphor of the church as the mystical body of Christ (Vine, Unger & White, 1985, p. 72), and is indicative of members of the church taking on the character of Jesus Christ and becoming more actively engaged in serving others individually and corporately. Thus, some of these labels were derived from the technical literature while others were in vivo codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, pp. 68-69).

A second stage of open coding occurred later on that focused on developing categories in terms of their properties and their dimensions. Here it was very useful to pose questions and then further analyse the data in an attempt to answer them (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, pp. 77-81). Questions asked included: “*What* was causing inertia and *what* was facilitating change?”; “*How* was this inertia managed?”; “*When* did inertia manifest itself?” (i.e. at what stage of transitioning). Each question provided new insights into the phenomenon being investigated, so for example asking when inertia was manifested, was instrumental in formulating the stages of transition that made up the final theory. As a result of dimensionalising, the relationships between categories began to emerge, with some categories being subsumed as dimensions or properties of other categories. One example of this was the development of the properties and dimensions of the category “Becoming the Body of Christ”, which culminated in the concept “Sense of community”, and became central to the grounded theory. Table 3.3 displays the outcome of the process of dimensionalising this category.

TABLE 3.3
DIMENSIONS OF THE CATEGORY “BECOMING THE BODY OF CHRIST”

Dimensions	Properties
Becoming more Christ-like as individuals and consequently as cells and as a church (i.e. Allowing Personal, Godly change)	Religious/traditional - Relational/contemporary Open to personal change - Closed Degree of transparency.
Being Christ in the flesh to the world (i.e. Having relevance and impact).	Great relevance – little Great impact - little Optimally attaining potential - not fulfilling potential Recognition of Christ-likeness by community or society.
Following God’s unique agenda for the church, cell and individual (Connected to the Head).	Indigenisation - stereotyping Spirit led - Self led Clear call or purpose - unclear/no purpose.
Being interconnected (Building strong relationships, not compartmentalized ministries)	Independent/self-sufficient – relational/interdependent Compartmentalised ministries - interconnected, cell supporting and integrated ministries.
Unity of purpose and vision (i.e. Visionary leadership, core values).	One common vision - disparate visions and activity Unity - strife/conflict/departure/separation, Strong visionary leadership – absence of leadership.
Co-operation of elements: churches, leaders, cells, individuals	Co-operation – competing

Dimensions	Properties
Each part fulfilling its function (i.e. Believer priesthood).	Sheep - Body or ministers Consumer – Producer
Continual, on-going process of development (i.e. Evidence of Becoming)	On-going research/learning value - no learning or growth/complacency.

3.6.3.1.2 Axial coding

Axial Coding usually follows open coding and is an evolutionary process involving putting the data back together in new ways that connect the various categories and sub-categories (Goulding, 2002, pp. 78-79; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 96-115). Making use of a coding paradigm achieves this by specifying the subcategories of the conditions giving rise to the phenomenon, the context in which it occurs, the action/interactional strategies by which it is executed and the consequences of these strategies to produce a dense and precise grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In simplified form, the paradigm model is represented as follows: (A) CAUSAL CONDITIONS → (B) PHENOMENON → (C) CONTEXT → (D) INTERVENING CONDITIONS → (E) ACTION/INTERACTION STRATEGIES → (F) CONSEQUENCES. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 99).

Strauss (1987, pp. 32-33) explains that axial coding takes place around one category at a time and that by placing a particular category at the centre of the analysis, its relationship to other categories and subcategories is clarified. This process assists in identifying the core category. Axial coding involves four distinct but simultaneous activities, namely hypothetically relating subcategories to categories, verifying these hypotheses against actual data, further developing the properties of categories and sub-categories and their dimensions and exploring the variation in phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 96-115).

TABLE 3.4
APPLICATION OF THE PARADIGM MODEL TO THE PHENOMENON OF A
SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Paradigm Element	Details
CAUSAL CONDITIONS	Leader discontent and search for relevance and impact
PHENOMENON	Sense of community at various levels
CONTEXT	Societal change Church size and history Church denomination
INTERVENING CONDITIONS	Time duration Leader characteristics Organization structures, programmes and leadership composition
ACTION/INTERACTION STRATEGIES	Monitor and evaluate Model desired behaviour Direct or instruct Compose or structure Develop systems and procedures Mentor and support Validation of people Properties of these actions <i>Participative-Directive</i> <i>Adopt-Customise-Reinterpret</i> <i>Force-Pace-Negotiate</i>
CONSEQUENCES	Inertia or growth

Several attempts were made in applying the paradigm model. A difficult decision was in choosing the phenomenon. However, trying out various alternatives is both part of axial

coding, and also, working with the data in this way helps to further illuminate the relationships between various categories and their properties. Initially, organizational inertia was used as the phenomenon, and the various categories then placed within the other elements of the model accordingly. In this framework, church transitioning was seen to be the primary casual condition and intervening variables included church size, the demographic profile of the church (age and years in membership), church denomination, while almost 20 action/interaction strategies were listed. This framework was revised a number of times.

Following the second stage of open coding, which has been described above, a final framework was selected. Through working with the data, it was concluded that organizational inertia was in fact a reaction to the effect of leadership activity on “sense of community”, and hence not necessarily central to the grounded theory. So, with further analysis, the concept of “sense of community” was selected as the core category, and placed as the phenomenon in the paradigm model. Table 3.4 summarises the main elements of this revised paradigm model. Using this revised paradigm model, further analysis entailed generating the properties and dimensions of the categories. By way of illustration, the properties and dimensions of the category sense of community are presented in Table 3.5.

In developing a grounded theory, cognisance can be given to the conventions of what constitutes a theory within the discipline or field of study at hand. Thus, with the grounded theory starting to take shape, a comparison was made between the emerging grounded theory and Dunphy’s (1996) criteria for a theory of change, to ensure that the theory was conforming to these criteria. This comparison is illustrated in Table 3.6.

TABLE 3.5
PROPERTIES OF SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Property	Sub-Properties	Dimensions of (Sub) Properties	
FORM	Nature Of Contacts		
	Setting	Camps, socials, training sessions, formal meetings	
	Frequency	Low	High
	Type		
	<i>Orientation</i>	Utilitarian	Service
	<i>Style</i>	Directive	Participative
	<i>Focus</i>	Task	Relational
	Quality		
	<i>Degree of Intimacy</i>	Impersonal	Personal
	<i>Degree of Meaningfulness</i>	Not meaningful	Very meaningful
	<i>Size of Group</i>	Large	Small
	Structure	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
Member Orientation			
Focus	Internal Seek continuity in relationships	External Open to change in relationships	
Role	Recipients Shepherd/Sheep Consumers Self-service	Generators Body of Christ Producers Service oriented	
Concern about relevance and impact	Not concerned	Concerned if under-achieving or optimally utilizing potential of church and or group	

	Shape		
	Depth <i>Degree of Intimacy</i>	Impersonal Weak ties	Personal Covenant Relationships, “Extended family”
	<i>Genuineness - congruence of intent and action</i>	Incongruent	Congruent
	Breadth	Narrow, small numbers involved	Wide, large numbers involved
	Number of Levels	Single	Several
	Congruence		
	Congruence Between and Across Levels	Incongruent	Congruent
STABILITY	Member Composition	Fluid	Stable
	Membership Size	Shrinking	Growing

3.6.3.1.3 Selective coding

The third type of coding in grounded theory is selective coding. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 116) define Selective Coding as “The process of selecting the core category and systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development.” It involves developing the list of concepts derived through axial coding, into an analytical, discursive written theory through a similar but more abstract level of analysis using five procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 116-142). Firstly, the story line is explained. Thereafter, subsidiary categories are related to the preferred core category, before relating these categories more specifically at the property and dimensional level. Fourthly, these relationships are validated against the data. Finally,

categories needing further refinement and/or development are fleshed out to attain conceptual density and specificity.

TABLE 3.6
CHARACTERISTICS OF A THEORY OF CHANGE

Dunphy's criteria	Application to the grounded theory
Basic metaphor (describing the nature of the organization)	Co-operative, voluntary community of service
Analytical framework (diagnostic model)	Voluntary/Solidary organization and leadership theory
Ideal model	Growing and maturing Biblically functioning community making an impact on society
Intervention theory	Searching and confirming purpose and direction Influencing by participation, instruction and modelling Designing and restructuring socio-technical systems and structures Validating people's worth
Change agent role	Technical expert Visionary leader and strategist Relationship builder Social rewards allocator

As a starting point in selective coding, the result of the axial coding - which was in the form of notes, lists and diagrams - were written up as a discursive summary to explain the story line of the theory. This initial summary of the story is reproduced in Table 3.7.

TABLE 3.7
SELECTIVE CODING – THE STORY

The main story is about how the leader and leadership of churches determine the direction their church should develop in, and how they go about initiating, implementing, monitoring and modifying actions designed to move the church in the desired direction.

Their interest in determining direction arises as a result of dissatisfaction with the current performance of the church, and/or as a result of a process of continuous monitoring and improvement. Organizational change became necessary because of the changes taking place in society and the perceived need for the church to remain relevant and have an impact on society. The church does not naturally adjust to its environment, but is sluggish and needs action – initiated by leadership - to bring about greater alignment. That is, churches seem to have an innate organizational inertia. This inertia may take one of two forms: an organization that is “stationary” or slow moving and needs energizing, or an organization that is moving in a direction that is seen to be taking the organization further out of alignment with its environment, and hence requires redirecting. The process of searching for and deciding upon direction involves three main role players – God, church leadership, and church membership - and can be seen as a form of three-way dialogue or “trialogue” between them.

The performance of the church can be defined in terms of the state of community. Community was multi-faceted in its form, member orientation and stability, and leaders would not necessarily have a common viewpoint on the ideal form and member-orientation that community should take, and would also experience different levels of community within their various churches. However, the direction of change being promoted is generally seen as desiring an increase in community.

Once the direction is determined, leaders adopt two broad approaches to initiating and implementing change. These are referred to as firstly influencing people, and secondly configuring (i.e. designing and (re)structuring) socio-technical systems and structures. Influencing strategies are mainly focused on developing the member orientation component of

community, while design and restructuring largely affect the form of community. However, some of these strategies also have significant cross-impact effects on community.

The consequences of these actions range from increased community, leading to a greater relevance and impact of the organization; through to a loss of community and increased organizational inertia.

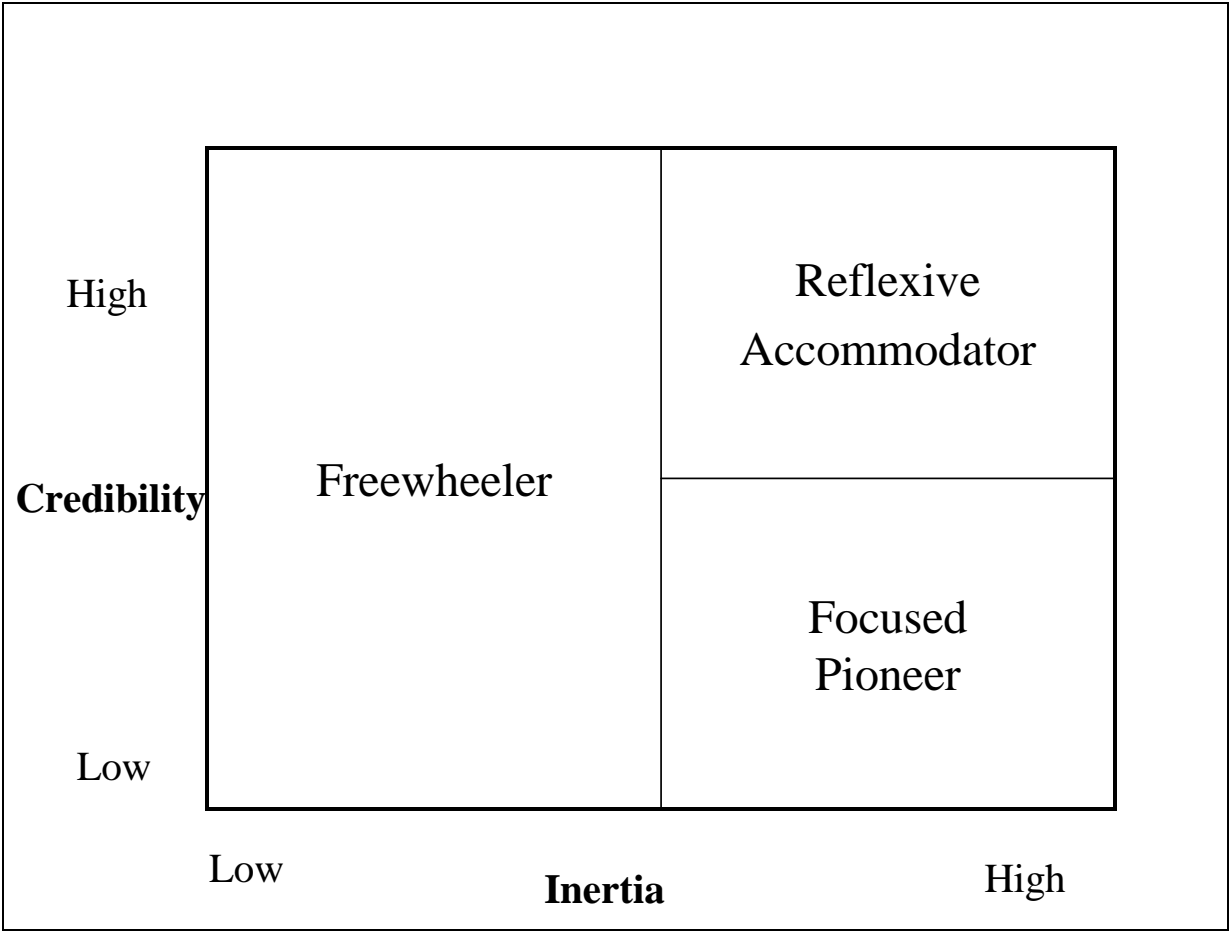
Central to the type of consequences resulting is the degree of reflexivity demonstrated by leaders. That is, where the church leader and leadership demonstrate more reflexivity, the greater the likelihood that the change is constructive, producing greater community. This relationship between leader reflexivity and change producing greater community is moderated by the time frame of the change transition, the credibility of the leader, and the size of the gap between the condition of the church and the ideal being strived for.

Writing the story line uncovered two salient phenomena. However, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 121-122), only one of them can be regarded as the core category. The first of these core categories was “sense of community”, which was the phenomenon central to the paradigm model. The alternative was the core category of “*building a sense of community*”, which centred upon the actions of the leaders. Ultimately, I decided to subordinate the category of sense of community and have as a core category the actions of leaders in building community. This decision was taken firstly in the light of the emphasis placed upon grounded theories representing a basic social process (Goulding, 2002, pp. 84-87), and secondly, in view of the original aim of the research being to explore the phenomenon of strategic leadership. The existing categories and their properties were then rearranged (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 127), based on this decision.

A significant determinant of this re-arrangement was identifying and re-arranging the data according to patterns being observed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 130-132). Strauss and Corbin (1990, pp. 130-131) stress the importance of uncovering these patterns so that the specificity of the theory can be enhanced, or the conditions of its occurrence specified. Initially, three patterns of leadership activity were identified, based upon two dimensions,

namely the degree of organizational inertia manifested and the amount of credibility the leader had. These patterns were ultimately labelled the freewheeler, the focused pioneer and the reflexive accommodator, and are explained in detail in Chapter Seven. The freewheeler pattern was characterised by low levels of inertia and a wide range of levels of credibility. The reflexive accommodator was encountered in conditions of high inertia, in spite of which, the leader managed to maintain high levels of credibility. In contrast, the focused pioneer pattern that also occurred in situations of high inertia had low credibility. Figure 3.1 illustrates these leadership patterns.

FIGURE 3.1
ORIGINAL REPRESENTATION OF LEADERSHIP PATTERNS



From this point on, data collection was focused on corroborating the theory as a whole and the leadership patterns in particular, through searching for both confirmatory data as verification, as well as deliberately looking for novel and disconfirming data. Furthermore, interviewees were presented with the theory for their comment and evaluation. They were asked to assess the theory from the perspective of it incorporating their experience as well as its usefulness in guiding their future practice. The final set of interviews generated more data and insight into this portrayal of leadership, and so the theory was further revised.

One concern that arose from these final interviews had to do with the freewheeler pattern. Its defining features had more to do with the context of leadership than the actions of the leaders displaying this pattern. A second concern was the negativity attached to the focused pioneer pattern. It was pointed out by interviewees that there were situations that required leaders to take the church through painful changes, which disrupted the existing sense of community, and was not popular with the church members. While this may lead to a short-term loss of credibility, in the longer term the insight and efforts of these leaders were often acknowledged and appreciated and they were held in even higher regard.

In addressing these two concerns through further data collection and analysis, ultimately, three effective, interacting and interrelated patterns of leadership action emerged. These were referred to as the freewheeler, the focused-pioneer, and the reflexive-accommodator patterns. Corresponding to each of these effective patterns were three ineffective patterns. These arise when elements of each of these effective patterns was overemphasised. These ineffective leadership patterns have been labelled the static non-leader, the rigid combatant and the popular people pleaser patterns, respectively.

3.6.3.2 The conditional matrix

The conditional matrix is a transactional system that has been devised by Strauss and Corbin (1990, pp. 158-175) as an aid in developing an explanatory framework for the grounded theory. It systematically identifies and considers a wide range of conditions and consequences

both closely and more remotely related to the phenomenon being investigated, by tracking an event or incident through the various levels of the matrix, thereby tracing conditional paths. The levels of the conditional matrix are labelled as follows: the action pertaining to the phenomenon; interaction; the group, individual and collective; the sub-organizational, sub-institutional level; the organizational and institutional level; community; national and international level. Use of the conditional matrix in this study was limited to identifying the various levels at which a “sense of community” was potentially manifested and a number of levels were identified. Some were related to the formal structure of the church such as within cell groups, between cell leaders and their ministers/supervisors, or among the church leadership. Another level represented the sense of community between the members in structures of older programmes and those in the newer cell-based structures, as well as members of the church who are part of cell groups versus those not involved. Yet another level was the general membership of the church as a whole, and collectives within it such as generational or racial groups, and the relationships among and within them. Moving beyond the boundaries of the church, there were four significant levels. Firstly, the local community the church was located in geographically, secondly its relationship with other local churches, thirdly denominational affiliations and their impact, and finally, the national level - that is, being a church within South Africa.

3.6.3.3 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is incremental, and involves obtaining data on incidents or events based on their relevance to the evolving theory, that will further develop the conceptual understanding of categories and their properties, dimensions and relationships (Goulding, 2002, pp. 66-68; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, pp. 176-179). Theoretical sampling is therefore related to the type of coding being engaged in (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 180-188). In open coding, open sampling emphasises variety and breadth. In line with this, I initially tried to interview a wide spectrum of church leaders. In axial coding relational and variational sampling focuses on establishing and validating the relationships evolving in the paradigmatic model. Consequently, at a later stage of the research, selecting interviewees had a dual intent

of both seeking similar cases for confirmation as well as seeking out novel church situations and incidents. Finally, in selective coding, discriminate sampling is very deliberate and directed, attempting to verify the story line of the theory and fill in poorly developed areas so that theoretical saturation can be attained. This was a motivating factor in deciding to conduct follow-up interviews, as well as in selecting some of the last interviewees who had vast experience in consulting to churches in the area of church development.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter set out to explain firstly what a good grounded theory is, and then to justify the selection of the Straussian version of grounded theory as a method that would be able to effectively serve the interests of the objectives of this study. Thereafter, the research procedure was explained in detail, to provide the reader with sufficient information upon which to judge the quality of the research process and the value of its product.

Important limitations of this study that were discussed were the reliance on interview data, and the limited range of South African churches that could be accessed. In the absence of observational data, the theory developed here rests upon data collected through the imperfect recollection of the lived experience of a limited number of interviewees. From my personal perspective, informed by my own educational background, experience, values and perceptions, I have worked with this data to construct a theory that seems to make sense to, and be useful to some of the practitioners, whom I was able to discuss the theory with.

With these limitations in mind, the next four chapters present the grounded theory that was discovered. In presenting this theory, Strauss and Corbin's (1990, p. 23) four main criteria used to ascertain the applicability of a grounded theory to a phenomenon (i.e. fit, understanding, generality and control), are borne in mind. Firstly, regarding the criteria of fit and control, the presentation of the theory reflects the complex, everyday reality of a wide range of interviewees. This is captured through the extensive use of quotations and the largely descriptive account of the first three chapters of the grounded theory, wherein a wide range of interviewee experiences is reported on. Furthermore, the complexity of the theory is reflected

in the amount of coverage given to the grounded theory, and in the attempt to represent the theory more conceptually in Chapter Seven. It is also hoped that this more conceptual presentation of Chapter Seven will facilitate the generality (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23) or transferability of the results beyond the local context in which it was generated, by the reader. In addressing the criteria of fit and understanding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23; 1994, p. 281), the target audience of practitioners is kept in mind. That is, the theory in the four results chapters is presented primarily in a language and form that will be accessible to church leaders rather than academics, and is therefore written from a Christian world view.

CHAPTER 4

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love – so you can't know him if you don't love.

(1 John 4: 7-8 in The Message Bible, by Eugene Peterson)

CHURCHES GROW WHEN THEY INTENTIONALLY REACH OUT TO PEOPLE INSTEAD OF CONCENTRATING ON THEIR INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS; churches die when they concentrate on their own needs. This is the basic Law of Congregational Life.

(Easum, 1990, p. 16)

By focusing on the programme-based to cell-based church transition, the aim of this research was to develop a theory of change within churches, incorporating the management of organizational inertia or resistance to change. As the study progressed, I was confronted with the question of what was actually being changed – and resisted - when the church was in transition. This path of enquiry ultimately led me to formulate the phenomenon of *sense of community*, which is the focus of this chapter. In the following two chapters, the actions of church leaders in trying to advance this sense of community by initiating the cell-based church transition is explored, and in the one thereafter, a more conceptual integration of sense of community and leadership action is undertaken.

4.1 Definition of Sense of Community

Not all of the interviewees made use of the terms *community* or *sense of community*, and when it was used, it was not in the fullness of its meaning as is defined here. That is to say, sense of community is a phenomenon constructed through the analysis of the data, which is of relevance to churches as organizations, and that best seems to describe and incorporate what the various church leaders were affecting by their actions, and often trying to develop.

Sense of community can be defined as a sense of collective-identity, -purpose and -belonging among people, who pray for, love, serve, develop and support each other in “extended family” or covenant relationships. That is, the members of the church recognise the collective nature of the church; that the church does not consist of individualists, but rather a grouping of people called together to accomplish a common purpose. This purpose is not only fulfilled at the organizational level, but even more significantly at the cell group level, where there are committed relationships that take on the characteristic of covenant relationships, as well as involving serving, pastoral care, and discipleship. Reaching out to others through service and evangelism is also recognised as an integral part of the common purpose, implying that sense of community is not insular, but seeks to embrace others outside of the church or cell group. Commenting on community construct, one leader noted: “The business, the whole need of society at the moment, [is that] guys want a place to belong.”

The central feature of sense of community is relationships. In one example, a leader described how the regular, often daily contact of members of a cell group began to produce the situation where “The love of the Lord began to get hands and feet and a mouth and eyes in the cell group. ... The love of the Lord became visible to the people.” (“Die liefde van die Here het hande en voete en ‘n mond en oë begin te kry in die sel groepe. ... Die liefde van die Here het sigbaar geword vir die mense.”). Other interviewees echoed this sentiment. One stated: “I really see small groups as the incarnation of Christ in the world today. So the body takes on flesh where ... people come together in Christ’s name ...”. This demonstration of love was not limited to members of the cell. The church leadership often encouraged each cell group to

be engaged in some project or service. In one case, this has grown to a great extent and as one of its projects the church now has a mobile dentist unit serving the surrounding areas, free of charge. This has partly been possible because the dentists working in the unit on a rotation basis offer their services free of charge.

Frequently the point was made in interviews that life in a cell-based church was not about the cell meeting being another programme, or being restricted to a weekly gathering or meeting, but rather was about a different way of life that emphasised relationships. This is illustrated in the following quotation.

A pure cell-church is really how we live, it's not something we go and do on a Tuesday night. ... Yes we have meetings on a Tuesday night, but between those Tuesday nights we live as a community in the sense that ... the cell members ...phone one another. And they start doing it because they start caring for one another. ... If one goes to hospital the cell is there, they go and visit the guy, you know. ... Or if your son is playing rugby this afternoon then we gather around here and we go and support the guy, as a cell, as a community. That is pure cell. ... It's a way of life.

To emphasise and reflect the nature of relationships in the cell groups, one of the churches chose to refer to their cell groups as “care groups” (“omgee groepe”), and placed great emphasis on living out the Biblical instructions related to “one another”. One of their leaders described how “koinonia” meant “love for one another, support for one another, carrying one another’s burdens, praying for one another, helping one another, admonishing one another (“liefde vir mekaar, support mekaar, dra mekaar se laste, bid vir mekaar, help mekaar, vermaan mekaar”). The Greek word “koinonia” is translated as “communion, fellowship, sharing in common”, or “that which is the outcome of fellowship, a contribution” (Vine, Unger & White, 1985, p.233).

Sense of community is therefore recognised and highly valued by the members of the church and its leadership, and in many ways captures the essence of what church should be about. It

is embedded in people's perceptions and experience of church life, and generally is something to be nurtured. One pastor's experience of a church split highlights the pain experienced by the church when there was a loss of sense of community.

[I]t's quite a sore thing in a sense in that there's a tearing away from the body, because now the group have excluded themselves from your vision and your dream, and the body standing together and working together, now all of a sudden there's a chunk gone, you know. And now Sunday, you get up and that group that was there is no longer around and there's an empty space.

4.2 Properties and Dimensions of Sense of Community

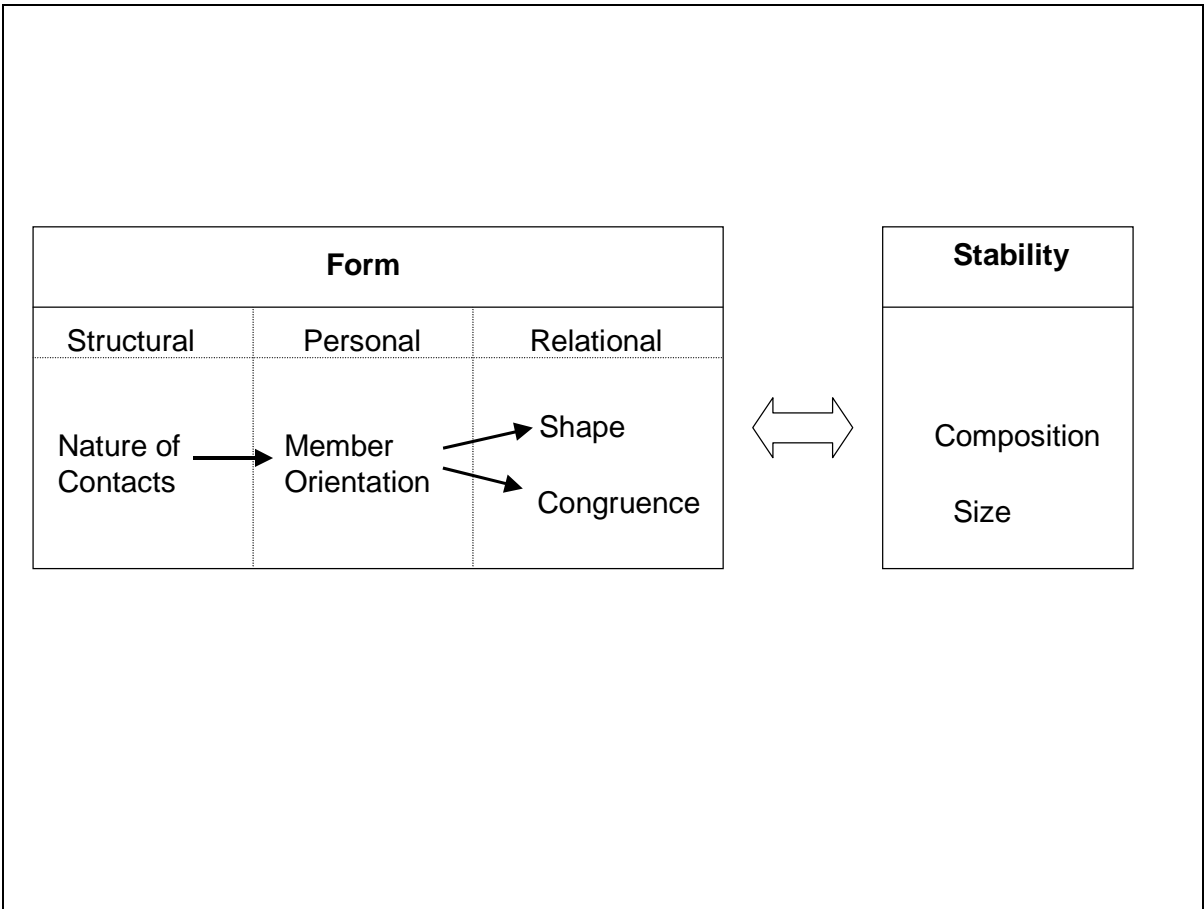
Sense of community is a complex phenomenon, and through the grounded theory process, I have constructed two main, multi-faceted properties, namely its form and the stability of this form. The *form* of sense of community describes the characteristics of the interrelationships that exist between people and the setting within which interaction between them can occur. It also incorporates the orientation of members, or the mindset of the people who are in community, regarding their perceptions of the purpose of relationships. *Stability* of sense of community refers to the degree to which sense of community is constant over time, and is related to the movement of people into and out of the church and their relational network. This change in membership composition and size affects the stability of the sense of community.

Church leaders do not necessarily have a common viewpoint on the ideal form that sense of community should take, and were also experiencing different levels of community within their various churches. However, the direction of change they were promoting through adopting a cell-based approach was generally seen as desiring an enhancement of the various facets of the sense of community.

Each of the main properties of sense of community - *form* and *stability* - has sub-properties. The form of sense of community is the dominant property, and has as its four sub-properties

the nature of contacts, member orientation, the shape of community and the congruence of community across the organization. As a secondary property, stability of the sense of community reflects the dynamic nature of community over time, and can be described in terms of member composition, and membership size. Changes in the form of the sense of community will also affect the stability of the sense of community and vice versa. Figure 4.1 illustrates the relationship between the properties of sense of community, recognising the structural, personal and relational character of the various properties. These properties and sub-properties of sense of community are summarised in Table 3.5 in the previous chapter and are discussed in greater detail below.

FIGURE 4.1
SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND ITS PROPERTIES



4.3 The Form of Sense of Community

Form is the primary characteristic of sense of community. Form is firstly a manifestation of the *nature of contacts* between people, or the structural aspects of community, which addresses questions such as: “Who is in community – at both the collective and individual levels?”, “How do they keep in contact with one another?” and “What is the qualitative nature of these contacts?” The nature of contacts is the foundation upon which the form of community rests, in that it is this sub-property that provides the basis for interaction between people, thereby allowing the form of the sense of community to take shape, as described by its other properties.

The second property of the form of sense of community is the *orientation* of the individual members. That is, whether their focus is internal or external, the role they perceive for themselves in the church, and the degree of concern shown about the role of the church in society. This can be thought of as a mindset that develops out of the structural aspects of community. Thirdly, the *shape* of community reflects the depth of relationships produced through the contacts that occur, as well as the expanse or breadth of these relationships within the church. The final property of the form of sense of community is the *degree of congruence*. That is, to what degree does sense of community retain its character across the organization and at different levels? In other words, it refers to the coherence and ubiquity of the sense of community within a church and across and between its various levels and groupings. That is not to say that sense of community will be uniform. What exists at one level may differ from that at another level, but should be complementary to it. Each of these four properties of the form of sense of community is developed further below.

4.3.1 The nature of contacts

The first sub-property of the form of sense of community refers to the nature of contacts between the people who are part of the local church. It is only through people coming together on a regular basis that sense of community can begin to develop. The nature of these contacts can be described in terms of the *setting* that contacts take place in, the *frequency* of contacts, the *type* of contacts, the *quality* of the contacts that occurs, and the *structuring* of contacts, or

who the contacts are between. Next, each of these aspects is described, followed by a discussion of the changing nature of contacts.

Firstly, the *setting* of contacts refers to the context wherein interaction occurs and includes various types of formal meetings and other gatherings. It includes the various church services, social events, training events, camps, cell meetings, leadership meetings, and so forth.

Secondly, given the number of opportunities individuals have, to make contact with other members of the local church in various settings in a specific time frame, *frequency* refers to how often they utilise these opportunities to actually make contact. Frequency is therefore reflected in the attendance figures at various social settings, as well as in the number of social events occurring within a particular time frame.

Thirdly, the nature of contacts can be described in terms of the *type* of contact. The type of contact is usually determined by the formal leader responsible for the contact, or in the absence of a formal leader, by the initiator of the contact, or an informal leader. These contacts may range from being utilitarian to service in orientation, directive to participative in style, and task to relational in focus. Utilitarian oriented contacts are those created to serve the interests of the church and would include, for example, business meetings or training events, while service oriented contacts are intended to primarily meet the needs of those in attendance. The style of the contact is reflected in communication and decision making patterns. Where these are dominated by leaders and take the form of one-way communication, they are defined as directive, while participative contacts are characterised by a much higher level of interaction amongst those in attendance, with the leader acting as a facilitator of this more extensive communication. The focus of a contact can be directed at accomplishing a particular goal and tend to be structured and managed according to a predetermined agenda or plan. On the other hand, contacts with a relational focus have no formal agenda, simply providing the opportunity for social interaction.

The sub-properties of the type of contact may not all apply equally to every contact, and there is some overlap between these elements, particularly when looking at orientation and focus.

To clarify the distinction by way of an illustration, a church may arrange a healing service. This would be task focused, but service oriented. On the other hand, a cell group that meets at the beach for a picnic would be an example of a contact that had a relational focus, but it would not be as easy or useful to describe it in terms of its orientation or style. Finally, these dimensions should not be seen as mutually exclusive qualities, but rather as ways of typifying a contact. For example the elders may have an annual retreat to plan for the year (i.e. task focused) but take their families along and allow a lot of time for social action (i.e. relational).

The fourth sub-property of the nature of contacts is the *quality* of contact. While the type of contact sub-property focused on the intentions of the leader as its point of reference, this sub-property examines how those in attendance are experiencing the contact. This is described by the degree of intimacy, the degree of meaningfulness, and the size of the group. Thus the quality of a contact may be experienced as personal or impersonal, or even too personal/impersonal. Those in attendance may experience the contact as meaningful, or they may find it of little personal relevance and feel it was a waste of their time. These two sub-properties of the quality of the contact are related and also have some relationship to the size of the group that meets. Generally the larger the group, the more impersonal the contact will become. On the other hand, in contacts that are not expected to be intimate, such as a Sunday celebration service, a large group in attendance may create a certain atmosphere, so that the individual experiences the meeting as more meaningful.

Finally, the *structure* of contacts refers to the demographic profile of the groups that met. This property was particularly significant at the cell group level, where contacts tend to be more frequent, relationally focused and potentially more intimate. The structuring or restructuring of small groups in the church by leaders invariably promoted groups that were either homogenous or heterogeneous. The value of homogeneous groups lay in the shared experience of the members and their ability to develop intimate relationships quite quickly, while heterogeneous groups were often seen to be more relevant and appropriate in the South African context. This is discussed more fully later.

Examples of the *nature of contacts* sub-property follow.

One leader described the setting and frequency of contacts amongst leadership in the church as follows.

I formed a supervisors' group who I meet with every Sunday. ... That's my cell, and then they have to meet with their cell leaders once a week. And then all the cell leaders come together once a month on a Sunday. Four times a year I go to a camp with them. Twice a year to what we call an interns camp when they actually go through the commitment of the cell-to-cell leadership, and twice a year, pure leadership. There we go for inspiration, to re-affirm the vision and to share. It's been great.

Those weekly meetings, are they feedback sessions?

They're feedback and then I also go for inspiration. There's one thing I've realised. The leaders are in the front line and they're going to take knocks all along. So I seek to give them a place where they can say how they feel, where they're at, if they're frustrated, you know. So, there's as much sharing... It's ministry time ...

Some churches had a high frequency of contacts of a social nature. One interviewee remarked: "Last Saturday morning was a cell prayer breakfast. The next week there's something else, there's always social activity." Several churches had regular meetings that were more utilitarian in nature, with cell leaders serving as a conduit for information between the church leadership and cell members. They reported back on progress and problems in their cells, received advice and training on how to run the cell, as well as information to convey to cell members at their meetings. In other cases, meetings that were previously very functional, such as elders meetings or church council meetings were converted into social family events. For example, all the family members would get together for a meal prior to official business, or annual planning events were held as part of a family camp.

Meetings that allowed a great deal of intimacy and transparency allowed people to have personally meaningful contacts where they could deal with problems in their life and grow spiritually:

Unless you have the presence of Christ in that little cell community, you're not going to get...you'll actually just end up with another programme. So Christ is the dynamic and when Christ comes in he shines light into people's lives, into their social life, their emotional life, their marital life, so you start surfacing these issues. So we had to deal with the issues. Painful, but man, we've seen people absolutely transformed. Even in terms of their worship experience. Worship would end and the testimonies ... I think of one particular – one of my Elders, he struggled with so much baggage, emotional baggage, prejudices, and all that has been broken down ... It's beautiful.

4.3.1.1 Changing the nature of contacts

Sense of community has the potential to develop in a church because the nature of contacts provides the opportunity for contact between people. Along with societal changes impacting upon the church, the cell-church transition inevitably led to changes in the nature of contacts, through eliminating programme related meetings and setting up cell-church related meetings. By changing the nature of contacts, leaders begin to change the sense of community, sometimes positively, and sometimes negatively. Below are some illustrations of changes made to the nature of contacts and their consequences. At times the reason for making these changes is alluded to. However, the purpose of these illustrations is primarily to show the nature of these changes and to emphasise their effects, because it is the impact of the change on sense of community that can give rise to organizational inertia, even in cases where the changes are well intended and constructive.

One contact typically established early on in the cell-church transition was meeting with all of the cell leaders. When implementing the cell system, it was common practice for the leader to have a large number of meetings with the cell leaders, so that the cell concept could be

effectively imparted and its implementation monitored. One leader described the effects of too many of these utilitarian and task-focused meetings with cell leaders.

What would happen is that there would be regular feedback meetings, interaction meetings, etcetera, say on average once a month, once every six weeks, once maybe every two months, where all the cell leaders would be brought in and there would be input, there would be discussion, etc. That was good and necessary. But maybe what we failed to do and understand. ... is that without exception every cell leader is someone who has got their own working career, family etc. And the amount of exposure that the leadership would have with them would be ... sometimes overworking individuals. ... And so in some cases, I suppose, resentment built up...

Interviewees had noticed a high turnover of cell leaders, as a result of the high demands placed on them. One indicated that: "In [a] two year period ... we had a 100% of turnover each year of leaders". Besides concerns about having too many meetings, there were a number of cases where church leaders recognized that they needed to change the type and quality of the contacts they had with their cell leaders. That is, there was a greater need to minister to or serve cell leaders and support them emotionally, and so their meetings became more relational and less functional in nature. One leader described his preference for service-oriented meetings over utilitarian purposes.

We tried to move away from that [soliciting feedback at meetings] a bit to be honest, because we felt that the leaders meetings need to move away from being utilitarian and rather being a place of ministry. So if we get feedback it's a bonus, but for us we decided to focus on "Hey man we are here to care for you. We are not here to use you." ... It makes a lot of sense. Makes logical sense [to get feedback] but at the end of the day people feel used. They don't feel that you care for them.

A second contact that reflected a change in its nature was the cell groups. Churches adopted a variety of strategies for growing the number of cell groups and thereby ensuring that the

groups did not become too large. These configuring activities of leaders are discussed later on. However, when the size of a group did become too large, it affected the quality of the contacts and there was less meaningful contact and less intimacy.

We had a cell that grew to about thirty, and within a year that cell disintegrated totally, because they failed to multiply. It became too crowded, it became another service [or meeting] and slowly the people started to stay away.

On the other hand, when, for example, multiplication strategies were adopted in terms of the Jethro-model, this intermittent disruption of groups also affected the quality of contacts, as relationships with members of the new cell group had to be built. One interviewee observed that there was great relief among the members of a church that had decided to adopt the G12 approach in place of the Jethro-model. With the Jethro-model, “It had been very upsetting to build relationships and shatter them, build relationships and shatter them.” He maintained that he would never personally adopt the Ralph Neighbour approach to multiplication (i.e. the Jethro model), claiming it was not Biblical, was too task-driven, and not relational enough.

4.3.2 Member orientation

Member orientation concerns itself with the mindset or schemata that individual members of the church hold. This can be described along a number of dimensions. Firstly, in terms of their *focus*, whether inward looking - focusing only on the immediate group and their needs - or looking outwards to others and trying to include them in the group as well; secondly by the *role* that members define for themselves within the church; and finally by the degree of *concern* shown about the relevance of the church and the impact it is having on society.

4.3.2.1 Focus

Firstly, the *focus* of members ranges from an internal to an external focus. Inwardly focused church members tend to seek homogeneous groups and continuity in relationships, while externally focused members tend to be open to heterogeneity and changes in relationships. In

other words, externally focused members would be more open to the idea of multiplication, or more welcoming of visitors to the church or cell group, for example.

One leader described the difficulty posed by groups of individuals who were inwardly focused:

Because once they get into this little kind of group, that we've become comfortable with one another, they find it very difficult to move away from each other.

Another leader described the positive effects arising when members had become outwardly focused:

The old, very religious and tired attitude has been so totally broken, I mean if a guy is rolling drunk we'll give him the front seat in our church because we're a community and we're here to save the lost.

4.3.2.2 Role

Role is the second property of member orientation. Members can see their role in the church along a continuum ranging from recipients of community to generators of community. In economic terms, they could be described as consumers or producers. Using Biblical metaphors, one leader noted that the roles that lay members assume could be described as a "Shepherd-sheep mentality" or a "Body of Christ mentality". The following quotes illustrate the dissatisfaction of leaders with the consumerist or sheep mentality dimension of the role that members could assume:

[The] culture of [this church] is a shepherd/sheep type of paradigm. In other words the Minister has a particular role, and the sheep just come to feed and go away, you know. They're not expected to be involved, or to be ministers in their own right. So the whole theology, if you like, of lay ministry is very poor.

When you're transitioning a traditional church, where a small group is an optional extra, you know, you're using essentially the paradigm of shepherd-sheep in that sort of traditional church setting. And the paradigm we wanted to use was the Body of Christ ...

One man came along and said 'Look, I want Bible study'. Of course he's not going to get that. He's going to get Bible application. And so he came a few times and off he goes. And so there's unfortunately there's that consumerism in church.

One type of problem encountered in cell groups was the presence of people who always wanted to be carried by the group, and monopolised the group's attention and time, showing no sign of progress in dealing with the problem or developing in a ministry. Usually other members of the group eventually become discouraged and start to stay away. One leader described this recipient role as follows: "You'll get people who will play their record. You know, 'This is my story, listen to me. I want sympathy.'"

4.3.2.3 Concern about relevance and impact

Finally, the third sub-property of member orientation is closely related to the focus and the ideas that members have about the role they should be playing in the church. Members have various perspectives on the contribution of the church to society. That is, there are varying degrees of *concern* shown firstly about the issue of the relevance of the church to its local society, as well as about the impact that the church is making on that society. The perspectives held by leaders and members are located within a historical context. In particular, there are different levels of awareness and understanding that have been created as to whether the local church is underachieving, or optimally utilizing its potential.

A particular focal point here was the evangelical responsibility of the church in carrying out what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission (Gospel of Matthew, 28: 16-20) to take the message of the gospel to the "ends of the earth". In other words, it is referring to the

responsibility of Christians to communicate the message of salvation through Jesus Christ to all people. Some churches had a strong emphasis on missions, and supported missionaries and mission activities. However, in the cell-church context the area of concern was in cell groups evangelising. As noted by one interviewee: “I think the cell church movement attracts evangelists, because it is a vehicle that most [effectively facilitates church growth].”

Leaders noted the trend in South African society of adopting various security measures including high walls and security gates, in response to high levels of crime. The result of people living in their own fortress was that they were less accessible, making for example, door-to-door evangelism fruitless. Alternative modes of evangelism needed to be explored, and the idea of cell groups engaging in evangelism activities was advocated. In fact, for many leaders, the appeal of the cell-church model lay in its potential for growth driven by the cell groups through relationship evangelism. However, many churches discovered that having made the transition to cell-groups, there was not an automatic increase in evangelistic activity, and that in fact many of the cell groups struggled in this area. Member orientation was internally focused and there was no burden for the non-Christian. One response to this weakness was to encourage cell groups to become more engaged in community service activities as a form of evangelism:

So, as far as evangelism is concerned, it's not that we have done away with the cell strategy, it's just that we've realised that probably the greatest evangelical tool that we have is our ability to be community. You know theologically, when Jesus said 'two or three in my name means that I am in the midst of that' is probably the most powerful evangelical tool we've got. So that sort of drives our thinking now in terms of evangelism. We say the better we can be a community, the better we can evangelise the world, and, so that's the sort of theology that we're working with, the incarnational theology, if you like, of the body, being the incarnate Christ in the world ...

Another response was to look at innovative ways of doing evangelism. One leader had a philosophy: “If the local people can’t introduce it – don’t introduce it” and carried out the following outreach in a Black township:

We put the buckets on the heads of the White guys and walk up the road with all the Black guys. The [residents were] thinking “Look at these crazy white guys with buckets on their heads”. Okay. But we just walked up the road doing that, and crowds of hundreds [followed] just like that. And then we created this ... gospel play using buckets. And we invited people to a meeting right then and there. ...

And then we had people playing guitars and we had the words written on newsprint and stuck on the walls with sticky tape. So they actually go out of their house and collected old broken benches [for people to sit on during the meeting] and [thereafter] we had tea and coffee and that was it.

4.3.2.4 Changing member orientation

The cell-church transition was usually a catalyst for members to change their orientation in terms of their focus, role in the church, and concern about relevance and impact. The cell-church model generally promoted an external focus, a more active role by lay members and a greater concern for those outside of the church.

A common concern of the leaders interviewed was that the members of the church were too inwardly focused, and so leaders expended much effort trying to develop an outward focus. For example, to prevent cell groups becoming insular, one particular leader encouraged cell groups to have joint meetings and to visit other members of the congregation who were not in their cell. Congregation-wide training courses were also used to develop a corporate identity that was larger than purely the cell group.

The struggle that many leaders encountered was in getting members of the congregation to reach out to others. Sometimes, it was that they had been in the church so long, that they had few relationships with people outside the church, and so were not able reach out easily. In

other cases, it was an unwillingness to reach out. One interviewee quoted a member of his church who had said: “Building relationships with people who were not Christians was like going to the dentist ... a painful experience.” Several leaders struggled with trying to get the members of their church to take responsibility for evangelism and discipleship. They often viewed this as the job of the minister, not them. Some leaders also noted that their church generally lacked people with evangelistic gifts. One interviewee, who was familiar with the results of the Natural Church Development survey of Christian Schwarz, noted that the weakness in most South African churches lay in the area of evangelism. One leader’s response to this evangelistic weakness was to encourage cells to conduct acts of service to others as a form of outreach, noting: “Where you shop and where you live and where your kids go to school, that’s where we want you to be active.”

Leaders recognised that it was very difficult for some members to deal with these changes. A number of initiatives by leaders to change member orientation are discussed in Chapter Six, but what was evident, was that some of those people who were struggling with the cell-church model and the paradigm shift it represented, began to feel uncomfortable in the church. As one leader observed:

What I try to do is create a culture within the church. I guess the other word to use is “values”. Establish a set of norms for church and then people who don’t share those values, they don’t feel comfortable. So you don’t need to confront them. They don’t fit and so they move on.

Another leader, recognising the church’s pastoral responsibility, described how they helped people who were not comfortable with the cell model to find another church where they would feel more at home:

[We] have developed a culture, which has said ‘We are unique’. If you don’t like this culture (That’s why we don’t talk about members but partners.) If you don’t like that then we will help you to find another church, and we really do that.

While churches tended to try and fulfil this pastoral obligation, and leaders were personally troubled when people wanted to leave the church, there was acceptance that with the transition, it was likely that the church would lose some of its members who struggled to accept the member orientation being required of them. Ultimately, this loss of members was reflected in the stability of community becoming more fluid accompanied by shrinkage in membership size, that was hopefully only temporary.

In addition to the change in member orientation that the cell-church transition entailed for most members, there were some groups of members whose orientation was more in keeping with a “Body of Christ” theology. They were either making a contribution to the church, or were trying to support the transition, but for different reasons still battled with the transition.

The first group of people that often battled with the change were those who had been the stalwarts in the programme-based design. This group was unique in that they tended to display an external focus and were already contributors to the church, serving others through the church’s programmes. However, with the transition, the type of contribution they were making was no longer wanted. Initially, their participation was curtailed when programmes were closed down, and they were then requested to redirect their involvement towards cell-related activities. This was not an easy adjustment for many of them to make, and feeling rejected, a number chose to leave the church and seek another. An interviewee described in graphic terms what this group of people experienced:

The equivalent is spiritually, they are being raped. Their personhood is being stolen from them in a very brutal way. ... And then they go to another church, and now they’ve got to adopt a new set of values anyway, but they are doing it with a whole lot of hurts. Whereas it would be a lot easier for them - maybe not for the church ... if they can adopt a new value system and find their identity in that. ... It’s not about the structure it is about the person. It is about trying to get the person to find ... their identity in God, instead of what they do. Because the kind of people we are talking about, their identity is in their ministry ...

A second group battled with the transition, but were supportive of it. They were the emerging leaders being drawn from the lay membership of the church. The cell-church transition engaged many more people in church related activity, and leaders were also faced with the challenge of supporting those who were actively involved, particularly in offering them emotional support and assisting with problem solving. Burnout of cell leaders was prevalent and attests to the acuteness of this problem. A significant feature of a cell-based church is that multiplication of groups and growth of the church hinged upon the availability of capable leadership. Consequently, a serious constraint to the growth of many churches was a lack of leadership, or an inability to develop leaders fast enough. Part, though not all, of this problem is either a lack of appreciation by many members of the understanding that they have a role to fulfil in the church, or otherwise ignorance as to what their role or ministry is. Perceived role is naturally linked to focus. As a result, one church chose to emphasise relationships and a family model of church, so as to break down perceptions that only the leader had a ministry. The thinking that was promoted was that “all members were children of God”, and as such had relationship with God and each other. Ministries subsequently arose as people gave their attention to developing these relationships.

4.3.3 The shape of community

Sense of community has a shape that reflects the relational aspect of its form. It has *depth*, which is characterised by the degree of intimacy and genuineness that exists in relationships. It has *breadth* - a quantitative measure of how many people or groups are part of community, or how dense the relational network of the church is. Finally, this shape is manifested at a *number of levels*.

4.3.3.1 Depth

Depth characterises the level of belonging, intimacy and authenticity that exists in relationships, particularly those at the small group level. A lack of depth was associated with members’ tendency to preserve the façade or persona that they put up in front of others and in their relationship with God, portraying the image that everything was in order and that they

were in a better spiritual state than they actually were. An interviewee described this lack of depth that he had seen in his church:

But we were not happy with the depth of relationship. It was superficial. And there were plenty of “How are you, I’m fine”. And you knew that it wasn’t fine. And you had folks who had been part of the church for twenty years and you bring new cell leaders and if they end up in those cells they don’t have confidence. So they’ll go along with the evening and participate in the sharing to a particular level. But if the wheels really fall off their lives they go looking for the eldership

One leader spoke about the importance of developing authentic Christianity and being relationally focused. In his case, students of a Bible school that was attached to the church, were required to not only be part of evangelism and mission related activities, but also to integrate into local church life so as to be exposed to “life ministry” and to “receive wisdom and impartation from others” in the cell context. Another spoke of the effect of cell involvement as follows:

I think when you go into cell, immediately you actually surface a lot of problems. A lot of problems [are] people [related], which in a PBD [i.e. Programme Based Design] church never even gets recognized. Everything is so general. Now, all of a sudden your life is a little bit in the spotlight. You know, Wesley ran his classes very similar to a cell concept I think, and one of the first questions you have to answer every week in your class meeting is, “How goes it with your soul?” ...

And we learnt a lot, as I say, from West Africa, from Dion Robert. I spent time with him personally, chatting with all his leadership and saw the way they did things, where they deal with issues up front, at the beginning of the Christian life, get people free, ...by the grace of the Lord and through ministry, and so their cells are so much more powerful. Because you can have a cell programme, but if the people aren’t deeply affected and unless Christ is central ... Unless you have

the presence of Christ in that little cell community, you're not going to get, you'll actually just end up with another programme. So Christ is the dynamic and when Christ comes in he shines light into people's lives, into their social life, their emotional life, their marital life, so you start surfacing these issues. So we had to deal with the issues. Painful, but man, we've seen people absolutely transformed.

While depth was also reflective of the extent to which the cell-church model represented a lifestyle rather than a meeting, the format of the cell meeting was one of the key facilitators of depth. In particular, the "Welcome" component of the cell meeting was intended to facilitate communication at the start of a meeting. This was specifically designed for people visiting the cell group for the first time. Unfortunately some members of cell groups resisted this as they saw it as unnecessary, and did not want to "play silly games", but rather get on with the "Word" component of the meeting.

The "Word" component of the typical cell format explicitly encouraged members to display greater transparency about the state of their spiritual life than a conventional Bible study would. The focus of this time was in examining the application of Biblical principles to the everyday life of the cell member. The cell leader facilitated this discussion, encouraging cell members to speak about their personal experiences, whether it was in the way of testimonies illustrating their successful application, or in admissions of failure or need. Many people battled with this aspect of cell life, which they saw as intruding into their personal life, and were therefore reluctant to be in a cell group, seeking the more impersonal context of the Bible study. However, as the cell group members began to open up, and discovered that it was safe to do so (i.e. that they were not rejected, but accepted with understanding and compassion), and received help and encouragement from the group; so strong bonds of intimate and genuine relationships were formed. The downside of this occurrence was that because of the close relationships, the group members were often reluctant to multiply the group when it became too large; and the group was vulnerable to breaches of confidentiality, should it happen that someone spoke out of turn. One leader described a common problem experienced, where depth resulted in reluctance among members to multiply their cell:

Multiplication became a problem because [it is] a relational model. ... People come because they want to feel part of something. Cells are something that they feel part of. Now we are saying to them, the goal of cell is multiplication.

4.3.3.2 Breadth

The second property of the shape of community is breadth. *Breadth* is an indication of the number of people who are in relationship with one another. That is, in quantitative terms, on average how many people does each member relate to, and also, what proportion of the membership is in a network of relationships.

Breadth also incorporates the density of the relational network. For example, some members of a cell group may only relate to one another indirectly through their cell leader, while others have direct relationships. This difference can be likened to viewing the cell leader as the hub of a wheel connecting people to one another, versus an entangled net, where the relational connections to the leader are not much different to those between other members of the group.

Another implicit characteristic of breadth is that where there are large numbers of people connected, this has come about by at least allowing new members to come into the group, if not actively recruiting them. It is this feature of the breadth that is related to the church growth appeal of the cell-church model. One minister described how the breadth of a cell-group was expanded by a cell outreach event:

[W]e had eleven people [in the cell] and we had thirteen visitors. There were some rules, you could not come, unless you brought a visitor, because we wanted a ratio of visitors to Christians to be higher so that the visitor did not feel like they were the target of fifteen ravenous evangelists. So that was what we tried to achieve, the sense of, "... if I meet people, cool, but if I don't meet people then I am here for the event."

And all of a sudden it broke the mentality of every time you invite a person they must be saved. It brought people to the awareness that actually if I bring a friend, you might see a more appropriate way to communicate with them than me, because, for many Christians they battle to bring the person from friendship to conversion because of their relationship. And so what we did was create an environment, which is easy to bring your friends to.

Another leader described how he encouraged cell groups to evangelise in the Black community:

I said, “You need to plant another home church”, and how we used to do it even in PE, I would say to them “Find out ... what are your needs within the community. If there’s a family that’s going through a bereavement, if there’s a family that’s going through a loss or somebody is sick in that neighbourhood, in that community, or whatever the case may be. You, as a home church must be the first one to pick that up. Somehow, you must speak with a neighbour and find out”. Word goes around, you know. People stay in communities, so word goes around, you know, and especially in the African context. We are a very communal neighbourhood, so word gets around even much faster. So here, that family has a funeral...and I said “Take advantage of that” because people at that time need ministering. They may be having their own church, some don’t, you know. So go there, just say “Can we bring a prayer? We’re just a”, if you like, “a prayer group from the neighbourhood. We’d like to bring a prayer to your house”. And they would always say yes. I would say, “If they say yes, you know, you can bring a prayer. Find out: Can we come again, maybe next time”. If they say yes, then that’s a potential next home church. That’s how you do it. Because there’s a willingness to receive you. People are open, and most of the time people say “Please bring, come again next time, you guys shared so well, and we’ll bring our neighbours this

time”. This time it’s not a bereavement thing you know. Next time, when there’s no issue, when it’s just a normal thing, we would like to get more ministry. That’s how we started opening our home churches, more and more. That was my principle of dividing. My principle of dividing was more of an outreach, if you like. Go and find out. Say a prayer here, say a prayer there, rotate.

Other ways that breadth of community was promoted, was by slotting visitors and new members into existing cell groups or by creating a variety of types of small groups. One minister outlined this process and identified some of these more unconventional small groups:

New members for example are much easier to get into cell or groups or whatever. And we are still trying to get them into groups as soon as we can. And we have started a number of support groups here, for divorcees ... And self-help groups and ahh you name it. ... Not cell groups per se [but] marriage enrichment groups ... guided prayer groups and things like that ...

4.3.3.3 Levels

Finally, the shape of community can be manifested at various *levels*, namely within the local society, with other local churches, the governing leadership of the church, the broader based leadership of the church, and the collective membership of the church. That is, this property answers the question: “*Where* can a sense of community be found?”

Firstly, the local church is seen as part of its *local society*, or geographically demarcated area. While the term “community” would typically be used here, preference is given to the word “society” in order to differentiate it from the sense of community construct. This local society is typically defined as some of the suburbs of a city, a whole town or city, and even as a metropolitan region made up of a number of towns and/or cities. This level of community is closely aligned with concerns of relevance and impact, with churches involved in various projects, campaigns and other acts of service in recognition of their social mandate.

While also involved in other events in the city, one particular church identified the suburb of Summerstrand in Port Elizabeth as its local society. They were aware of the demographic profile of the area and the needs and problems that were to be addressed. The leader noted that Summerstrand is quite an affluent suburb and the house prices quite high. As a result it was common to find both parents working to afford the expense of staying in the suburb. While as a church they believed this was not an ideal situation, they also acknowledged the reality of the situation and saw what they could do to address the needs of the children. For example an after-care facility and crèche have been set up on the church premises. They also knew about developments in the area and actively tried to respond to these. The interviewee noted that there were currently about two thousand Chinese students living in Summerstrand as a result of an agreement between the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, which is located within the suburb, and the Republic of China. A number of these Chinese students had started to attend church services on Sundays, primarily to learn English. The church was now considering how they could integrate teaching English with evangelistic endeavours.

Secondly, the local church is in relationship with the *other local churches* of various denominations within its geographical vicinity. Often the minister's fraternal is used as a point of reference here. It was commonly recognised that these other churches were not the competition, but rather, there was a co-operative relationship among them. So, for example, if someone came to the church from another church in the area, they would find out why, and send them back if need be, or at least have them get permission to leave. In this was the recognition that they intended to grow the church through reaching people who were not in a church, not by taking members away from other churches.

Thirdly, there is sense of community among the "*governing*" leadership of the local church. This is the strategic leadership group that is primarily responsible for formulating and implementing the strategy of the church. In many churches this group would mainly consist of the full time workers or ministers of the church and the lay leaders (e.g. the church board or elders and/or deacons). Obviously, in some churches ascribing to their denomination's form of governance, this grouping may not be seen to govern the church - such as the Baptist

church, which is governed by its members – but would consist of people of influence. The success of a number of churches was often attributed to the strength of relationships within this strategic leadership group, as reflected in the following interview extract:

Do you know that I cannot recall one single day in the past 12 years, 13 years that we ever had the typical “church-board-fight kind-of-thing.” The Spirit of God is so powerful in the church that when [the pastor] speaks we just know, “That’s it”. And it is not a dictatorial, autocratic kind of thing. But we respect and we know because he is a man of God. And it sounds “Wow!”, if we say it, but he is a man of God. So because of the spiritual standard of the church we have made ... very few mistakes along the road. We are consistent. We’re focused. We know where we are going, and we are constantly aware of the backup of God and that he is with us all the way, and that is something we treasure. ... We really have one spirit in the church. Our relationships are extraordinary, our fellowship, it is just amazing.

The importance of this strategic leadership group to the success of the church in general and the cell-church transition in particular, was underlined by several instances where there was a fallout within this group, leading to a fracturing of the church, with significant segments leaving to either form their own church, or join another. As a result of the potential strains that could arise between a new senior minister and the existing church elders, one denomination that has had a practice of rotating their ministers every few years, now has adopted a practice whereby the elders of a church stand down when a new senior minister arrives, and after a period of time the new minister then identifies and appoints elders.

Fourthly, community is manifested among the *broader-based leadership* of the church. This would include the collective grouping of formal (lay) leaders whose appointment does not typically involve them in governing the church, and would include leadership positions such as deacons, zone supervisors and cell leaders. It would also include relations between sectors of a church’s collective, such as the relationship between the minister and the cell leaders, or a few cell leaders and their supervisor.

In one church, the leaders got together every Sunday. These weekly leader meetings helped to build relationships and allowed leaders to receive support, deal with their own problems and provided a place to vent their personal frustrations they may have been experiencing in leading their cell. Another leader described the challenges zone supervisors experienced and his attempts to bring about a more relational focus.

So you know with all of that we started to see that you put a zone supervisor and he becomes an inspector of cells. The first person he drops is his wife, because what is the point. So she rather stays at home and this guy visits and before you know - this guy is a veteran cell leader and loved to be with the people - he becomes a manager and inspector of cells and he loses passion. And when he drops out the whole thing starts to erode. That is my experience. And the cell leaders also start to pick up ... an attitude about this guy to come and almost police events ... They get unnatural, you know. And I thought if he could become relational ... spiritual parenting, a spirit of fathering in the cells. ... It is natural for fathers to produce. So if you really had this spirit of fathering and relationship, growth is automatic.

Fifthly, community occurs among the *collective membership* of the local church. This would include both the individuals who constitute the church and various collectives within it. Focusing on the individuals first, the interest here is in the sense of community that exists among the broader membership of the local church. One leader described this as the church's basic purpose, and illustrated what was expected of each person.

Our purpose is very simple. We want to build what we call a Biblically-functioning community here. ... Community in the larger group is really related to owning the larger group. The sense of ownership of the larger group, the larger church. So again if I am a member of community of the larger church, there are certain characteristics that I want to live out. I'm willing to relate to people, willing to have a look out for the unsaved and willing to care for the

poor, willing to serve, willing to give, say hello to the stranger that comes in the door, ... and I do this because I belong to this large group which has it's own psyche, it's own soul, if you like.

This collective membership level would also include relationships between various formal structures or groupings within a local church community, such as functions, programmes or departments. That is, these collectives are related to the formal organization of the church, and to design changes that accompanied the cell-church transition. One leader described the dilemma of developing pockets of community through the cell-church model that had ultimately eroded the overall community of the church. Adopting a more inclusive approach was aimed at removing these divisions:

[W]hat we realised is that cells were, whilst they were producing community in sections, they weren't capturing the larger congregation ... That's created a bit of tension in the church.

I don't want to do away with cells, but I really want to be more inclusive in our cell group development. You know cell has tended to be a bit exclusive. ... We are a traditional church and you've got ... Women's [groups], things like that. ... [T]hey feel excluded from the church ... even though they have been part of the church for donkey's years. ... We've been promoting the cell, so everything goes towards the cell meeting. So they feel neglected, they feel sidelined or excluded. So I'm looking at a model now where we are hoping to be more inclusive in a small group ... type model. Obviously indigenised for our own needs, which will include the cells and will include ... what we call the focus groups and hopefully there is space for both and any other new ones... This is the point you see we say that cells are a bit exclusive and therefore community suffers.

So we already have the three constituencies, the cell constituency, what we call the focus group constituency and of course, the others in

between who don't belong to any group. ... So we've got these three constituencies and we'll work with the new thinking of saying we'll keep that, we'll keep that and we'll try and stir up the development of ... people taking initiatives to start groups and make it so flexible that they can start up any reasonable activity, as long as it's in Christ's name, there is training, and there is supervision, and we know who they are. We will supervise them. ...

The focus is still the same. That hasn't shifted. It won't shift. But we are looking at this new strategy of incorporating that third group.

In a similar vein, another leader defined one of his main challenges as building bridges between the two groupings that had been created in the church. That is, those in cell groups who were more charismatic, and those in the traditional church structures and programmes. Prior to his arrival at the church, two ministers had led these two groupings, which were in conflict with one another. They had operated independently of one another, even having separate leadership structures within each of their groupings. Because the senior minister was involved in, and actively promoted the cell-church model, the members of the traditional group had begun to feel that they were not good enough anymore. With this minister being transferred to set up a church in a new suburb, and the second retiring, only one minister was appointed to replace the two of them. He deliberately developed an inclusive leadership style that was more neutrally positioned rather than seen to be favouring one camp, and began to create opportunities for informal social interaction for the entire church so as to encourage the building of relationships across the divide. He also began to dismantle the separate leadership structures by incorporating both group's leaders in church planning activities. More recently, the members involved in the traditional structures had expressed an interest in being involved in small groups, but not cell groups. As a result he had now begun a process of leader development for these small groups, which would probably take the form of Bible study or discussion groups. In other words, he had adopted an eclectic small group model for the church that accommodated both cell groups and other forms of small groups.

Besides functional design initiatives creating groupings, the formation of collectives in the church occurred in groups that were either defined by, or formally constituted by the sharing of a particular characteristic, such as age, sex, generation, language or race. For example some churches had women's groups, or activities aimed specifically at pensioners or youth. On the other hand, in the absence of formal structures, people of similar backgrounds often tended to naturally gravitate towards each other, sit in the same area of the church, or establish friendships. Leaders sometimes discouraged this, while others accepted it as natural. This demographic diversity within the church also made leading the church more complex. When considering the structure of contacts, leaders had mixed views on the value of homogeneous versus heterogeneous groups, specifically as they related to age, race, ethnic, and gender differences. Some churches recognised the value of inter-generational groups as a basis for effective mentoring and discipleship. In these cases, young children, their parents, students and older people were in the same group. When, for example, the student was encountering examination anxiety, older members of the group could offer support and counsel, drawn from their own experiences of being a student. In some situations where there was a primary emphasis on mentorship, cell groups consisting only of men or only of women, were established. Furthermore, these groups also tended to share other features. In one instance the group consisted of wives who were at home and could meet in the mornings; in another business owners met to share their experiences and the difficulties they were encountering in business, to get advice and encouragement.

Two characteristics that featured prominently at this collective membership level were age or generational differences, and racial differences. When developing the cell-church, the generation gap seemed to be more challenging for leaders than racial differences. While there were mentoring models as described earlier that capitalised on generational differences, there were many instances where the age profile of the church posed problems, and leaders found it easier to deal with the generations independently. For instance, in reflecting on the introduction of the cell-church model, one minister described his experience and how he had to handle the youth and older members of his church:

The younger folk are grabbing this thing more. So, they kind of enjoy it because I run these youth cells in my home, because my kids are still,

you know, seventeen and eighteen, so it's easy for me to attract the younger people. And I found as well that I wanted to do that because I wanted to see where they are, and they are....it's just kind of natural for them, it's become a natural thing for them. They're more comfortable in a situation like this, than what they are in a church. They're more relaxed in a home environment, a relaxed environment, because they can, I think they kind of feel they can be themselves more ...

Ja, they are themselves. I find it very amazing, I thought it was going to be very difficult to try and run the cell, to start a junior cell well not a junior cell but you know, a youth cell. Because of, you know, I'm the Pastor as well, they're not going to open up to me and amazingly they've just opened up, they are more at home around me, it's amazing. I think it's also just my boys being a part of it as well, which has helped them...

Yes, I think it's more that the whole church mentality had to be changed. Which is very difficult for the older folk that have been set in their ways to now even change to what we've done. I think it has been fairly difficult for them, but we've done the process nice and gently, we haven't forced and we haven't shut down....even this what I've done with the Thursday night, it's not like I'm coming to them and saying you've got to break into a smaller group. This is not a cell concept of what we're trying to do. I've left that, for the reason that I can see they're enjoying, I can see how much they're getting from it, and it's not also limiting them from getting involved in another cell group if they want to, ... a number of them do, not all of them, but a number of them do.

It was quite common for the cell-church model to be more readily accepted by the youth and young adults of the church. This comment by one of the interviewees captures a typical experience:

Young adults took to it within those five months, one home cell multiplied I think two times. Young adults. And they take it, they run with it, they love it. And so the young adults became one of the biggest groups in the church, just like that, overnight.

Not only was a diversity in age, and differences between age groupings more difficult to handle, but leaders also found that defining generational groups and then dealing with these more homogenous groups was helpful, and often formed the basis for configuring cell groups. Commenting on the sense of community that arises between people who are of a similar generation, one interviewee explained that this was due to them confronting similar crises together, and more or less at the same time. These crises, which were part of life, included the birth of children, moving home, starting a new job, seeing children off to school or university for the first time, mourning the death of a loved one, and so forth. He noted that these crises of life helped to build a sense of community between them:

There are crises that people go through and they connect in those crises. And not necessarily a crisis as in a ... one night event, but it is the crisis of developing, of inviting new members of the family into the family, children coming into the home. ... When you have got five or six families that are going through this stage of being a family, there is a sense of part of the community is “Hey we are all going through this together”.

By the same line of reasoning he explained why he found it more difficult to bring together people of different generations. He noted that the personal level of community that was desired, changed over one’s lifetime. That is, older people want to scale down their involvement and talk about what they have already done: “Their idea of community is an event that happened in the past, and they ... bask in the afterglow of the community but they are not community anymore.”

Also, older people were more inclined to talk, but not act, and did not always attend the cell group meetings, and if they did, wanted others to adopt the old formula that had worked for them. On the other hand, younger people were still keen to engage in community interaction, and were more supportive of the cell group. The efficacy of multi-generational cells was questioned in the light of this, since it required people to be open minded, and to be prepared to include dissenting “minorities” in their groups.

In general then, leaders encountered the most problems with the older generation of the church when it came to implementing the cell-church model. Although generational groups may have been more cohesive than multigenerational ones, leaders still recognised the importance of having all generations represented in the overall profile of the church. To illustrate this point, the same minister who described the value of a generation dealing with crises together, also noted that the church he was involved with was literally missing a generation of people in their thirties who had emigrated. He explained the effect of this as follows:

There is a sense of dealing with life together. But if you are missing the generations, then new people want to come in but they see that there is no one who is like me who I can connect with. So the church can actually die ...

Another leader suggested that to develop a true sense of community, the church needed to confront generational divides. In some churches this was achieved through creating multi-generational cell groups, or by forming groups strictly on geographic lines that thereby enforced diversity in age. He described how one way he was doing this was to involve the whole family, including children, in the elder’s meeting:

[W]e’re a family church, and when people come to church the first thing they do is to split them up you know, according to age. I mean clearly that’s just playing games you know. So when we bring a kid into our Elder’s meeting you know, we’re addressing something deep.

Other than age or generational differences, differences in race, ethnicity and/or language also featured prominently at the collective membership level. Particularly when cells groups

multiplied, or churches were planted, leaders were sensitive to racial composition, but interestingly, leaders seemed to have fewer problems in dealing with the racial profile of the church, compared to the issues arising as a result of age differences. What was emphasised though, was the importance of creating heterogeneous groups along racial lines. That is, racial diversity within groups was encouraged. This was partly used as a strategy of dealing with the historical racial divisions in the church in South Africa, by actively promoting non-racialism. With many churches becoming increasingly multi-racial in their composition, it was seen as inevitable and desirable that this diversity be reflected in the small groups as well. One interviewee remarked:

We have deliberately broken with Ralph Neighbour and even the G-12 guys who say to you that homogenous groups are the way to grow. We have deliberately said we don't see that Biblically. We feel that in the South African context, to do it that way is to perpetuate divisions and to prevent us from breaking down things [that cause division].

One church recognised the value of making a “prophetic statement” by breaking down class and racial barriers between members and being a “church for all nations”. That is, they recognised that their members were not in community because they shared the same interests, but purely “because of Christ”. For a long period, the racial composition of the church was more or less equally balanced between mainly Afrikaans-speaking whites, Afrikaans-speaking “Coloureds” and mainly Xhosa-speaking Africans. However, when one of the key leaders in the African section of the church left, a large part of this group also left the church, and they began to realise that they had been a “Multi-cultural church in assembly, but not in community”. Thereafter they recognised that they needed to work harder in future to rebuild a multicultural church that would be a truly multicultural community.

Finally, there is community among the members within the numerous *small groups* existing in the church. Several leaders described their aspirations for this level of community:

I really see small groups as the incarnation of Christ in the world today. So the body takes on flesh where two people come together in Christ's name. ... We are also deliberately looking at becoming a more

multicultural church. So for me, the best way that is going to happen is in small groups.

A sense of community, belonging, care ...Not so much for teaching, evangelism or things like that. More a matter of a social thing.

And my thinking was that a church, a home church ... It's a micro of the macro. You know, it's a little section. It's a small church of the big church, and the understanding was that everything the big church has must be there in the small church. And to me it was not even a question of numbers.

4.3.3.4 Managing tensions between the breadth and depth of community

Leaders recognised the pastoral function of cells in developing depth of community and the evangelical function in expanding its breadth.

But to me, cell life is not optional. It is the only tool that I can understand to be Biblical, [and] effectively organising the church in such a way that it will evangelise *and* take care of the flock.

However, breadth and depth, by their conflicting natures, are often held in tension. For example, a greater breadth of community tended to reduce the depth of community. This suggests that another dimension of the shape of community is that it is relatively fixed in its "volume", or at least very difficult to increase. In spite of this, while recognising their pastoral function, some leaders continued to emphasise the importance of the cell group in carrying out an evangelistic mandate:

You know if you take, where the Bible speaks of the Lord of the harvest. Send the guys, the seventy out two by two. He sent them to homes you know, so to me in my mind, the mission field. I don't see a big tent [where] I am somewhere with a mass of people. I see a lot of homes that we have to enter. So for me homes should be the focus.

Very much. And so I think in my mind as a leader I would say that the structure, the way the church can be organised to most effectively care for it and to most effectively reach out and infiltrate homes in the community is through homes, through cells.

However there were other leaders who had resigned themselves to the fact that their cell groups were not developing breadth of community, and probably would not in the future, either:

[W]e've wanted to use cells as the prime evangelical tool, and it's proved not to be the case. ... The reality is most of the evangelised people do come in through the main front door of the Sunday services, and that's just how it is you know."

This tension between breadth and depth is manifested in the strain between the pastoral and evangelical roles of churches that underlies a number of the other properties of sense of community, as well. In the cell-church context, it is evident in the various approaches to cell growth (e.g. Jethro model versus G-12) and their respective strengths and weaknesses. For example, in churches that used the Jethro-system, multiplication of cell groups was particularly difficult and traumatic for the members of the original cell. Perhaps the tension between breadth and depth was most evident at this point; when cell groups had to multiply. One interviewee described how this difficult situation was handled:

And by the way to multiply the cell is quite a skill as well. You don't say to people, like, "You are going with him and you are going with him". ... Prepare people for the multiplication. Get feedback. Get to pray. And then look at healthy connections between people and unhealthy ones. Healthy ones are open to people coming [in and are] more actively seeking to recruit new friends. Closed ones are self satisfied, very close, long-term friendships, where people are not that open to making new friends. [It is] not a good community because it is closed.

Okay. So in ... a cell, [where there are] these long-term, deep relations, I tend to separate them in the multiplication. It causes havoc. But as I say to them, "If the basis of your relationship is sustained by a once a night meeting, once a week," I say, "you don't really have a deep relationship. And most of you guys are going out to movies together. You are walking on the mountain together. You are keen to go on holiday together ... What you need to understand is that this is about fishing [for people]. You have got those relationships ... Ninety percent of people out there don't have those relationships. Now frankly you have to be quitted from this cell [i.e. separated during multiplication]". I am just blunt, and after thirteen years you can be. ... "I will put you in a place where you have to make new friends. And then you will realise the distance you have come and you [will] treasure your old relationships because you are kind of distanced. But you will come over to new ones and bring those people into that kind of depth of relationship that you enjoy". So you turn a negative into a positive by helping them to understand that they do actually have something outside a cell much deeper than just cell.

4.3.4 Congruence of community

Congruence of community refers to the degree to which a coherent "organizational culture" is manifested through the various levels of community. One interviewee expressed this as follows: "[W]e wanted to be a community in a community for the community". This is not to say that the sense of community will be the same or uniform at various levels. In fact, it was generally accepted that there would be differences; that for example the level of intimacy in a cell group would be greater than it was in a congregational setting. However, these differences needed to be complementary and synergistic. It also refers to the degree of congruence between the stated purpose, the organizational processes activated to attain that purpose, and the behaviour ultimately manifested. In this sense, it is an indicator of the progress being made with the transition.

While primarily understood as a characteristic across the various levels of community in the church, congruence is also applicable at a single level, such as the collective membership level, as discussed previously. For example, reference was made to the two camps represented by the cell groups and the traditional structures, and to the challenge of leading several generations. It is also applicable at the cell group level. In churches that had adopted a “hands off” approach by not laying down too many stipulations as to how the cell meeting should be run, a great deal of diversity of cells had been produced. Some of these cells were more evangelical while others were more pastoral in their focus; some were described as more charismatic and informal while yet others were more traditional and formal. Where such diversity was encouraged, it was then vital for leaders to give more careful attention to the placement of new members in cells, so that there was a match. If they had made a mistake in this placement process, leaders often found that these recently placed members did not remain in the group for long and then became averse to cells.

As an indication of progress with the transition, a lack of congruence could also be a signal to leaders of problems with the transition or with the adoption of a cell-based church model, sometimes prompting leaders to explore other models. One interviewee described his experience of this, and how the church had now abandoned the idea of developing a pure cell-church in favour of the model of Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church, where a wide range of types of small groups, and seeker sensitive services are two of the key characteristics (Gillmor, 2000). At the time of this interview, the church was planning the launch of a new meeting that was seeker-sensitive and targeted at the youth:

Ja, [the cell-church model is] not gonna work here. You know, it's created a bit of a first-class second-class type citizenship in the kingdom here... The in-group out-group type thing. That's created a bit of tension in the church. ... I don't want to do away with cells, but I really want to be more inclusive in our cell group development. You know cell has tended to be a bit exclusive. ... So I'm looking at a model now where we are hoping to be more inclusive in a small group Willow type model.

4.4 Stability of Community

Stability of community is the second, and secondary property of sense of community. Stability of community is mainly about the movement of people across the organizational boundary that affects the *membership size* and *membership composition* of the church.

The dimensions of membership size range from increasing membership numbers to maintaining, or even losing members. Underlying the net numerical effect as measured by membership size, is the movement of people in and out of the organization. That is, even if the total number of members is constant, there could be both an outflow and an influx of people, or alternatively a stable membership.

An interesting aspect of this movement of people is the role played by leaders when dealing with an outflow of people. This role can sometimes involve the releasing of people, while at other times leaders attempted to keep them. The following two incidents illustrate some of the ways in which leaders dealt with these departures.

In the first case, the leader described the discomfort that people began to feel as the preaching began to emphasise the cell model, and how this ultimately led to their departure from the church:

When we started hitting the real issues, and of course now we're preaching values – seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness - where are your priorities, your time priorities, your talent priorities? So people become uncomfortable, and the more uncomfortable they became, we didn't deliberately set out to make them uncomfortable, but the value preaching does that obviously. And when you rock people's comfort zones they become vociferous, and so at one stage there was quite a lot of noise from this small party, but I think at the moment they're actually quite silent because I don't think that they can ignore what's happening in the church. The testimonies are too overwhelming,

and so at the moment they kind of just say “I accept that, I’m happy with that, I don’t feel threatened by that” and you know really, if they’re not happy here, they can move to a typical [name of the denomination] church and feel comfortable there.

In the second case, the leader reasoned with people, but was not prepared to compromise:

[I] lost them from the church. ... They didn’t like what they were hearing. The old ways were what they understood. A paradigm shift just wasn’t part of their vocabulary. They didn’t see the vision. It just wasn’t going to work for them.

Was it an unpleasant departure, or was ...

No, it was a case of “We don’t think you should do this”. [In response] I said, “Well, then you are going to have to find a church, that’s going to do what you want. Because we don’t want unpleasantness, and I want you happy. You’ve been faithful, but I can’t veer from what God is showing me”. There was no doubt in my heart that I had to do this.

Another (more positive) form of outflow is in those instances where new churches are planted, thereby reducing the membership of the existing church. The experience of one particular church was described as follows:

We have one home church for example [where] out of that experience we planted a church within a matter of months. ... We planted a church because there was one home church that was just incredibly growing at such a rate, I mean the first meeting [there was] ... about 20 people. You know, seemingly they really were canvassing, and they were really aggressive, inviting people. Second meeting they come, “We are about 30 people”, third meeting, “We are about 40 something”. I thought, “Gee, are you in a house, you can never be 40 something.” They said “No, we are in this big hall” ... [I replied], “Okay, you know, all-right, this doesn’t sound like a church to me, [that is a] home church concept. It’s almost like a church-church celebration, you know, or

congregation.” ... [T]hat family was so vibrant and they were so really into this thing ... And I thought “This thing is functioning” ... I thought, “Let’s release them in the church. Let’s plant them, because they have the potential, because number one they’re in [a distant geographic] territory.”

Besides the quantitative component of stability reflected in the size of the church, there are qualitative aspects relating to the stability of the demographic profile of the membership. That is, while the church size seems constant, there is an inflow and outflow of people, and this began to be reflected in the demographics. While many churches have experienced greater diversity in their racial composition as a result of the demise of Apartheid, one church in particular experienced a dramatic change in racial profile from being predominantly White to becoming predominantly Black in its racial composition. This is how it happened:

Our church here used to be one hundred percent White. So when [the previous minister] was here, he started receiving the nations here, started having messages about needing to interact with other nationalities and stuff. He himself was a White man who was open to inter-racial fellowship. Then you know, the black folks came ... You know, when they come, they come in their numbers, you know you open a little door they come all ... the church was a nice mix, but still predominantly White. But then administrative issues came along that caused some problems internally, and [the minister] felt it was time for him also to move on. When he left, the church was really de-stabilised

...

Given the problems in the church and being without a minister, many people began to leave. However, the political context also contributed to the change in racial profile. That is, coinciding with the political changes in the country, the region in which the church was located, experienced an exodus of businesses that had previously benefited from government subsidies by being located there. This led to the departure of many skilled White people from

the area, and an influx of black people as a result of the repealing of the Group Areas Act, which had reserved the area for Whites only.

There is an interrelationship between the two main properties of sense of community, namely form and stability. With this movement of people as represented by the stability of community, the form of community will be affected. In particular, the quality and structure components of the nature of contacts could change, as group sizes change or these groups become more homogeneous or heterogeneous. Secondly, the overall member orientation may be affected as people of various outlooks or paradigms come into the church while others leave. Thirdly, the shape of community will also be affected. For example, if the composition of groups is changing, the breadth of the group will be altered, and the depth of the group will have to be rebuilt. There is a reciprocal relationship between the form and stability of sense of community. While changes in the properties of stability affect the form of community, on the other hand, as the form of sense of community changes, so stability of community will be affected.

4.5 The Current and Ideal State of Community

In the previous sections of this chapter, the construct of sense of community has been described. Implicit in this discussion, there were specific properties of sense of community that leaders had indicated they were not satisfied with, and were hoping to enhance during transitioning to a cell-based church. The essence of this was captured in the sentiments of one interviewee who stated: “I would argue very strongly that church is community. That if you don’t have community, you don’t have to have a church”. This aspect is addressed in this final section of the chapter, where the properties of sense of community are used to clarify the gap between the current and ideal state of the church, that leaders were hoping to close through the cell-church transition.

Firstly, from the perspective of the nature of contacts, it was recognised that the quality of contacts in the church were too impersonal. Greater intimacy was needed to build meaningful community. Secondly, looking at member orientation, church leaders were disturbed about

members having an apparent lack of concern about the relevance and impact of the church beyond its boundaries. The performance of the church in this regard was of great concern to them, especially regarding service and evangelism, but this concern was often not widely shared by the rest of the church. Leaders recognised that this would require changing the focus and role of members so that they were more externally oriented, and actively contributed to the church's overall functioning, and specifically with outreach and service to the local society. Finally, there were some church leaders who felt that the church was either stagnating, or not growing at the rate it should. This can be related to the breadth and stability of sense of community. Here the appeal of the cell-church model lay in its potential as a vehicle for church growth.

It should be noted at this point that many leaders recognized that the typical member of their church did not live in community, naturally. This seemed to be the case particularly among White South Africans. Therefore sense of community was something that had to be driven, because it was not part of the culture. The transition therefore involved changing cultures from being individualistic to more collective/community focused, which was seen to be a more Biblical perspective. In the words of one of the interviewees:

I believe [cells is] a concept in the Bible. It's a way people have a group. They have to get into community. That's the way we love each other, transform each other, help each other. It's in a close community, kind of a small group with some friends. People who have to speak into your life. Want to help you. You have to get networks of people around you. You have to. It's a Biblical concept.

In the following chapter, the focus shifts to the actions of the leaders and the measures taken to transition the church.

CHAPTER 5

THE TRANSITION PROCESS

No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out, and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, "The old is better."

(Luke 5: 36-39 in the New International Version Bible)

Anyone interested in planned social change would be well advised to recognize two facts of life. First, despite all the claims of many, relatively little is known about how to achieve predictable change. Second, much of what is known will not work.

(Schaller, 1972, p. 11)

The concept of sense of community is a multifaceted one, and was addressed in the previous chapter. There it became apparent that the manner, in which the ideal state of sense of community is conceptualised, differs from church to church. In this chapter, sense of community serves as part of the background to being able to better understand how leaders' actions bring about a change in the sense of community. The aim then of this chapter is to describe how leaders go about cell-church transitioning, and how this affects the sense of community.

The actions of leaders can be clustered as *searching* activities, *influencing* activities and *configuring* activities that occur in the *initiating*, *implementing*, *monitoring* and *modifying* stages of the transitioning or change process. In this chapter the process of change is

discussed, while the following chapter provides a description of the leadership activities involved in transitioning. The process of leading a cell-church transition showed much variance, which is partly explained by the patterns of leadership observed. These patterns will be dealt with in Chapter Seven.

5.1 The Transition Process

In this chapter a generic process of leading change is described, attempting to present a composite description of this process. Stages in this composite process are *initiating* change, *implementing* change, and *monitoring and modifying* change. The stage of initiating change consists of *dissatisfaction, search, discovery, exploration and learning*, and finally, *deciding*. Implementation involves *obtaining member commitment, preparation and the launch*. Having implemented the change, the initiative was monitored to see whether the change was successful, and modifications were made if needed. Two themes closely related to the various stages of transitioning are the extent of adoption versus indigenisation, and the pacing of the transition. These aspects are discussed at the end of the chapter.

While the transition has a number of stages, the process should not be perceived as strictly linear. Rather, this process can be viewed as one cycle of change occurring in sequence and in parallel with many others that occur over the lifetime of the church as it responds to church trends and/or environmental forces. To illustrate, if the cell-church transition is viewed as an organizational design change, it is quite likely that after the transition, other design changes will be undertaken, some of them detracting from the intents of the cell-church model. In my research, this was evident in some churches where the leadership had become dissatisfied with the cell-church model and had begun to explore alternative small-group models and to initiate these changes.

5.2 Initiating Change

Leaders' initiating of change begins with the search for direction and culminates in a decision of the direction that is agreed to by the leadership of the church. This involves the following sub-stages: *Dissatisfaction, Search, Discovery, Exploration and learning*, and *Deciding*.

5.2.1 Dissatisfaction

A leader's interest in determining a new direction for the church arose as a result of an awareness of the effects of changes happening within South Africa, dissatisfaction with the church's current level of performance, and/or as a result of a process of continuously trying to improve the church's functioning. In some cases this sense of dissatisfaction could be understood in relation to the political transition occurring in the country at the time. Many churches were grappling with trying to redefine the role of the church in post-Apartheid South Africa. In this post-Apartheid era, churches were experiencing increased racial diversity of membership as residential areas became more racially integrated. Other churches had developed an aging profile as a result of the emigration of younger members, so that there was effectively a younger generation missing from the church. One church had very few people younger than 35 years of age. The leader was concerned that: "The natural successors in a third generation church are missing because of the political change in the country."

In other cases, leaders expressed their disillusionment in the inability of the latest fads to produce results. One leader expressed his dissatisfaction as follows:

I had grown totally frustrated with the so called PBD [Programme Based Design] approach, you know, and having been in the ministry for a few decades you eventually get just so disillusioned by buying into this or buying into that [fad]. ... [A]nd you know I nibbled at some, but I just felt that none of them satisfied, and I was really looking for a basic paradigm, a basic structure that would integrate things in the church. In other words, you're not darting off in this direction or darting off in another direction. You really want, the way I put it sometimes, you need a skeleton on which you can hang flesh, so that this bit of flesh is not competing with that bit of flesh. And then I think just general disillusionment with the lack of growth and personal growth, and growth in the church.

Another lamented the underperformance of the church that he led:

[W]e were a totally under-achieving church, in terms of potential. And also, I think the other problem was that we were lulled by the large numbers in this church, into a sort of sleep that all was well. But if you really looked under the surface, you would soon realise that the Church of the size – we had twelve groups, we've got some ministries - but we are really not making much difference ... in the larger community. It's quite clear that we couldn't continue as we were ... to continue to lull ourselves to sleep... Ja, I think that the leaders were beginning to read, and the ministers were reading and clearly we could see that things were shifting.

I think that part of the political dynamics of the country had a lot to do with it. It was quite clear that we needed to re-position ourselves in a position really against the whole Apartheid thing, and then the peace thing you know, around the early nineties. We realised that we had to re-position ourselves for the new South Africa. Clearly, the old way of doing business was no longer appropriate. These were all factors that played in our minds. So yes, we looked at what was happening, we read, we studied and prayed, retreated and all sorts of things. But certainly, underneath it all there was a sense of disquiet that all wasn't well.

Along with the social transformation occurring in the post-Apartheid era, a particular aspect that was affecting the functioning of the church was an increased level of crime. Crime as well as busy lifestyles had affected the willingness and ability of people to attend church meetings and activities, while household security measures such as high walls and security complexes had limited the church's access to people through cold-calling mechanisms such as door-to-door evangelism. For example, one interviewee noted these effects on church attendance:

I don't know if it's the whole South African thing now, but you know in years past, I would fill up a church in the evening and kind of have a small group in the morning, now I have the main body in the morning, and half the church in the evening. So the whole thing has switched now, and...

People don't want to travel so much at night?

They don't, and I think it's also a security thing, the whole thing of getting out at dark. The whole thing of where we are in South Africa at the moment. So folks find it much more easy to come out in the morning than what they do in the evenings, so it's kind of a struggle ... I put it down to being, you know, possibly a crime thing or a night thing, or people not wanting to come out. People find it easy just to attend one service and their cell, you know. They find that's enough ... Life, I think, has become busy as well. People are busy. People work ... six, seven days a week, many people do, you know. So they're looking for time for family. So I kind of put it down to that.

In sum, besides searching for a basic approach to leading the church, this sense of dissatisfaction was in response to the realisation among leaders that the church was no longer as relevant as it should be, or was not making much impact on society; and that society in turn, was negatively affecting the church's functioning. Thus, because of being out of alignment with its environment, organizational change became a pressing need.

Referring to sense of community, it is apparent that the dissatisfaction that leaders typically experienced was largely related to the member orientation and stability sub-properties. In particular, leaders were concerned that the members of the church were too inwardly focused, the shape of community lacked breadth, and that the church was lacking in relevance and impact. These concerns often arose in the face of a changing membership composition and sometimes a loss of members.

5.2.2 Search

Leaders tended to be quite aware of trends and developments in churches. However, when they became discontented with the current state of the church they began a more active and focused search for ways of achieving greater relevance and impact. Typical searching activities included reading books, attending conferences, speaking to other people in ministry, praying through issues and ideas, as well as trying out different ideas in a process of trial and error.

Sometimes various initiatives that had been introduced either failed to realise their potential or created other problems. In one instance, a church introduced a training course to assist members discover their gifts. Thereafter, they were allocated to particular departments of the church so that these gifts could be exercised. As more and more people went through the training, the departments began to find they had more people than they could accommodate and utilise. As they were about to redirect their efforts and try out an evangelism programme, the leadership experienced God telling them to stop what they were doing and become a church patterned after the description in the Book of Acts, in chapters two and four. This ultimately led them to embrace the cell-church model.

Another interviewee traced the stages that their church had been through already, culminating in the focus on the cell-church transition:

[W]e were a church that has been through various transitions. The first thing that we went through was the cultural change. ... In other words we were a sort of a homogenous church. Which was basically a White church that over the last years has started to change. We have to take that into account. Furthermore, we had some two major shifts in terms of ... leadership. ... That also brought some changes. We also were wrestling with becoming a church with a social element. Being involved with HIV/AIDS and community outreach and all that stuff. We started a ministry school as well. The church planted and we planted several churches. ... I think we are in a place now where it is

dawning on us that if we can consistently maintain and grow the church ... the staff, would have to channel 80% of our time into the cell-church. And then the 20% in specialised ministry ...

While the searching stage was about trying to discover how to be aligned and responsive to the external environment so as to be most relevant to society, it was as much about trying to discern what they believed to be the will of God for the church. This involved a great deal of prayer, particularly among the church leaders, often spanning several months or even years. On the topic of prayer, one leader's comments emphasise the enquiring nature of this prayer:

Henry Blackeby - he's well known for a course called 'Experiencing God'. And look it's common stuff, stuff you know but he just puts it in a way which you kind of think, 'Wow!' He says the typical question is we say 'God, what's your plan for my life?' or in the church situation, 'God, what's Your plan for my church? Give me a vision for this church'. Where he says it the other way round because that's the wrong question. Because there the emphasis is on me. The emphasis should be on God. So it's not 'God, what is Your plan for *my* life?', it's 'God, what is Your plan? I will change my life to fit in with Your plan.'

5.2.3 Discovery

Many of the leaders in their quest to find direction for the church, identified specific events or "Kairos moments" that had occurred, and which led them to discover a new course for their church. These events were often interpreted as divine interventions. For example, one leader described how he believed God gave them the word "koinonia" in a prayer meeting, through which they came to realise that they needed to focus on home cells. Another interviewee described the effect of reading a book outlining the cell-church concept, and recognising this as God's prompting:

And then I just saw a headline somewhere with Ralph Neighbour's book, the very first one that he wrote. 'Where do we go from here?' And I read it and I really felt that it was a kind of a divine thing.

Although I had lots of questions, I kind of had a gut feeling ... what you've been asking God for – here is a key. This in many ways is it.

Another leader was evangelistically disposed, and was therefore most concerned about the Great Commission and how the whole church could fulfil this. He described how attending a church conference had brought about a complete change in his leadership philosophy as he was exposed to the cell-church model and given a vehicle for fulfilling the Great Commission. He described the event as a personal mind change: “God did it. Something birthed afresh in my heart. I now live, eat and sleep cells.” Attending a conference was also the defining moment in the following case:

[A]nd while I was there walking around, I was up in Rustenburg, God [began] to deal with me personally, telling me that the time had come for change, and that I would speak to someone who would show me the way. And I thought, “Ja, ja, ja”. Anyway, I went for a walk and I walked up to two guys from one of the churches. As far as I was concerned they were talking rubbish, so I walked on and found the next two. You know, you walk from group to group. And eventually this Black pastor ... came and sat next to me under the tree, and started talking about his church, and God witnessed with me: “This is the man I must listen to”, and he had just transitioned.

5.2.4 Exploration and learning

When they first discovered the cell-church model, leaders usually had little knowledge about it. Consequently, a process of exploration and learning followed the discovery. At this stage a wider representation of the church became involved in the process. Typically the church leadership became involved early on, and in some cases members of the congregation were invited to participate in the learning process. The initial stages of this group's exploration and learning could be likened to a study group familiarising themselves with the concepts and materials. Often these groups developed into prototype cell groups, as they experimented with and piloted the cell based model. In doing so, learning was expanded from book learning to

also include experiential learning. One interviewee described this stage, when members of the church were invited to participate in the exploration and learning:

We're going to take a journey together. We're going to investigate ... all the books that Ralph [Neighbour] had ever written. Okay. And I went through them, and we'd been going through this part of the *Shepherd's Guide Book* and I started preparing lectures from that. You see I knew so little, that I didn't know what to take first. And this group that were interested, every Sunday afternoon I met with them, drew them around myself and started teaching them what was in this book.

One leader who became convinced that, "This was what the New Testament [church] did"; began to read. He then took the ideas in various books to the church executive and shared it with them. He indicated that it was a slow process for them to grasp what it was about. He tried to get them to read the books, but needed to get them interested first in order to encourage further reading. One way of stimulating their interest was in getting them to attend a cell conference. Another had less trouble persuading the elders to read:

I'm quite a vociferous reader. I started reading around that and contacting Ralph [Neighbour] and so on. And then I passed it to one of my elders and I said 'You've got to read this'. And he read it and then he came and said 'Wow'. And then we kind of got everybody in the leadership to read the book. Well most. And over a period of months ... we kind of felt for us at the time the Lord was saying to us 'This is for you'.

Looking at this exploration and learning process from the perspective of the sense of community construct, it is apparent that the nature of contacts within the church began to change with the establishment of study groups or prototype cell groups. Particularly when the groups were broad-based, it often led to a change of member orientation among those involved in these groups as they developed a new understanding of what church was about and their part in its functioning. With the strong church-growth thrust underlying much of the cell-

church literature, this material often raised to awareness the church's lack of relevance and impact, and also suggested that the solution to developing this property of sense of community, lay in the cell-church model:

I think that J-graph [showing exponential growth] really made those guys get excited. ... Because [of the potential to] structure for multiplication. Up 'til that time we had additional growth And you know theoretically that multiplication became very attractive. In terms of, "Hey, we can actually reach the goals that we have set for ourselves" because if cells keep on multiplying.

So I think that yes the caring, Pastors were - you know the traditional Pastors - were overworked in the old system. So this was becoming a very attractive solution to a lot of those problems or even to achieving that role. ... Yes I think that maybe, as I say, one of the things that became very attractive was the whole training, discipling, mentoring.

5.2.5 Deciding

At some stage during the discovery or exploration stages, a decision was made to embark on the cell-church transition, but there was much variety in how the decision was reached. The interviewees recognised that the process of searching for and ultimately deciding upon a direction for the church involves three main role players – God, the church leadership, and the church membership. While they indicated that there was much praying to discern what they believed to be God's will, the process of coming to a decision sometimes took the form of a three-way dialogue or "trialogue" between these three parties, where there was broad-based participation and engagement with the membership of the church. In other cases, the members were not involved and a prayerful leadership decision was communicated to the church members. That is, as a third party, the church members were informed of the decision, rather than playing a role in making it.

The variety in decision-making approaches was partly reflected in the denominational character of a church, and/or the way in which its leadership operated. In the Dutch Reformed church, the idea had to be approved by the church board (“Kerkraad”). With Baptists, the members had to make the decision, as it is governed congregationally. In other instances, the senior church minister was the primary decision maker. There were some cases where the discovery itself involved a decision by the leader that this was the right thing to do, but then a broader consensus-seeking process with leadership and/or the church membership followed. The following quotes illustrate some of the variety in the decision making process:

One interviewee described their departure from the denomination’s convention in decision-making:

The traditional [Denomination’s] view is kind of democratic ... vote. What happens is that you may have a congregation of half committed Christians - and sometimes, uninformed Christians - taking votes about major issues. So we now try and get the balance you know. We start with leadership from senior pastor, there’s a circle of discussion with the elders and the leadership of the church, cell leaders, and from there we go to the members and we share with them and honestly as transparently as we can. And then usually they will confirm. I mean I can’t think of any major issues where they have not confirmed, what the leadership feels to be the leading of the Lord. We really don’t [ask] them just to rubber stamp [what we have already decided]. But at the same time it’s your leadership who maybe are in the best situation to think about these things, and to seek the Lord’s will.

Another sought commitment to decisions through consultation:

I jumped in and I realised that this is what God was trying to talk to me about. So I thoroughly researched it from all angles, being the sort of person who never jumps in until I’m sure of everything. And I brought it to the church and I said to them ‘Those of you who want to know

what God has shared with me, and what the results of my research are, be at church on Friday night’.

There was not only diversity in who participated in the decision making process and how they participated, but there was also variety in the degree of certainty expressed about the decision, affecting how it was communicated. So in some cases decision-making was more provisional and tentative in nature, as the following two quotations illustrate:

I wouldn’t say ‘I say God is saying the following’. I would say ‘We have discerned as a congregation that God is leading us in this way’. ... through a very long painful process of groups getting together, consultation with the congregation, different meetings, AGMs, different ideas being tested, prayer meetings. So [it is] a long process. ... But you know we believe, because we have now prayed, and we have thought, and we have argued, and we have thought, and God is calling us to be what we called a Biblically functioning community. ... and the elders feel it in their bones and the colleagues feel it in their bones.

I wouldn’t say: ‘I say God is saying the following’. I would say ‘We have discerned as a congregation that God is leading us in this way.’ That’s the big difference.

In other cases there was more certainty about the decision and it was expressed more confidently and emphatically:

What he did then, he seriously started praying about what to do to have a shepherding system. He went to the Cape 1993 ... in the beginning of the year ... Went, ministered there, found a book by the name of *Where do we go from here?* by Dr Ralph Neighbour. Someone advised him to get the book, to read the book. He came into the office with the book between his fingers like that and he said the following words. I will never forget it. He said, ‘This book contains the vision of our church for the future. God said.’ And when he said those words we knew that

God had said. But he also added ‘I don’t have a clue what is written in this book. ... you take chapter so and so, ... you take chapter so and so.’ He gave chapters to each of us. We had an evening [where] we presented it to the leadership and unanimously the leadership said ‘This is of God.’ We took it and we did not have a classical transition period ... where we say you need at least a five year period to transition your church. Based on the strength of character and integrity and the ability of [the senior pastor] and the trust we had in him, we took his word and that was it.

The variation in the process of decision making and the degree of certainty expressed about the decision is related to the leadership philosophy that church leaders have, particularly regarding the concept of vision and how it is handled. As illustrated in the following quotations, some leaders saw a direct relationship between their personal vision and the vision of the church, while others saw themselves as custodians of a vision essentially owned by the church:

The church is there to help me to live out the calling that God has for me... The vision and [the leader] are the same thing.

So I really become at best the custodian of that vision. It’s not my vision. It’s God’s vision. I’m not the one who discerns the thing. I am the one who wrestles with the others to try and work it. Therefore my leadership is about saying ‘Well God has granted us ... this vision’. ... I am talking about a 4, 5, 6 year process of discerning a way. We fight with each other, disagree. This and that and the next thing. ... we look at church indicators. The indicators are of course your worship attendance, and your income, your groups of ministry. They all show in the right direction, so that is great. So we are seeing support. Folks are voting with their feet and their wallets and their hearts, and so on.

The timing of decisions and when they were communicated also showed some variance. One minister had been advised to make the transition as soon as possible, while others felt that there were times that they had to put decisions on hold. For example, one leader was transferred to a church where his predecessor had forcefully initiated the cell-church transition. With mounting dissent in the church his predecessor had been transferred elsewhere. While personally favouring a cell model, being aware of the recent history of the church, he announced that he would not be making any major changes for at least six months:

[M]y motto was simple. I just said ‘For six months I’m not going to make any changes. All I’m going to do is talk to people.’ That’s all I wanted to do, and I did that.

Generally it was advisable to examine the church’s readiness for change, both in terms of change per se, as well as readiness for the cell-church transition, in particular. One interviewee who consults to churches explained how he first assesses the health of the church by using the Natural Church Development survey, for example, as an indicator of its readiness for change. If there are weak areas, he then advises or helps the church to address these, prior to embarking on the transition.

In examining the decision process from the perspective of sense of community, it is apparent that leaders could potentially start to positively affect the style of contacts in meetings by, for example, adopting a more participative approach as opposed to a directive one. In addition, through participation, those engaged in the decision-making process will better appreciate the member orientation in its current form as well as the ideal state aspired to through the transition. For example, they would begin to understand and possibly share the leader’s concern about relevance and impact, and would become aware of the need for the church’s members to fulfil more active and constructive roles.

5.3 The Process of Implementation

Once the direction was decided upon, leaders emphasised one of two broad approaches to initiating and implementing change, namely a relational approach of influencing people or a

structural one of configuring systems and structures. Influencing strategies are mainly focused on developing the member orientation component of community, while design and restructuring, largely affects the nature of contacts and shape of community. However, some of these strategies also have cross-impact effects.

Implementing actions begin with efforts to communicate the direction to the membership of the local church and encompass all subsequent actions that are intended to advance the direction agreed to. These actions involved three phases, namely *obtaining member commitment*, *preparation* and *the launch*.

5.3.1 Obtaining member commitment

Once the leadership had come to an agreement on the proposed new direction for the church, this was then communicated to the members of the church, sometimes to inform them, sometimes to obtain their commitment, and sometimes – where governance rested with the congregation - to get them to make the final decision. Some of the processes adopted to obtain commitment are illustrated in the following quotes:

We did a lot of praying about that, and we shared the concept with the church and went the normal sort of [denomination] route of moving from leadership to membership, getting their feel. And we, I think we got a kind of an 80% support base from the members, saying ‘Okay, we don’t understand all of it, but basically we like the direction.’

And from the book I had put together a few transparencies on the cell structure and how it works and what not. And I did not even get into the teaching, I just started sharing from the heart of what I felt God wanted to do with us.

Obtaining commitment was facilitated by three factors: informing the congregation, involving them in the decision making process and giving a choice. Involvement has already been discussed as part of initiating change, but the most common way of informing the church

members of the planned transition was to preach a series of sermons on the topic. Providing people with choices was instrumental to the prevention of active resistance. Consequently, participation in the cell structures was strongly encouraged, but also framed as optional. Furthermore, alternatives were provided or permitted. For example, in a Dutch Reformed church, a season of preaching on the proposed change was followed by members being given the option of remaining in the traditional Ward structure generic to Dutch Reformed churches, or being in cell-groups. Two hundred wanted to be in cells, and twenty of them offered to be leaders. The leadership took the large favourable response, and the fact that there was a large enough number volunteering to lead groups, as an indication that they were doing what they believed God wanted.

5.3.2 Preparation

Having reached a fairly broad basis of consensus, there was usually a period of preparation for the changeover to a cell-based system. This period of preparation, which involved changes to the nature of contacts, was largely focused on changing the member orientation component of sense of community, but also began to affect its shape. Key activities in this preparation phase included experimenting with prototype cell groups, as well as teaching and training. This time of preparation was most often characterised by extensive communication of vision and values, although in at least one case, the focus was on behavioural change with not even an announcement that change was underway.

Regarding experimenting with a prototype cell group, it was common practice to first form a single cell, which the senior minister led for a season. These prototypes did not operate as typical cell-groups, but would often function as learning groups, where the cell principles and practices were first explained and then tried out. In other words there was a strong emphasis on instructional training and correct cell-group facilitation and practice. As the training progressed, the group began to function more and more like the archetypal cell group was intended. Typically, the members of this prototype cell became leaders of the cell groups that were formed at a later stage. One interviewee's experience was as follows:

For the first year I formed a group [consisting of cell leaders] which I called the Alpha Cell. I met with them every Sunday. We discussed their problems, their heartaches and their joys and then once the first lot of multiplying took place that got a bit too big. So ... I formed a [second] supervisors' group who I meet with every Sunday.

In some instances, the church had small groups functioning already. Often these groups were closed down for a period of time – even three to four months, with the leaders being retrained to lead the groups according to cell-church principles, while the rest of the church members were catered for in some other way (e.g. a video series was held). When the groups were reopened, the leaders sometimes changed the composition of the groups. This was usually because they were trying to group people together who lived in the same geographic area in accordance with the Jethro model. This disruption of existing relationships was deeply resented.

On the other hand, where people were given some latitude to decide which cell group they wanted to attend, this was usually more readily accepted. This was achieved by, for example, putting up lists of the cell leaders and asking people to write their name on one of the lists, or alternatively, asking people to visit four different cell groups over a four week period before deciding which group they wanted to commit to. The problem here was the likelihood of launching groups of various sizes, and there was the risk that some leaders would not have sufficient members to run a cell group. The minister would then have to negotiate with people to switch cells so that all were adequately supported, or if this could not be realised, deal with the wounded ego and demoralisation of this leader.

Invariably, each cell group developed its own character, in keeping with the character of its leader. So, for example, groups led by someone who had a gift of evangelism, usually shaped a group that was active evangelistically, grew quickly and multiplied often.

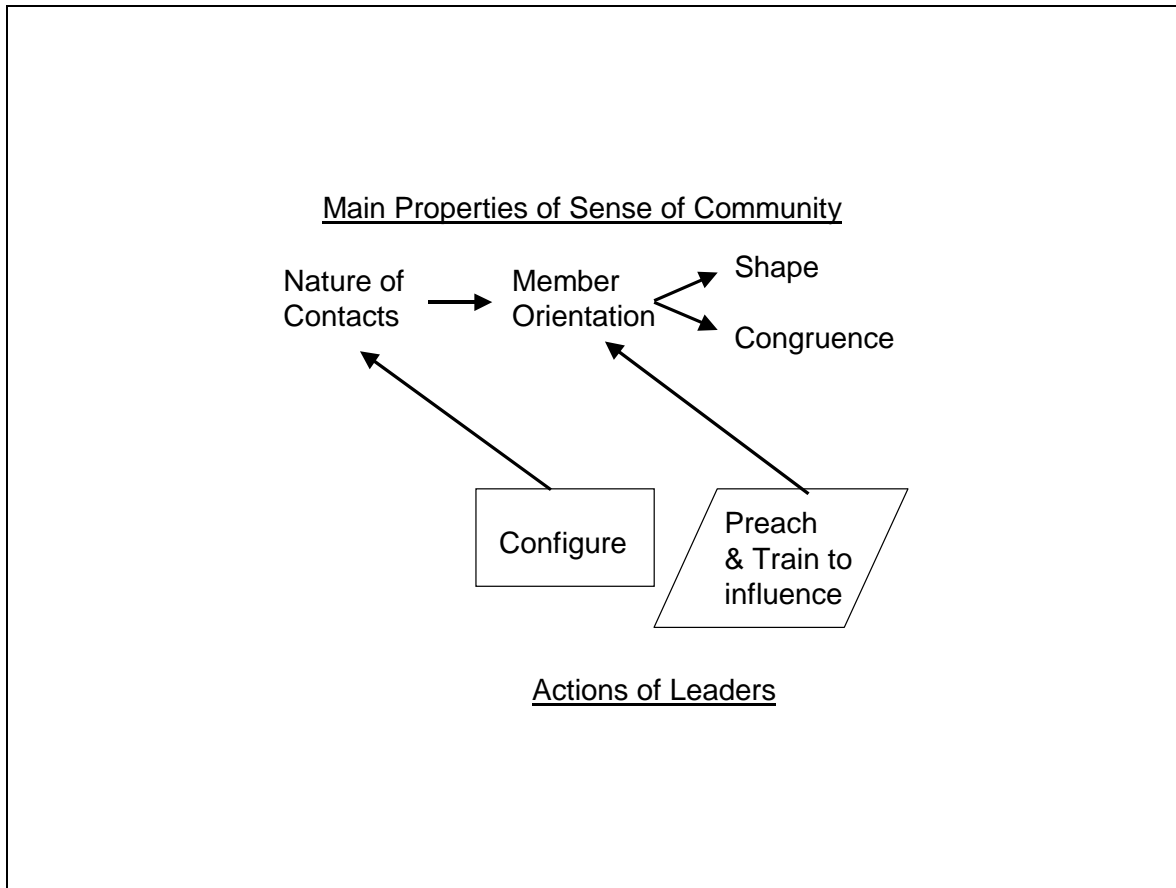
5.3.3 The launch

The launch of the official period of transition was usually characterised by the decentralising of church functioning to cell groups, and the closure of competing church programmes. In some instances this transition was a gradual, incremental process, where competing programmes were closed either when church members were not supporting them anymore, or when they were not seen to be serving a purpose any longer, or both. Often this situation arose with the growing success of the cell groups in catering for members' needs. However, in other more dramatic cases a "big bang" approach was followed. Here, competing programmes were virtually closed overnight, coinciding with the launch of cell groups, or it occurred over a predetermined and fixed time period - usually a year - and was referred to as a year of transition:

[S]o by the end of '99 we had finished our training and in 2000 we transitioned. We spent a year in transition. ... we started, and we said we are now transitioning. ... none of the old ways. We dropped every programme that was in the church at this point. ... we decided at the beginning of 2000 to make it or break, and I cut every programme. The youth fell away, the Sunday school fell away. There were no more ladies' organizations. Everything in our church was going to be cell-based. Since then we've built our children's' cell, youth cell, so we now have family, adults, young couples, youth, everything is now cell, and [in] the first year we started bringing in these extras, and by last year [2001] we did away with more things, and everything was cell-based. ... We broke all the old structures down and got rid of them.

Viewed from the perspective of sense of community, the launch stage primarily altered the nature of contacts within the church and member orientation, with these changes then filtering through to other properties of sense of community as illustrated in Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1
THE INFLUENCE ON SENSE OF COMMUNITY OF LEADER'S ACTIONS DURING IMPLEMENTATION



5.4 Monitoring and Modifying Processes

Monitoring is an ongoing process that runs parallel with the leadership actions undertaken during the transition process. Even the sense of dissatisfaction experienced by leaders prior to the discovery of the cell-church model, arose as a result of their monitoring of the church, and monitoring continued until well after the initial stages of implementation.

In some cases, this monitoring was intuitive, while in other cases it was more deliberate and pro-active in nature, with specific systems put in place to monitor progress. One interviewee suggested that the degree of monitoring was related to the gift of the senior minister. That is,

those who were gifted in administration were more likely to develop effective monitoring systems from the start. He was of the view that the Jethro model in particular, required the gift of administration, which he defined as “The ability to plan ahead in a way that makes people feel secure and want to follow you and yet also give attention to detail”. He had observed that some leaders embark on the transition without this administrative gift and consequently failed, because of the onerous administrative load that they neglected. In hindsight, he recognised his own weakness in this area, and that this lack of effective monitoring had contributed to an unsuccessful transition and his ultimate departure from the church. Another interviewee cautioned against the overemphasis on administration at the expense of flexibility:

We are administratively strong, but sometimes that administration gift can be so strong that it even stifles the spontaneity and the natural growth of a thing. ... You know, because it's so regulated, and that's my fear. At the same time I see the importance of that regulation, you know, because unfortunately human beings are beings of habit, so they need to develop a habit. They need to do certain things habitually, so that they are able to grow within those structures. At the same time you must allow, you know, the dynamicness of an organism, if you know what I am saying. So that it does not become a thing that is fixed, but it's like water, it's like fire, its like wind; you know...it's the spirit. You must allow that nature, the wild nature, just guide it. You know, you must allow that freeness, but you must guide it. Because I believe that's how you do God's things, because the moment you box things, and give them labels, you won't know when it is now your human wisdom and when it's God's wisdom. I know that God can work in both...use both human wisdom and His wisdom to accomplish His purpose. Still, I think that you are safer, because people change, organisations change, models change.

Leaders varied in what they were monitoring. Some simply noted the mood in the church, or kept records of trends in attendance (i.e. Sunday services and mid-week cell meetings) and

monthly income (i.e. tithes and offerings). One interviewee described his monitoring mechanisms as follows:

Well, interviews, listening, people vote with their feet, you know you got to read it. Of course surveys and things like that. So you gotta build in some sort of feedback process. Sometimes you just ask in the congregation, you know. And you know when something is good and when something is not good. If something has acceptance and doesn't have acceptance. You can feel straight away.

More sophisticated systems required detailed weekly reports from each cell leader. These reports would note for example, who was in attendance, including the names of any visitors; and describe what had happened at the cell meeting. Face-to-face meetings with the cell leaders also provided more detailed feedback, both of the cell's functioning and the cell leader's standing and condition. One leader spoke of how he identified when the cell leaders were not doing well:

[Y]ou would pick up warning signs before things fall apart. The persons in the cell [would give you an indication] that the cell leader's taken on too much. Or is just not able to cope. That it is not working things out.

Information was therefore collected at various levels of community, and on the basis of the information received through this monitoring, modifications were made to the cell model as required. A second source of information used to make decisions about modifications was external to the organization, arising from ongoing search activities. For example, conferences and books provided alternative cell-church and small group models, such as the G-12, or the idea of seeker sensitive services, or the emphasis on mentoring relationships. Modifying actions or interactions are those actions of leaders characterised by changes in the initial intent, or activities of the church and/or leadership. In other words, from the sense of community perspective, they were largely aimed at changing the nature of contacts.

In some instances, the modifications amounted to a change of intent. That is, the leadership began to recognise that the pure cell-church model was not appropriate for their situation. Some churches reverted to a programme-based model, while others developed an eclectic cell model. That is, other elements were introduced to support the cell system. As an example of this, one church leader likened the cells to bricks in a wall, and explained to the church that the wall would be stronger if pillars supported the bricks. These pillars were various church ministries, such as the counselling services or family ministries, which would remain in the church in a supportive capacity to the cell groups, and helped to ease the load of the cell leader. Another interviewee expressed a similar sentiment:

I think that the idea of pursuing a purely cell based church, I think we, in a way, kind of abandoned that road, as maybe a myth, in a sense. Why? Because we realise that your cell leader will burn out eventually. In other words we saw the need and were very much convinced by Doctor Dion Robert's model where there was a department for various things. So we started to have a training department and a marriage department and a counselling department and a deliverance department and so forth. So that the cell leader that would then be able to refer people to those various departments.

Another form that the change of strategic intent was manifested, was in embracing a small group model in preference to a cell based model. The rationale behind this often had to do with the dynamic developing in the church between those members of the congregations who were in cell groups and those who were not. From a sense of community perspective this can be understood as follows. Through regular contacts, an increased depth in the shape of community arose within cell groups, but this was often incongruent with the sense of community in existence elsewhere in the church. The challenge then for the leaders of these churches was to bridge a growing divide between church members who were part of the cell system and those who were not. In churches where the cell system was quite well entrenched, the leaders regarded this bridging process as one of their main priorities. In creating a broader basis of church unity, the church leaders often gave legitimacy to both the traditional structures and the emerging cell system, therein often choosing to follow a small group model

rather than pursuing a pure cell-based church model. Besides addressing the conflict between cell group members and those not in cell groups, the small group model also acknowledged and promoted the diversity of membership of the church:

We're working with at least four or five different cultures. Differing first of all [in their home] language and so on. But also ... social[ly], you know you may get a business culture, you would get a student culture. You get people with more time and less time. Definitely all that. We also developed a model where we allowed diversity of cells. We recognised a woman's cell, a men's cell. We recognise an interest group. We have even got codes and categories for that. A leadership cell. It's fine with us if a cell does not meet every week, but for convenience sake meets every second week. ... In other words we would have the so-called, normal [or] traditional types of cells. But we cope comfortably with variety here. And I think that's a model that we ... all felt that is workable. It gives more right and more creativity.

How did that diversity come about, or recognition of diversity come about?

Simply because of realising that we have to be more creative. There is a lot of people that you won't reach with the stereotype cell.

Another leader noted the importance of making modifications to ensure a balance in the emphasis being placed on cells compared with other church activities:

[Y]our whole hub is still your main church but it feeds in from the cell where everyone is cared for and there is a serious working together ... [Cell] will feed the main one [meeting] and it will feed the cells and so they both have to work equally well and they both work with each other. You can't have church that has a weak Sunday service and they found the cells going well.

A less fundamental, and more typical modification included the development and refinement of a training programme or equipping track. Often churches would begin by adopting existing

training models such as those of Ralph Neighbour, Larry Stockstill (1998) or Little Falls, and then make changes to them over time to more directly address their specific requirements.

Finally, leaders also tried out various approaches to receiving feedback from cell leaders and training them. Often the initial systems in place were quite demanding on the time of cell leaders, and so once the system seemed to be working and when it was noted that cell leaders were tiring, feedback systems were simplified, and meetings with cell leaders changed in frequency and form.

Most of the cases of modifications discussed so far are about making changes, but there are also modifications that involve not making the changes that were originally planned. So in some cases leaders intended to close down programmes, but ultimately retained them, as part of revising the transition's goals, or in response to members' perceived needs and/or objections. Time will tell if these types of changes were merely a change of pace, or a more permanent departure from the cell-church transition.

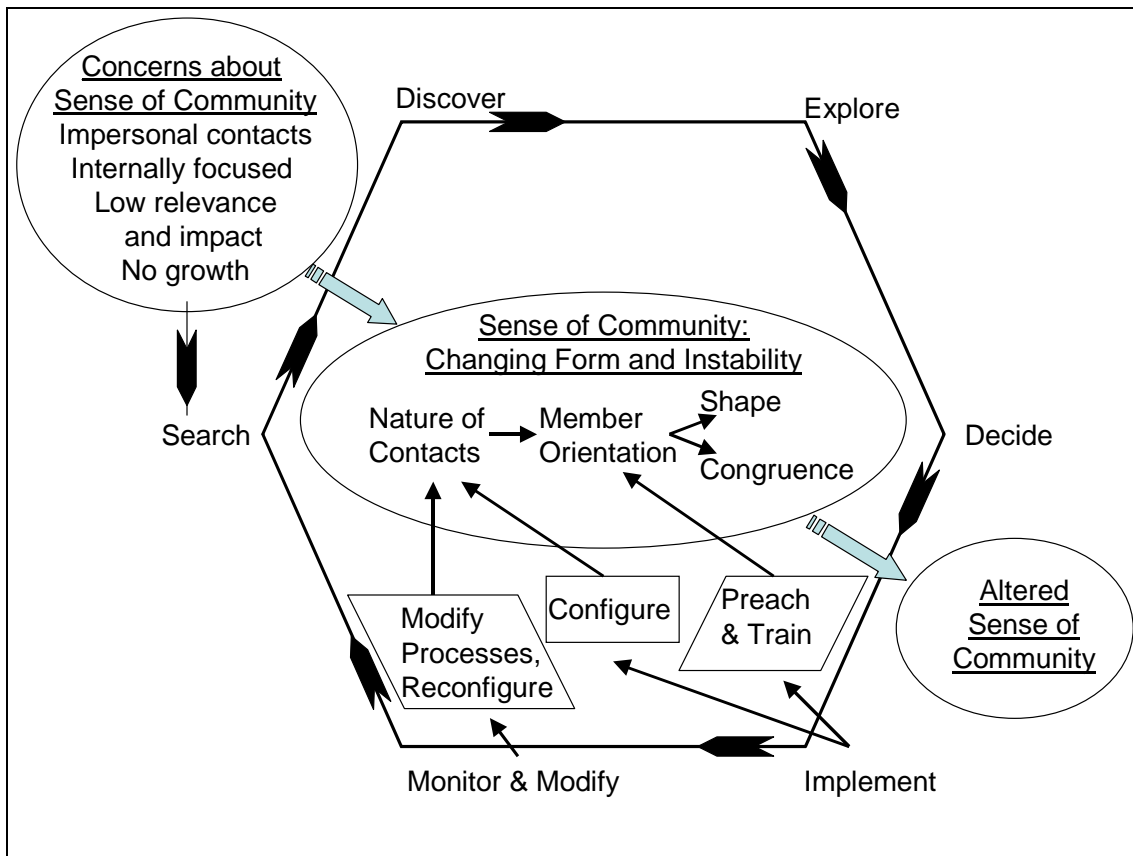
5.5 The Change Process and Sense of Community

In considering the composite picture of the process of change presented above, it is evident that the components of the change process had direct and indirect effects on various properties of the sense of community, suggesting principal causal and relational links. The processes linked to the initiation of change were largely taking place within the leadership core of the church, who became increasingly aware of deficits in the church's sense of community, most noticeably its weakness in not being relevant to or having an impact on society, and the lack of breadth as expressed in evangelistic activity. This translated into concerns about the lack of growth in membership size, not for its own sake, but as an indicator of carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples (Gospel of Matthew 28: 19-20). Leaders were also concerned about the impersonal nature of contacts and the internal focus of members.

The search, discovery, exploration and decision processes were largely concerned with exploring ways of addressing these deficiencies. However, when it came to implementation,

the main effects of obtaining member commitment, preparation and launch, was in two areas. Firstly the nature of contacts was refashioned, often quite dramatically, through the reconfiguring of church structures. Secondly, preaching and training activities primarily addressed member orientation. The most noticeable changes made in post-implementation involved modification of processes that primarily affected the nature of contacts. In summary, it is evident that organizational and system changes primarily had direct effects on the nature of contacts, while instructional interventions were targeted at member orientation. Indirectly, these interventions had an effect on the shape of community and its incongruence between and within various levels. Finally, stability of the sense of community was affected by the changes happening in its form. These relationships between the sense of community, the change process and the activities of leaders are illustrated in Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5.2
SENSE OF COMMUNITY, AND THE CHANGE PROCESS



5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused mainly on the change process that unfolds when the cell-church transition is embarked upon. It was recognised that each church followed a unique path, but that it was possible to construct a composite picture of the change, incorporating points of similarity and uniqueness. Three broad phases of change were identified, each with their own stages. Even in the first stage of initiating change, it was noted that the sense of community of the church began to be affected, and even more so during the implementation phase. The monitoring and modifying phase was characterised by a departure from the original planned change in its timing, and also in its substance. These departures were often motivated by adverse trends in quantitative data or other types of feedback, but could also have arisen from ongoing search activities that identified new trends or frameworks in church organization, leadership and development.

Playing a central role in this change process were the strategic leaders of churches. Their role in configuring, preaching and training has already been referred to here. In the following chapter, the actions of leaders during the transition are more closely examined.

CHAPTER 6

LEADERSHIP ACTIONS

Leaders are obligated to provide and maintain momentum. Leadership comes with a lot of debts to the future. There are more immediate obligations as well. Momentum is one. ... It is a feeling among a group of people that their lives and work are intertwined and moving toward a recognizable and legitimate goal. It begins with competent leadership ... Momentum comes from a clear vision of what the corporation ought to be, from a well thought-out strategy to achieve that vision, and from carefully conceived and communicated directions and plans that enable every one to participate and be publicly accountable in achieving those plans.

(De Pree, 1989, pp.17-18)

Having described in broad terms the process of transitioning from a programme based design to a cell based design, it is now possible to address in more detail the actions of leaders as they embarked upon this change. Leadership actions refer to the reported behaviours that leaders engage in whilst leading and transitioning the church through the stages described above. Three sets of actions have been identified, namely *searching* activities, *influencing* activities and *configuring* activities.

6.1 Searching Activities

Searching activities are concerned with collecting information that will assist in clarifying, setting and confirming the purpose and direction of the local church. As such, it also involves both evaluating the current performance of the church and seeking to enhance its performance.

The onus of responsibility for searching activities often lies with the senior minister of the church. One of the interviewees remarked:

Your leader needs to hear God's voice. ...Your leader needs to be trusted by your congregation. ... Your leader always needs to be ahead of the congregation.

Leaders engage in these activities both by observing their own church and by finding out what other churches are doing, by making personal contact with the other churches' leaders, attending conferences or reading. Searching activities are an ongoing activity, as leaders try to keep in touch with church trends and developments:

[W]e've tried to keep up with reading ... we've got to keep apace, and we've got to be very much future directed, rather than just living in the past ...

As discussed in more detail earlier, these activities are most prevalent in the search stage of the change process, but also need to be recognised as an ongoing set of activities, and are influential in deciding upon any modifications to be made to the original transition blueprint.

6.2 Influencing Activities

Influencing activities are primarily focused on changing the ideas, beliefs, values and behaviour of people. As such, they mainly focus on developing the member orientation components of the form of community in the church. Some activities are intentionally influencing, while others enhance the influence of the leader as a result of the stronger relationship that is being developed through the activities. The more *instrumentally focused* influencing activities include praying, mentoring, modelling desirable behaviour for people, directing and envisioning people, renaming and re-interpreting ideas and concepts, and neglecting certain activities or roles. The influencing activities that are more *relationally focused* include validating people's worth; mentoring, befriending and supporting people; and accommodating needs.

6.2.1

Instrumental influence

Activities that are instrumentally focused have an agenda that is promoted. In this study, this agenda has to do with the advancement of the cell-church agenda by influencing the way in which people think about the church and their role in it. This agenda is mainly advanced through the following activities.

6.2.1.1

Praying

Prayer was recognised as a critical, fundamental and first ingredient for the successful transitioning of the church as well as its ongoing, effective functioning. Firstly, prayer was revelatory in character, with leaders believing they were apprehending the will of God through prayer. This type of prayer was particularly evident in the initiating stage of the transition, and is closely aligned with search activities. Secondly, prayer could be intercessory in nature. So for example the leadership prayed that the members of the church would be open and committed to the cell-church vision. Although an influencing activity, the influence of prayer was not unidirectional. In seeking out what they believed to be God's purpose for the church and attaining a common perspective of this purpose among the leadership, it sometimes involved a meeting of leadership minds and wills in prayer. A third way in which prayer was evident as a form of instrumental influence, was when it was used to deal with problems:

Well, [we had] plenty of difficulties, and I'm not trying to sound super-spiritual when I say that it's really taught us to pray much more. We learnt very early that when you hit a blank wall, you know, a wall, you really need wisdom from God and so we've learnt to pray, much more than we've done under the old paradigm.

One leader described how through prayer, he dealt with the difficulties he was having with the church leadership:

[T]hose men and women are in leadership. Now either I'm taking an approach where I say, 'God you made a mistake. Some of these people

shouldn't be here'. Or I come with a mindset that says, 'Okay God, Jesus said you're always at work and I know that You're fairly clever so You can't make a mistake, so therefore these people who are in leadership are your chosen people, so I've got to get to know them if I want to do what You have called me here to do, these are the people You put here, so it's my job to get along with them' ...

I don't want to rule the supernatural out of it. I haven't let you into my prayer diary, but I often pray, 'Lord if it's the wrong person, move them on', and so therefore if they stay...

6.2.1.2

Modelling

Leaders recognised the importance of setting an example and influenced others through modelling appropriate behaviour. This was often seen as being of greater influence than what the leader had to say about the change. A few leaders even held the view that the less that was said and the more that was shown, the better: "The less information you give people the better. Really, you must lead by example and don't give people too much information."

Modelling really came to the fore in the way in which leaders interacted in prototype cell groups. The members of the prototype cell typically became the first generation of cell leaders. As explained in one interview: "So what we did was multiplied our first cell and each elder took a group of area leaders and senior leaders into their own group and began to model it to them again."

However, in at least one case, the minister did not start a prototype cell, but rather worked with the existing home cells, and through modelling the desired behaviour, began to change their character to be more in line with the cell-church approach, including growing and multiplying cells, and appointing new leaders who had learnt how it was done by his example. Modelling was also used as a vehicle for on-the-job training of cell leaders, with the

appointment of cell interns - or cell leaders in training – who began to work alongside the cell leader in running the cell. Furthermore, ordinary members of the cell group were encouraged to emulate the behaviour of the cell leader and other informal leaders in ministering to and praying for others.

6.2.1.3

Directing and envisioning

Through directing and envisioning, leaders exercise influence by clarifying what is to be done, how it is to be done and why it is being done. Directing and envisioning involves the communication of the cell-church agenda predominantly through verbal means, but also through written communication. It is also achieved through the establishment of training systems.

Directing and envisioning people typically occurred through preaching, teaching, and instructing, but in some cases it was also in the form of marketing promotions. For example, one leader put a great deal of effort into promoting the vision of the church through formulating slogans, sending regular cellular phone messages (SMS's) to his leadership, creating a visual presentation booklet to assist in the explanation of the cell vision and process, creating screensavers, printing T-shirts, making videos, and carefully selecting an appropriate website address.

When it came to providing vision and direction to the whole church membership, there was wide recognition of the power of vision. The vision was sometimes prominently displayed within the church building and on church correspondence, and was chosen as the sermon topic from time to time. However, there was some debate as to whether the leadership should be communicating the vision or not. Part of this debate is centred on different understandings of what vision entails, particularly how specific, concrete and quantifiable it should be. For example, some leaders focused on communicating the values of the church, while steering clear of communicating numerical goals, as illustrated in the quotes below:

Preaching, values, you've got to preach and teach values. That's incredibly important. Kingdom values.

Teaching [in Sunday sermons], over and over, and over again. We have taught every member a minister. We've taught about caring for the lost. We've taught about caring for the poor. Taught about gifting, bringing your own gifts, do the network course. We have taught, and we have taught.

Another point of contention was in the role that the vision should play, and whether it was differentiated from the concept of the mission statement or not:

Vision, oh boy, depending on whose book you're reading. 'Mission statement' and 'vision statement', I mean, those words. I have steered as far away from those things as I possibly can, because two things. One as I said, vision is such a powerful thing. You can achieve it to find out it's not what God wants you to do. Secondly, if you don't achieve it, it's so demotivating and you actually lose instead of gaining. Whereas if we put church culture and values and people buy into the values, then they will accept what's going on. ...

I'm interested that you've used the word "purpose" instead of "vision". Henry Blackeby said ... he will never put in writing what the vision is. Because vision is such a strong thing, that you could reach and achieve the vision, only to find out it's not what God wanted you to do. It's what you wanted to do. So with that in mind, I don't want to say anything specific and I try, even though there are pictures in my mind, I try not to see specific things, but rather on a regular basis, just try to say, 'Okay, God, what's the next step? Are we doing the right thing here?' ... I see it as my role to make sure that everyone in the church is living out [the] purpose.

While envisioning focused primarily on articulating purpose, values and goals, directing both facilitated and laid down parameters within which to operate, in order to realise them. In dealing with cell leaders, the vision and other more specific directives were sometimes imparted to them at meetings, or through cell guides - which were booklets prepared by the leadership to assist the cell leaders to run the cell and to ensure alignment with the overall church direction. These booklets were distributed weekly, monthly or quarterly. However, a careful balance had to be found between giving direction and communicating the purpose on the one hand, but not forcing them to follow that direction on the other. Sometimes the way that this balance was attained was through laying down quite broad directional parameters and then allowing the cell leader to decide how they are going to operate within those parameters. If cell leaders deviated from these parameters, rather than forcing them to change, or remonstrating with them, the approach leaders used was to explain to them what the vision of the church was and why. Usually this explanation was convincing enough so that the person realised that they were out of alignment and changed their ways. One leader noted the effects of pushing the vision too hard and providing too much direction to cell leaders:

[Y]ou start to perceive as a cell leader all the pastor wants from me is the numbers and growth. Perform or you die. And then more than that stick to the outline, otherwise you are a rebel. You know, so the limitations started to press in and the longer you go – you should actually give more freedom. But this thing really became, I think, conducive to burn out and boredom and lack of creativity.

A key feature of cell-church transitioning was the development of a training system - usually referred to as an equipping track - that was used as a developmental support to the cell system. The equipping track is discussed in more detail as a configuring activity of leaders, but at this point it should be noted that it also facilitated envisioning and directing. The following quotations capture something of this intention and results of these equipping tracks or their elements, such as a particular course:

I don't think many of the members understand the true concept of what we want from a cell. So it's been a process of teaching the people over the last few years [through the equipping track].

There's a statistic somewhere, or a comment from one of the top guys - it could be Ralph himself – who said that if you leave a cell-church alone on its own [without training]... if they've been PBD [Programme Based Design] ... they'll return to that quite quickly.

I've had so many people say to me their lives have been turned around by doing the course, because they've realized it's not about what God can do for me, it's about how God can use me. I'm available.

6.2.1.4

Renaming and reinterpreting

Renaming and reinterpreting highlights the power of specific words as a means of influence. The selective and deliberate use of certain terminology could facilitate the understanding and acceptance of the cell-church model, or the notion of small groups in the church. So, for example, cell groups were variously referred to as 'cells', 'life groups', or 'church in the house'. Cell leaders were also given various titles such as deacons or pastors. One interviewee explained why he chose to use the word "pastor" when referring to his cell leaders:

I called them home church pastors. ... I called them pastor by function, not necessarily pastor by calling. I think their job is pastor. If we were to look at what they are doing at a home church level, that's a pastoral function. Caring for the sheep, visiting the sheep. ... my heart is always.....let's find a biblical terminology ... There's something about calling things by their Biblical name, because they carry a certain anointing with them. And I felt if I call a person a home church pastor, it will dawn to his mind that 'Hey, I'm a pastor. I might not be a pastor by calling, but I'm a pastor by function, so I must pastor these people.'

Sometimes, particular words were selected that were problematic. Rather than choosing a substitute term, a leader sometimes opted to clarify the word and thereby debunk it. For instance, the word “cell” had to be explained or interpreted for the members of a church that was not Charismatic or Pentecostal in its doctrine or affiliation:

I mean, just the word itself brings all sorts of charismatic Pentecostal connotations, for some, even jail, and that sort of thing. Restricting, narrow type of connotation. We had to unpack that quite a lot. We explored all sorts of different names, but that’s the best one we could come up with. So we decided to stick with it, just talk about it more carefully.

6.2.1.5

A strategy of neglect

What leaders paid attention to, church members interpreted as being of importance. Some leaders recognised this phenomenon, and consequently adopted a deliberate strategy of neglect, where activities that were not seen as fitting in to the new approach that was being promoted, were neglected, as illustrated in the following quote: “One man came along and said ‘Look, I want Bible study’. Of course he’s not going to get that. He’s going to get Bible application. ”. Not only did this type of thing send a clear message to members of changing priorities, but it also freed up some of the leader’s time to be able to focus on the new priorities. This in turn got members to begin thinking about the direction the church was taking and the role that they as members would need to play. Typically, when the leader’s support was withdrawn, by for example no longer attending a particular activity, this would sometimes lead to the decline and termination of that activity or programme. One leader described the personal difficulties he experienced when adopting this strategy, but also recognised the importance of being able to set priorities:

And we have had to say no. The ministers have had to say no to certain things. And, reluctantly, yes to others where we just can’t get out of it. It’s been a bit costly, I think, for the ministers as well as the laity, because they’ve been used to the paradigm and now it’s no longer, it’s

shifted. ... Ja, just let them get on with what they want to get on with. But, it's also been a strategy maybe, that we've used of neglect, you know. Some things have died because of neglect.

6.2.2 Relational influence

Activities that are relationally focused place a premium on relationships above purpose. The agenda underlying these activities – if it can be referred to as an agenda - is to build stronger and closer relationships within the church community, without explicitly pushing the cell-church agenda. In particular, leaders were concerned with the relationships they had with church members, and so by setting up new types of contacts with people, indirectly promoted the depth of sense of community, through the emerging personally-meaningful, and often service-oriented contacts. The intent of investing in relationship building was to simply validate the worth of the person, but also had the effect of enhancing the influence potential, or credibility of the leader. This relational focus is manifested in several forms.

6.2.2.1 Validating, mentoring, befriending and supporting

Leaders sometimes validated the worth of others when they gave them special mention, expressed appreciation for what they had done, or commended them either publicly or personally. But it was relationship building that seemed to be both popular and valued. As expressed by one interviewee: “[M]y motto was simple. ... All I’m going to do is talk to people, that’s all I wanted to do and I did that.”

For many churches, this focus on relationship building seemed to lead naturally to the establishment of mentoring relationships or groups, or the placing of an emphasis on mentoring within the existing cell groups. In one instance, a group of businessmen began meeting weekly, primarily to mentor and disciple one another focusing on how to live out their Christianity in the business world and helping one another solve problems that were being encountered in the workplace. In another case, cells were making use of a mentoring process

across generations within cells, with older couples fulfilling a mentoring function in the lives of students that in some ways was akin to surrogate parenting.

Relationship building initiated by the senior leader with the rest of the church leadership was particularly important. Leaders recognised this as an important aspect in building a strong leadership team of people who would “Protect you and stand by you. Who were sold out for you.”. One leader saw himself as a father to his group, noting that one of the characteristics of fathers was that they were prepared for their sons to exceed what they have done. He described how he had built relationships through much prayer, tears, spending time together, playing together, ministering together. Similarly, another leader described how the church leadership had worked hard at building relationships, spending hours away together, praying together, working together and simply talking to each other. The result was a strong sense of unity among the leadership:

Our relationships are not negotiable. We might disagree on something but relationships are never negotiable. The guys can have a big ding-dong in a meeting but we can walk outside and go and have a cup of coffee together as if nothing’s happened. That is where basically have come to and work hard at maintaining it. The unity amongst the guys is unique.

Some ministers had a more focused approach, looking for selected people who they could nurture and develop. One interviewee looked for three people whom he could work with as the core leadership group:

I think wherever I’ve been, the first thing I do when I go into a place, whether it’s Youth Pastor or Senior Pastor, ‘Lord, who are the people? Who’m I going to work with here? Give me three.’ And then just start working on those, building relationships with them and getting them to do the same. So it’s a long, long term thing. ... so we’re still far away with that ... we’ve only been here a year, but I’m coming a bit closer to identifying who the people are.

And what does forming friendship involve?

Transparency, I mean all of those, those things, [like] letting them into my life, taking an interest in theirs. They're all different people.

Relationships were also built with the cell leaders to show them that they were valued and appreciated. As expressed in one interview: “You’ve got to keep on re-enthusing your leaders. There’s no doubt about that. And really value them, spoil them and take out for a picnic, a coffee and tea. And we’re trying to do that.”

Other leaders recognized the importance of relationship building not only with current leaders, but also with potential leaders in the church. The idea here was not necessarily to develop them and then bring them into leadership positions, but rather to develop them without conditions or promises attached. In other words it was development for the sake of development, simply for those with potential to be able to benefit from intensive ministry and nurturing from the leader. One interviewee described what he had done in this regard, as follows:

So what I’ve done on an ad hoc basis, is that I have engaged potential leaders in the church. I wrote to them and said ‘Look I would like you to engage with me on a once or twice a month basis to explore something of your journey with God with the view of discovering where your leadership lies.’ ... We met with them and worked with them over about a year. There were no strings attached. We don’t make any promises. We’re just going to walk with you and encourage you on your walk and see where God’s leading.

6.2.2.2

Accommodating needs

Leaders encountered situations where specific needs were expressed by church members, and were not in keeping with the cell-church model. In some cases these needs were deliberately neglected illustrative of instrumental influence, but in other cases, they were accommodated, even though they may not have been part of the church’s strategic direction. An example of

accommodating needs was the creation of an alternative forum for members of the church to preach. That is, when the facilitative role of cell leaders was emphasized in preference to a preaching role, lay members were given the chance to preach at congregational meetings or on Sundays:

[C]onstantly I remind them ... if you want to preach, come to me and I'll give you a preaching date ... What I've done now, I've created a kind of a teaching thing in the evening. So I do give a lot of opportunities for my young preachers to preach, you know. So that kind of balances it out.

Similarly, when members complained that they were no longer receiving teaching or Bible studies in the cell group meetings, these needs were sometimes accommodated through Bible or leadership schools, or courses run by the church. Alternatively, people interested in pursuing Biblical studies were directed to appropriate correspondence courses.

6.3 Configuring Activities

In addition to searching and influencing, the third set of actions that leaders engage in is configuring activities, which involve designing, structuring and restructuring the socio-technical systems and structures of the local church. These configuring activities affect the form of sense of community, primarily by rearranging the nature of contacts. Configuring activities include *composing* or (re)structuring groups and programmes, and *developing systems and procedures*. These systems and procedures include leader selection and development systems; training or equipping tracks; using prototype groups to experiment with and refine the cell system; and setting criteria and procedures to qualify for membership.

6.3.1 Composing

Composing has to do with those activities that alter the formal structures of the church and the membership composition of those structures. As such, they directly affect the nature of contacts property of sense of community. Examples of composing include the creation of, or

modifications to small group structures and training systems and structures in the church; the disbanding of structures such as the closure of a church programme; and changing the make-up or composition of existing structures, such as the eldership. Illustrations of these composing activities follow.

Some leaders closed down cell groups that were seen to be dysfunctional, in particular those that were dwindling, or not growing in numbers and multiplying. At one stage a popular motto in cell-church training was “Multiply or die”, implying that cells that were not multiplying were dysfunctional and should be closed down. One interviewee referred to “Monster cells” that had been together for a while, but were not reaching out or growing, and had become a “holy huddle”. He eventually closed down two of these cells, which he reported was very traumatic for the members, and one couple consequently left the church. The remaining members were placed in a variety of other cells, so as to dilute their influence. He was pleased to see many of them grasping the vision for growth in their new cell environments.

Other leaders closed down all the existing cell groups, and then reconfigured them as part of launching the cell-based system:

[At the cell-church conference, t]he idea was given, ‘Close everything’. Close the woman’s ministry. ‘Nothing must compete with the cells’ type of idea. And when they came back [from the conference] they dismantled a structure that was already thriving. ... The structure changed and there was major, major resistance.

Another leader was experimenting with alternative approaches to cell multiplication as part of a mission strategy:

[A]nd we’ve got some wonderful new stuff just off the net from Dr Ralph Neighbour, where they run a cross-cultural missions church in Houston, but cell-based. They are even more radical than we are. We want to learn from that, we don’t feel satisfied with what we are doing. We have a saying, ‘a cell is mission, and mission is cell’. Now even

that can be watered down, but we want to be very strict about that and see that every cell needs to live missions. I'm talking not so much about multiplication these days as 'plantification'. Cells planting other cells, especially cross-culturally, and I think it's certainly working in our Black township situation.

Besides restructuring cell groups, other church structures and/or their composition were changed, such as the leadership of the church, as the following instances demonstrate. In one church, the make-up of the eldership of the church gradually changed as some leaders stood down and others took their place:

I think that many of them realised that they had done what they can do, you know. And then to bring in new leadership, and we've been able to put new structures in place where we bring in new leadership every year. We bring in one or two new Elders every year. Two stand down, two come in. The building of [a] leadership re-think.

In another case, the change in eldership composition was more drastic.

I'd disbanded the eldership of the church. I decided it was part of the old. We were going to have cell leaders who were going to be true elders, because they were going to be shepherds in their hearts, instead of elders who sat on the Board and made decisions, but didn't share the gospel.

In a third case, a new position of district pastor was created. The appointment of someone into this newly created position was met with much unhappiness, as the other leaders viewed it as a promotion and they had been overlooked:

But what actually happened was that there was a ranking order in the church. And then when the new model came and suddenly there was an attempt to make it more functional. ... In other words, maybe appointing a district pastor. But I think what actually happened was that the senior pastor was [up] there and then he had his elders and his

pastors [at a level below]. When this new thing came he then appointed a district pastor then being senior to [the other pastors]. Suddenly you had a bit of a speed wobble there. ... It was a terrible time.

When making formal appointments as part of the composing activity, leaders had to be attentive to informal leadership in the church. Naturally, they were a likely source of formal leadership, but if they were overlooked, this could also be problematic, as noted by one leader:

And in a church structure you get people that are a grouping and they attract a grouping that are with them and another grouping, another, 'nother, 'nother ... It speaks about John and Peter and James being pillars in the church. ... You look at a church and you look at the social structure itself and [if] one of those [pillars] leaves a whole grouping leaves with them, especially if they are the leader. And you will always find people are following a leader or leaders. But if you can unite all the leaders under one leader then you have got a unity then the whole thing works. And it does.

As a result of this perspective, he was cautious to not appoint leaders too quickly, and first wanted to consider the ramifications of such appointments.

6.3.2 Developing systems and procedures

Systems and procedures were developed that were consistent with the vision or purpose of the church. Examples include training systems, cell administration systems, and setting new criteria and procedures to qualify for church membership or cell leadership.

The equipping track was usually scheduled to run in parallel with the cell meetings, but on occasion was integrated into the cell meetings. It was developed and used to deal with matters that could not be as effectively addressed in the cell context, and – vitally - to develop leadership and ministry. The objectives or topics covered in equipping tracks typically included assurance of salvation, becoming a church member, basic discipleship, the basic

doctrines of the church, personal wholeness, relational wholeness, discovery of personal gifts and calling, and leadership development. The material for these equipping tracks was either obtained from existing systems such as Ralph Neighbour or Touch Outreach Ministries Stations (available at www.touchusa.org), Bethany World Prayer Center's baseball diamond model (Stockstill, 1998), or Little Falls Christian Church (available at www.cellchurchonline.com), or otherwise self-developed. When developing their own equipping track, churches typically combined their own material with existing courses such as those of Family Foundations International (available at www.familyfi.org), Kay Arthur's, Precepts Course (available at www.preceptaustin.org), or Nicky Gumbel's Alpha Course (available at alphacourse.org), although there were instances where the courses and material was mainly developed by the church.

One leader described how the criteria that had been developed for taking people into membership had been revised as part of the transition, as follows:

[N]umber one, that you become a cell member, even before you join the congregation. ... Number two, that you have been baptised by immersion, because of our Baptist beliefs, and thirdly, that you join, enlist on the equipping track. We have a six to eight months, nine months equipping track which moves through four phases, typically, I think, in a lot of cell-churches. And that they've got to at least have completed the first weekend retreat offered at equipping track, where we deal with very basic issues, very basic issues, and I think they get a good idea of what is really required in serious discipleship.

An interviewee had noted that for a cell-based church model to work, it was important to have someone in leadership with the gift of administration. Some administration systems were quite elaborate with weekly cell reports being submitted and then followed up by church staff, and records being kept on each church member's attendance of meetings and progress on the equipping track. Numerous pigeonholes that were used to collect and distribute forms and documents were a regular feature in a number of churches.

One leader developed an administration system to track the development of each person in the church. This came about after visiting a dairy farmer and seeing his detailed records on each cow. He felt God had said to him, that if that was how much attention the farmer had given to caring for his cows, how much more important was it, when it came to caring for people in the church. This leader then developed a system for the church that involved setting qualitative goals in different areas of ministry that each person would work through, such as evangelism, deliverance or praying for healing; even though it may not be their ministry. Each person was first to experience receiving ministry, then observing others being ministered to, thereafter assisting in ministry, and so forth, until they were able to take the lead in that type of ministry. At least one interviewee had developed a computerised administrative system to assist with this kind of administrative task.

6.4 Adoption or Indigenisation

The degree of adoption versus indigenisation was a defining characteristic of the transition process. Adoption is used here to refer to a cell-based transition that is largely based on importing a model that is in use elsewhere. At least to start with, little modification was made to this model which was generally seen as universally applicable, and so it was largely perceived and used as a blueprint for the local church's own transition. In many cases, problems arose with this wholesale adoption, requiring subsequent modifications to be made. Failure to see the need for modifications was problematic, as illustrated in the following quote:

[A]nd to me the biggest stumbling block ... to transitioning a cell-church has been the 'You've got to do it this way or else it's not a cell-church'. ... But the philosophy, you can't deny, you can't change, that has to be there. ... [The philosophy is] that, in order to grow big you've got to grow smaller.

Indigenisation of the model occurred where leaders recognised the uniqueness of their church's situation and therefore adapted existing models to meet their requirements, or alternatively developed their own unique model. One leader described how this need for indigenisation arose and how a unique model was developed:

[T]here weren't many models around, and so we basically followed [Ralph Neighbour's] model. We used his equipping track, but it wasn't a very measurable equipping track. It seemed like you could go on it forever. In practice anyway. You could take a lot of time and it just wasn't contextualised, and so we kind of developed our own pudding, with a bit of this. And it seems to be working quite nicely.

You speak about the contextualising of it. How did that happen?

Well first of all, it just didn't seem to work. It just seemed that people would start off enthusiastically, and then kind of get discouraged. Because there were many books to work through for example, if you're familiar with his equipping track. And we felt that it needed far more practical and hands-on, rather than merely book knowledge, not knocking the book knowledge part of it. And ... we'd been to many conferences and we'd looked at many models around the world, all major models around the world, and then we looked at our own needs where people, you know, God was beginning to work. There seemed to be a whole movement of the [Holy] Spirit you see. So issues were starting to surface in the church. I think when you go into cell, immediately you actually surface a lot of problems. ... Now, all of a sudden your life is a little bit in the spotlight. You know, Wesley ran his classes very similar to a cell concept I think. And one of the first questions you have to answer every week in your class meeting is 'How goes it with your soul?' I mean we're not as legalistic as that by any means, but problems start surfacing, and because we're involved cross-culturally as well, I mean I knew nothing about demonic deliverance, but all of a sudden I had to deal with these issues.

And we learnt a lot, as I say, from West Africa, from Dion Robert. I spent time with him personally, chatting with all his leadership and saw

the way they did things, where they deal with issues up front. At the beginning of the Christian life, get people free, ... and so their cells are so much more powerful.

An interviewee had observed that many people who had adopted the cell model wholeheartedly, later dropped it, while others who “applied a bit of wisdom” and adapted it to their situation, had more success. So in contrast to adoption, an indigenised approach recognises local contextual factors that need to be taken into account in designing a transition model that is unique. One leader claimed: “We have developed a unique model that is part of our character and focus”. Another noted that you ‘Don’t simply follow the latest fad’ and cannot ‘stereotype what others are doing’, but rather need to adapt it to the local church’s unique requirements and ‘What God is saying’. He believed a good starting point in developing a model was to consider the question ‘How can we best serve our congregation and then our community?’ The approach followed in indigenisation, was to extract elements, or principles from a variety of models and combine them in a way that seemed most appropriate to the church’s requirements.

As the following quotations and examples illustrate, the basis for this indigenisation was related to contextual factors such as the culture of the local community, the denominational character of the church, or the defining features of the church itself. One church established an equipping track based mainly on the materials of Larry Stockstill, with some of Ralph Neighbour’s materials added in, purposefully omitting material that they regarded as too charismatic for their denomination. Another church had always had a strong emphasis on prayer. It had attempted a transition to a cell-based model, but found it was not working out and so reverted to a programme-based model. Later on, coinciding with a prayer conference, they started prayer cells in homes, which were to meet daily for a week. These were very successful. Due to this success, they allowed them to continue and began encouraging people to attend. Thereafter zone pastors started linking people up in their geographic zone as prayer cells. In another church, the interviewee described how they adapted cell outreaches on the basis of the understanding they had of the (black) African culture:

For example, in the African neighbourhood here, you find that prayer meetings is a normal thing. So that's the best tool to use, to say 'Hey, don't you like to have a prayer meeting?' Sure. People love prayer. Whatever their idea of prayer is. Whether religious or spiritual, whatever, you know. But to them it's more, it's superstitious ... prayer will make things go good, whether they commit to the Lord or not. Prayer in the African context is part of, it's more of a spiritual, what's the terminology? Ja, it's a luck thing, you know. It's like if I pray, things are going to go well. So we use that. It's a bait.

Also, the personal characteristics of the leader sometimes meant they were more flexible in their approach, and hence reluctant to follow an adoption approach:

I feel that we also need to allow a flexibility. ... I wanted them to be innovative. I wanted each home church to take it's own flavour. I did not want to prescribe it. I did not want to put any pattern into it. Because to me I always said that the home church will take your flavour, because we are different individuals. Some of you are extroverts, some of you are introverts, some of you are more strong in nature in terms of your strong will, some of you are very relaxed, and so your home church will take who you are. You must be comfortable with who you are in a home church cell.

What became evident from a number of the interviewees, was that while they had interpreted various authors and advocates of the cell-based church model as portraying it as the only effective church model for today's circumstances (and hence as an end in itself), many of them had come to see it as one of many alternatives, and as a means to an end:

Again, cells are merely a tool, that's what they are. Nothing more, nothing less you know. They never are an end in themselves. I think that's a big error to make about cells. The time will come I think when we might do away with cells altogether. We can discard them tomorrow, but we've got to find ways of helping us develop

community. At this time I don't know of a better way than cell to do it, you know. So part of my leadership function is to say ... 'This is the goal, what strategy do we use to get there, to build this community?'

6.5 Pacing

Pacing is adjusting the speed of the transition in the light of the response to the transition by members of the church. This response is gauged through monitoring activities and feedback from church members. Relevant information included attendance figures at church celebration meetings and cell groups, patterns in church income, the number of new members and visitors, the number of people leaving, and the expression of satisfaction or discontent by church members with church developments. From the perspective of sense of community this information is reflected in the level of stability of community; the degree to which member orientation is changing; a willingness to increase breadth of community, or the lack thereof; and the degree of congruence of community across and within levels.

Pacing usually involves having to slow down the speed of implementation by delaying or suspending decisions, or alternatively rescheduling planned events. At times it may even have involved reversing decisions and actions, which had been too hastily undertaken. At this point there could be a fine line between pacing and modifying, or indigenising. Pacing was also reflected in the emphasis placed on transitioning by leaders in their preaching, and for example, where this was under- or overdone, required adjustment. One leader described how his cell leaders advised him to not harp on about cells so much. From the interview it seemed that this had created a personal inner conflict, as he tried to clarify how much emphasis should be placed on the topic in his sermons:

You know, even some of my cell leaders have said 'Pastor let this thing grow, it's running, it's running, ...' And they are saying to me, 'You're probably preaching to the converted, just relax a bit. The thing is doing pretty well, and don't make people feel guilty, unnecessarily. [Furthermore], don't lay a guilt trip on people who may be convinced otherwise, for whatever reason.' But I think even so, I think I probably

differ a little bit with my leadership ... Only when you're captain of the ship, you realize how easy [one] goes off course. You only need to waiver a degree or two here, and you'll end up, instead of ending of ending up in Cape Town you'll end up in Rio or somewhere, or maybe the Antarctic. So you have to do that [continually emphasise cells]. And I suppose for those who are sold on it, they sometimes feel it's a little irksome, but they forget that there are so many new people coming into church. We constantly have visitors. ... It's like a company vision. You've got to keep on stating the vision. ... I don't want to be seen as someone who only has a one-string guitar, although cell is a very important, it probably is a one-string guitar. You don't want to become obnoxious.

The difficulty leaders were grappling with when it came to pacing, was in finding a pace of change that was slow enough for the members of the church to cope with, but fast enough to maintain momentum and prevent discouragement. One leader expressed this sentiment as follows:

I like to at any given stage to be reigning some people in and be fetching others. If I am not holding anybody back, then I don't feel like we have got sufficient momentum to move. I need to slow down. And if I am not fetching anybody then we are not going anywhere.

It was vital to ensure that members understood and were committed, before undertaking the next step in the transition. The following quotes illustrate this dilemma and how various sections of the church seem to require different paces of change:

[T]he whole church mentality had to be changed. Which is very difficult for the older folk that have been set in their ways to now even change to what we've done. I think it has been fairly difficult for them, but we've done the process nice and gently, we haven't forced and we haven't shut down.

And also if change happens too slowly, people lose heart, and they leave.

And the youth cells just took off like overnight. The young people, its what they had been waiting for. They love cells, you know, so much so, that I no longer have a normal Sunday service, I have youth services on a Sunday night now, taken by my youth cell leaders. There's such a vibe to it you know. It's like this is the part they have been waiting for.

In the next chapter, this theme will be revisited in relation to the various patterns of leadership identified, where it will be shown that effective leadership involved getting the pace right, while ineffective leadership patterns either pushed the pace too hard, or did not keep up the change momentum.

6.6 Conclusion

Strategic leaders in the church are the initiators and drivers of the cell-church transition. This chapter has described in more detail what actions leaders take as the transition process unfolds. Three clusters of activities were identified, namely searching, influencing and configuring. It was observed that configuring activities altered the nature of contacts, while the influencing activities impacted the member orientation property of sense of community. Two types of influence were evident. Instrumental influence was used at the strategic leadership level of the church, with cell leaders, and to influence the congregation as an entity. On the other hand, relational influence tended to be more individualistic with respect to who it was targeted at, but also had positive effects beyond that immediate relationship.

So far, the findings of this study with respect to leadership have been presented at a descriptive level, simply outlining what leaders do and also indicating the effect of their actions on sense of community. Much of these findings arose from the use of open and axial coding. The following chapter describes the findings at a more conceptual level, and is largely the product of selective coding, wherein patterns of leadership action were identified.

CHAPTER 7

BALANCED LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITIONS

First, leaders *take the lead*. That is, they initiate ideas and plans. Second, leaders *move people to follow them* by showing them consideration! (Leighton Ford, 1991, p. 25).

In the previous three chapters the concept of sense of community was developed, the various stages of church transition outlined, and the actions of leaders described. In this chapter, the interaction of leadership patterns with sense of community is developed in the context of the cell-church transition in order to more fully develop a theory of change. This chapter is therefore approached more conceptually and metaphorically than the predominantly descriptive accounts of the previous three.

Within physical science, the concept of inertia is derived from Newton's first law of motion that is also referred to as the law of inertia (Halliday, Resnick & Walker, 1993, p. 99). This law states (Keighley, McKim, Clark & Harrison, 1986, p. 30): "If a body is at rest it will remain at rest, and if it is in motion it will continue to move in a straight line with a constant velocity unless it is acted on by a resultant external force" (Velocity is simply understood as speed in a certain direction). In other words, the inertial effect is manifest in the object when a force is applied to it, and then it will resist any change to its current state of rest or velocity.

Understood from the perspective of Newton's law, the sense of community of a church can be likened to the velocity of an object. The actions of leaders in bringing about change can then be equated either to the deliberate, or the unintentional application of a force that alters the sense of community, and this produces organizational inertia. While the idea of using this physics metaphor to explain change is probably the basis for the original choice of the term organizational inertia, this study's contribution is firstly in its focus on the interactive role of

strategic leadership as an agent of change. Secondly, this study highlights the unique organizational context of leadership in churches to produce a substantive theory of leading change.

The theory is more fully extended in this chapter, built upon the understanding developed in the previous three chapters. In developing this theory, and to make the principles of Newton's law more concrete, the leading of organizational change is likened to riding a bicycle, which though a much simpler task than leading an organization through change, is a useful explanatory metaphor.

7.1 Patterns of Leadership Action

Part of the selective coding process of grounded theory is re-arranging the data according to patterns that are being observed so that the specificity of the theory can be enhanced, or the conditions of its occurrence specified (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 130-132). In examining the actions of leaders, three effective, interacting and interrelated patterns of leadership action emerged. These patterns have been referred to as the *freewheeler*, the *focused-pioneer*, and the *reflexive-accommodator* pattern. Corresponding to each of these effective patterns are three ineffective patterns that arise when elements of each of these effective patterns are overemphasised. These corresponding ineffective leadership patterns have been labelled the *static non-leader*, the *rigid combatant* and the *popular people pleaser* patterns, respectively.

These leadership patterns should not simply be interpreted as leadership styles being ascribed to various leaders. Rather they are patterns arising because of the interaction between leaders and their context over a particular period of time. That is, a series of incidents or events and a leader's activities in response thereto, usually typified a pattern. To further develop this point, there were times when the same individual displayed different patterns in different churches they had ministered in. There are also cases where the same leader in the same church, displayed a variety of patterns at different times. Furthermore, it is proposed that effective leadership entails balancing the three effective patterns so as to avoid their ineffective counterparts. In other words, the three patterns are interrelated, and the application of one

pattern prevents the emergence of the ineffective counterpart of another. So over a period of time, a church that is being effectively led will most likely experience various patterns of leadership.

The organizational context that leaders confronted when transitioning the church varied in the level of organizational inertia that was manifested in response to modifications being made to the sense of community. That is, high organizational inertia was prevalent when there was much in the organization that needed to be changed in order to bring it in to line with the desired state, and so the existing sense of community was greatly altered, either deliberately or inadvertently. In this instance, the organization could be thought of as needing to be turned around, as its velocity is currently propelling it in the “wrong” direction. In contrast, instances of low inertia arose when the organization was already moving in the desired direction.

The cycling metaphor can be expanded to explain this further. When a cyclist turns a corner this mainly involves turning the handlebars. However, too sharp a turn will result in a fall. On the other hand, not turning sharply enough will mean that the cyclist will fail to negotiate the corner. So the cyclist manoeuvres the handlebars and successfully turns the corner by considering several factors, including the current velocity of the bicycle and the sharpness of the corner. The cyclist will either brake to slow down or perhaps pedal to speed up, and turn the handlebars in the appropriate direction and at the correct rate.

Similarly, when leaders try to change the direction of a church such as in transitioning from a programme-based model to a cell-based model, successfully negotiating this change involves steering the church in the new direction on the one hand, and allaying member’s concerns on the other. The leader has to manage the delicate balance between pushing ahead with change and thereby compelling the church to fulfil its perceived purpose, and slowing down the pace of change to accommodate members’ needs. So when the *focused pioneer* pattern produces high levels of organization inertia, the *reflexive accommodating* pattern is needed to balance it out and allay members’ concerns. Excessive forcing of change is ineffective leadership as described in the *rigid combatant* pattern, while accommodating concerns at the expense of purpose is also ineffective, as described in the *popular people pleaser* pattern.

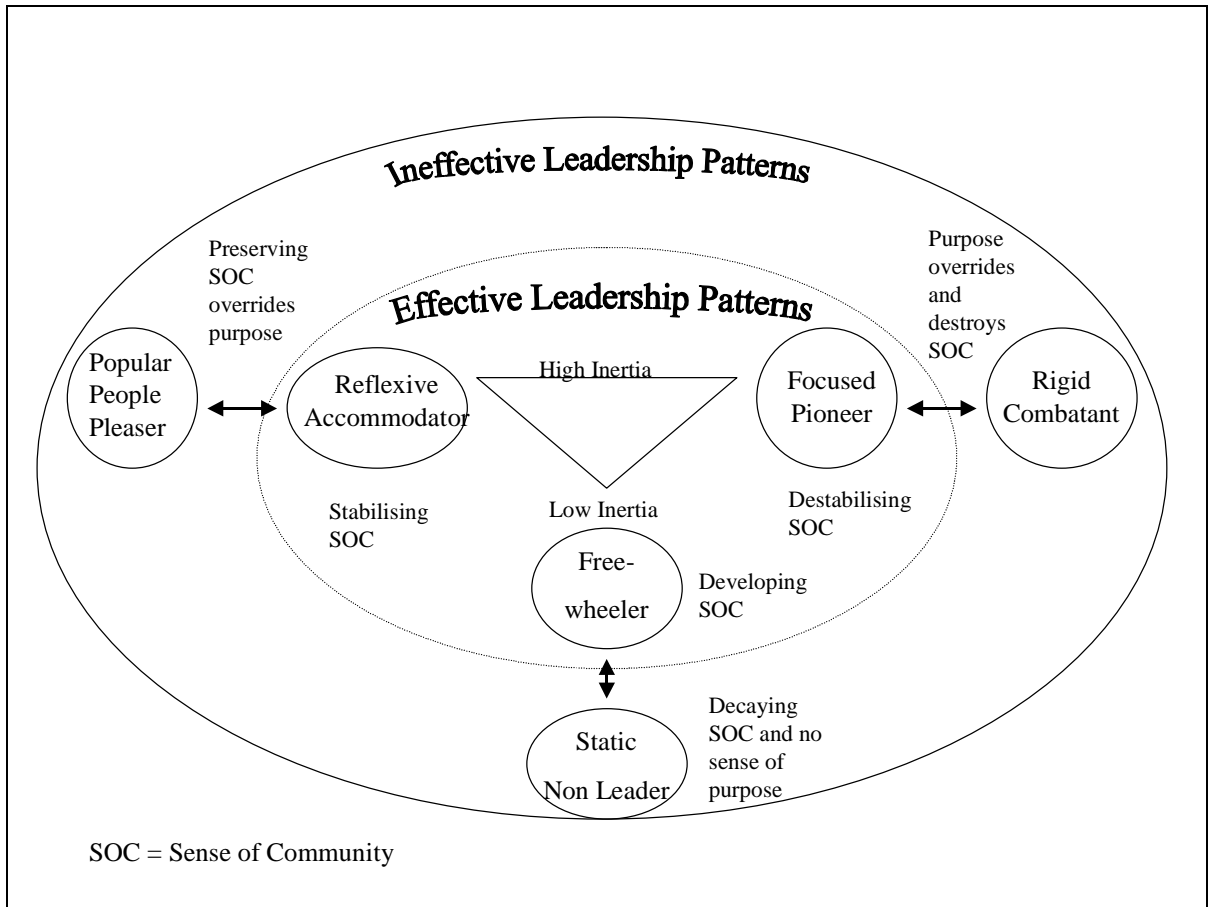
When organizational inertia is low, this would be because the organization is already moving in the direction of desired change, or in the cycling idiom, there is presently no turn for the cyclist to negotiate. The current velocity simply needs to be maintained. This is what the *freewheeler* pattern entails. However, as with cycling, if there is no leadership influence, the velocity of change is lost. When a cyclist stops pedalling and slows down too much he or she will lose balance. According to Newton's law, this is because there are forces – such as friction and gravity - working against the current motion. Similarly, organizations can lose their velocity in the absence of active leadership. This inactive leadership is expressed in the *static non-leadership* pattern. Leaders need to keep reminding their followers of the direction that has been set, and keep exercising influence to ensure that the member orientation properties of sense of community continue to mature in the desired direction. If the leader fails to do this, there is a tendency for members to pursue their disparate individual needs or preferred directions. After all even when freewheeling, the cyclist still exercises control over the bicycle and watches the road ahead.

Figure 7.1 illustrates the relationship between the various leadership patterns and sense of community. The three sets of leadership patterns are now developed more fully.

7.1.1 The freewheeler and static non-leadership patterns

Freewheelers faced situations of low organizational inertia. The idea of freewheeling is derived from cycling, where the cyclist is usually travelling downhill, or there is very little resistance and so they do not have to pedal hard in order to keep moving, but can simply “freewheel”. It is a picture of seemingly effortless movement. Sometimes leaders found themselves in the position of leading a church that they had either inherited or created, which had little inertia present. In other words, the church was already moving in the direction of the vision or purpose. When the various patterns of leadership were explained in one of the interviews, the interviewee remarked that the freewheeler pattern was probably the ideal situation to be in: “[T]o put it in your words, I try to work very hard at staying a freewheeler. ... Why would anyone want to be anywhere else?”

FIGURE 7.1
BALANCING PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP



These leaders brought about change making use of a diverse range of searching, influencing and configuring activities. For example, some of them placed great emphasis on directing and envisioning, but there is also evidence to suggest that at least some of these leaders were able to keep organizational inertia at a low level by not making major announcements of the intended change, but simply beginning to do things differently, in an incremental fashion. That is, they relied more on modelling appropriate or desired behaviour than on directing and envisioning. The freewheeler pattern is therefore characterised by similarity in the context of leadership rather than by similarity in leadership activities. That is, there was a good fit between organization and leader.

This goodness of fit may have arisen from one of, or a combination of several factors, namely the careful selection of a successor, the management of a smooth succession process, the leader being the founder of the church, and the length of association that the leader has with the church. As a consequence of this fit between the leader and church, the leader's actions did not unduly disrupt the sense of community, and in many cases, cultivated its ongoing development.

Freewheeling on a bicycle becomes ineffective when the cyclist stops pedalling for too extended a period of time. Eventually the bicycle will come to a stop and fall over. Essentially, the counterpart of the freewheeler pattern, namely the *static non-leadership* pattern arises when the leader does not lead. This pattern was originally identified by one of the interviewees as a pattern that was missing from the model, and the model was revised to incorporate his observations after further data collection and analysis. He said that he could recognize at least three churches within his fraternal where the leader was "going nowhere" and had no credibility. The churches were in decline because of a lack of leadership activity. This ineffective pattern represents the situation where there may be little organizational inertia evident, simply because the leader is not trying to direct the church. In other words, while this leader may not disrupt the sense of community, it is not being developed either, and soon begins to decay. Another interviewee had consulted to numerous churches in the area of cell-church transitioning, and often found that the leaders of churches did not know what the church's purpose was, and had no strategy either. Consequently they would "try out every new fad or concept that flows through the country". They treated cells in the same way. He lamented that "People can't decide who they are and what they are and then stick to that and do it." As a result of this lack of direction, when called in to do cell training, he would often end up spending most of the time on the topics of vision and leadership and sometimes not even get to the topic of cells. Here again the leaders are not exercising leadership.

7.1.2 The focused-pioneer and rigid combatant patterns

The focused-pioneer pattern was present in situations where there was high organizational inertia. This arose mainly as a result of the pioneering activities of the leader in taking the church on a new course, which had the effect of destabilising the sense of community. Commenting on the focused pioneer pattern one interviewee compared this pattern to stopping the bicycle and then starting it up again, further reflecting:

Everything that I was doing before, stops. I have got to make or reinvent the wheel totally. ... What it means is that I lose finances in the process, I lose people, I might keep a measure of my infrastructure, but everything that has been built up to now, no longer has value. And you are telling people that have been doing XYZ for a number of years that you have wasted your time. ... You lose all that investment. It might be necessary at times, because it might have been a stupid thing that you have been doing.

This state of high levels of organization inertia was usually recognised, but these leaders often held the view that the change embarked upon was God-ordained, and so went ahead with the changes despite the discomfort that was being created in some quarters of the church. In other words, there was an appreciation that the current sense of community was not fulfilling the church's purpose and so needed to be changed.

The focus of the change initiative itself was largely on structures and systems. Commanding and teaching - through communicating the vision and providing training to support this ideal, characterised implementation. Furthermore, implementation was generally quite rapid and linear, sometimes following a "big bang" approach and there was greater emphasis placed on configuring activities than on influencing activities. The configuring activities also reflected an inclination to adopt "the one best way" to implement the change, rather than customising according to the contextual requirements of the church, or the needs of members. Influencing activities tended to be more instrumental in nature, rather than relational.

Like the focused-pioneer pattern, the rigid combatant is characterized by a context of high organizational inertia, often arising from the breakdown of the sense of community that accompanied the leader's drive for change. These rigid combatants believed they knew what was right for the church and proceeded to rapidly impose that on the church largely through instrumental influence and configuring activities, but without careful monitoring or modifying of activities and/or time frames when the sense of community was being harmed. That is, the application of a focused pioneering pattern became that of a rigid combatant when it was not moderated by the reflexive accommodator pattern. Rigid combatants seemed to spend little time reflecting upon the repercussions of their actions, would not easily admit to having made a mistake, and tended to neglect relational influence activities. Consequently, their credibility declined to the point where some relationships were severed, even if they thought they were making some progress towards the goal of the transition.

The search activities of the rigid combatant appeared to be of a relatively short duration. This was partly because there was less searching and they were less reflexive. A textbook approach was often adopted, with leaders often reluctant to deviate from its prescriptions. The view was often held that there is only one ideal model (e.g. the pure cell model) and there is a ready-made formula and process to follow to get there. This formula or blue print was usually found in cell-church books, conferences or training courses. There was a sense that there is a ready-made answer that is relatively easy to come by and simply needs to be implemented. The short search duration was also because they tended to not engage extensively with others in the discovery of purpose, which they rather saw as a personal dialogue with God, the results of which would be communicated to others.

The context, cause and implication of high organizational inertia manifesting as a result of the destabilising of the sense of community, was either not appreciated by the rigid combatant, or otherwise was ignored, as they pressed ahead with their change programme. Unfortunately, this often destabilised the sense of community to the point that it was irreparably damaged. Many members felt hurt and often left the church, calling the credibility of the rigid combatant's leadership into question. Some of the rigid combatants may have ultimately emerged victorious in attaining their goals and even building a new sense of community, but at

great cost. There was usually a very different church membership composition in the end, with many old members having left, but newcomers who were ignorant of the recent history of the church, joining. In other cases, leaders recognised that they were losing the change battle and either decided to move out of the church, or were compelled to do so. Referring to the cycling metaphor, the rigid combatant can be thought of as a cyclist who turns the corner too sharply, causing the bicycle to fall over or the wheels to slip out, and the cyclist to crash.

7.1.3 The reflexive-accommodator and popular people pleaser patterns

Reflexivity involves changing behaviour based upon reflection. That is, it is acting upon the outcome of reflection. Like focused-pioneers and rigid combatants, reflexive-accommodators found themselves in situations of high organizational inertia. This was often as a result of a preceding leadership pattern of a focused pioneer or rigid combatant. Typically they had succeeded a leader who had displayed such a pattern, or otherwise they had personally displayed one of these patterns when introducing a new vision for the church or initiating the transition. The sense of community had been disrupted or possibly harmed, and utilising the reflexive accommodator pattern had the effect of re-stabilising the sense of community by showing an interest in the concerns of members. In cycling terms, it can be compared to a cyclist who applies the brakes to avoid an accident when realising that he or she will not be able to negotiate the turn ahead at the current speed. Alternatively, it is the cyclist who picks up the bicycle after a crash and proceeds more cautiously.

Unlike the rigid combatants, these leaders had a greater appreciation of the linkage between the appearance of inertia and the destabilised – and sometimes deteriorating - state of community. They recognised there was a problem that had to be dealt with. Aware of the difficulty of this context, they embarked upon change in a more considered, less drastic fashion, changing the pace and even redefining the form of the change, as the situation dictated, so as to accommodate the needs and concerns of church members. Consequently, these leaders emerged with their credibility intact or increased; while in the process they succeeded in bringing about changes that developed community, albeit not always in the form of a traditional cell-church transition.

The reflexivity of the reflexive-accommodator was particularly evident in the search activities of this leader, which tended to be both prolonged, a “trialogue”, and focused on the long term. When it came to implementation, more emphasis was placed on influencing activities than configuring activities and the implementation process was quite drawn out. Relationally focused influence was greatly emphasised and configuring activities tended to be customised according to the perceived requirements of the church, even to the point of abandoning the notion of a pure cell-church. Implementation was slower, incremental and more considered, with the goal emerging and even changing in some aspects, as progress was made.

A deeper, more critical approach to managing change arose from reflecting on and coming to an appreciation of the unique nature or character of the local church, critiquing it and trying to maintain and/or develop its essential character. Here there were no easy answers, no quick fix solutions. In fact more questions are posed than answers given – and proposed answers were more tentative. The focus was on principles, dynamics, or the essence of things. There was no perfect solution or model out there to be grasped and implemented. Rather, a lot of effort was spent on trying to create a unique model or approach that supported and developed the essential character of the local church – variously referred to by interviewees as its “soul”, “values”, or “culture”. As a result, sense of community was developed. Continuous learning and improvement was valued and learning came through reflective practice, observation and monitoring, and through what leaders recognised as a three-way dialogue or “trialogue” between God, the leadership and the church membership.

The popular people pleaser pattern arose when reflexive accommodators became too accommodating, paying more attention to the needs of the church members than the purpose of the church. Relational influence was not balanced out by instrumental influence when the time and circumstances demanded it. The cell-church transition was often put on hold, or even abandoned altogether. Those members who voiced their preferences the loudest dictated a new, and erratic direction for the church, with the leader responding in turn through configuring activities that changed the nature of contacts to meet these expressed needs. The “voice of God” was drowned out by the clamour of people’s demands. In this, the popular

people pleaser differed from that of the static non-leadership pattern, where the leader would not even respond to peoples' demands. The popular people pleaser pattern can be compared to a cyclist who ignores the course to be followed and is prepared to move in any direction, and to change direction often, as long as he keeps on going downhill so that there is little effort exerted in pedalling.

7.2 Balancing Leadership Patterns

Just as a cyclist will pedal, brake, steer and freewheel at different stages of a journey, so an organization displays, and requires, a variety of leadership patterns over time. That is, effective leadership of the church during a transition requires a combination of effective leadership styles. There are times when a focused pioneer pattern is required to align the church with its purpose. At other stages, concerns of members need to be addressed, even if it slows down progress. At other times the church is making good progress and the leader can exercise less influence and “rest” a while, allowing the church to progress in the desired direction at an acceptable speed.

In fact, it is when there is no adjustment to a given leadership pattern that ineffective leadership arises. The rigid combatant pattern arises from the leader being too task driven, ignoring the needs of the church members, while the popular people pleaser fails to influence people to fulfil the purpose of the church. The static non-leader suffers from a lack of leadership influence over the church, whether it is in setting direction, or addressing members' concerns.

Underlying this balancing of leadership patterns is the effect of leadership on the sense of community in the church. Reflexive accommodators stabilise the sense of community, while focused pioneers destabilise it. These two patterns need to interact to ensure that there is a strong but developing sense of community that is supportive of the church's purpose. Exercising reflexive accommodation prevents the emergence of a rigid combatant pattern, while the focused pioneer pattern prevents the popular people pleaser pattern from arising. The freewheeler pattern allows the sense of community to develop naturally, in line with the

church's purpose. However, giving insufficient attention to monitoring its progress, and thereby failing to recognise when an alternative pattern is needed, creates static non-leadership. In this sense, leaders are required in the organization to counter the organization's natural tendencies of entropy.

The linkage between the sense of community and the various leadership patterns can be understood more fully by examining the effects of the various leadership activities that characterise each of the patterns of leadership, on the sense of community.

Searching activities can be construed as seeking to hear the "voice of God", versus seeking to hear the voice of the people. The effective patterns try to manage the tensions between these two voices, with the reflexive accommodator placing more emphasis on "dialogue". Looking at the ineffective styles, the static non-leader tends to ignore the voices, while the popular people pleaser harkens to the voice of the people. Finally, the rigid combatant, in believing to have heard the "voice of God", is deaf to other voices.

Configuring activities are pervasive within the focused pioneer pattern. Configuring activities incorporate composing, as well as developing systems and procedures. In composing the organization, leaders create and/or remove opportunities for church members to interact. Thus the structural nature of contacts within the church is affected. As this is the foundation for the other dimensions and sub-dimensions of sense of community these configuring activities may have broad-based implications for the form and stability of the sense of community in the church. Depending on their nature, developing systems and procedures may also impact the form of community. For example, training systems or equipping tracks are geared to changing the role of members so that they become service-oriented producers.

Influencing activities are divided into two clusters, namely instrumental and relational influence. Focused pioneers typically used instrumental influence to promote their change agenda. One of the intentions behind utilising instrumental influence was to alter the member orientation component of sense of community. For example, preaching on the vision and values of the church, or modelling appropriate behaviour, encouraged people to become more

active in the church and to be more concerned about others than themselves. Instrumental influence also advances a new shape of community. For example, as people were encouraged and shown how to reach out to others in the church and outside the church, the depth and breadth of sense of community was shaped accordingly.

Leaders who demonstrated relational influence developed closer relationships with people, and this had the effect of increasing the depth of sense of community by promoting intimacy and genuineness at a number of levels within the church, most notably among current and potential leadership groupings. Relational influence was usually the type of leadership activity that reflexive accommodators first resorted to.

Table 7.1 summarises the linkage between leadership patterns, leadership activities and sense of community that has been developed here. The table quantifies the prevalence of a particular set of leadership activities within each leadership pattern. These need to be read in conjunction with the qualitative characteristics described above.

TABLE 7.1
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND LEADERSHIP PATTERNS

	Leadership activities			
	Searching	Configuring	Instrumental influence	Relational influence
Leadership patterns				
Static non-leader	Low	Low	Low	Low
Freewheeler	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Focused pioneer	Medium	High	High	Low
Rigid combatant	Low	High	High	Low
Reflexive accommodator	High	Medium	Low	High
Popular people pleaser	Low	Medium	Low	High

7.3 Leadership Patterns and Leadership Credibility

The patterns of leadership that have been described above are distinguished by the leadership activities that typify them, as well as the effect of these activities. That is, some of these patterns disrupt the sense of community, thereby producing organizational inertia, while others nurture it. In addition to these action- and contextual differences that distinguish the leadership patterns, they are also told apart by the effect on the credibility of the leader as the process of change was embarked upon, and a particular pattern relied upon. Those leaders who drove the change process hard, tended to begin to adopt the rigid combatant leadership pattern, this leading to a decline in their credibility. On the other hand, with the popular pleaser or static non-leader patterns, where there was a loss or lack of momentum to the change initiative, this was equally damaging to leader credibility. In other words, the pace of change affected leader credibility, but ultimately the pace was dictated by the patterns of leadership in use, and the continuation of ineffective leadership patterns was associated with declining levels of credibility.

Without credibility, the influence of the leader was undermined and the ability to continue with a change initiative, compromised. In some instances, the handling of the change initiative enhanced the credibility of the leader. Unfortunately, in other situations there was a loss of credibility of leadership, even to the point of separation of leader and followers. While some of these departing followers may well have been laggards, the leader's actions also contributed to their departure.

When initiating change, leaders already have a certain degree of credibility, but depending on how the transition develops, the leader's credibility will either wax or wane. In analysing the interviews with church leaders, the category of succession emerged. It had two sub-categories, namely those factors related to the level of credibility of the leader prior to the transition and often related to succession; and secondly, those background factors related to the succession context that began to affect credibility when leading the change initiative.

Factors related to initial levels of credibility are first discussed, followed by the factors arising when implementing change.

7.3.1 Initial levels of credibility and succession

A change of leadership is unsettling for the church members. The initial level of credibility of leaders is determined by factors related to their origin and tenure. For example, when there were gender changes (i.e. a woman succeeding a man) the stereotyping of women by a congregation's members implied that a woman was accorded less credibility. How the successor had been appointed was significant. In some circumstances, the leadership of the denomination made the appointment, while in others the church members were more involved in the decision. Participation facilitated acceptance and thereby enhanced credibility. Being a known insider rather than an unknown outsider also enhanced initial levels of credibility.

Initial credibility is also affected by the way in which the process of succession is handled. Having a period of succession-overlap or handing over, promoted a smooth transition, as long as this transition period was planned and amicable. In this respect, being a known insider to the organization was an advantage, compared to the appointment of a relatively unknown outsider. In one instance, an outside successor had the opportunity to lead the church alongside the predecessor in a two-month changeover period. For the first month, the predecessor led, and was shadowed by the successor. In the second month, the successor took the lead, supported by the predecessor. During this two-month period, the two leaders then had the opportunity to discuss and iron out any differences in leadership, vision and strategy, and the church members were also able to experience the changeover as being smooth and gradual, with no significant change in the course the church had embarked upon under the predecessor. Essentially, the conditions had been created for the successor to adopt a freewheeler pattern of leadership.

Finally, the anticipated period of tenure of the leader affected credibility. That is, leaders who were seen to be there for the long term were accorded more credibility than those who were seen to be shorter term appointments as part of their itinerant deployment determined by

denominational leaders. There was the sentiment that if leaders introduced changes that did not work out, they may be moved elsewhere, but ultimately the members of the church would be left to deal with the problem. Longer tenure seemed to imply greater accountability, and for this reason higher credibility was accorded.

7.3.2 Changing levels of credibility

The rising and falling of credibility is related to the effect of succession factors on the actions and interactions of leaders in handling key features of the change initiative. These background factors influence the timing of the change initiative, and the pacing of its implementation.

Firstly, those leaders, who brought in changes in vision and leadership philosophy early in their tenure, were regarded with suspicion and more likely to encounter resistance. Consequently, leaders entering into a new church who were not too hasty in making changes were better accepted and better positioned to initiate change later on. As an example, one leader described how he had been deployed to a church that had been particularly upset by rapid and significant changes that had been introduced by his predecessor. His predecessor had introduced far-reaching changes soon after his arrival. This predecessor was soon transferred to another church because of the unhappiness he had created. The successor described how, knowing this history of the church, he had emphasised that he would introduce no changes for at least the first six months, and would use that time to simply meet with and talk to people, to “discover what God was already doing” in the church and to build relationships. This brought tremendous relief to the church members. When he introduced changes at a later stage, he was careful not to begin by tampering with the essential character of the church, but rather to build the changes upon ideas with which the members were already familiar. Through personal experience or wisdom of hindsight, several other leaders also commented on the need to first build relationships and be established as a leader, before introducing fundamental changes.

The premature introduction of change often led to the loss of church members. In one case, a leader who had assumed that the church had already made some progress along the path of

change he wanted to introduce, had been advised to proceed with further changes as rapidly as possible after he had assumed the position of leadership. He soon discovered that the church members had a “mixed mind set”. The model of change they were introducing was a blend of two models. He then had to proceed to undo and unravel the two models before reintroducing the pure model of change he wanted. Due to the false start and dissatisfaction with the changes he was proposing to make, several members left the church. He realised he needed to have given the change more time and to spend more time training before introducing changes. He also recognised that the congregation first needed time to gain confidence in his leadership, before even considering introducing change.

Another aspect of the timing of the change initiative was evident in the following account. A leader had the experience of being with a church for several years, before embarking on a change initiative. Shortly after beginning to implement the change, he left to lead a church elsewhere. Nine months later, he returned to the church as the senior minister, only to find a total regression on the path of change previously agreed to. He realised the importance of seeing through what he had started and that he had to view it as life calling if he really wanted to achieve anything significant in one place. This case also serves to highlight the fact that changes to the expected tenure period of the successor, as well as their premature departure could affect their acceptance by church members and jeopardise change initiatives.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, three effective patterns of leadership have been described (i.e. the freewheeler, the focused-pioneer, and the reflexive-accommodator) along with their ineffective counterparts (i.e. the static non-leader, the rigid combatant and the popular people pleaser). It was argued that effective leadership involves balancing these three effective patterns over time, and that a failure to achieve this balance produced an ineffective pattern. Furthermore, ineffective leadership damaged the credibility of the leader, as their actions were seen to be harming the sense of community. A loss of credibility compromised the leader’s ability to lead change.

The aim of this research was to develop a theory of leading change that accounted for the manifestation and management of organization inertia. This theory has been developed in this chapter and the three preceding ones. Central to this theory has been the conceptualisation of the idea of sense of community, and the discovery that the success in leading change in the church ultimately rests on the leader's ability to cultivate the sense of community. In the following chapter, the literature is revisited in an attempt to position this theory in the body of knowledge related to change management, and organizational inertia in particular.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast. – Leonardo da Vinci

It is the theory that decides what can be observed – Albert Einstein

Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve – Karl Popper

It is a test of true theories not only to account for but to predict phenomena – William Whewell

The above quotations, all found at <http://en.thinkexist.com>, highlight the importance and role of theories. The aim of this research was to develop a substantive grounded theory that describes the process of change and the management of inertia by organizational leadership, in the transition of churches from a programme-based to a cell-based design. This aim was broken down into six goals. Firstly, to describe the stages, or process of change occurring in churches that were transitioning from a programme-based to a cell-based church model. Secondly, to identify and locate points of organizational inertia within the change process described. Thirdly, to describe how the congregation's leadership managed organizational inertia when it occurred. Fourthly, to describe the consequences of these interventions. Fifthly, to develop the descriptive material into a more conceptual, theoretical account. Finally, to locate the grounded theory within the existing body of the change management literature.

The first five of these goals were met in the previous four chapters, where the theory was presented. However, as implied by Popper, the theory constructed is not the only theory, and there are others that could provide competing and complementary explanations of the cell-church transition in South Africa. In this chapter, the findings of this study – the grounded theory presented in the preceding four chapters – are discussed in the light of the research problem and objectives, and in relation to a number of other theories. The purpose in doing so is to meet the final goal of the research. That is, to locate the grounded theory that has been generated, within the extant literature.

8.1 Summary of Findings

Pursuing the goals of this study ultimately generated a theory incorporating three areas, namely a descriptive account of the change process, the concept of a sense of community, and finally, leadership activities and patterns that were engaged in the change process and simultaneously influenced various dimensions of the sense of community.

The process of leading a church transition showed much variance. A generic, composite description of this process of leading change involves a number of stages, namely initiating change, implementing change, and monitoring and modifying the original intentions, thereby beginning another cycle of change.

Initiating change consists of a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the current condition of the church; a search for an alternative and discovery of the cell-based model; exploration of and a more in-depth learning about the cell-based model; and then finally deciding to transform to a cell-based model. According to Huber, Sutcliffe, Miller and Glick (1993, in Weick & Quinn, 1999) the triggering of change originates from at least five sources, namely the environment, performance, characteristics of top management, structure and strategy. Many of these triggers were evident in this study. Changes in the external environment of South African society raised concerns about the performance of the church in terms of its relevance and impact. This in turn led to the adoption of strategies and structures implicit in

the cell-church transition. There were also instances where senior leadership changes brought an alternative perspective to the church, culminating in the transition.

Implementation involved firstly obtaining member commitment; then preparation for the change; and finally the launch of a cell-based model or transition. Thus, there is some evidence of the process of replacement that characterises intentional episodic change (Ford & Ford, 1994, in Weick & Quinn, 1999), in defining what existed, determining its replacement, removing what was there and substituting it with its replacement. Having implemented the change, the initiative was monitored to see whether the change was successful, and leaders, in keeping with the teleological character of the change (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), frequently made modifications. Sometimes, these modifications amounted to quite significant departures from the “pure” cell-church concept, suggesting that among the leadership at least, there may be some evidence of not only second-order change, but also third-order change (Bartunek & Moch, 1994).

During the process of change, the central characteristic being affected was the sense of community of the church. This construct of sense of community can be defined as a sense of collective-identity, -purpose and -belonging among people, who pray for, love, serve, develop and support each other in “extended family” relationships. Community is multi-faceted and was constructed to consist of two main properties, namely its form and the stability of this form.

The form of community is the dominant property of community, and can be described in terms of its sub-properties, namely the nature of contacts, member orientation, the shape of community and the congruence of this sense of community across the organization. The first sub-property of form reflects the structural aspects of community, and addresses questions such as: “Who is in community – at both the collective and individual levels?”, “How do they come into and maintain contact with one another?” and “What is the qualitative nature of these contacts?” The second sub-property refers to the orientation of the individual members with respect to their focus, their perceived role in the church, and the degree of concern shown about the role of the church in society. This can be thought of as the mindset that develops out

of the structural aspects of community and is the locus of second-order change (Bartunek & Moch, 1994). Thirdly, community has a shape. It has depth, which is characterised by the degree of intimacy and genuineness of relationships. It has breadth - a quantitative measure of how many people or groups are part of community. The shape of community may also be seen to exist at a number of levels. For example community may exist among the top leadership group of the church, while at another level it is reflected within a single cell group. The final sub-property of the form of community can be conceptualised according to its degree of congruence. That is, the degree to which community retains its characteristic form across the organisation and at different levels.

Stability of community is a secondary property of sense of community, reflecting the dynamic nature of the sense of community over time, and can be described in terms of member composition, and membership size. Stability of community is therefore related to the degree of movement of people into and out of community.

Against the background of this change process are the actions of the church leaders who were leading their churches in the direction of a cell-based model. Three sets of actions have been identified, namely searching activities, influencing activities and configuring activities. Searching activities usually preceded the implementation of the change, while during implementation and thereafter, on-going searching activities (or the lack thereof) influenced when and in what form, other leadership activities were engaged. Instrumental influence activities of leaders provide some evidence of intangible change being driven by Huy's (2001) teaching and socialising motors, and relational influence can be understood as a socialising activity. Configuring activities are more in keeping with Huy's (2001) commanding and engineering motors.

Three effective patterns of leadership action emerged from the interplay between leaders and the organizational context their leadership occurs in. These three patterns have been referred to as the freewheeler, the focused-pioneer, and the reflexive-accommodator pattern. Each pattern has a corresponding ineffective leadership pattern, namely the static non-leader, the rigid combatant and the popular people pleaser, respectively - that arose when the various

effective leadership patterns were not applied in a balanced way. In other words, successful transitioning required balancing the application of the effective patterns, over a period of time. The application of these patterns of leadership was illustrated by using the metaphor of riding a bicycle, highlighting the importance of maintaining momentum and balance.

8.2 Outline of Literature to Discuss

The purpose of developing theories following a grounded theory approach is not to produce theories that stand in isolation to existing theory within the research domain, but in fact need to be related to them and thereby extend current understanding of the research area being investigated (Parker and Roffey, 1997, pp. 224-225). Besides further reflecting on the literature discussed in Chapter Two (that was reviewed primarily with the aim of understanding the context of the research), an attempt is made to locate the results of the research in the existing body of theoretical knowledge in several domains either not incorporated or not fully developed in Chapter Two.

Firstly, the aim of this study was to examine the manifestation of organizational inertia in a unique and defined organizational context. The results are therefore discussed in the light of the literature on organizational inertia and resistance to change, which is located within the field of change management. Secondly, a central aspect of the grounded theory developed here, involved formulating the concept of a sense of community. Referring to the literature on social capital in general and internal organizational social capital in particular, further illuminates this concept. The literature on social capital is also used to make sense of the effect of leadership activities on the sense of community. Thirdly, the findings are compared to the literature on strategic leadership and leadership succession.

8.3 Organizational Inertia

As the grounded theory process advanced, it became apparent that some of the initial preconceptions I had about organization inertia were not applicable. For example, I anticipated that leaders tried to implement change in organizations, and then when they discovered inertia, undertook additional actions to address it. This is particularly common

when conceiving of inertia as “resistance to change”. That is, I had anticipated that I would encounter two sets of initiatives running in parallel. The first being the actions that were designed to transition the church, and the second, a set of initiatives that developed on an ad hoc basis to counter the inertia or resistance that was emerging as the change programme unfolded. This was not the case, and I was puzzled at first when this distinction did not emerge. Further analysis revealed that the resistance factors seemed to arise when ineffective leadership patterns were applied.

What was surprising was the temporal sequence of the change initiative in relation to organization inertia. That is, while it is more conventional to think of change being implemented and then inertia arising, here it seemed more appropriate to see inertia preceding the change initiative. That is, it is the presence of inertia – the inability of the organization to respond appropriately to its environment – that brings leaders to the point of initiating change. In fact, the leadership coming to an awareness of the need for change can be conceived as the leadership beginning to dispose of their personal inertial state. While the leadership may then come to a personal awareness of what is required, the organization as a whole is still in inertia. Change can then largely be seen as leaders acting on the inertia, trying to remove it. This suggests that inertia is embedded in the actual state of the organization, and its absence evident in the ideal situation aspired to. Changing to this ideal requires the organization to remove its collective, layered, multi-faceted state of inertia. This is in essence, what transitioning involved. It is the organization coming to an awareness of its incongruence with its environment, clarifying what its condition would be like without inertia, and then mobilizing its resources to begin the change.

This perspective of organizational inertia is consistent with the strategic choice (Boeker, 1989) perspective of change, but casts some doubt over Kinnear and Roodt’s (1998) conceptualisation of organization inertia as a unitary concept. It would seem that there are at least two distinct uses of the term organizational inertia. Firstly, it can be seen as an organizational characteristic, where there is the manifestation of organizational inertia in a lack of alignment with the organization’s environment. Secondly, organizational inertia can

be conceptualised as a response by organizational members to a change initiative. This is typically, and perhaps more accurately, referred to as resistance to change.

Not only was the temporal sequence of change versus inertia an interesting finding, but also the linkage between organization inertia and the constructed phenomenon, sense of community. That is, organizational inertia or resistance to change can generally be seen as the flip side of the phenomenon of sense of community.

Referring to Figure 7.1, the actions of focused pioneers and rigid combatants that were intended to promote a cell-based church, but subsequently destabilised or destroyed the sense of community, can be seen as promoting organizational inertia in the form of active resistance to change. Evidence of inertia of this nature includes disgruntlement arising from the closure of programmes, members choosing to leave, or people feeling marginalized by the transition.

On the other hand, when sense of community increased or was stabilised, active resistance to change decreased. So while the reflexive accommodator's actions may have stabilised the sense of community, the popular people pleaser's excessive attempts to preserve the sense of community created organizational inertia in the form of a lack of alignment with the environment. Similarly, the static non-leader's inactivity produced this form of inertia, but this time, at the expense of sense of community as well. Finally, the freewheeler pattern was displayed in situations where the sense of community was being developed and simultaneously the organization was making progress. Here there is minimal organizational inertia or resistance to change.

The nature of the connection between sense of community and organizational inertia/resistance to change firstly raises a number of questions about the value of the sense of community. For example: How far does a church go when introducing changes that minimise organizational inertia, if these changes are at the expense of sense of community and arouses high levels of resistance? In other words, to what extent can the actions of the focused pioneer, and for that matter the rigid combatant, be justified? Alternatively, to what extent can the actions of reflexive accommodators in stabilising sense of community be justified, if they

are rendering the church less relevant to its environment and possibly even detracting from or delaying what they believe to be the will of God for the church?

Secondly, this connection raises queries about the relative value attached to the various properties of sense of community at different levels of community. For example, valuing and promoting sense of community at the cell-group level may lead to pockets of community being created and therefore less of a sense of community being experienced at a church-wide level. Furthermore, valuing the breadth of community and thereby promoting evangelistic efforts that increase numbers and then require cell multiplication to accommodate them, would undermine the depth of community. On the other hand, it is the degree of intimacy and genuineness that is experienced in the property of depth that often attracts people to the group in the first place, and retains them. So which dimension should take preference, depth or breadth? Given the complex, multifaceted and sometimes paradoxical nature of sense of community, it becomes more difficult to determine if more or less organizational inertia is being generated by various actions.

With this understanding of organizational inertia and sense of community in mind, the literature on change management and organizational inertia is examined to see if any existing theories are able to explain these findings.

8.3.1 Sources of organizational inertia and resistance to change

It is not uncommon for change initiatives to fail (Beer, Eisenstat & Spector, 1990; Kotter, 1995; Nutt, 1999; Senge, 1999; Tomasko, 1993). The reason for failure can often be attributed at least in part, to various types and intensity (Judson, 1991, p. 48) of resistance to change. Within the literature on organizational inertia and resistance to change, it appears to be regular practice to emphasise the sources of resistance to change and the management thereof. This trend is most apparent in the management literature that is aimed at guiding practitioners, where there is also a tendency to identify a few key sources of resistance that managers can anticipate and then give advice on how to deal with each, as opposed to trying to provide a more fully developed theoretical explanation (e.g. Blake, 1992; Caruth,

Middlebrook & Rachel, 1985; Macadam, 1996; Maurer, 1996; Schwann & Spady, 1998; van der Merwe & van der Merwe, 1993). The sources or causes of organization inertia and resistance to change are often classified as individual, group, or organizational-level factors (King & Anderson, 2002, pp. 204-210). Each of these levels is discussed, along with some of the theories accompanying them.

8.3.2 Individual-level sources

Sources of individual resistance to change that have been identified include stress, a lack of information or misunderstanding; threats to status, skills, power or other areas of self interest; loss of face; loss of control; the homeostatic nature of human nature; a tendency to seek security in the past; personal disposition towards risk; fear of failure or the unknown; regression in times of uncertainty; lack of trust; having different facts or holding to different beliefs and values; holding ambivalent attitudes; anxiety; and various related personality characteristics (Clarke, 1994; Hayes, 2002; Hill, Smith & Mann, 1987; Hultman, 1998; Lau & Woodman, 1995; Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne, 1999; King & Anderson, 2002; Piderit, 2000; Robbins & Finley, 1996; van Tonder, 2004; Watson, 1971; Williams, Woodward & Dobson, 2002).

Fears and imagined threats such as fear of the unknown, job insecurity, economic loss, or reduced job status are all potential sources of resistance to change in individuals (Caruth, Middlebrook & Rachel, 1985). As Clarke (1994, pp. 73-79) aptly puts it, change hurts, causing fear, loss, discomfort and stress. For example, Hui and Lee (2000) propose that in times of organizational change, at least two forms of uncertainty are likely to arise, namely job insecurity and anticipated organizational change, and that this would lead to lower levels of intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment, and higher levels of absenteeism.

Theories of individual motivation offer some insight into people's response to change, with most theories offering a cognitive explanation as opposed to an emotion-based one (Dehler & Welsh, 1994). However, Carr (1999; 2001) has argued against a binary, oppositional perspective of rationality versus emotion and instead, presented a psychodynamic explanation

for individual resistance to change. This theory suggests that individuals identify with an organizational-ideal to a greater or lesser degree, and so when there is a change in the organization, individuals experience a degree of dislodging of their personal identity and therefore engage in a grieving process. While outlining a grieving process is a useful and more common approach to understanding the individual's response to change (e.g. Adams, Hayes & Hopson, 1976; Jick, 1993), several other individual level models offer a stepwise approach to classifying the various responses of individuals over time and how to deal with these stages (e.g. Conner, 1992; Galpin, 1995; Schaafsma, 1997; van Tonder, 2004). Rather than looking at a single change event, it is also possible to look at the experience of individuals in a series of change events. For example, in their research, Wanous, Reichers and Austin (2000) concluded that individual cynicism towards change was a learned response to ineffective change practices in the past, rather than an individual disposition.

8.3.2.1 Justice perspectives

Justice theory in the form of distributive, procedural and interactional justice also provides an explanation for individual resistance to change, suggesting that when employees believe that they are treated unfairly, they are more likely to resist change (e.g. Folger & Skarlicki, 1999). Justice theory is built upon the foundation of the psychological contract. According to Makin, Cooper and Cox (1996), the idea of a psychological contract appears to have originated with Argyris in 1960, but then seems to have been more fully developed by Schein (1970) a decade later. The psychological contract can be described as “the expectations of employer and employee which operate over and above the formal contract of employment ... the perceptions of the different parties to the employment relationship of what each owes the other... It incorporates beliefs, values, expectations and aspirations of employer and employee.” (Smithson & Lewis, 2000, p. 681-682). Strebel (1996, p. 87) calls the psychological contract a “personal compact” that exists between organizations and employees; that is, “reciprocal obligations and mutual commitments, both stated and implied, that define their relationship.”

A fundamental reason for the development of the psychological contract in the employment relationship is to reduce uncertainty (or conversely, to increase predictability) regarding the

obligations of the parties to the employment relationship (McFarlane-Shore & Tetrick, 1994). However, for the employee encountering change, the certainty that the psychological contract previously provided would have been removed, since the terms of this contract would now be up for review. Therefore, of concern to employees would be the effect of the change on the mutual obligations of the parties. Makin *et al.* (1996) suggest that obligations - upon which psychological contracts rest - go further than expectations. In this, they suggest that broken expectations may lead to disappointment, while broken obligations lead to anger, and a reassessment of the relationship.

According to Morishima (1996), the psychological contract has a surface and a deeper level. The surface level is at the level of human resource management practices, while the deeper level is concerned with employee welfare, long-term employment security and human capital development. Morishima (1996) maintains that as long as stability at the deeper level is maintained, the surface level can be quite flexible. Changes at the surface level can be renegotiated, while changes at the deeper level affect obligations and are tantamount to a violation of the psychological contract (Morishima, 1996). Therefore, when organizations embark on planned change initiatives, Strebel (1996) suggests that if personal compacts are not revised, employees will block organizational change efforts.

It has been suggested that there are two main types of psychological contract, namely transactional contracts based on the principle of economic exchange, and relational contracts based on social exchange theory (McFarlane-Shore & Tetrick, 1994). Drawing on justice theory in considering what happens when psychological contracts are violated, McFarlane-Shore and Tetrick (1994) maintain that employees in relationally based contracts would be more concerned about issues of procedural and interactional justice, while those in transactional contracts would be more concerned with distributive justice. McFarlane-Shore and Tetrick (1994) define each of the three forms of justice as follows: Distributive justice concerns the actual allocation of outcomes. Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedures followed in the allocation of outcomes. Interactional justice pertains to the interpersonal treatment that employees would receive in this allocation process. Thus, the criterion for distributive justice is fairness in the distribution of outcomes; while procedural

justice is based primarily on what decision criteria are used to determine the outcomes (Novelli, Kirkman & Shapiro, 1995). In interactional justice, the criteria reside in the interpersonal context and include “neutrality, or decision-maker honesty and lack of bias; trust, or the sincerity of the motives of the decision maker; and standing, or treatment that shows respect and dignity.” (Novelli, Kirkman & Shapiro, 1995, p. 28). Survey research conducted by Shapiro and Kirkman (1999) in two large US firms found that when employees anticipated that the change amounted to distributive injustice, they were more likely to resist. However, the anticipation of distributive injustice was moderated by the perception of procedural justice being exercised.

According to Kernan and Lord (1990 in McFarlane-Shore & Tetrick, 1994), where the new psychological contract is seen as a net loss, an individual would then try to reduce the discrepancy in perceptions between the old and new psychological contracts. McFarlane-Shore and Tetrick (1994) present five possible forms of response, namely voicing objection, silence, retreat, destruction, or exit. McFarlane-Shore and Tetrick (1994) suggest that employees will only voice their dissatisfaction with the contract, when distributive and interactional injustices are evident. On the other hand procedural injustices may never be voiced, but rather negative employee reactions may follow, such as silence, retreat, destruction or exiting the organization.

8.3.2.2 Summary of individual level sources of resistance

In considering the findings of this study on church transitioning, there certainly was some evidence of individual level resistance to change, and leaders trying to allay this. For example, through instrumental influence actions such as preaching and teaching about the change leaders hoped to both educate and influence individuals. Looking at justice perspectives, the psychological contract in a church situation would be relational, rather than economic. As such, it can be anticipated that church members would be more attuned to procedural and interactional injustices. This would be supported by, for example, the value gained from incorporating members in the change process (e.g. involvement in the exploration and learning processes and preparation for the launch), the negative reaction of church

members to the rigid combatant leadership pattern, and the need to change the pace of change in order to allay peoples' concerns. Furthermore, the finding that relational influence actions were related to the credibility of the leader would be consistent with organization members' sensitivity to interactional justice.

However, the sense of community phenomenon described in the theory is not primarily an individual level phenomenon, and so these individual level explanations do not shed much light onto the study as a whole.

8.3.3 Group-level sources

At this level, theories of change concentrate on the behaviour within and between groups, that either results in a group supporting the change, or otherwise resisting it. As indicated in Chapter Two, it was in describing change processes at this level that Lewin (1952) first coined the phrase "resistance to change". Groups are typically viewed as complex, adaptive and dynamic systems (McGrath & Argote, 2001, p. 603), and so while there has been much written about intra-group processes, by comparison, not much attention has been explicitly paid to the way in which groups resist organizational level change. Naturally, it can be assumed that any dysfunction within a group that constrains its adaptability can create problems for a change initiative, but space does not allow for an in-depth consideration of factors influencing effective group functioning.

Fraser, Burchell, Hay and Duveen (2001) have suggested that the social influence processes that occur within groups can be understood by referring to theories explaining the formation, maintenance and changing of norms, social comparison processes, the law of social impact, and self categorization theory. In functional groups, resistance may occur due to the group being prevented from participating in the decision making related to the change and imposing group standards that are in opposition to the proposed change (Coch & French, 1989); conflict between current group interests, values and norms and those that are being promoted by the change (Newstrom & Davis, 2002); or when the change is perceived to disrupt existing group relations and cohesion (Newstrom & Davis, 2002). Negative feedback from a group may

dampen the effect of an event, while temporal shifts (i.e. the delay between an event and its impact) may obscure the impact of an event on the group (McGrath & Argote, 2001, pp. 614-615).

In this study, resistance to change within groups was most noticeable within cell groups at the time when it was necessary to multiply the cell. Cell group members were loath to have their close relationships disrupted. Resistance at this level was even more problematic in instances where cell group formation was reconfigured, for example, as part of the launch of the cell-church transition. This resistance was moderated by allowing some form of participation in decision making, such as allowing members to choose which group to belong to, or how the cell group should be multiplied, as opposed to allocation by leaders on geographic lines or some other criteria.

Inter-group processes can also give rise to resistance to change. The dynamics of inter-group interactions, co-operation, competition and conflict, is well documented (e.g. Brown, 1988; Brown & Gaertner, 2001; Turner & Giles, 1981). Many inter-group relations are typified by an unequal distribution of resources, power and influence, and so any attempt to change this will be resisted by the dominant group as it tries to preserve its privileges (Wright, 2001, p. 409). Inter-group dynamics also impact on individual behaviour and viewpoints. For example, there is much empirical support for the idea that because individuals classify themselves as an in-group member, the individual does not readily accept communications from another group, and their personal viewpoints remain unchanged (Mackie & Wright, 2001, p. 293).

In cell-church transitions, inter-group dynamics were most evident between the group of people associated with the traditional church structures and those associated with the cell-group structures. There was often rivalry and divisions between the camps, and when the leader gave more attention to the cell groups as part of the transitioning, the other group felt marginalized. Furthermore, Mackie and Wright's (2001) observations may also provide some understanding as to why individuals who were associated with traditional structures and wanted small group interaction, were opposed to groups that resembled cell groups and

preferred a Bible study group, for example. As long as the leader or cell-groups represented a group that a certain individual did not belong to, he or she would not easily be persuaded to adopt another group's outlook.

Once again, the group-level sources of inertia and resistance are helpful in understanding some aspects of the cell-church transition, but given that both the cell-church transition and the phenomenon of sense of community are best understood as organization-level phenomena, a more holistic understanding is required. In the next section, organization-level sources are explored.

8.3.4 Organization-level sources

The cell-church transition can best be viewed as an attempt to change the organization as an entity. From this perspective, both its willingness and readiness to engage in a change process will determine the likelihood of resistance arising as well as the potential for the change initiative to be scuppered. This is expressed in the formula (Beckhard & Harris, 1987, pp. 98-99) $C=[ABD]>X$, where C=change, A=level of dissatisfaction with the status quo, B=desirability of the proposed change or end state, D=practicality of the change (i.e. minimal risk or disruption), and X="cost of changing" (i.e. the financial, time and other resources that need to be invested in the change). For example, in a study of hotel firms, Okumus and Hemmington (1998) discovered that the cost of change, financial difficulties and focusing on other priorities were the main obstacles to change.

At the organizational level, typical barriers to change are a preoccupation with seeing immediate financial benefits of change; an over-investment in previous decisions and courses of action; reward systems that are out of alignment with the proposed change, or discouraged risk taking and innovation; a lack of co-ordination and co-operation; threats to existing power balances; and incompatibility of the change with the culture of the organization (Beatty & Gordon, 1988; Smither, Houston & McIntire, 1996). It is the organizational level of resistance to change that is of the most interest here, as the focus of the study was on the role of strategic leadership in bringing about organizational change. In the next section, the main perspectives

of organizational level change are examined, with the aim of considering their explanatory power pertaining to the findings of this study.

8.3.5 Theoretical perspectives of organizational-level resistance to change

Explanations of organizational-level change are located in the diverse range of theoretical perspectives of organizations (See for example, Strickland, 1998; van Tonder, 2004). The following five perspectives seem to be the most prominent and are briefly explained in turn: open systems theory; structural inertia theory; cognitive perspectives, including learning theories; political and social system perspectives; and theories of organizational culture.

8.3.5.1 Systems theory perspectives

General systems theory is touted as a meta-theory that strives to unify various scientific disciplines by extracting common principles and laws (Strickland, 1998). It is not surprising then, that in its various guises (see for example, Scott, 1987), systems thinking is often viewed as the dominant perspective when it comes to understanding organizations today (van Tonder, 2004, p. 37); and more specifically, has been applied to organizational change and development (e.g. Beer, 1980). In the field of organizational development and change, numerous models of organizations have been spawned based upon systems thinking (e.g. Beer, 1985; Burke & Litwin, 1989; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985; Lewin, 1951; Nadler & Tushman, 1983; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Porras & Robertson, 1992; Weisbord, 1976), and at least one of them – Burke & Litwin (1989) - applied directly as a conceptualising framework for organizational inertia (Kinnear & Roodt, 1998). Open system principles implicit in these models include interdependence, feedback, equilibrium, equifinality and adaptation (Katz & Kahn, 1966; 1978). Harrison (1987, pp. 33-37) identifies three categories of effectiveness criteria of systems, namely those related to output goals, internal system state, and finally, adaptation and resource position. From a change management perspective, the adaptation criteria are of particular significance and include legitimacy, competitive/strategic position, impact on the environment, adaptiveness, innovativeness, and fit.

From an open systems perspective, Zeffane (1996) proposes that barriers to change arise from five broad categories (namely the setting, the organization, the manager, the group and the results) and core dimensions (culture, assumptions and mind sets or psyches), while Goldstein (1988) suggests that resistance to change can be understood as a constructive response by a group or organization to a perceived threat to its autonomous identity. Furthermore, Watson (1971) notes that the tendency of social systems to resist change is related to conformity to existing norms; the cultural coherence of systems (that requires a change in one area to be expanded to all other areas of the social system for it to have any effect); perspectives of changes affecting what the social system regards as sacred; the rejection of outsiders; the power structure of the organization; poverty within the social system; restricted communication; and the nature of the innovation (i.e. its complexity, speed of introduction, scope, reversibility, and compatibility with existing concepts, theories and values). Because of the meta-theoretical status of systems theory, many of the barriers to change that have been identified by Zeffane (1996), Goldstein (1988) and Watson (1971) can be examined from other more focused perspectives, such as intra- and intergroup functioning, organizations as political systems, cognition and learning models, organizational culture viewpoints, and so forth. So rather than dealing with them here, they are considered elsewhere.

8.3.5.2 Structural inertia theory

Hannan and Freeman (1984, p. 150) have argued that there are three main explanations that try to account for the variety of organizational forms that exist and why structural change within an organization may or may not be able to occur. Firstly, population ecology theory suggests that it is the replacement of old organizations with new ones differing in form from their predecessors that gives rise to variety in organizational structure. That is, this view proposes that organizations are replaced - since relative to the rate of changes in the environment - they cannot change structurally. Numerous innovative replacements generate a variety of organizational forms. This view is unlike the second view, rational adaptation theory, which advocates that in response to an environmental assessment, individual organizations can deliberately, timeously and successfully adapt their strategy and structure. The third perspective, random transformation theory proposes that structures change as a result of

processes originating from within the organization, but not necessarily in response to leadership intentions or environmental threats.

Underlying these three perspectives is the question of whether changes in major organizational features over a period of time are indicative of the occurrence of “adaptation or selection and replacement” (Hannan & Freeman, 1984, p. 150). Favouring the selection argument, structural inertia theory is located in the population ecology approach, and is based on a number of fundamental assumptions (Hannan & Freeman, 1984, pp. 152-155). Firstly, it is assumed that in contemporary society, selection in populations of organizations favours organizational forms that have high levels of reliability and accountability. Secondly, it is assumed that structural reproducibility is a prerequisite for achieving reliability and accountability. Thirdly, these high levels of reproducibility create strong inertial forces in organizations. Based on these three assumptions, it is concluded that selection favours organizational structures that are high in inertia. That is, organizations that develop reproducibility through institutionalising and standardising processes are more able to meet reliability and accountability requirements and are therefore more likely to succeed. Hannan and Freeman (1984, pp. 157-161) further propose that since reproducibility increases with age, and larger organizations display higher levels of inertia, then older and larger organizations are more likely to survive, while new organizations or organizations that attempt structural re-organization, will be more prone to failure, given the liability of newness. Supporting the notion of the liability of newness, in a study of the United States radio industry, Greve (1999) concluded that change was in fact harmful to large and successful organizations, and only organizations that were under-performing prior to a change benefited.

While some studies have given a measure of support to structural inertia theory (e.g. Baum, 1990; Singh, Tucker & Meinhard, 1988), Kelly and Amburgey (1991) tested the applicability of structural inertia theory (Hannan and Freeman, 1984) to the air carrier industry in the United States and failed to find support for it. In the light of their findings they provided a revision to, and broadening of the theory to incorporate both inertia and momentum, by proposing that when changes are observed, they may well be the continuation of prior routines, rather than novel changes. That is, over time, organizations may develop routines

that are “modification routines”: procedures for changing and creating routines” (Amburgey, Kelly & Barnett, 1993, p. 54).

Fombrun’s (1994, pp. 47-68) explanation of why organizations resist change is basically a variant of structural inertia theory, and helps to further illustrate the emergence of structural reproducibility, or routines. He argues that organizations compete by firstly creating firm-wide capabilities based upon their core technologies and human skills. Thereafter, controls are designed to administer and co-ordinate organizational transactions and interactions so that employee interactions are effectively channelled to produce high levels of performance. Finally, a corporate culture is shaped that requires people to act in ways consistent with company beliefs and norms. Consequently, organizational conduct is shaped and inhibited by its capabilities, controls and culture.

This conduct is not only inertial in limiting the likelihood of change, but “also contributes to building momentum that propels firms and communities forward along strategic trajectories” (Fombrun, 1994, p. 55). Essentially, Sull (1999) observed this same phenomenon in various business cases that were researched, noting that active inertia arises as a direct result of the previous success of the company. That is, when circumstances change, successful companies tend to have become entrenched in their strategic frames, thereby creating blind spots; their successful processes have become rigid routines; successful relationships with employees, customers, suppliers, lenders and investors have become fetters to developing new relationships; and their values have hardened into dogmas, or inflexible rules and regulations; all combining to produce an active resistance to change.

In a similar vein to Fombrun, 1994), Hinings & Greenwood (1988) propose that organizational archetypes are either maintained or destabilised by one or more of the following five factors and their interchange: contextual constraints, interpretive schemes, interests, power, and organizational capacity.

Structural inertia theory mainly refers to organizational features such as institutionalisation or standardisation to explain inertia, and furthermore, relates their development to organizational

features such as response to competition (Fombrun, 1994), or the age and size of the organization (Amburgey, Kelly & Barnett, 1993), or characteristics related to the dominant initial organization strategy (Boeker, 1989).

Examining these organization level processes from a leadership perspective highlights another set of dynamics that explains how the strategic leadership of an organization become committed to a particular strategy because it is seen to be working. For example, Sull (1999) explains that active inertia arises because organizational success reinforces the idea that leaders have found the one best way to manage the organization and so proceed to further develop and refine what is viewed as a winning formula. This serves to develop a singular strategic frame that is resistant to new ideas and opportunities, and hence become blinders that either distort contrary information or ignore it. It is these strategic frames and their refinement that produce inflexible routines that are unresponsive to environmental changes, as relationships become shackles and values harden into dogmas. Other explanations of commitment to ineffective strategies are offered by threat rigidity response theories such as Staw's (1981) escalating commitment theory, Zajac and Bazerman's (1991) explanation of the emergence of blind spots in competitor analysis, and D'Aveni's (1989) strategic paralysis.

A central question posed by structural inertia theory, is can a church really change from being a programme-based church? The weight of opinion of advocates of the cell-church movement (e.g. Comiskey, 1998; 1999; Gustitus, 2000; Hurston, 2001; Khong, 2000; Neighbour, 1990; Yonggi Cho, 1981) would be that it is possible for a church to successfully change from a programme-based to a cell-based model. Therefore the premise underlying the cell-church transition would be based on rational adaptation theory and not population ecology theory or random transformation theory. This would suggest that structural inertia theory and its variants would not be able to offer an appropriate explanation of the cell-church transition. Accordingly, structural inertia theory flies in the face of a central assumption that was made when embarking on this study. That is, it was assumed that organizations, including churches, can change, and that strategic leadership is instrumental to ensuring the success of the change.

However, the findings of this study highlighted the centrality of sense of community and the difficulties associated with leadership actions that disrupted the sense of community. It would seem that members of a church quickly develop routines of interaction that occur within the framework of the nature of contacts provided, and ultimately cultivated a particular form to the sense of community. On the other hand, there was some evidence of leaders successfully changing strategic trajectory of the church, cultivating a different form of sense of community, and establishing new routines of interaction. While structural inertia theory does not provide an adequate explanation for the grounded theory developed here, perhaps its value to this study lies in the potential use of institutionalisation and standardisation to refreeze the church in the cell-based model. Examples of this may be the training equipping track and cell feedback and administrative systems, which can be regarded as new routines. Finally, the idea of modification routines in structural inertia theory may be helpful. If churches recognise that the environment is dynamic, they would be advised to consider how they could institutionalise flexibility in this way.

8.3.5.3 Cognitive and learning perspectives

In Chapter Two, the type of change represented by the cell-church transition was classified as an example of intangible episodic change, driven by teaching and socialisation teleological motors (Huy, 2001; Van de Ven & Poole; 1995; Weick and Quinn, 1999). It was also described as an example of second-order change involving the adoption of a new, shared schema (Bartunek & Moch, 1994). With this in mind, it was anticipated that the cognitive and learning perspectives of organizational change would be insightful.

Some of the theories represented by this perspective incorporate changing individual-level cognition, such as expectancy theory (Hayes, 2002), sense making and sense giving (Ericson, 2001; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Kiesler & Sproull, 1982; Peterson & Smith, 2000; Taylor, 1999; Weick, 1995), positive deviance (Crom & Bertels, 1999), creeping rationality (Fredrickson & Iaquinto, 1989), cognitive dissonance (Jermias, 2001) and others (see for example, Douglas, 2000; Reger, Mullane, Gustafson & Demarie, 1994; van Tonder, 2004; Watson, 1971). While the focal point may be the individual, I would argue that when these

actions are pervasive in the organization, they begin to effect change at the organizational level.

Currently, learning perspectives form a prominent branch of cognitive approaches to change management. The development of the idea of the learning organization and/or organizational learning can largely be ascribed to Chris Argyris (e.g. Argyris, 1964; 1982; 1990; 1999; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Argyris & Schön, 1978; 1996), and has more recently been embraced by others (e.g. Dixon, 1999; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Garvin, 1993; Nonaka, 1991; 1994; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Senge, 1990; 1999).

From a learning perspective, organizational inertia arises inter alia, from defensive routines blocking double-loop learning (Argyris, 1985; 1990; 1999); emotional responses (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001) and habitual patterns reinforced by selective perception and retention (Watson, 1971, pp.749-754). Also, adaptive response theory suggests that in response to observed discrepancies between their own expectations and those of the organization, individuals compromise the expectations they have of the organization from time to time (Griffeth, Gaertner & Sager, 1999; Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000). Finally, Senge (1999) addresses a number of challenges to initiating and sustaining transformation (i.e. not enough time or support, perceived irrelevance, discrepancies between what is spoken and what is practised, fear and anxiety, measurement of progress, clashes between fanatical believers and non-believers); as well as to redesign and rethinking (i.e. establishing legitimacy, diffusion of innovations, and broadening involvement in strategic thinking).

In the grounded theory explaining cell-church transition, there was evidence of schematic change being achieved. This was largely represented by the member orientation property of sense of community, and was attained through instrumental influence (e.g. modelling and directing and envisioning); and configuring activities (e.g. developing systems and procedures such as training equipping tracks). Learning practices were also evident in ongoing searching actions by leaders in particular, and became more pervasive in the church during the initiation phase of the transition and the preparation stage of the implementation phase. After implementation, learning was institutionalised through, for example, training programmes.

However, there are aspects of the transition and its effect on sense of community that are not easily explained from a cognitive or learning perspective. Examples include the configuring activities of the leader and their impact on the nature of contacts. Also the shape of community in general and the tension between its depth and breadth is not easily accounted for. So like the other perspectives discussed so far, the cognitive and learning perspective can provide some insights, but does not sufficiently embrace the grounded theory.

8.3.5.4 Political perspectives

Political perspectives of organizations and change (e.g. Greiner & Schein, 1988; Morgan, 1997) apply particularly at the inter-group and organizational levels, where they are concerned with the processes that arise between constituencies trying to advance or preserve their personal interests in a change initiative by making claims on scarce and valued resources (Hinings & Greenwood, 1988, p. 21). Consequently, it incorporates processes such as conflict management and negotiation (Brooks & Adiorne, 1984; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Robbins, 1997; Tosi, Rizzo, & Carroll, 1993; Walton & Dutton, 1969), power (French & Raven, 1958; Kotter, 1985; Luthans, 2002; Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981; 1993), powerlessness (Senior, 1997), and impression management (Robbins, 1997).

While considering resistance to change from a social systems perspective, Watson (1971) explains the political dynamic at work in the system. Firstly, Watson (1971, pp. 746-748) notes that with the introduction of an innovation, organizations move through various stages or forms of resistance to change in a cyclical fashion. In the early stage, the initiators of innovations are not taken seriously, and thus face large scale, undifferentiated resistance. Once the change develops momentum, two camps or power bases begin to emerge – one in favour of and the other opposed to the change. In the third stage resistance is very active, and there is direct conflict and a showdown between the two groupings, with the survival of the innovation being determined by the balance of power. In the fourth stage, the supporters of the change hold power and ongoing resistance is seen as stubbornness and a nuisance. While there is growing majority support for the change, the power may still be delicately balanced initially, with opportunistic mobilisation of power against the innovation if there is any

indication of it faltering. The final stage is characterised by the presence of only a few alienated opponents to the change, which is now well established. In fact it is so well established that the original pioneers of the change become the main opponents of the next emerging change.

The literature on cell-church transitioning does advise leaders to take into account the political dimension of change. For example, Neighbour (1990) suggests profiling the members of the church according to Rogers and Shoemaker's (1971) five "diffusion of innovation" groups. Furthermore, Comiskey (1999, pp. 189-201) and others advise that preparation for the transition should include obtaining support for the change at the highest level in the church, and developing a support base through relationship building. As one of the processes in initiating the change, interviewees did emphasise the importance of obtaining agreement to the transition among the leadership at least, if not the broader church membership. Other than that, politics and power did not seem to emerge as a theme in this grounded theory study. Admittedly, conflict did occur and interviewees described its occurrence and management, but they did not link this to concepts related to organizational politics or power. As a result, the political perspective serves little explanatory purpose in this study.

8.3.5.5 Organizational culture perspectives

There is a vast body of literature on organizational culture, and only part of it is concerned with the impact of culture on change, or how to bring about change through organizational culture (Senior, 1997). Organizational culture change will be approached from two broad viewpoints, namely levels of culture and the types of culture.

Firstly, it is generally accepted that there are various levels of organizational culture (Brown, 1995; Dyer, 1985; Gagliardi, 1986; Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv & Sanders, 1990; Marcoulides & Heck, 1993; Schein, 1984), ranging from visible artefacts to invisible values, or basic assumptions (e.g. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). It is argued that the organizational culture develops as the organization solves two sets of problems, namely external adaptation and internal integration (e.g. Denison, Haaland & Goelzer, 2004; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Schein,

1984). Drawing on Kirton's (1976) adaptation/innovation theory, Vicere (1992) notes that as organizations develop over time, they tend to become less open to change, less responsive to external environmental changes and more inwardly focused and reactive. This chronological change is accompanied by different styles of leadership that are necessary for continued organizational growth and development, shifting from a creative, innovative emphasis early on, to a more adaptive focus later on where the emphasis is on improving what currently exists in the organization. This pattern also reflects a change in priorities over time. That is, initially external adaptation is emphasised, while later on, internal integration gets more attention.

Relating this chronological process to the patterns of leadership observed, it would suggest that new churches would be more amenable to the focused pioneer leadership pattern, and with age, develop a preference for the reflexive accommodator pattern, which, in stabilising sense of community, tends to be more focused on matters of internal integration. The tensions between increasing the depth versus the breadth of the shape of sense of community can also be understood as managing external adaptation versus internal integration. Furthermore, it is likely that attempts to change the member orientation properties of focus, role and concerns about relevance and impact are embedded in basic assumptions.

Cultural change initiatives are usually, though not exclusively (e.g. Marcoulides & Heck, 1993) aimed directly at deeper levels of culture, such as values or basic assumptions (e.g. Dolan & Garcia, 2002; Gagliardi, 1986; Schein, 1984; Senior, 1997; Whiteley, 1995). On the premise that change programmes challenge currently held values, resistance to change can be anticipated (e.g. Gagliardi, 1986). Whether these values can be changed directly, is open to debate, with some authors advocating that behaviour should be targeted, and that this will then lead to a change in values (e.g. Beer, Einstat & Spector, 1990; Hope & Hendry, 1995). In church transitioning, it was common practice to try and directly promote values that were supportive of a cell-based model through directing and envisioning activities such as teaching and preaching. However, there was also evidence of behaviourally targeted strategies, such as mentoring, befriending and supporting; modelling; and neglect.

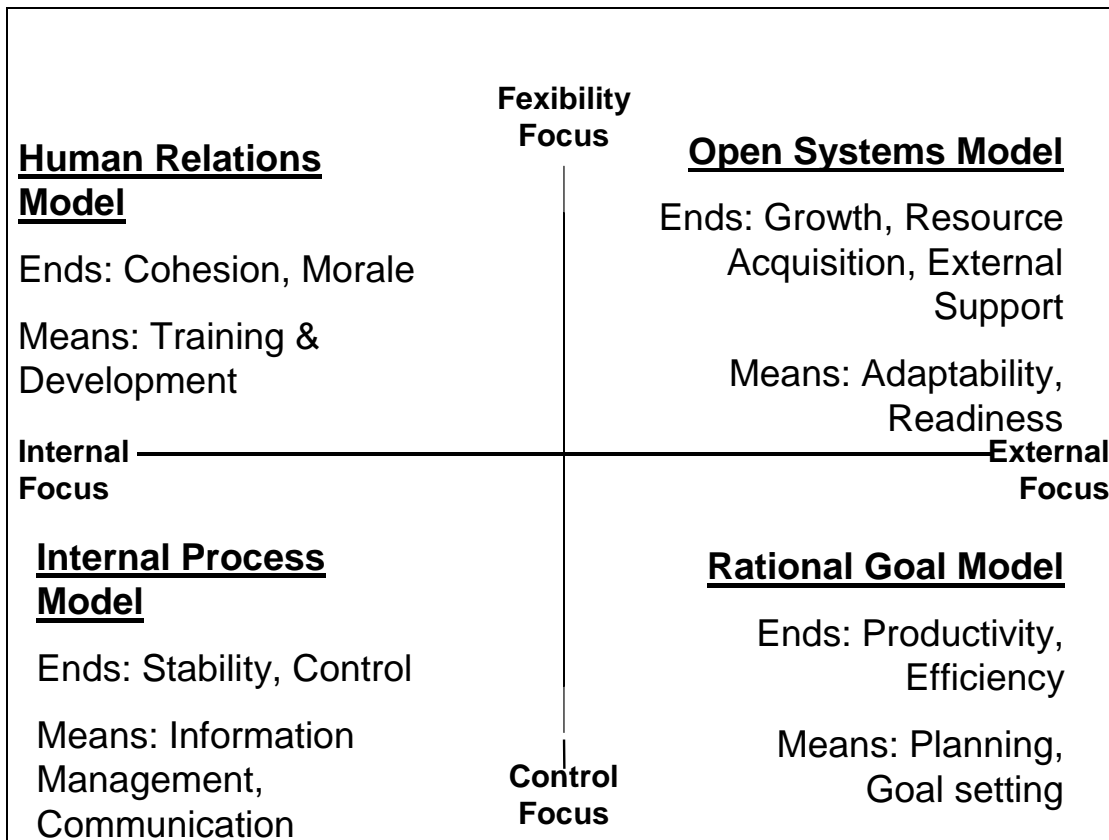
The second perspective on organizational culture that will be discussed is the recognition of various types of culture and attempts at classification. Several authors have constructed typologies of culture (e.g. Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Goffee & Jones, 1996; Hall, 1995; Handy, 1993; Harrison, 1972; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984; Pheysey, 1993; Scholz, 1987). From a change perspective, the interest would often be on how the organization culture can be changed from one type to another. This usually entails a value change, as many of the typologies have values that implicitly or explicitly differentiate one culture type from another (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000, pp. 9-11). The typology of the competing values framework will be used here to consider organizational culture changes implicit in the cell-church transition.

Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) developed the competing values framework as a spatial model representing various competing criteria of organizational effectiveness. These criteria can be differentiated along three dimensions representing competing values of control versus flexibility, an internal versus and external focus, and an emphasis on means versus ends. The first two dimensions are used to develop four models representing different types of culture, namely the human relations model, the internal process model, the rational goal model, and the open system model (Quinn & McGrath, 1985; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Zammuto, Gifford & Goodman, 2000). This framework is depicted in Figure 8.1. Zammuto, Gifford and Goodman (2000, pp. 266-267) have tabulated the characteristics of each of these models making up the competing values framework quadrants.

While developing the patterns of leadership in the grounded theory, the distinction between the focused pioneer and the reflexive accommodator resonated with two of these leadership approaches. The reflexive accommodator resembles the pattern of leadership characterized by the human relations model where the leadership roles of mentor and facilitator are prominent; while the focused pioneer fits with the rational goal model, where the leadership roles are more task oriented, namely the producer who initiates action and the director who provides structure. The third dimension of the competing values framework has tended to receive less attention than the focus and control dimensions, and that is the means-ends dimension.

Reflective accommodators place more emphasis on the means, while focused pioneers emphasise the attainment of ends.

FIGURE 8.1
COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK



Source: Adapted from Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1983, p. 369) and Zammuto, Gifford & Goodman (2000, p. 265).

According to the competing values framework, organizations need to embrace all four ideologies, or competing values. It can then be assumed that this balance may be attained over time through successive complementary leaders who emphasise different roles, or through a balanced leadership approach being embodied in one leader. This is the essence of the grounded theory developed here, which argues in favour of balancing leadership patterns. This insight also serves to highlight the role of leadership succession, a topic to be revisited later.

Examining the competing values framework in more detail, it could be argued that the church transition involves shifting the culture from an internal systems model towards an open systems model, and this is being achieved through balancing out the leadership patterns of the human relations and rational goal model. This then raises a question about the leadership style associated with the open systems model. Is it possible that a more effective style of leadership lies in the open systems model where both an external focus and flexibility are emphasised through the leader embracing the roles of innovator and resource broker? Furthermore, is it possible that some the freewheeler pattern is related to the open systems style of leadership? If not, can the freewheeler pattern be related to the competing values framework in another way? This is perhaps an area for further research.

8.3.6 Summary of organizational inertia

In this section, a number of approaches to understanding organizational inertia and resistance to change have been examined in an attempt to locate the grounded theory in the body of literature and to use that literature to shed light on the findings of this study. Since the cell-church transition was a church-wide change process that church leaders were engaging in, prominence was given to organizational level perspectives of change management. While all the perspectives proved useful in a limited way, the organizational culture perspective of organizational inertia and resistance to change has provided more insight into the grounded theory, than any of the preceding perspectives of organizations (i.e. systems, structural inertia, political, and cognitive/learning perspectives). However, cultural perspectives tend to emphasise organizational values as a central phenomenon of exploration. While this has been useful, structural and relational aspects of the grounded theory have not been adequately accounted for. So while the body of knowledge typically associated with the organizational change literature did provide some useful insights and confirmations, no single theoretical perspective seemed to supply a comprehensive explanation of the grounded theory. In the next section, it is argued that social capital theory offers a more encompassing explanation, and as such, shows much promise as a body of literature that in future, can be used to develop an understanding of organizational change.

8.4 Social Capital

The results of this study, and the construct of sense of community in particular, are illuminated by the organizational social capital literature. My academic background is in the fields of industrial/organizational psychology and management. Therefore, having its roots in sociology, I was unfamiliar with the concept of social capital at the start of the study. However, as sense of community started to develop as a category central to the theory, and recognising the sociological nature of the category, I began reading more widely and only then discovered the literature on social capital.

Fukuyama (2001, p. 7) describes social capital as “an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals.” These instantiated norms include “virtues like honesty, the keeping of commitments, reliable performance of duties, reciprocity, and the like” (Fukuyama, 2001, p. 7). Leana and van Buuren (1999, p. 538) define *organizational* social capital (OSC) as “a resource reflecting the character of social relations within the firm... realized through members’ levels of collective goal orientation and shared trust, which create value by facilitating successful collective action”.

It is generally agreed that the origins of theories of social capital can largely be attributed to the writings of Pierre Bourdieu in France and James Coleman and Robert Putnam in the United States (Field, 2003, pp. 13-40; Schuller, Baron & Field, 2000, pp. 1-12). Today its popularity is evident in its application to a wide range of contexts and disciplines, including organizational theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002, pp. 17-18). The concept of social capital has been applied widely, from individual to national levels (Leana & van Buuren, 1999; Tsai & Goshal, 1998), but of particular interest here is its applicability to the organizational level, or in organizational social capital (OSC).

Furthermore, in the light of the grounded theory that has been developed, with sense of community central to it, the spotlight on OSC can be narrowed down even more, to focus primarily on internal social capital – that is the ties an actor maintains within a collective,

rather than with outsiders (Adler & Kwon, 2002, pp. 19-21; Hitt & Ireland, 2002, p. 4). Internal social capital has to do with “the relationships between strategic leaders and those whom they lead as well as relationships across all of the organization’s work units.” (Hitt & Ireland, 2002, p. 5).

8.4.1 Internal organizational social capital and its outcomes

While Leana and van Buuren’s (1999, p. 538) definition of organizational social capital (OSC) referred to earlier, may suggest that OSC requires action for it to be acknowledged as a resource, Nahapiet and Goshal (1998) maintain that both the actual *and potential* embedded resources of a social unit constitute OSC.

Adler and Kwon (2002, pp. 21-22) note several characteristics of social capital that personify it as a form of capital. Examining some of these characteristics helps to clarify the nature of internal OSC being referred to here. Firstly, as capital, social capital can be invested to derive a flow of benefits. The implication of this is that by developing internal organizational relations, leaders will extend the collective identity of the organization and enhance its capability for collective action. Secondly, social capital is appropriable – it can be mobilised for different purposes such as seeking advice or obtaining information from friendship ties. Thirdly, social capital needs to be preserved. This requires the continual renewal of social ties and the reciprocation of trust, favours and obligations. Fourthly, Adler and Kwon (2002) note that social capital is not a private but a collective good, and that its use by one person does not necessarily diminish its availability to others. This does make it vulnerable to free-rider problems, but even so, it is excludable, in that people can be excluded from the network of relationships (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 22). Related to this characteristic of being a collective good, social capital is generally seen to be embedded in the relationship between parties rather than in the parties themselves (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 22). That is, it is jointly owned by the organization and its members, and both parties benefit extrinsically and/or intrinsically from its existence (Leana & van Buren, 1999, p. 541).

For this study, these characteristics provide important insights for application of leadership actions in managing sense of community. Firstly, a leader needs to have invested in the church's social capital before being able to derive any benefits, or use it towards other ends. Furthermore, there needs to be an ongoing investment. Relational influence represents this investment. Secondly, actions of leaders that unilaterally devalue the stock of social capital (by for example, disrupting sense of community), harm the social capital accrued to other parties, or are perceived to only benefit the leader; will be resisted. In the light of this, it can be understood that organization inertia arose in response to the change initiatives, due to uncertainty about the future state of the social capital in the church. Leaders who were seen to be having too detrimental an effect on social capital were excluded, or alternatively, if an individual felt that the social capital had been greatly devalued for them, they were inclined to leave the church.

Nahapiet and Goshal (1998) relate OSC to the creation of intellectual capital. In this context, they identify three clusters of OSC, namely structural, relational and cognitive dimensions. The impersonal, structural dimension would describe social networks in terms of their density, connectivity, hierarchy and appropriability. This would be similar to one of the sub-properties of sense of community, namely the nature of contacts. On the other hand, the personal relational dimension would be characterised by features such as respect, friendship, trust and trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, expectations and obligations, identity and identification, and the like, which develop out of the history of interaction between people. The shape of the sense of community would be represented here. The cognitive dimension is characterised by shared understandings and interpretations among parties and is supported by the development of, for example, shared languages, codes and narratives. This is similar to the member orientation sub-property of sense of community.

Sandefur and Laumann (1988, in Adler & Kwon, 2002) identify three main benefits and risks derived from social capital, namely facilitating information flow, being a source of influence and engendering solidarity. Lin (2001, pp. 19-20) substitutes solidarity with the benefit of certifying the social credentials of a party, and adds a fourth benefit, namely reinforcement of identity and recognition. In this study there was evidence of these benefits being apparent as

churches embarked on the transition. The formation of cell groups, meetings and correspondence with cell leaders facilitated leadership communication and influence in the church. In addition, the social credentials and recognition of people appointed as cell leaders was enhanced, as this was often seen as a function to aspire to. There was also a sense of solidarity that developed at various levels and within groupings in the church, among those who were involved with the cells.

A unique outcome of social capital that is pertinent to the church context is religiosity (Hoge & Carroll, 1978; Welch, 1981; Welch & Baltzell, 1984). For example, in a survey of over 2500 registered Catholic parishioners in the United States, Cavendish, Welch and Leege (1998) reported that social network variables such as sense of community (i.e. feeling that there is community in the parish), social integration (i.e. feelings of attachment to the parish, its parishioners and ministers), and organizational membership (i.e. the number of affiliations to other civic organizations) were the strongest net predictors of all the measures of Catholic religiosity that were used, namely obligatory devotionism (i.e. commitment to and attendance of liturgical activities that are viewed as mandatory in the Catholic tradition), evangelical devotionism (i.e. more personal devotional activities such as praying, witnessing and participating in Bible studies), traditional devotionism (i.e. participation in uniquely Catholic traditions such as benediction and confession), and spiritual experience (i.e. the frequency of spiritual experiences). Discussing their findings, they note: “The distinctive role of social integration for predicting several dimensions of religiosity suggests to us that many Catholics ... find God through other people. [S]ocial ties enhance religious expression precisely by fostering a form of community that sustains religious practice.” (Cavendish, Welch & Leege, 1998, p. 405). The definition of sense of community is aligned to this observation, and it was often in the small group context that “The love of the Lord began to get hands and feet and a mouth and eyes.”

8.4.1.1 Social capital in churches

It is generally agreed that the norms and activities of churches and other religious organizations both promote and provide an individual with the opportunity to gain social

capital, and that by engaging in the social life of the church the individual can become increasingly embedded into the church and community's social network (Ammerman, 1997; Davie, 2001; Greeley, 1997; Lam, 2002; Milofsky, 1997; Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Yeung, 2004).

A distinction in the social capital literature that is worth noting at this point is that made between bridging, bonding and linking social capital (Woolcock, 2001, p. 13). The distinction between bonding and bridging social capital is better known, referring respectively to the relations between family, members, close friends and neighbours, versus more distant friends, colleagues and associates. This distinction is evident in the relationships that an individual cultivates with others within the cell group (i.e. bonding), compared with the relationships they have with others in the church (i.e. bridging).

Woolcock (2001, p. 13) describes the main function of linking social capital as "The capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community". The cell model was often embraced as a vehicle for church growth, to reach people outside the church community and bring them into it. While these evangelistic intentions of increasing the breadth of sense of community, may not have been to leverage external resources but to fulfil the Great Commission, it does seem to represent a form of linking social capital.

There is however, some evidence to suggest that extensive involvement within the church can limit involvement in the broader community (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996; Wuthnow, 1999), and that in turn, people who were extensively involved in community service, restricted their social involvement. For example, in her research, Yeung (2004, pp. 415-416) noted that volunteers in church seemed to be more active than their non-church counterparts. The net effect was that because of their concern for others and their willingness to be of help, church volunteers tended to display high levels of bridging altruistic social capital. On the other hand, when they socialised, they tended to restrict their social circles largely to fellow church members. In this way, they displayed high levels of bonding social capital in domain of their personal life. This tension between bridging altruistic social capital and personal bonding

social capital is reminiscent of the tension observed by church leaders between increasing the breadth of the sense of community's shape, while simultaneously trying to preserve its depth.

8.4.2 Determinants of social capital

Having clarified the nature of social capital as it pertains to this study, the question that arises is what the origins of social capital are. Muthuri (2005, pp. 449-451) notes that social capital is dynamic and that there are various contextual and relational demands that affect its formation and maintenance. Adler and Kwon (2002, pp. 23-28) provide an opportunity-motivation-ability representation of the sources of social capital, which serves as a useful organizing framework to answer this question.

8.4.2.1 Opportunity

As a starting point, the mere existence of individual social networks provides the opportunity to engage in social capital exchanges. However, the quality of these ties, reflected in features such as the frequency, intensity and multiplexity of the interactions, will impact upon the nature of the social capital derived (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 24). Furthermore, examining internal social capital, the closure of the network structure – the extent to which the connections of a party are also connected to others in the group (Coleman, 1988) - will promote trust and co-operative norms between parties, strengthening social capital in the process. In contrast, a lack of closure will diminish social capital.

8.4.2.1.1 Associability

According to Leana and van Buuren (1999, pp 541-542) associability is a critical determinant of OSC. Associability is the willingness and ability of individuals to engage in collective action. “It takes repeated exchanges that reinforce mutual recognition and boundaries to affirm and reaffirm the collectivity of the capital and each member’s claim to that capital.” (Lin, 2001, p. 22). Thus, configuring activities affect the current state of collective action, and it is self evident that a lack of associability will undermine social capital.

Structural holes exist where there is “the separation between nonredundant contacts ... As a result of the hole between them, the two contacts provide network benefits that are in some degree additive rather than overlapping.” (Burt, 1992, p. 18). This lack of overlap can be potentially problematic. Burt, Hogarth and Michaud (2000, pp. 123-124) summarise how structural holes emerge. When there is specialisation, parties begin to focus on their immediate tasks, to the exclusion of adjacent ones. These parties may be part of the same organization, or different ones. Thus, holes emerge in the social structure between the parties, as people have little time to devote to the activities of other groups. Consequently, potential benefits of co-ordinated activities are overlooked.

Leaders can fulfil a bridging role and connect parties where it is valuable to do so, to the benefit of the parties and the leader. Burt (1992, p. 34) referred to this bridging role as entrepreneurship. As described in the congruence property of sense of community, there were cases where the leader was confronted with a situation of leading two congregations in one. That is, there was a part of the church that represented the traditional church model and then there was a separate grouping that had embraced the cell-church model. Recognising this incongruence – or the structural holes – some leaders had given priority to building bridges between these two groups and emphasising a collective identity. In doing so, they were fulfilling Burt’s (1992) entrepreneurship role.

Another feature of associability is the strength of relational ties. The strength of relational ties can be measured in terms of the time, emotion and affection mutually invested in a relationship, and yet in spite of this investment – or perhaps because of it – it is hypothesised that strong ties seem to fragment more easily than weak ties (Blackshaw & Long, 1998, pp. 241-242). As so aptly put by Bulmer (1985, p. 435, in Blackshaw and Long, 1998, p. 242) “weak ties are indispensable to individuals’ opportunities and to their integration into communities. Strong ties, breeding local cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation. Weak ties are not generative of alienation.”

Blackshaw and Long's (1998) observations about the strength of ties raises important debates for the cell-church model. Firstly, they may provide an alternative explanation for the formation of structural holes. That is, strong ties in one section of the church – such as the section of the church engaged in cells - bring about localised cohesion, but overall these pockets of cohesion could create overall fragmentation in the church. This point has already been discussed in detail. Secondly, the question arises of how strong the ties must be between a leader and the members of the church. If Blackshaw and Long (1998) are correct, then getting too close to the people in the church could ultimately begin to alienate the leader. On the other hand, the leader needs to have ties of sufficient strength to be able to mobilise the social capital for action. This aspect is discussed in more detail later. Thirdly, the strength of ties between people within a cell group needs to be considered.

A common struggle encountered when introducing a cell-based model, was that when the quality of contacts was configured to be personal and meaningful, it did not always promote the desired depth of intimacy, and in fact was often resisted as it created discomfort for people. For example, sometimes people preferred Bible study groups to cell groups, because they were less threatening. Being transparent and authentic was not easy. Cells were also promoted as a lifestyle not a meeting, yet a communal approach to life was alien to some people, especially when their cultural background was one that valued individualism. At what stage will the following proverb be realised for them? “Let not your foot be frequently in your neighbour's house, or he may get tired of you, and his feeling be turned to hate.” (Proverbs 25:17 in the Bible in Basic English).

On the other hand, when there was depth to the sense of community in cell groups, there was a reluctance to increase the breadth of sense of community, or to multiply. If Blackshaw and Long's (1998) contention is correct that strong ties are more likely to fragment, then one question that arises is how strong should the ties be in a cell group? And are leaders not investing energy in something that will invariably disintegrate? Alternatively, if strong ties are desired, what causes them to fragment, and what can leaders do to repair and maintain them? Intuitively, it would seem desirable to have stronger ties among cell groups rather than

weaker ones, and that the contextual application of Blackshaw and Long's (1998) assertion needs to be researched further.

8.4.2.1.2 *Resilient trust*

A second determinant of OSC that Leana and van Buuren (1999, p. 542-544) identify is resilient trust. Resilience is based upon the multiplicity of links between the organization and its members, that produces a level of immunity to occasional transactions that are not equitable in terms of their costs and benefits accrued to the parties (Ring & van de Ven, 1992, in Leana and Van Buren, 1999, p. 543). Resilient trust is not calculative in nature, but instead is based upon "experience with the other parties and/or beliefs about their moral integrity" (Leana & Van Buren, 1999, p. 543). Communities where resilient trust occurs have strong norms and values that are supportive of its development (Leana & Van Buren, 1999, p. 543). Trust is developed through valuing and rewarding trust, setting an example of trustworthiness, and showing trust in others. Co-operation is fostered when people have a common sense of purpose and when organizational rules and norms promote it. Leana and van Buren (1999, p. 543) further contend that in organizations that have voluntary membership, for there to be any associability, a minimum level of trust is needed, even if it is not personal in nature or pervasive throughout the organization.

As has been noted, the level of credibility of leaders is in part determined by the history of their relationship with the church, as well as variables related to succession that place them in contrast (or similarity) with their predecessor. Furthermore, leaders' engagement in instrumental influence and configuring activities would tend to diminish the resilience of trust if the perceived benefits were overshadowed by the perceived costs. On the other hand, relational influence activities would almost always enhance the resilience of trust because the benefits being experienced by members through the relationship-building activities of the leader would be seen to be at relatively little cost to them.

Prusak and Cohen (2001, pp. 88-93) suggest that the development of OSC can be promoted through allowing people to make connections, enabling trust and fostering co-operation in an

authentic way, and without being heavy handed in doing so. In other words, if changes are imposed inflexibly (e.g. the rigid combatant pattern), the willingness of members to engage in further collective actions may be affected, and – given the permeability of organizational boundaries – members may withdraw from the church. So firstly, Prusak and Cohen (2001, pp. 88-93) recommend that the making of connections needs to be promoted. Making connections includes making time and space for people to bond in person and conduct personal conversations. These are the activities associated with relational influence activities. Configuring activities also have the potential to promote these connections. Secondly, trust is enabled through valuing and rewarding trust, setting an example of trustworthiness, and showing trust in others. Leaders show trust in others when they adopt a more participative, humble and flexible approach to the implementation of the change initiatives that they are introducing. Thirdly, co-operation is fostered when people have a common sense of purpose and when organizational rules and norms promote it. This is the strength of the focused pioneer leadership pattern. Church leaders can inculcate co-operation through envisioning activities, but these must not be seen as being too prescriptive or imposed – a danger of the rigid combatant. On the other hand, a leader who does not provide direction (e.g. the static non-leadership pattern), fails to create a sense of collective purpose and so will not have the co-operation of followers. This will undermine the social capital of the church.

8.4.2.2 Motivation

Adler and Kwon (2002, pp25-26) remark that while it is relatively easy to understand the motivation of “recipients” of social capital, a central issue that arises when considering the motivational sources of social capital is explaining why “donors” of social capital would choose to transact in the absence of definite, or short-term returns. Key explanations of this rest on notions of trust and shared norms such as generalised reciprocity – which in Putnam’s (1993, in Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 25) words is expressed as “I’ll do this for you now, knowing that somewhere down the road you’ll do something for me”.

Alternative explanations to this self-centered view may be offered by the literature on organizational citizenship behaviour (Bolino, Turnley and Bloodgood, 2002), or volunteering

(e.g. Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Sciulli, 1986) and altruism (e.g. Gassler, 1998; Knox, 1999). However, while some have attributed volunteering to personality factors (e.g. Elshaug & Metzger, 2001), others propose that individuals invariably benefit in some way from volunteering (Smith, 1975; Wilson, 2000). It has also been argued that it is variables related to social capital that actually produce volunteerism (e.g. Mattis, Jagers, Hatcher, Lawhon, Murphy & Murray, 2000; Wilson 2000), suggesting altruism/voluntarism may be an outcome of social capital rather than a determinant.

In examining the findings of this study, there was relatively little information gleaned on the motivation of church members, as this was not a focus of the study, and the data was drawn from interviews with leaders rather than the general membership. Nevertheless, motivational considerations are implicit in the member orientation property of sense of community, with an internal focus, recipient role and low concern about relevance and impact being associated with self-serving motivations, while altruistic behaviours underlie an external focus, generative roles and high levels of concern about impact and relevance. Clearly, there is the potential for very fruitful research to be conducted amongst church members to probe the motivation underlying their response to change initiatives such as the cell-church transition.

8.4.2.3 Ability

Adler and Kwon (2002, p. 26) define ability as “the competencies and resources at the nodes of the network”, but note that the inclusion of ability as a source of social capital is still contested. That is, there is much debate whether social capital resides in the social network only, or more broadly in its nodes – the actors – as well. It seems that both sides of the debate recognise, for example, that it is ultimately individual actors who either have the ability to help or not, but they differ in their interpretation of the social capital construct. That is, the broad view is that this ability is also social capital; while the narrow view is that this ability represents another form of capital (such as human capital), and as such complements social capital, but is not part of it.

Leaders recognised that the cell-church transition would require people to not only adopt a different member orientation, but also learn different abilities. This was particularly important for cell group leaders. Consequently, systems and procedures were introduced to develop the required abilities – the equipping track being the most prominent example of this. Yet in spite of this, leaders were often confronted with the problem of further growth (e.g. multiplication of cell groups) being constrained by a lack of leadership at this level. Churches had a shortage of ability (or human capital) and it seems that leaders are faced with a number of alternatives. Either they will have to slow down the pace of cell-growth, or reconfigure the small groups in a way that would require fewer leaders, or change the requirements for leadership and the demands placed on them, or find alternative ways to identify leadership potential and accelerate leader development.

In summary, when examining the determinants of social capital, these were represented as opportunity, motivation and ability factors. Opportunity received the most extensive coverage, given its relevance to the sense of community phenomenon. Nevertheless, the importance of motivation and ability factors was recognised. Motivational factors seemed to be related to the member orientation property, while ability factors posed a serious limitation on the potential rate of growth of the church. Leadership actions, and particularly the patterns of leadership were related to these determinants to illustrate the constructive role that leadership could play in the creation and maintenance of social capital, but also to highlight the destructive effects that could be realised from the application of ineffective patterns or inappropriate actions. Next, the role of leadership in creating social capital is explored in greater depth.

8.4.3 Social capital and leadership

Up until now, the discussion of social capital has concentrated on understanding internal organizational social capital and some of its determinants and outcomes; as well as exploring how sense of community could be better understood in the light of social capital theory. The question that will now be addressed is how leaders manage social capital, especially when

introducing organizational change. This in turn, will provide further understanding of the effect of leadership actions on sense of community.

Sirmon and Hitt (2003) developed a model explaining the process by which leaders manage a range of resources – including social capital – in a family business context. Hitt and Ireland (2002) modified this theory to describe the process used by strategic leaders to manage human and social capital resources in companies in order to attain a competitive advantage. While recognising the differences in the organizational context and purpose between churches and companies, the resource management process described by these authors provides a useful framework within which to look at the management of the church's social capital. This continuous process consists of three interdependent components, namely resource inventory, resource bundling and resource leveraging.

8.4.3.1 Resource inventory

Resource inventory consists of three continuous and interdependent stages that are not necessarily sequential; namely resource evaluation, resource shedding, and adding resources (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003, pp. 344-348). Analogous to raw material inventory, resource evaluation involves determining current levels of social capital, recognising both strengths and deficiencies, including peoples' ability to learn and develop new capabilities (Hitt & Ireland, 2002, pp. 7-8). This evaluation needs to incorporate both individual resource stocks as well as the quality of relationships (Hitt & Ireland, 2002, p. 8). For Kay (1993, p. 66) the value of social capital (what he refers to as architecture) lies in its capacity for knowledge creation, flexibility and information exchange.

There are indications that part of the dissatisfaction that leaders experienced, and that prompted them to search for a new model by which to lead the church, was their recognition that the social capital potential that was embedded in church relationships was not being realised. However, there was little evidence of leaders contemplating the capacity of their members to learn and develop the capabilities that were required to transition successfully. At the organizational level, the overall health of the church and its readiness for change was

considered in some instances, but not the learning capacity of the individual members. This is an aspect that may require more careful consideration prior to embarking upon future transitions. An area that was sometimes given more thought was an ongoing assessment of the quality of relationships - especially those that the leader had with the members - but also those between members. It would seem that a rigid combatant pattern of leadership was particularly weak in this area, while it was the reflexive accommodator pattern's strength.

A second stage in the resource inventory component is resource shedding. Given the opportunity costs of maintaining and leveraging resources, it is often advisable to shed resources of low value that are not contributing to competitive advantage (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003, p. 347). This is not an easy thing to do in a family business setting, where it may, for example, involve releasing a family member from the business; and emotional ties, nostalgia and escalation of commitment have to be reckoned with; but failure to do so can lead to inertia (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003, pp. 347-348). Configuring activities of leaders that involve closing down church programmes, or instrumental influence actions such as neglect can be understood as forms of resource shedding. The opportunity costs here were also evident. Leaders who maintained and supported programmes may have been popular with those involved with them, but also recognised that their continuation prolonged inertia problems in the form of church relevance, impact and growth. Closure of programmes sometimes proved to be very difficult for leaders and traumatic for participants.

The third stage of the resource inventory component involves adding resources "that can be integrated to create resource bundles that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable, and that can be leveraged by a strategy" (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003, p. 348). Family firms often have deficiencies in human capital that they need to address. There are a number of options here, such as (1) recruiting heterogeneous human capital from outside the firm and utilising the existing social capital to facilitate its integration, or (2) forming alliances, or (3) developing internal resources, or (4) learning from failure (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003, pp. 349-350). In considering the cell-church transition, this scenario of human capital deficiencies can firstly be translated into the situation where there is the appointment of new leaders to promote, develop, or manage the cell-church model. This was only feasible in larger churches, where

often, someone was appointed to assist the senior minister by administering the cell system. In smaller churches, additional employed staff could not be supported financially, and so this was less likely. One possibility is that a successor to the current leader be appointed, but most often it was the current leader who was instrumental to driving this transition. In reality, churches struggled to develop their human capital base through new appointments and rather resorted to developing the existing human capital through training and development activities. The arrangement and development of these training activities were often facilitated by alliances with other churches in the local fraternal, or denomination, through conference attendance or by using the services of training consultants. There was also evidence of “wisdom in hindsight”, where leaders adapted their leadership patterns through learning from their own mistakes and those of others.

8.4.3.2 Resource bundling

The resource bundling and leveraging components follow on from the resource inventory component (Hitt & Ireland, 2003, pp. 350-352). These components involve configuring resources into bundles, and then using these bundles “to formulate a strategy that exploits opportunities and creates a competitive advantage. In this way, managers leverage the firm’s resources to create wealth.” (Hitt & Ireland, 2003, p. 350). The configuring of resources often entails establishing integrative and co-ordinating mechanisms to link “silos”, requiring leaders to possess co-ordinating and persuasive skills so that groups are not only linked up, but also co-operative (Hitt & Ireland, 2003, p. 351). Integrating human capital through co-ordination also makes use of the social capital of the group and leader (Hitt & Ireland, 2002, p. 10). This bundling process would also include leaders fulfilling an entrepreneurial role in order to bridge structural holes, as was discussed previously.

8.4.3.3 Leveraging resources

Leveraging resources involves using bundled resources to pursue strategic ends. Adler and Kwon (2002, p. 32) suggest, “the ultimate value of a given form of social capital also depends

on more contextual factors – on the task and symbolic demands placed on the focal actor and on the availability of complementary resources”. That is, social capital is only of value to an organization to the extent that it is contributing to its objectives (task contingent) and valued by the surrounding environment (symbolically contingent). Task and symbolic contingencies are primarily the responsibility of the strategic leader.

Quoting from a graduation address by Carly Fiorina, Hitt & Ireland (2002, p. 10) describe the process of leveraging through leadership, as follows: “Leadership is not about controlling decision making ... Its about enablement and empowerment ... Leadership is not about hierarchy and status; its about having influence and mastering change ... Its about challenging minds and capturing hearts ... Leadership is about empowering others to reach their full potential.” This requires leaders to be facilitative rather than controlling of members’ activities; learning, absorbing and diffusing new knowledge; shaping and structuring co-operative relationships; using relational skills to build relationships with others; and essentially, building a collaborative mindset in the organization (Hitt & Ireland, 2002, p. 10).

Hitt & Ireland (2002, pp. 5-7) propose a number of ways in which strategic leaders could build internal social capital. Firstly, they need to engage in building and utilising a team “as a means of developing effective, collaborative relationships.” That is, there is a recognition that they cannot succeed on their own. Several interviewees highlighted the strength and unity of the leadership team as a critical factor responsible for the success of the church transition. That is, the sense of community that was desired in the church, had to first be reflected in the relationships at this level. Secondly, effective relationships within a team will arise from the engendering of a climate of trust within the group, and from the leaders selectively showing their weaknesses or humanness. It is largely the form that day-to-day interaction takes that will determine the quality of relationships. In a case study within a research and development section of an organization, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003a) discovered how important it was for leaders to listen and informally chat to their subordinates, and suggest that this was in fact the key to their leadership. They referred to this as the “extra-ordinization of the mundane”.

Examining leadership actions in this study, particularly with the cell leaders, relational influence activities such as validating, befriending, supporting and accommodating needs promoted effective relationships. Meeting with cell leaders also assisted in this regard, especially when these meetings were not utilitarian and task driven in quality, but rather service oriented and relational. In addition, changing the pace of change helped to ease tensions in relationships.

Thirdly, Hitt and Ireland (2002, pp. 5-7) advise that leaders need to ensure justice in the way in which processes, rewards and relationships are handled in the organization. According to Kay (1993, p. 66) the maintenance of the value of social capital (or architecture) is largely dependent on the leader's ability to cultivate and uphold long-term relationships (Kay, 1993, p. 66). Demonstrating fairness is one way of doing this. While the question of justice or fairness did not feature prominently in this study, its importance is noted. It is also possible that this may have come to the fore more strongly, if the source of data was to have included ordinary members of the church and not just the views of leadership. Fourthly, Hitt & Ireland (2002) note that strategic leaders need to co-ordinate and integrate the diverse, and often specialised units of the organization into a community. This is similar to the entrepreneurial role discussed earlier.

An alternative and complementary perspective on the role of leaders in managing social capital is found in the work of Lin (2001). According to Lin (2001, pp. 29-30) resources – i.e. material and symbolic goods – are assigned value through one of three influencing processes, namely persuasion, petition, or coercion. Persuasion makes use of communication and interaction to convince others of the merit of a resource. When convinced, members see the resource's intrinsic value. When exercising influence to bring about the church transition, leaders tended to emphasise persuasion when interacting with the church as a whole. For example, instrumental activities such as directing and envisioning, or renaming and reinterpreting, were often part of sermons. Petition involves lobbying members, who then accept the group values in order to remain with the group, even though they may not understand or support the values. One possible place where there may have been some lobbying in this study was where the senior minister worked at getting support for the

transition among the core leadership of the church. However, this was not a prominent feature of the interviewees' reports. Coercion uses the threat of punishment or other types of sanction to force members to recognise the value placed on certain resources. There was some evidence of coercion in this study, and it tended to be embedded in the development of systems and procedures. For example, there were often new requirements introduced for church membership such as regularly attending a cell group, and training prerequisites for prospective cell leaders were often enforced.

From a social capital perspective, if a leader wants to bring about change or action, they need to be able to access the social capital. Lin (2001, pp. 60-73) identifies a number of conditions that affect an individual's access to social capital. Some of these are relevant to this study. Firstly, the higher the person's position in the hierarchy the more access to social capital he or she enjoys. It is now a well-known adage in change management literature that the backing of top leadership is required for a change initiative to succeed (e.g. Kotter, 1995, p. 62). In many instances in this study, the senior (or sole) minister was the initiator of the change. Where this was delegated to another person, the transition had less chance of success. Secondly, Lin (2001, pp. 60-73) observes that where there are strong ties between parties, this usually implies that social capital will be more effectively maintained. That is, the more intense, frequent and intimate interactions are, the stronger the relationship and so the higher the level of mutual support, tolerance and recognition. The finding that successors who tried to introduce change too early in their period of tenure were less likely to succeed supported this observation. Their credibility had not yet been adequately established, but with time, they would become more fully accepted and integrated into the church and hence had greater access to the social capital to be able to mobilise it for action or change.

8.4.4 Summary of social capital

In this section, the internal organizational social capital literature has been outlined to illuminate the findings of the study. This was undertaken, because of the lack of accord between the theory generated in this study and the various theories of organizational inertia and resistance to change. Social capital theory has been particularly helpful in highlighting

the dynamics of the sense of community phenomenon, and the action's of leaders in managing it as a social capital resource.

What has also been highlighted in this discussion is that social capital develops through a history of constructive interaction. In the light of this, it is important to consider a typical and significant situation that arises, namely the succession of leadership. This is particularly important in the light of the finding that there is a relationship between the period of a leader's tenure and the credibility that he or she has. The question of succession is dealt with in the next section.

8.5 Strategic Leadership Succession

In considering the various theoretical explanations of succession presented in Chapter Two, none seems to adequately capture the dynamics discovered in this study of church leader succession, largely because there is little evidence of the existence of the power dynamic associated with C.E.O. succession. Furthermore, in examining the effect of succession in private companies, much reference is made to performance indicators of the company. As a solidary organization, these performance criteria are largely inappropriate to the church. Rather, successful succession would be evident in the impact on the supply of solidary incentives and their distribution by the leader.

Given the inapplicability of the power-based theories of succession, the literature on social capital is briefly revisited to consider its relevance to understanding succession in churches. Examining this from the organizational social capital perspective, it would seem that leadership succession had the effect of diminishing the extant "stock" of organizational social capital, with the departure of the predecessor. This is understandable, given the centrality of the leader in relationship structures within the church. It was most likely the active members of the church who had close bonds with the predecessor, simply through their involvement in the activities of the church. Thus, with the departure of the predecessor, significant loss of the relationships would have occurred, affecting the relational dimension of organizational social capital. This explains why it seems to be so critical for the successor to build relationships

with church members, and partly why there tended to be a loss of membership with a leadership change. It would also seem that the loss of cognitive social capital (Nahapiet & Goshal, 1998) also occurred in instances where leaders brought in fresh ideas, and because they had to develop a sense of what was happening in the church before they could lead effectively.

What was significant in this study was the effect of succession on church members, including their continued membership of the church. That is, successful transitions seemed to lie in successful relationship building by the successor. The importance of the strength of relationship seems to underlie many of the factors identified in Chapter Seven that determined the initial level of credibility of the leader as well as their credibility level once the transition was initiated. That is, members of the church saw the leader as credible once they had had enough time to get to know him or her, and were confident that the leader was going to remain for some time. The more of a “foreigner” the leader was, and the more they differed from the predecessor, the more time was needed to develop familiarity. As a result, premature initiation of change can be understood as change that is initiated without a strong enough relational foundation.

Rothschild’s (1993; 1996) perspective on strategic leadership succession examined the life cycle of organizations rather than the period of tenure of a single strategic leader. He proposed that particular styles of leadership - namely risk-takers, caretakers, surgeons and undertakers - are appropriate in different “seasons” in the organization’s life cycle (Rothschild, 1993, pp. 9-20; 1996, pp. 16-17). On the face of it, the risk-taker resembles the focused pioneer, in that both introduce significant changes, while the caretaker and reflexive accommodators both play a stabilising role in the organization. However, the differences between Rothschild’s (1993; 1996) styles and the patterns of leadership discovered in this study are quite significant. One of Rothschild’s (1996, p. 16) central premises is that leaders are managing a portfolio of businesses or products, each of which is passes through various phases of their life cycle. Ultimately, effective leadership is that which matches the portfolio’s demands. In this study, there is now portfolio of this nature. Rather, there is a

community of people who have to be led. Effective leadership involves balancing sense of community with fulfilling purpose.

8.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to locate the grounded theory that was developed in the previous four chapters, within a body of literature. Firstly, the literature on organizational inertia and resistance to change was examined. This was the logical place to begin, since the aim of the study was to investigate the phenomenon of strategic leaders dealing with organizational inertia as part of their change endeavours. This literature was firstly explored in terms of its manifestation at the individual, group and organizational level. In addition, theoretical perspectives applicable to the organizational level were explored in more depth, given the focus of the study. This venture proved to be insightful, shedding light on many of the findings of the study. However, no single perspective typically associated with the field of change management seemed to capture the fullness of the grounded theory. Consequently, other fields were explored and it was discovered that the theory of social capital was far more illuminating. The linkages between social capital and the grounded theory were therefore explored in more detail. Finally, the literature on leadership succession was briefly reviewed, given the importance of this dynamic in the grounded theory. Once again, the extant literature on succession was of little relevance to the grounded theory, and so social capital theory was used to explain the succession dynamic.

The next chapter concludes the study, highlighting the main findings and making recommendations for future research. In addition, the findings of this study are reflected upon, and their implications for a theological understanding of the church, considered.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In some sense, every reader “finishes” every book according to his or her experiences and needs and beliefs and potential. That is the way you can really own a book. Buying books is easy; owning them is not.

(De Pree, 1989, p. 3)

In this study, I set out to develop a grounded theory that would explain the occurrence and management of organizational inertia within churches that were transitioning from a programme-based model to a cell-based one. A grounded theory was constructed that explained how the sense of community of a church was affected by the changes introduced as part of the cell-church transition, and illustrated how church leaders needed to balance out various patterns of leadership in order to successfully negotiate the different stages of the change process. The grounded theory that was constructed describes the phases of the change process, and how the actions of leaders interact with the sense of community of the church. Three effective patterns of leadership were identified, namely the freewheeler, the focused-pioneer and the reflexive-accommodator; along with their ineffective counterparts labelled the static non-leader, the rigid combatant and the popular people pleaser. It was argued that effective leadership involves balancing the three effective patterns over time, and that a failure to achieve this balance created an ineffective pattern. Furthermore, because their actions harmed the sense of community, ineffective leadership damaged the credibility of leaders and a loss of credibility compromised the leader’s ability to lead change.

A number of approaches to understanding organizational inertia or resistance to change were examined in an attempt to locate the grounded theory in the literature and to use the literature to shed light on the findings of this study. While this literature did provide some useful insights and confirmations, no single theoretical perspective seemed to supply a

comprehensive explanation. Instead, social capital theory offered a more encompassing explanation, and as such, showed much promise as a body of literature that can be used to develop an understanding of organizational change. In this way, this study has contributed to the body of knowledge by providing an original understanding of change management and the role of strategic leadership in managing the process of change within the church context. In other words, this study has illustrated the value of a social capital theory perspective in understanding change and the role of leadership in managing change in churches, and may have wider application.

The study has also served to highlight the importance of taking into account contextual factors when conducting management research. Specifically, it was the uniqueness of churches as solidary organizations, normative organizations, congregations and voluntary organizations or associations that significantly shaped the grounded theory that was constructed. Therefore, while certain generic practices of managing change may be usefully imported into the context of managing change in churches, a lack of appreciation of the nature of the church as an organization, may compromise the efficacy of these change practises. In this discovery lies the value of having used the grounded theory method in this research. Positivist research approaches to the study such as surveys would not have been attuned to contextual factors, while other contextually sensitive research methods such as a case study would probably not have produced a theory.

9.1 Further Research Recommendations

Research seems to generate more questions than it is able to answer, and this study, given both its delimitation and the originality of findings has opened up a number of fruitful areas for further research. Several research recommendations arise related to the substantive and theoretical areas addressed in this study, as well as to the methodology. The substantive area of this study was closely circumscribed in examining the cell-church transition within some South African churches. Grounded theory has its own approach to expanding substantive theories into formal theories. To advance a research agenda of developing a formal theory of change in churches, other changes being encountered by churches in South Africa could

provide a useful research context. Here other small group models come to mind and more broadly, the response of the church to social issues such as the constitutional changes regarding freedom of religion, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the changing racial composition of local churches.

In considering the advancement of theory related to change management, this study highlighted a number of gaps in the literature. Firstly, this study explicitly set out to investigate the cell-church transition from the perspective of strategic leadership theory. In the light of the findings, which point to a complex interaction between leaders and followers, Thorne's (2000) cautionary note advising that not too much of the results of complex human and organizational interaction should be attributed to a single individual strategic leader, is apt. A broader sociological investigation focusing on this interaction could be productive; particularly one based on social capital theory.

Secondly, the cell-church transition may provide fertile ground for research from other theoretical perspectives. For example, valuable insights were provided by the literature on organizational culture. A deliberate focus on this aspect of churches may be very illuminating. Alternatively, given the strong structural element implicit in the cell-church transition, a study from the perspective of organizational design may also be worthwhile.

Bearing in mind the design of this research, certain delimitations of the study point to potentially valuable research endeavours. One of the delimitations relates to the racial profile of the churches and leadership sampled in this study. Most of the membership of the churches represented in my study were historically White (although many of them are now racially diverse) and were mainly led by White males. It has been pointed out that the values of various race groups may differ, as expressed in cultural values and that; for example, differences in individualism-collectivism (Hofstede, 1982) may mean that the cell-church transition manifests itself in different ways in different racial contexts.

Secondly, the grounded theory method's theoretical sampling called for a wide range of incidents to be sampled. This was achieved through interviewing an extensive range of church

leaders, rather than for example, conducting an in-depth case study on a few churches. Further research on the life cycle of a few carefully selected churches and their leadership will help to develop a more detailed understanding of the interaction of various patterns of leadership over time.

Thirdly, many of the churches that made up this study were still in the midst of the cell-church transition, or in introducing the small group variant that they had opted for later on. Follow-up research that has allowed for a longer time lapse subsequent to the transition will help to clarify its longer-term effects.

Finally, this research was limited in its almost exclusive reliance on interviews with leaders, as the source of data. While many of the leaders were quite candid in the interview and were willing to speak of their positive and negative experiences, this remains a limitation of the study. Consequently, further research exploring the transition from the perspective of church members would be valuable, as would research that collected incidents using a range of data collection methods, not only interviews.

9.2 Theological Considerations

A vexing question that remains unanswered centres on the theological dimension of the study. Can what is primarily a sociological grounded theory be used to explain behaviour and guide leadership practice in a theological entity such as the church? According to Tucker (2003, p. 36), from a theological perspective, this study would reside in the “building up the church” sub-discipline of practical theology. Here change in churches would be recognised as a natural phenomenon, occurring on three interrelated dimensions, namely “the theological-hermeneutical dimension (increasing insight into the nature of the local church), the agogical-teleological dimension (changing the local congregation into what the first dimension reveals it should be), and a morphological-teleological dimension (this is establishing structures that will effect this change)” (Tucker, 2003, p. 36). Because this is not a theological study, it has not developed a full understanding of the first of these dimensions, but has focused on the second and third. This first dimension would address the question of what leaders believed to

be God's will for a local church, including more actively critiquing the appropriateness of it embarking upon the cell-church transition. It would also help to clarify the appropriateness of balancing out the pursuit of purpose with the cultivation of sense of community through the balanced application of the various leadership patterns. Future research that blends sociological and theological approaches in the examination of the cell church concept may help to answer this question.

9.3 The Value of the Study

This omission of addressing the theological-hermeneutical dimension may well temper the value of the grounded theory for practitioners, and the practical utility of a grounded theory is an aspect highly valued in grounded theory research. However, in spite of this reservation, a number of the interviewees with whom the theory was discussed indicated that it was of interest, relevance, and use to them. Furthermore, it helped them to clarify their own situation with respect to the transition, as well as what further action would be appropriate. One interviewee expressed this as follows:

As you have been speaking I have people and situations flashing through the back of my mind. So it is a framework that works for me. I can think in it, also.

Not only has the research seemed to be beneficial to practitioners, but it was also of personal value. Firstly, the use of the grounded theory method was enriching and fulfilling. It allowed for a good measure of creativity while simultaneously laying out clear guidelines and procedures through which this creativity could be realised and channelled in order to arrive at a theory as an end product. Grappling with the notion of what constitutes a theory, also provided me with a basis upon which to critique the current state and applicability of knowledge within a range of fields related to this study. This has changed the way in which I now look at the literature as an academic, engendering a great deal more scepticism. Simultaneously, it has increased my confidence in the potential value of the contribution to the body of knowledge that can be made by qualitative, non-positivist research designs.

Secondly, through having conducted this research I was exposed to alternative small group models and variants of the cell-church model. I also witnessed the problems encountered during a transition. Consequently, my own enthusiasm for the cell-church model has been dampened. A cell-church transition represents a complex and difficult change to introduce in a church, and its results cannot be guaranteed. Even when it has been fully integrated into the life of a church, it has its own challenges, such as the development of sufficient capable leaders; the monitoring, co-ordination and control of cell activities and cell leader actions; as well as the strain of multiplication that comes with the growth of a cell. Church leaders need to proceed wisely and cautiously if they employ a cell-church model. Small groups have an important role to play in contemporary church life, but the form that they take and their relationship and linkage to the other church activities and structures need to be carefully considered by leaders. In my view, this study has illustrated that the cell-church model is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Therefore, if adopted in its pure form, the cell-church model needs to serve the strategic purpose of the church, rather than be seen as its strategic intent.

Furthermore, this research has made me more aware of the complexity of change, and has given me a renewed sense of appreciation for those who have the courage to lead it. I trust that any readers who undertake this venture will be able to find something in this study that they can take ownership of, and that it will help to ease the pain of change. On this note, the following practical recommendations in managing change in the church are made on the basis of this study: Firstly, strategic leaders need to formulate and articulate the unique purpose of their local church, recognising that the cell church model may be one strategy through which this purpose could be realised. The cell-church model cannot be a substitute for this purpose. Also, if it is an appropriate strategy, the cell-church model needs to serve the unique purpose of the church and should be fashioned accordingly. Secondly, leaders should not embark on a change programme of this nature without first assessing the current health of the church. Healthy churches are better able to change, and unhealthy ones are unlikely to have the resources or will to complete the journey. Related to this point, leaders need to recognise the social nature of the church. This necessitates understanding the current state of the social capital of the church, and the properties and dimensions of the sense of community construct

may help to develop this appreciation. Finally, the church leadership needs to be aware of, and monitor their own leadership patterns over time and consider the impact of their leadership on the sense of community. This will call for reflection and reflexivity on the part of leaders. A change process is usually a time consuming process, taking far longer than originally anticipated, and so leaders will need to be flexible and patient.

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.

(Hebrews 10: 35-36 in the New International Version Bible)

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