

Viab! Long-term Church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An  
analysis of common characteristics

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DECLARATION

I declare that *Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

  
Signature

  
Date

## Summary

The practice of church planting has become commonplace for many evangelical denominations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Many of these new churches have not been able to attain expectations for long-term viability as presented in much of the literature on church planting, especially from American based sources. The science of practical theology enabled research into the religious and cultural milieu of this region to inform the practice of church planting. The study tested the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common to long-term viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. It compared the common characteristics with the widely accepted Indigenous Church Mission Theory that states a new church should be self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing within three years of establishment. A conceptual framework was developed based on available literature from North American, Canadian and global sources on church planting which examined church planting theories in regard to: theological issues, including foundational Biblical concepts, current theological issues and vision; structural issues including church political structures and leadership issues; cultural and geographical issues. This study of church planting situations in the region has employed a grounded theory method, using a constant comparative process, to reveal data that begins to form a theoretical base for church planting. The researcher used semi-standardized in-depth interviews of pastors, from evangelical churches, involved in church planting in the Maritime Provinces, along with case studies based on the researchers own experience in the field, to derive data that reveals common characteristics of church planting in the region. The analysis of research data from the in-depth interviews and case studies, when compared to one another and the conceptual framework, revealed unique and identifiable characteristics of church planting in the Maritime Provinces. These characteristics are: slower change and slower establishment of new churches in the region compared to literature based expectations; the prevalence of a pastor formulated vision for new churches; traditional thinking in the region that led to slower growth of new congregations; rural isolation and a smaller demographic base that led to slower growth and the need for sustained financial support for new churches.

## Preface

In approaching a topic which examines church planting practices and viability among evangelical churches and denominations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, recognition must be made that there are different approaches and denominational policies that undergird church planting situations among evangelical denominations in the region. My purpose in conducting this research is not to question the validity of these various approaches, nor is it to criticize any particular individual, church or denomination involved in the practice of church planting in the region. I believe a variety of approaches is to be considered healthy, as they enable individuals and churches to examine their own practices with a view to better self-understanding and making necessary changes.

My purpose in conducting this research is based on my conviction that there needs to be an understanding of the cultural and religious milieu of the Maritime Provinces that will be part of a theoretical base to undergird church planting practices in the region. This in turn will assist church planting pastors, churches and denominations in developing practices that will lead to long-term viability in new church planting situations.

My experience as a church planter in both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick provided motivation for this research. As a church planting pastor I both observed and experienced some of the challenges of establishing a new congregation and attaining long-term viability. Conversations with other church planting pastors confirmed discrepancies between expectations of viability in church planting literature and the reality of church planting within the region. It is my hope that this study will assist church planters in the region with a theory base that will

enable them to recognize some of these challenges as normative for the region and make the necessary adjustments to deal with them.

In regard to the completion of this dissertation I am indebted to the support and assistance of a number of individuals and churches. My wife, Ruth Anne, has been my constant support and encouragement throughout this process. She has assisted me with mundane tasks and offered her insights. Her love and patience have made this possible. Thank you to my children, Emily, Julia and James who have endured my rambling about the subject, have accompanied me on travels for interviews, assisted me with transcription of interviews and offered their advice, when asked. Throughout this process my faculty supervisors from UNISA, initially Prof. Jacques Theron, until his retirement, and, since then, Prof Gordon Dames have provided the advice, suggestions and guidance that were instrumental in completion of the final product. Thank you again for your assistance. Thanks are extended, as well, to all of the pastors who participated in the research. Your thoughts, insights and opinions have been invaluable in completing this research.

I wish to express my appreciation to the congregations and leadership of Grand falls and Ortonville Baptist Churches, and Nackawic Baptist Church as they have supported me in this endeavour. Thank you to Dr. Daniel Goodwin of Crandall University who encouraged me to begin this process. He is a long time and highly valued friend. Thanks, as well, to administrators of UNISA and the department of Practical Theology, therein, for your help and support.

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## **Chapter 1: Identifying the Issue**

The purpose of this study is to identify common characteristics of church planting practices of evangelical churches and denominations during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in the Maritime Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in the region of Atlantic Canada.

### **1.2 The Aim of the Study:**

The aim of the research has been to conduct a literature and empirical, in-depth study, through semi-standardized interviews with church planting pastors and case studies, thereby researching the common theological, practical and structural characteristics of viable, long-term church plant practices, and by comparison, exploring the reasons why some of the churches struggle to maintain viability in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

### **1.3 Background and rationale:**

The rationale for the research is based upon the assumption that there are identifiable factors that contribute to the success and viability, or the lack of viability, of new church plant practices in the Maritime Provinces, which are part of the region commonly known as Atlantic Canada.

Some of these factors are general to church planting and some are unique to the Atlantic Canadian context. In the researcher's own experience, and in the observation of other ministers/pastors of regional denominations, some successes and failures have been observed in the area of new church planting. I have replanted, in my ministry from 1999 until 2005, a church that had struggled for stability for over ten years. I have also replanted an older church, from 2005 until 2010, that had only 5 members and was ready to close its door permanently. In the

course of dealing with issues that arose, in these particular situations, I developed an interest in the phenomenon associated with long-term viability for new church planting situations.

The Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century has been an economically challenged region. The economy has improved in some urban areas, but in others and in rural areas high unemployment rates and job instability have persisted. Atlantic Canada is geographically remote from much of the rest of Canada and has a relatively small population. Statistics Canada ([www.statscan.gc.ca](http://www.statscan.gc.ca), 2013) records a total population for the Maritime Provinces of 1,842,100 persons. The total population of Canada at the same time was 35,158,300 persons. These three provinces, combined, contain less than 6% of the nation's population. Population growth has remained in the Maritime Provinces according to the Canada Council for the Arts publication, *Overview of key Demographic trends –Possible Impact on Canadian Arts Attendance*. (2002, 6) which from their perspective has a negative impact on attendance at Arts events.

It is also a region with higher than the national average for church attendance and religious observance (Clark & Schellenberg, 2006). Slow societal changes in Atlantic Canada have resulted in many churches struggling to change from traditional worship styles and political church structures. Changes have been taking place, but not without conflict and/or apathy. An example of this is noted in a publication of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, entitled, *A Missional Minded People: 200 Years of Atlantic Baptist Mission, 1814-2014*, by Peter Lohness (2014) in which attempts to raise finances for a “Giving for Growth” campaign did not meet expectations. Lohness says,

Before the first year was complete it became obvious that things would not move as quickly as anticipated. At the Convention Assembly in 1990 a two year extension was given to the Campaign which had only reached the \$700,000 mark.

The enthusiasm of the 1985 assembly did not result in increased giving or greater openness to church planting initiatives.

This seeming resistance to change is also noted by Graham, Bustin, Card and Mitchell (2001, 79) who note,

Evangelism in Atlantic Canada takes place in the cross-currents where traditional values and postmodernity meet. This is an unpredictable and often turbulent setting. Surface appearances can be misleading. The number of churches dotting the countryside, and their historic significance as community spiritual landmarks, does not indicate that the Church corporately is relevant to Atlantic Canadian culture.

The challenges of understanding traditional values and post-modern thought create unique challenges for church planting in the Maritime Provinces.

The Maritime Provinces are sometimes considered “have not” provinces within the Confederation of Canada. As such the provinces are sometimes considered by other regions of Canada as dependent and lacking motivation to move towards self-sufficiency. This attitude is reflected in a commentary on Canadian fiscal policy by Eisen and Milke (2010) who say,

This means that provinces that receive large equalization payments can find themselves in a situation where even successful efforts to promote economic growth bring no additional revenue into the provincial treasury. In short, increased tax dollars simply take the place of with- drawn equalization dollars. Clearly, this has the potential to breed complacency about the necessity of promoting growth in poorer provinces.

A second major problem created by large equalization payments is that they undermine democratic account- ability by making it impossible for voters to know which politicians to hold accountable for perceived problems with service delivery. Federal transfers, which include equalization, represent a large portion of the overall revenue of several have-not provinces. In Quebec and Manitoba, approximately one-quarter of the provincial government revenue comes from

major federal transfers. In the recipient Maritime provinces, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, major federal transfers constitute approximately one-third of total provincial government revenue.

This state of affairs has serious consequences for democratic accountability. When citizens are unhappy with the quality of provincial services, it is often difficult to determine whether federal or provincial authorities are responsible for perceived problems. Furthermore, as Brian Lee Crowley, the founder of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, points out, the equalization process creates an incentive for have-not provincial governments to spend freely, since they recognize that taxpayers in other provinces will be forced to cover a significant portion of any new spending programs.

This attitude is also reflected in the thought process of Maritimers themselves. The senior pastor of Interview 1 (Appendix A) comments, “There is one cultural factor. It says that it can’t ever happen here...It’s in education, it’s in business, it’s in politics, it’s in everything.”

The same way of thinking is evident in the perception and reception of literature from Maritime sources. In a Master of Arts Thesis entitled, *Perceptions of the Environment in Maritime Literature*, the author Peter Thompson (2004, 168) argues,

Critics have reacted with revulsion to the portraits of the Maritimes offered by the region’s writers, particularly those who offer realistic depictions of its lower class. As Keefer notes: “The texts which make up a Maritime canon...suffer from a double disadvantage within the context of contemporary criticism: many of the genres they favour are, paradoxically, both critically outmoded and commercially popular.” It is for this reason that Maritime literature has traditionally been ignored...Horbruck argues that it is only contemporary Maritime literature that has been marginalized within Canada.

Attitudes, such as are described above, both outside and within Maritime culture contribute to a sense of isolation and cultural distance from other regions of Canada.

Much of the American based literature on the topic of church planting suggests a relatively short time period to attain viability. Aubrey Malphurs (1999: 395) suggests that a new church planting situation should become viable and self – supporting in three years. This has been the traditional understanding of church planting viability which is based upon the concept of Henry Venn’s definition of a viable Christian Mission as being self-propagating, self-governing and self-financing (Bolton, 2007: 2-3). This concept was accepted at the Lausanne Congress of 1974 (Mission [Christian], 2007; Gardner, 1994) and has continued to proliferate much of the later church planting literature (Stetzer, 2003: 50-52). This seems to be an unrealistic expectation in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The reality of new church viability in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, which is the religious context of the researcher, has been between 5 and 20 years. Many new churches have become reliant on denominational support. Other new churches, however, have thrived and grown, with stable, long-term leadership. Research is necessary to help understand why some new churches thrive and others struggle in these provinces.

#### **1.4 The research problem of the study:**

Church planting situations have become commonplace in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada but we do not have a clear understanding of how they were planned or the consequent outcomes for long-term viability. There is no existing body of knowledge or accepted theories to describe and theorize about issues specific to the Maritime Provinces. It seems that the theoretical basis for church planting is largely dependent upon what is happening in the United States of America and not on the differences related to diverse situations in the Canadian context. It is not known why some church plants become viable while others struggle

in the Maritime Provinces and whether or not there are significant differences in these Provinces with regard to urban and rural areas or why some church plants struggle and others thrive. Chapter 3 develops a conceptual framework for the problem through a thorough literature review of both North American sources, as well as, sources from a more global perspective, but it does not, in itself, solve the problem facing church planting situations in an Atlantic Canadian context, therefore, empirical research needs to be done.

This research is designed to identify the common characteristics of viable, long-term church plant practices and to compare characteristics of church plants that struggle, not only in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, which is the researcher's base of experience in the area, but also in the wider context of Atlantic Canadian Evangelical Churches in the Maritime Provinces. The purpose of the research is to assist churches and denominations achieve long-term viability in future church planting situations by becoming aware of common characteristics of viable long-term planting situations in the region.

### **1.5 Hypothesis:**

There are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common among viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

### **1.6 The methodology of the study:**

This study was conducted from an empirical qualitative research approach, based on a conceptual framework derived from literature for the field of church planting in the late 20th and early 21st century. This framework formed the basis for developing a research tool to obtain data through in-depth interviews with church planting pastors from several evangelical denominations

in all three of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, as well as, two case studies based on the researcher's experience in church planting situations in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick between 1999 and 2010. The in-depth interviews were semi-standardized in that they were guided by a set agenda of questions for every person interviewed, but with allowances made for additional questions and comments by the person interviewed, and by the researcher. The conceptual framework, in-depth interviews and case studies were examined using a Grounded Theory approach and a constant comparative method, as well as, participatory action research which allowed for the inclusion of the case studies in the collection and analysis of data. This methodology is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

The standard interview questionnaire used in the research for all interviews is included as Appendix B. Participants in the research include church planters from the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, The Wesleyan Church in Atlantic Canada, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Denomination, The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, The Freewill Baptist Denomination and an Interdenominational Charismatic Church.

### **1.7 Key concepts of this study:**

This study is concerned with characteristics of viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. In the context of this research a **viable long-term church planting** situation will be defined as a **new congregation** that has been initiated by an individual or denomination and has been able to achieve success and viability as understood in terms of the Indigenous Church Mission Theory that has been widely accepted by evangelical denominations since the Lausanne Congress of 1974 (Gardner, 1994: 19). The three tenets of this theory are that a church should be **self-supporting, self-propagating and self-**



**governing** within three years of commencement. A **church replanting** situation is understood to be a church planting situation that has failed to obtain **viability** and requires an individual, group or denomination to begin again the process of planting a viable church in the same area. A replanting situation will be considered as being on the same level as a new church planting situation.

Church planting models will be defined as the methods, means and structures employed by individual or groups in establishing a new congregation. **Self-governing** means that the church is able to make decisions for its ministry and direction, to the extent that their own denominational structure allows. **Self-propagating** refers to the congregation's ability to continue to grow without the support of outside sources for leadership and evangelism. **Self-supporting** refers to the stage of development when the new church plant is able to provide for the financial needs of the local situation without denominational or outside assistance. A **satellite church** concept will be understood as one congregation meeting in two sites for worship and ministry.

**The Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada** include the political and geographical provinces of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. **Evangelical churches** will be defined as those churches and/or denominations whose theology is based on the sole authority of the scriptures for faith and practice and the emphasis of regenerate church membership through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Much of the theological discussion of the conceptual framework and the practical theological approach will include the term **missional** in this research project. The term missional will be understood as meaning a theology of being sent. Hirsch (2008, 1-2) says,

A missional community sees the mission as both its originating impulse and its organizing principle...In the incarnation God sent His Son. Similarly to be missional

means to be sent into the world. We do not expect the world to come to us. This posture differentiates a missional church from an attractional church.

The terms **discipleship** and **evangelism** will be used frequently, as well, in reference to missional theology and their importance for church planting. They will be understood as key elements in the great commission both in terms of teaching training and in terms of witness and outreach for the church.

### **1.8 Anticipated Outcomes:**

Based on analysis of the answers and observations of those being interviewed, and comparison of their responses to one another, as well as, observations drawn from the case studies, the researcher anticipates the emergence of common characteristics that are essential to long-term viability for church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The researcher anticipates that some of these characteristics will be similar to church planting situations as represented in the current literature and outlined in the conceptual framework of Chapter 3. The researcher also anticipates that there will be characteristics that are unique to the theological, geographical and cultural context of the region specified above.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study:**

The researcher acknowledges that the information gathered is limited to the experience and observations of those interviewed and may not be a universal representation of the experiences of all church planters in the designated time frame of the late 20th and early 21<sup>st</sup> century in the Maritime Provinces. Although the interviews were structured, allowance was made for in-depth observations in areas where the research candidate thought it to be appropriate. This research project does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of common characteristics of viable long-

term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, only of those for which the research enabled accurate analysis. The research does not attempt to analyze every aspect of church planting, culture and theology in comparison to the wider experience of church planters in North America. It is limited to the specific areas of theological presuppositions and vision, church structures and leadership, as well as cultural and geographical distinctions, as defined by the research questions and in keeping with the aims of the study.

### **1.10 Chapter Outline:**

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and is comprised of sections 1.1-1.8 above and section 1.9 below which describes the content of Chapters 2-6.

Chapter 2 is an overview of Practical Theology and how it relates to the research problem given in Chapter 1.3. Section 2.1 introduces the practical theological framework. Section 2.2 defines the relationship of church planting in the late 20th and early 21st century to the development of practical theology as a social science. Section 2.3 explains the ecclesiology of church planting as it relates to missional theology in church planting practices of evangelical denominations. Section 2.4 outlines the importance of practical theology in recognizing cultural and social systems in church planting practices. Section 2.5 is a sub-conclusion that summarizes the findings of Chapter 2 as to the importance of practical theology as a social science and in relation to missional theology and the recognition of distinct social and cultural systems in a region.

Chapter 3 is a conceptual framework for church planting practices based on the available literature on church planting in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This chapter gives a broad

overview of viable church planting practices in the North American context. Section 3.1 introduces the structure and parameters of the conceptual framework. Section 3.2 identifies specific emphases on theological issues which are prominent in much of the current literature, as well as the role of vision for church planting situations. Section 3.3 examines structural and leadership issues that pertain to church planting in the literature available on church planting in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Section 3.4 discusses the importance of cultural and geographical issues in the current literature, from American, Canadian and global perspectives. It includes literature specific to church planting in the Canadian and Atlantic Canadian context and makes comparisons between literature from different cultural, geographical and demographic regions. Section 3.5 highlights the most pertinent findings from the examination of the literature in order to provide the conceptual framework for the empirical research.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology. It is comprised of four sections. Section 4.1 is an introduction and description of the qualitative research design used by the researcher. Section 4.2 is an explanation of the research design, the research tool and description of participants, as well as, a description of the case studies. Section 4.3 describes and explains the research methodology. It discusses the research instrument that was used for the semi-standardized in-depth interviews with church planting pastors. It explains the data collection, the sample size and population of the sample. Section 4.4 provides a description of the analysis employed including coding, techniques, assumptions, justification and limitations. Section 4.5 delineates ethical considerations and gives a brief sub-conclusion.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical research results evident from the data obtained from the interviewing of church planting pastors and from the case studies. In-depth interviews with

church planting pastors are considered the primary source of data. Case studies based on the experience of the researcher in both planting and replanting churches are considered secondary sources of data for comparison to the interviews. This is important to note, as the researcher's own presuppositions are part of the case studies. Section 5.1 introduces the chapter. Section 5.2 discusses the prevalence of codes detected in the data of the research interviews and the case studies. It specifies which codes emerged universally in the interviews and often in the case studies, as a secondary source of data. Comparisons are made between the interviews and case studies and some references are made to the conceptual framework as found in Chapter 3. More in-depth analysis of the relationship between the conceptual framework and the data will be made in section 5.5 of this chapter. 5.3 identifies codes that emerged from the data in some but not all of the interviews and case studies but are considered important in gaining a more complete understanding of the challenges of planting churches that achieve long-term viability in the Maritime Provinces. Section 5.4 discusses the significance of the data emerging from the empirical research for church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada and draws similarities and distinctions of data from the empirical research to the expectations and assumptions evident in the current literature as discussed in the conceptual framework in Chapter 3. Section 5.5 is a sub-conclusion of findings from the research.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion that contains a summary of the key findings based on the literature and empirical research regarding viable long-term church planting practices in Atlantic Canada. It will identify common characteristics of church planting situations that have achieved long-term viability. It will also make recommendations concerning church planting practices, based on research findings, for evangelical churches to achieve long-term viability in church planting situations, in the context of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Section 6.1

describes the format of the chapter and evaluates the ability of the research analysis to address the research problem and the thesis of the research project. Section 6.2 describes the importance of the research from a practical theological paradigm and its contribution to the area of church planting in general and specifically with reference to the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Section 6.3 discusses the similarities and differences of the research analysis with the literature based expectations as outlined in the conceptual framework of Chapter 3. It also makes suggestions as to the importance of the common characteristics of church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, and practical suggestions as to how these distinctions can be addressed in the region. This section also draws conclusions as to how the research may inform the practice of church planting in situations outside of the region in which the research was conducted.

Section 6.4 addresses the extent to which the research methodology and the conclusions drawn from the data analysis are consistent with the methodology as described in Chapter 4. It also identifies concepts that emerged from the data which form the tenets for a theoretical base for church planting specific to the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

## **Chapter 2: Practical Theological Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction:**

The purpose of this study, as the introduction of Chapter 1 defines it, is identifying common characteristics of the church planting practices of evangelical denominations during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The discipline of practical theology has been chosen for this research because it relates to the study in key areas. This chapter will establish the relationship between this research and the discipline of practical theology-- as represented in current literature in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, in respect to the following key areas: development of practical theology as a social science; the ecclesiology of church planting as it relates to missional theology in church planting practices of evangelical denominations; and the importance of practical theology in recognizing cultural and social systems in church planting practices.

### **2.2 The Role of Practical Theology as Social Science:**

The growth of practical theology in the past few decades, from its' perception as a discipline of instruction in applied ministry skills for clergy, to its' present context of an interdisciplinary instrument for research in areas of ecclesiological praxis, has enabled it to be used for research in areas of the church's praxis and ministry influence. Dingemans (1996:82-83) gives a brief outline of the history of practical theology and the influence of Friedrich Schleiermacher on the understanding of practical theology as an applied discipline to its present acceptance as an academic discipline that studies the manner in which churches and denominations practice their religious traditions. He (1996, 84) says,

In the second half of the twentieth century...the emphasis in practical theology has been extended from the functions of the pastor to the functions of the church as a whole...For

many practical theologians, practical ecclesiology and church development have become the foundational sub-disciplines of practical theology.

Similarly the views of Don Browning, as described by Hestenes (2012, 1-7) indicate the importance of practical theology in assisting the church in self-understanding through the means of social scientific methodology. Hestenes (2012, 2) quotes Browning

Pastoral theology should rediscover itself as a dimension of theological or religious ethics. It is the primary task of pastoral theology to bring together theological ethics and the social sciences to articulate a normative vision of the human life cycle. Pastoral theology involves stating the appropriate relation between a moral theology of the human life cycle and psychodynamic, developmental, and other social science perspectives that describe or explain how human development comes about. (Browning 1983a:187)

This understanding of practical theology positions the discipline well for research into the mission of churches with regard to church planting practices. It provides an academic discipline with which to assess church and denominational strategies with specific reference to the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

According to de Gruyter (1997: 1), practical theology is no longer considered a discipline concerned only with applied theology or ecclesiastical techniques. De Gruyter (1997:1-2) says,

The new focus of practical theology as an academic discipline is closely related to fundamental hermeneutical reflection on the practical character of theology as a whole. The reflection is grounded in the fact that the practical interest of theology in the Christian life does not emerge solely out of an appropriation of biblical and dogmatic traditions, but also emerges out of the church's present and future vision of what Christian life might become...The expansion of the scope of practical theology beyond that of an action-oriented theory of ecclesiastical practice is also grounded in its own "turn" toward empirical-hermeneutical concerns. Lived religion, including lived Christian religion, is not confined to the life of the church and its attendant communities.



In keeping with this understanding of practical theology, Van Wyk (1995: 85-88) outlines fundamental changes in the discipline that have emerged since the mid-1960s that were prompted by discussions in Germany and had great influence on practical theology in South Africa. These discussions led to an understanding of the need for practical theology to follow the models of modern operational sciences through the use of empirical research with reference to context and situational analysis, social change and equipping of the church community rather than just the clergy. Van Wyk (1995: 85) says,

In my use of the term ‘practical theology’ rather than ‘applied theology,’ or even, to some extent, ‘pastoral theology,’ I am making a definite distinction between practical theology as a science and the training and technical equipping of pastors for the gospel ministry. For the best results, a proper understanding and use of the latter should—perhaps, must—be undergirded by the former.

He (1995: 93) develops this thought further on saying,

Practical theology is the science of describing the structure and the functioning of certain events in the sphere of interpersonal relations, within a religious context. For Christians, this context is the Christian Church and its Judaeo-Christian heritage and nature. Thus practical theology includes a concern with contents and norms.

This expanded focus positions a practical theological approach to be well suited for research and examination of factors which have an impact on church planting situations attempted by churches and individuals in a specific cultural, social and geographical milieu. According to Neibuhr culture is not a barrier to be overcome but part of the mission of the church in relation to the proclamation of the gospel. In relation to this he (1951, 194) says, “The problem of culture is therefore the problem of its conversion, not of its replacement by a new creation; though the conversion is so radical that it amounts to a kind of rebirth.” Neibuhr does not distinguish between mission and culture but sees the work of the gospel as taking place within the culture of the age in which we live. In regard to this he (1951, 246) says,

To make our decisions in faith is to make them in view of the fact that no single man or group or historical time is the church; but that there is a church of faith in

which we do our partial, relative work and on which we count. It is to make them [our decisions] in view of the fact that Christ is risen from the dead, and is not only the head of the church but the redeemer of the world. It is to make them in view of the fact that the world of culture—man’s achievement—exists within the world of grace—God’s Kingdom.

Similarly Grenz (1996, 254-257) advocates a view of history in which history is the narrative of God in bringing creation to His fulfilled plan. He (1996, 256) contends that,

History is God at work establishing community. The Bible leave no doubt as to the actual content of God’s goal for human history. God is directing history toward the fulfilment of Jesus’ petition: “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”(Matt. 6:10) And God’s reign—God’s will—is reconciliation and fellowship—“community.” The Scriptures assert that God’s goal is a redeemed people living within a renewed creation enjoying fellowship with the Triune God.

This understanding of the church and culture provides the basis for studying the specific cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces, the mission of the church in mission and evangelism within this culture and its relationship to the process of church planting. Discussing the importance of understanding culture Kwast (1981, 363) says, “At the very heart of any culture is its *world view*, answering the most basic question: ‘What is real?’ This area of culture concerns itself with the great ‘ultimate’ questions of reality, questions which are seldom asked, but to which culture provides its most important answers.” The aim of this study is to research the common characteristics of viable long-term church planting situations in Atlantic Canada in order to begin to discern cultural and regional distinctions which impact church planting. This requires investigation into contributing theological, structural, geographical and cultural factors, both within and outside the church, from a practical theological viewpoint.

Ballard (1992: 112-115) discusses the importance of practical theology, as an academic discipline, in contributing to an ecclesiology which goes beyond the arena of clergy training and perspectives to include contributions in the areas of social action and professional development. He asserts that practical theology's claim to be an academic discipline is based in a three-fold academic pattern wherein practical theology is a practical discipline, a recognizable field of study and a critical, reflective discipline. He (1992: 115) says,

Practical theology is essentially an interdisciplinary activity, in dialogue with others, notably the social sciences. It stands at the meeting of faith and action, of belief and culture, of different professional decisions, and cannot avoid working in the public domain....practical theology is at the heart of any real theological activity, for it is the form most exposed to the whole range of human experience. It is, therefore, a critical activity in that attention has to be given to the challenges posed by other forms of knowledge and enquiries into truth, both theoretical and empirical.

In the same way Campbell (1990: 10-20) asserts that practical theology is concerned with the study of specific social structures either within or outside the church and works in a lateral relationship with other disciplines such as Biblical, historical, philosophical and the social sciences. Kok and Niemandt (2009: 502-508) also stress the importance of recognizing culture and social structures in practical theology. They (2009: 503) write, "The term 'ethos' is understood as the practical way in which we live out our ethics in a given socio-historical and cultural context. This refers to the moral vision and principles, the practices and the way of living in particular communities." The reliance of Atlantic Canadian churches on church planting literature written from contexts far removed from the distinctions of Atlantic Canada socially, demographically, culturally and geographically has hampered church planting practices by failure to recognize these regional distinctions. Empirical research involving the practices of

church planters in the Atlantic Canadian context is essential for understanding the unique challenges of planting a church in Atlantic Canada.

Recognition for the need for a deeper social understanding of and training in church planting principles is receiving wider acknowledgement. Stetzer (2003: xv-xvii) asserts that there is a lack of training from a missiological perspective and acknowledges the importance of empirical research in addressing the issue. He (2003: xvi) says,

Also, church planting is still an emerging field in North America. People have been planting churches for two millennia, but in the last few decades, church planting has risen to prominence among evangelicals. The literature began with how-to tapes and practical books. Recently, more thoughtful books that examine culture and church planting in the light of missions have begun to emerge.

This emphasis of reflection on culture in church planting provides a strong basis for practical theological research and is supported by others in the church planting community.

Murray (2010: 85-87) argues for the importance of empirical community research for the process of church planting and its immediate and long-term benefits. He (2010: 85-86) writes,

One of the significant contributions of Challenge 200 was its insistence on research as a basis for church planting. Many churches do not regard research as vital when planning evangelistic or community initiatives...But well-conducted research that leads on to effective analysis and action offers a much more secure foundation for a church-planting initiative.

Also commenting on the need for cultural awareness in the area of church planting practices Wagler (2009: 7) says,

To be a missional ecclesia, to be the called-out church on mission from God, requires more than the performance of our religious duties and the implementation of trendy programs that will somehow bring success or breathe life into our dry bones...Many churches are still driving programmatic Studebakers while our neighbours and culture have moved on to Smart cars.

This research, in the Atlantic Canadian context, is in keeping with the wider recognition for theological practices to be informed by social science disciplines. The empirical research into effective practices of viable long-term church planting situations is being approached from a qualitative method using in-depth interviews with comparison and analysis of these interviews to find common themes, practices and concerns among Atlantic Canadian church planters who are from various denominational backgrounds. Case studies are being employed as examples of the lack of and need for research from a practical theological base.

Tucker (2011: 2) affirms the use of social science methods with development of practical methodologies for the church. He (2011: 2) comments on Heitink's theory and says,

Heitink developed a 'theological theory of action as the core of a practical-theological theory'. Its foundational idea comes from the assumption that social science theories of communicative action provide an adequate basis for a scientific and systematic understanding of how praxis and theory relate. This is compatible with the central importance that the Judaeo-Christian scriptures attach to communication as deed and action.

In this respect practical theology and ecclesiology form a link that enables objective research in the praxis of a church or denomination as it relates to its theological presuppositions.

### **2.3 A Missional Ecclesiology of Church Planting:**

The ecclesiology of the practices of many evangelical church planters is decidedly missiological and, perhaps more clearly, missional. Missiology in the past, from a modern Western perspective, has often been linked with the study of overseas missions and relied on the paradigm of colonialism from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kane and Covell (1981, 347 - 353) describe 20<sup>th</sup> century changes in the understanding and practice of missions but express a definition of missions as an endeavour which takes place overseas. They (1981, 347-349) write,

One problem is that we had it too good in the 19th century. In those days the Christian missionary could come and go as he pleased. Passports were seldom required and visas were unknown. The great European powers imposed their peace on whole continents, and missionaries enjoyed the protection of their respective colonial authorities. Today the situation is different...Every sovereign state has the right to exclude or expel anyone deemed undesirable...Today's missionary is a guest in a host country.

This concept, *missionary*, is an inadequate basis for understanding postmodern changes both in the church and in society. The church has struggled to keep up with the paradigm changes in western thought. Empirical research in practical theology is an opportunity for the church to identify these changes and make appropriate responses to the needs of people within and outside of the church. Bosch (2011, 20-23) argues that the mission of the church, from its inception, was understood within the context of the society in which it was developed. He (2011, 20-21) says,

Even so, it may come as a surprise to many to be told that, during his life on earth, Jesus ministered, lived, and thought almost exclusively within the framework of first-century Jewish religious faith and life. He is introduced to us, particularly in the Gospel of Matthew, as the One who has come to fulfil what had been promised to the fathers and mothers of faith. It could not have been immediately clear to his early followers that the door of faith would soon be opened for the Gentiles too.

Bosch's understanding of the church's mission in this sense is not an appeal to change the gospel. Rather it is the assertion that the gospel needs to be communicated with reference to the context in which it is preached. He (2011, 23) argues,

Yet even where the sociological gap between today's communities and those of the first Christians is narrow, it is there, and it should be respected. A historico-critical study may help us to comprehend what mission was for Paul and Mark and John but it will not immediately tell us what we must think about mission in our own concrete situation...the approach called for requires an interaction between the self-definition of early Christian authors and actors and the self-

definition of today's believers who wish to be inspired and guided by those early witnesses.

This argument for contextualization is supported by Newbigin (1989, 173) who comments,

Moreover, every missionary knows that it is impossible to communicate the gospel without acknowledging in practice that there is some continuity between the gospel and the experience of the hearer outside the Christian Church. One cannot preach the gospel without using the word "God." If one is talking to a person of a non-Christian religion, one is bound to use one of the words in her language which is used to denote God. But the context of that word has necessarily been formed by his experience outside the church. By using the word, the preacher is taking the non-Christian experience of the hearer as the starting point.

In a postmodern society practical theology provides a scientific basis for understanding the socio-cultural milieu of the church's mission and, in the context of this research, the socio-cultural milieu of church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

In an article that delineates an early understanding of the impact of postmodern thought on the church and practical theology, Fowler (1985, 43-44) asserts that practical theology is essential in helping the church to address vision and discipleship. He (1985, 44) says,

In the pluralism and secularism of contemporary society, theology is under pressure to speak a language that is faithful to the Christian story and vision, and at the same time addresses the felt experience and the recognized and unrecognized hungers of contemporary people.

This is an important insight into the impact of secularism and contemporary society on church praxis and the need for an interdisciplinary approach to research from the perspective of practical theology which will assist church planters in understanding the unique culture and community in which they seek to minister.

The rise of post-modernism during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century has forced the church to examine the paradigm of thought from which it views mission. This change of thought has led to a missional understanding of the very nature of the church. Ecclesiology has begun to focus on the mission of the church locally and globally as being one and the same in theory but requiring culturally appropriate practices. Stetzer (2003, xv) discusses missiology in terms of evangelism and church planting locally and globally. He (2003, xv) argues,

Recently, many evangelical denominations have experienced a heightened awareness and practice of church planting. This return to New Testament missiological practice is good news. However, training in church planting principles is sporadic and often incomplete. Today, there is great interest in and need for church plants that will reach a changing postmodern world. Being a missionary in a new culture, whether that culture is in another country or emerges in our own, takes discernment and wise planning.

This emphasis on mission as a united concept both locally and globally has led to the development of a missional understanding of ecclesiology among evangelical denominations. Kok and Niemandt (2009, 503) explain that to be missional is to understand the basis of theology to be a God who sent His Son to redeem the world and who, in turn, sends the church into the world to live and proclaim the good news. They (2009, 506) say,

From the investigation above, it becomes clear that it is Jesus's missional-incarnational ethos that culminates not only in the reality of transformation and restoration but also in the activation of the dynamics of a movement....A missional-incarnational spirituality and ethos result in the bringing of the presence of Christ into marginalised places or spaces where such presence is not recognised.

Church planting is, by definition, missional-incarnational when church planters are committed to bringing the presence and message of Christ to communities that do not have an evangelical witness.



Wagler (2000, 9) defines missional in this way, “to recover a commitment to the apostolic message and develop the ability to see humanity once more, to see those who have yet to know Christ, and equally important, to see those who are already part of the Kingdom community.” In this sense missions and evangelism are joined and lead to an ecclesiology that incorporates church planting as a logical outcome of missional thinking. Commenting on this idea Hesselgrave (2000, 31) says,

Call it what you will. Call it church planting, church development, church growth, or church extension-evangelism. Or call it mission-evangelism. The task is the same anywhere in the world. Any community of people without an accessible church—whether they reside in North America or South Africa—is a mission field. And it is the responsibility of believers in existing churches to fill those spiritual voids with believing congregations...neither a mission-less church or a churchless mission is in accordance with the plan of God.

Missional thinking, in this respect, relies on the assistance of the empirical research in practical theology to move from theory to practice locally and globally in culturally appropriate practices and methods.

The importance of missional theology as it relates to a practical understanding of the church is promoted by Hendriks (2007, 1000-1002) who argues that practical theology has the ability to help the church become contextually relevant in that theology is contextual and missional in nature. He asserts that theological reflection on theory and praxis is essential for a correct understanding of theology. He (2007, 1002) says,

The implication of this is that doing theology shall never claim to have final answers as to the exact nature of God, the church or to many theological questions, but it shall always be able to witness about what it believes. This ecclesiology will never deign to give anybody a blueprint about being church, but it will provide a methodology to discern how to participate in the missional praxis of the Triune God and, as such, how to become what God wants His people to be: his image, his body.

McNeal (2003, 25-26) contends that missional theology and missional spirituality are linked by the need for the North American Church to be captured by God's heart for people and so adjust thinking and praxis from a methodology of attraction to a missional sense of being sent to those who do not believe. He (2003, 34) says,

In the church age, cultural presence has largely depended on church real estate. People had to come "inside" the church to participate in worship, to observe Christian sacraments, to hear Scripture, to "join" the church. In the emerging future this "come and get it!" approach will yield to another strategy. Jesus' strategy was to go where people were already hanging out.

This is an example of the need for practical theology to assist in informing the practice of the local church in addressing the needs of society and, particularly, as it relates to local and regional realities. In this sense a missional and practical theological approach to church planting is essential for understanding the local context and for promoting long term viability in church planting situations.

The importance of a missional and culturally relevant methodology is asserted by Dames (2007, 3-4) who believes local churches need to examine their basic assumptions and practices in order to be relevant to the culture to which they are sent. He (2007:3-4) says,

Five major challenges confront the 21st century church today, namely: demographic shifts and migration of cultures and its effect on local congregations; an increasing worldview shift toward post-modernism and how mission and the gospel will be expressed in an increasingly pluralistic and secular world; post-denominationalism, a movement away from corporate church structures toward a missional church concept, and the necessary shift in genetic code of churches; understanding evangelistic witness in terms of the Kingdom of God instead of the typical reductionistic expression of what it means to be a witness in today's world; and the need to rethink the theology of the 21st century church in terms of the Kingdom of God (Johnson 2004b:355-356). These

challenges are the agenda for 21st century Christianity and should duly be treated with sincere intent to discern God's will for the church.

Dames promotes a methodology in which spiritual discernment for the church is assisted by an understanding of the culture to which the church is sent to minister. Dames (2007, 8) makes reference to the views of Guder in support of this methodology and writes,

We propose a methodology of spiritual discernment and dialogical-diffusion for cultural transformation. Guder (1998:157) declares that the church's practices should not simply be repeated, but that it should intentionally be evaluated to measure its faithfulness and effectiveness as missional practices. Spiritual discernment plays a pivotal role in cultural formation and transformation in PMC. The result of the process of spiritual discernment is the formation of a missional community, in a particular place, sent and empowered by God to be gospel witnesses in that cultural context (Guder 2000:84). The missionary community being formed within a particular local culture is itself a transforming force. The most significant missiological implications of spiritual discernment are found in the transformative power of the gospel to shape a community for its missional ministry in its context (Guder 2000:85). The missional purpose of all faith communities should facilitate the formation of every Christian church in every culture (Guder 2000:86). Mission as spiritual discernment means that the apostolic ministry of witness (mission) takes place in a plurality of cultural forms (2000:92).

This provides an important base for a missional and practical theological approach to spiritual discernment in relation to church planting practices in the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

In an article (Dames 2008, 1-18) that discusses, from a South African perspective, the gospel and the importance of the church ministering to human beings, actions and practices that are on the edges of society (2008, 4) and removed from the centre of cultural life, Dames (2008, 11-12) advocates for the importance of rethinking the way we do mission, especially in regard to people and places on the edges of society, saying,

The things that had worked yesterday do not necessarily work today. Ancient and classical texts remained unchanged, but its audiences and its cultural settings, our contexts, have changed exponentially. Uncertainty, strangeness, plurality and diversity of choices and cultures typify contemporary society. The practical theological knowledge, skills and techniques the church employed 20-600 years ago do not apply anymore. Roxburgh (2005) helps us to understand that we need to be adaptive in the face of diverse cultural change. This calls for a new way of being church without being in control, dictating the flow of events and their outcomes. Adaptive change agents are needed to engage with the current tectonic shifts we are experiencing and the challenges that the edges of life are providing. These adaptive agents have to unlearn old methodologies, and relearn to innovate new (missional) practical theological lenses, skills and capacities. Practical theological knowledge and technical skills and practices that worked well in the past may not necessarily apply to the challenges on the fringes or in the centres of the post-modern reality. The current cultural scene is foreign for the leadership of Christendom (Roxburgh 2005:50-54). The following three models or agents can help the institutionalized church to free itself from its maintenance paradigm to become missional adaptive agents of change.

Similarly, Hastings (2007, 42-43) discusses the need of the western church, and particularly North American churches, to recognize the growth and development of Christianity in Latin America, Africa and Asia to the point where Christianity is now a non-Western religion. He maintains that the current prevalence of post-modern thought in Western society is forcing Western churches and Christians to re-examine long held cultural beliefs and practices. He (2007, 43-44) says,

Given the contemporary Western church's growing experience of cultural displacement or "exile" in which Christians may no longer expect their surrounding culture to be able to recognize Christian ways of thinking, feeling,

and acting, or even to tacitly embody some vestige of a Judeo-Christian ethos, we may have something valuable to learn from the “exile narratives” that have shaped the identity of the so-called “younger churches of the former “mission lands.”...Non-Western Christianity still remains a largely unexplored but potentially fertile field of inquiry and reflection for Western biblical, systematic, historical and practical theologians. Such inquiries will require new and creative methodologies and curricula... Another fruit of such investigations may be an increased awareness of the sensitivity to the ways some of our most treasured epistemological and theological convictions are also not untainted by our own local cultural *habitus*.

This is pertinent to the practices of planting long-term viable churches in the Maritime Provinces in that this region is geographically and culturally distinct from the perspective of those involved in church planting in more urbanized regions of North America. Literature and practices concerning church planting are often generated from areas of higher population density while little research is available for regions on the “edges” of North American society.

## **2.4 Theological and Biblical Perspectives, Cultural and Social Systems in Church Planting Practices:**

The preceding two sections of this chapter have established the development of practical theology in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century as an interdisciplinary approach to research in the praxis of the church as it relates to developments in society, both within and outside of the church, and the development of an ecclesiology among evangelicals, in the same time period, that is decidedly missional. These developments are significant in informing churches in culturally and socially relevant church planting practices. Rainey (2008, 8-9) argues for the need for new churches that are contextually relevant, even in areas that seem to have more than enough

churches because of the failure of so many local churches to provide culturally relevant ministry. He (2008, 76) relates this to new church structures, saying,

When it comes to structure, the importance of cultural context cannot be overemphasized. How you go about making disciples, and even the terms you use to describe the process, should be designed in such a way that they communicate expectations clearly. For this to be possible you have to have a thorough grasp of the people you are seeking to reach, and your structure and process should reflect this understanding with clarity.

Practical theology, as an interdisciplinary approach, is an important tool in research for local and regional areas and the cultural distinctions therein.

The approach of this study, through the use of in-depth interviews with church planters from various denominations and geographical locations within the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, provides important insight into regional theological, social, structural and cultural issues which have been observed by the participants or are implicit in their responses. Case studies, used as examples of church planting and development in Atlantic Canada, also provide insights into regional distinctions. Neither the interviews nor the case studies provide an exhaustive body of knowledge into regional distinctions. The knowledge derived from both is subject to the biases and limits of knowledge and experience of the participants but represent important observations from those working within the reality of the theological, social, cultural and geographical realities of the Atlantic Canadian context, with specific reference to the Maritime Provinces.

The significance of researching the views, opinions and observations of those working within the context of practical theology is defended by Dingemans (1996, 95), who says, “Religious narratives and metaphors can function to enliven, energize, liberate, and make more effective the workings of practical reason.” Dingemans (1996, 96) goes on to describe the application of this idea in research, saying,

In church revitalization programs Christian communities are confronted with their past (tradition and history, both conscious and unconscious) to find new ways of interpreting the past and opening up the future...each person has his or her own history of life that is embedded in a framework of stories and narratives, which in turn are nourished by the social and cultural context and also by interpretations of traditional narratives, the grand stories of ideologies or the myths, stories and confessions of religions.

In this context the operational and social science base of practical theology, as it has developed in recent years (compare Chapter 2), provides a strong foundation for research in the area of common practices of viable long term church planting situations in the given milieu of Atlantic Canada.

In reference to practical theology as a theological science Van Wyk (1995, 101) maintains that it is an action science that approaches the praxis of faith from a critical-analytical approach. He (1995, 87) argues that it is a critical theory of how religious praxis is influenced by society. Van Wyk (1995, 87) says, “Since social processes have a definite influence on the church, and vice versa, the object of practical theology is a Christian-churchly communicative operation in which social factors and processes play an important part.” This explanation of practical theological research coincides with the attempt of this research to ascertain the impact of social factors and processes in Atlantic Canada, both inside and outside the church, that impact the development of effective church planting practices.

Hendriks (2007, 1005-1012) proposes that theology is about God’s relationship to the church, the world, the word of God and mission. It is fundamentally about mission and ties practical theology, in that sense, to missional theology. He argues for the need for the church to interpret its praxis in light of its theological heritage and beliefs. Hendriks (2007: 1011) explains this connection between practical and missional theology saying,

As such, the church is an interpretative community in an ongoing engagement with the remembered patterns of God’s praxis. The sedimented rock of this engagement is to be

seen in the patterns of the church's worship and practice. Theology would request its research partners to respect its beliefs. Within a missional paradigm there is always openness to being criticized, since theology in the postmodern stance is aware of its fallibility. The church would, however, also claim to witness to society about what it perceives to be in contradiction to its beliefs.

This concept of the role and purpose of practical theology provides a strong basis for this present research in the area common practices of long-term viable church planting situations in Atlantic Canada. It supports the need for a critical analysis of present practices as related to the specific cultural and social milieu of the region and its relationship to the missional praxis of evangelical churches seeking to plant churches in the region.

Robinson (2006, 11-32) asserts that the church and western society are in the process of a major paradigm shift from the tenets of modernity to a postmodern way of thinking. He (2006, 13) proposes the need for re-examining structures of mission and stresses the importance of cultural sensitivity. He (2006, 13) says,

Mission always seeks to contextualize the gospel in relation to the culture that it seeks to address. That is not a difficult concept when we are thinking of the preparation of missionaries who are going to be sent to other lands. Of course they will need to know the language, the worldview, the customs, the assumptions and the religious outlook of those they are trying to reach. The gospel will need to assume appropriate 'clothes' for the new setting. We are not so practiced at engaging in a similar act of preparation for a Western setting.

This comment magnifies the need for research specific to the Maritime Provinces that will assist church planters in the region. Robinson (2006, 49-76) also highlights the relationship between practical theological research and church planting in any given context. He (2006, 76) says,

Two questions now arise, how do we find out what ideas, values, experiences and influences people have from culture and how do we engage with that information



to understand the world of those we are seeking to reach? Partly we need to view the information we already have with a new awareness. To a large extent we are part of the same world or worlds as those we are seeking to reach; it is just that we have learnt to filter the information that comes to us somewhat differently...It is not that we should abandon those ideas so much as we need to enter imaginatively the world of those who do not share our Christian horizon.

Robinson's ideas support the framework of this study and its aim to ascertain and contextualize the commonality of religious, social, cultural and geographical concepts, within the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, that have an impact on viable church planting practices.

Qualitative research through the use of structured in-depth interviews with church planters is undergirded by Robinson's concept, quoted above, that the church is part of the same world but needs to attempt to understand the same world from the perspective of those outside the Christian faith. Similarly, Roxburgh (2005, 20-23) contends that new approaches to reflection on tradition, theological frameworks and changes in society are necessary in order to provide a foundation for missional outreach and sustainable change in the post-modern world. He defines two tribes of thought naming traditionalist thinkers as Liminals and those enamored with change as Emergents and contends that it is essential to find new ways to develop contextually acceptable structures and frameworks. In regard to this he (2005, 24) says,

A few leaders, the elites in each tribe, will always shine in any circumstances...however, the majority in each tribe must find ways of discovering and developing frameworks and skills for leading in this new world. Without this Liminals will become discouraged and cynical...On the other hand, Emergents will die out because the tribe was unable to develop habits that can be handed down.

The purpose of this study is to attempt to discover frameworks that will strengthen church planting situations in the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces.

Kok and Niemandt (2009, 1-7) also argue for a missional approach that is informed by a contextual understanding of the people and place in which the church seeks to serve. In relation to the practice of the church and its context they (2009, 2) say,

The term 'ethics' is understood as the values that we live by on the basis of how we understand ourselves, of our relationship to God and of the world and the values rules and principles we that we infer from that. The term 'Ethos' is understood as the practical way in which we live out our ethics....A fundamental dialectic relationship therefore exists between ethics and ethos. Conduct is result of identity and therefore ethos is always a result of ethics, rooted in a particular understanding of the universal godly narrative. Ethos is, in other words, the *Lebensstil* or conduct of those who share a common identity. The understanding of ethics and ethos is a dynamic social process due to its realisation within a specific socio-historical context.

The relationship of ethics to ethos highlights the need for research in identifiable cultural geographical contexts, such as the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, to prepare the church for culturally sensitive and appropriate practices in the ministry of the gospel and with specific reference to church planting practices in this study.

In the same way Dames (2013, 9ff) highlights the importance of research as a basis for religious praxis, saying,

The complexity of life requires better understanding, interpretation and application of new knowledge. Freire (in Branson 2011: 401) wants knowledge to serve a life-giving role in nurturing persons and communities to change their contexts whilst they themselves are being changed through the reflection-action cycle. Practical theology is challenged to search for sound theological theoretical and empirical direction and a renewed engagement between praxis and theory.

Practical theology, therefore, is uniquely equipped as a means for empirical theological and theory based reflections on the practice of church planting.

This study attempts to address the lack of research for church planters that will inform the practices of viable long-term church planting situations, within the religious, social, cultural and geographical milieu of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. In so doing it is in keeping with a missional approach to ministry in a postmodern paradigm which recognizes the need for missional contextualization in every mission setting. In relation to this Stetzer (2003, 136) maintains that how we plant churches, the practices of church planters, will be determined by the location and focus group being considered for church planting. He equates church planting in the postmodern paradigm with mission work. He (2003, 140) writes,

Many postmoderns feel as if they are entering an alien culture when encountering evangelical Christianity. It is not the job of the unchurched postmodern to enter our culture. It is our job to invade theirs. We do that by recognizing it as mission work. Mission work is the same in every place; the missionary must radically engage the culture.

Practical theology provides a theological and social science basis for the church planter to understand his or her own beliefs and presuppositions, as well as, the beliefs and presuppositions inherent in the culture in which church planting is taking place. In the same way McNeal (2003, 31) challenges church leaders to demonstrate an understanding of cultural change saying, “Church leaders mostly whine about how the church is suffering under this cultural shift rather than making serious adjustments to make the church more available to people who are not a part of the church culture lifestyle anymore.” Understanding our culture and context is essential if we are to reach a culture which does not comprehend the traditional church culture. Practical theology assists the church in understanding a culture which may be radically different from the church’s traditional thinking and culture. In relation to this Dames (2007, 14) says,

Cultural edges as adaptive agents of change provide us with an answer to the opening question of this article. Cultural edges pertain to fringe-scenarios. It

provides meaningful and innovative answers to God's mission in this world. Adaptive agents serve as a critical-reflective lens for the practices of Christendom. The church is challenged to break free out of its maintenance mode to become edged in common human life situations. The church should be-and-act as change agents of human lives. The hermeneutical and action role and identity of the church continuously re-invents itself to become culturally undomesticated.

A practical theological approach to understanding the culture of church planting in the context of the Maritime Provinces will assist the church in identifying religious traditions that need to be changed in order to allow the church to continue its missional call to spread the gospel through church planting.

An understanding of the need for contextualization of church planting is the basis for this research. Thomas John Hastings (2007, 44-45) contends that practical theology is in need of a deeper understanding of culture without compromising the gospel. He (2007, 45) says,

Wall's studied observation that you can have 'too little' of either culture or the gospel sheds some light on the cultural captivity of the North American practical theologians I criticized in the first chapter. Their reticence on divine agency, construction of 'tertium quid' methodologies, and capitulation to an individualistic-expressivist religiosity, as well as the loss of any consciousness of the missional and ecumenical charter of the Christian church, all bear witness to the loss of evangelical nerve within North American 'mainline' Protestantism today. Contrary to the claims of conservative evangelicals or communitarians, the problem I see with 'mainline' protestant churches and theologians is not 'too much' culture. I believe we should be commended for being engaged rather than withdrawn, for trying to maintain a positive, ongoing conversation with the resources of contemporary culture. Rather, our weakness, as I see it, has been 'too little' gospel.

This research project has been developed from a practical theological foundation using a qualitative approach to obtain the opinions, beliefs and perspectives of church planters working with the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, in order to understand and engage the specific

cultural milieu with the gospel through culturally appropriate practices and to understand possible barriers to long-term viable church planting opportunities in this specific geographical area.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The development of practical theology at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, from an applied discipline designed to develop ministry skills, to an interdisciplinary theological science that uses social science methodology, has provided the foundation for the research of this study in the common practices of viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

Missional ecclesiology, which is becoming normative for many evangelical denominations, understands that God sent His Son into the social context of His world to redeem it, therefore, the Church is sent to that same world to bring the gospel to it in culturally appropriate and sensitive practices. Ecclesiology, from a missional perspective, has a unified concept of missions that is both local and global. A missional church, or church planter, in the postmodern paradigm needs to engage the specific socio-historic and geographic milieu in which church planting is taking place. Missional ecclesiology provides a theological base for such ministry in culturally appropriate practices.

A qualitative approach to practical theology, through in-depth structured interviews and the use of case studies, as examples, is in keeping with social science methodology and has provided the opportunity to obtain data and understand it in terms of context and situational analysis. The research is understood to be the opinions, beliefs, perspectives and values of the participants as they have engaged the cultural milieu of the given geographic region. It is

acknowledged that both the researcher and participants bring their own biases, beliefs and presuppositions to the research. It is also understood that the aforementioned researcher and participants are impacted by the socio-historical context, upon which they have shared their observations, whether that be from a different belief system or not. The research is limited by the experiences of the researcher and participants and is not considered to be an exhaustive body of knowledge on the subject matter.

The discipline of practical theology has provided an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the following: the theological presuppositions of both the general population and churches in the region; the traditional and non-traditional thinking regarding ecclesiastical structures and leadership in the region; and the cultural and geographical milieu of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada that will enable church planters to develop culturally sensitive and effective practices. It has also provided the social science research base for gathering accurate data from a qualitative research approach.

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## Chapter 3: A Conceptual Framework for Church Planting Practices

### 3.1 Introduction:

As stated in Chapter 1, much of the current literature in the area of church planting reflects the demographics and culture of the United States. While this literature is insightful and useful for basic principles, it often reflects the characteristics of regions which are densely populated and have an evangelical base that is far more influential than is reflected in the Canadian population in general, and the population base of Atlantic Canada, in particular.

The growth of the church planting movement has created an opportunity for the examination of the fundamental principles and challenges which undergird church planting in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Problems with church planting in the North American context have become evident through the high percentage of church planting situations that do not achieve long-term viability. Robinson (2006, 27), commenting on church planting in North America, as well as Britain, asserts that problems with sustainability for many new congregations became evident by 1996. Robinson believes that many congregations failed as a result of a faulty church planting model. Robinson (2006, 28) says,

Many of these congregations consisted of collecting disaffected Christians from other churches...Those disaffected Christians tended to bring their disaffections with them and so what resulted was a series of new congregations that were fundamentally unhealthy....

Robinson (2006, 28) concludes that much of the emphasis in church planting has been on the 'how,' to the detriment of the 'what' or on the foundations underlying church planting.

Murray (2001, 53), in his book, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, asserts that the neglect of the theological foundations for church planting has, at times, undermined the effectiveness of church planting. Murray writes about Church planting from a British and European background. He (2001, 53) says,

We have argued that church planting can be located theologically at the interface between ecclesiology and missiology. Since both ecclesiology and missiology have been marginalized in theological reflection, it is not surprising that a topic on the borders of both has received little theological attention. This is unfortunate, given the significance of this practice throughout the history and global expansion of the church.

This argument is crucial to an understanding of church planting in an area such as Atlantic Canada that has relied upon the literature and research of sources outside the cultural setting and has little development of the theological assumptions of the region.

Stetzer (2004), commenting on Church growth formulas and their relationship to his church planting ministry, writes about the inadequacy of church growth programs which were promoted as universally applicable. He (2004, 1) holds, “Seven years ago my church growth world began to come apart. Many of the sure-fire, guaranteed, great-new-whiz-bang-programs weren’t working in my church or the churches we were starting....When I became seminary professor, my students told me the same thing....” Stetzer (2004, 4) concludes that church planting methods are not universal but that an understanding of the people one is trying to reach is far more important. He (2006, 115-123) continues to develop this line of thinking in *Planting Missional Churches*. He (2006, 115) writes,

Effective church planting is missionary work. Insightful church planters must begin by determining their mission—exploring questions of personal call and conviction—and by learning missions principles. Then they seek to understand the culture they’ve been called to reach. How do the people who live here think? What are their values? What events shaped their collective history, affected their group psyche? What are their needs and desires?...The missional church planter is performing an ‘exegesis’ of the target culture...to exegete the culture is to study the setting in such a way that one receives guidance for understanding the meanings of cultural patterns, systems and behaviours. This is what it means to be missional; and this is why, in today’s new world of establishing churches, every plant is different. It’s because every culture is unique.



This, in itself, is both a practical and theological issue and ties church planting to a missional ecclesiology that recognizes the importance of cultural sensitivity. In a similar vein of thought, Hastings (2007, 47) argues for a radical independence of the church's missionary message from the culture but also maintains the need for cultural dialogue and sensitivity. He (2007, 47-48) writes, "However, the church's cultural discontinuity and independence can never be absolute since 'the new church takes its place alongside the other churches of the world in the necessary ecumenical conversation between the various inculturations of discipleship.'" In this sense, an understanding of regional distinctions proposed in this research is invaluable to continued church planting in the given region.

In the three broad categories outlined for this thesis in the research questions, namely, theological issues, structural issues and cultural/geographical issues (See Appendix B), there is often a gap in literature that addresses church planting practices in areas like Atlantic Canada that have a smaller population base and an even smaller evangelical presence. It is therefore necessary to address the theological, structural and cultural/geographical issues in this Chapter. They will be examined in the respective order, with attention being given to the sub-categories of each (-See Appendix A) as represented in the current and available literature.

Theological issues will be examined in terms of key Biblical principles and current theological issues. Structural issues will be examined with regard to church political and leadership issues. Lastly, cultural and geographical issues will be explored.

This chapter focuses on current literature which span from the late twentieth century, during a period of intense church planting in many denominations, to the first decade of the twenty-first century from authors such as Harry Gardner (1994), Aubrey Malphurs (1999), Ed Stetzer (2003, 2004, 2006), Stuart Murray (2001,2008), George W. Bullard (2005), Reggie McNeal (2003),

David J. Hesselgrave (2000), Martin Robinson (2006) and many others from the similar time frame.

### **3.2 Theological Issues of Church Planting:**

There are many theological issues which could inform the church planting phenomena. This study will be limited to an examination of key theological issues in the areas of foundational biblical concepts, current theological issues and vision statements. Concepts of church planting range from the theologically conservative Anabaptist model which stresses evangelism in and through the local congregation, to the more theologically liberal framework of mainline denominations. From a general perspective the mainline denominations operate within a theological understanding of North America as a church culture and in which church expansion is primarily for those of the respective denomination. It is the intent of this dissertation, in view of the wide spectrum of theological positions, to be limited to the views of evangelical churches and literature being produced in that genre. Reference may be made to literature outside the evangelical community in areas where there is crossover, for the purpose of gaining a wider view of the issue, but not with the intention of examining the entire theological realm of church planting.

In regard to the Anabaptist model Dale R. Stoffer (1994, 210) asserts that Anabaptist and Brethren Churches have relied too heavily on modern church growth methods and too little on the principles derived from their own history. Stoffer suggests that the modern church planting emphasis may be lacking in biblical and theological depth. He (1994, 211) says, “In fact, in the modern church planting and church growth movements, there is all too little attention given to developing a theological rationale for new practices. Pragmatic considerations seem to be the

litmus test for any new technique.” Church planting, Stoffer (1994, 215) maintains, must be rooted in the church, as a community of faith with accountability structures in place to provide both service to the individual and an opportunity for the individual to serve the community. Stoffer is concerned with the development of congregations that are decidedly Anabaptist and emphasizes the need for accountability for church planters and new churches. He (1994, 215) says, “I need the accountability of a community to which I am committed and which is committed to me. Growth, both individually and corporately, occurs in the church, paradoxically, as each members serves the needs of the others in sacrificial love.” Although Stoffer (1994, 216) argues against new methodologies such as a need-oriented model or a user-friendly model his emphasis quoted immediately above betrays a need for those same things, albeit, within an Anabaptist theological framework. His emphasis is also decidedly missional as he (1994, 218) describes it in these words.

In my own church planting work I sought first to introduce the people to Christ and his Word. From this foundation I could then reinforce the importance of key Anabaptist principles not because they were Anabaptist but because they were biblical and true to Christ’s teaching and example.

Approaching the issue from a slightly different perspective and in relation to the theological rationale Joel Rainey (2008, 19) highlights the Christological reason for church planting. Church planting should take place because it is the means by which God, through His Spirit has chosen to proclaim, illustrate and confirm the gospel. Rainey (2008, 19-20) says, “Everything begins and ends with Jesus and His gospel. The centre and circumference of your church planting conviction should be no less than a realization that Jesus is not yet worshiped as He deserves to be, and a determination to do something about that.” Rainey’s perspective is also missional in that he promotes a church planting model based on being called and sent by God. He (2008, 20) says,

As you explore your calling to this task, one crucial element of that calling will be not only the conviction that a Gospel-centred church be planted, but that it be planted in a

particular place, among a particular people. Like the Apostle Paul, who was forbidden to enter Asia and Bithynia and the very next day led directly to Macedonia, God has a place and people among whom He desires this church be planted.

This way of thinking establishes the need of culturally sensitive outreach and evangelism in church planting specific to the cultural milieu to which a church planter is called.

In contrast to this and at the other end of the theological spectrum are many of the mainline denominations. Commenting on mainline denominations, such as the Lutheran Church, of which he is part, Mervin E. Thompson (1993, 19-21) indicates that there is a need for his and other churches to rethink their understanding of North American culture as being Christian in its basis. Thompson insists that the need for change within his own denomination is crucial for church growth. He maintains that the change needed is in the area of leadership training and focus, so that the church becomes more mission minded. He (1993, 25) says,

Leadership for growth is a crying need within the Christian community. The day of the professional minister is over; the day of the missionary pastor has come. The day of clergy-dominated church is over; the day of lay leadership has arrived. The future of the church will be determined largely by how well we respond to these changes in our midst.

The need for changes in leadership training, according to Thompson, are based on an understanding of church planting that is centred on denominational development rather than missional ministry. This leads directly to the importance of Biblical concepts for church planting.

### **3.2.1 Foundational Biblical Concepts**

Thompson's (1993) views are in keeping with a current emphasis on the missional church and leadership that has become the basis for much of the modern church planting movement.

Literature from many sources give high priority to the concepts of mission, discipleship and evangelism in church planting. Often the terms are used together and even interchangeably in the sense that missional churches define their mission in terms that are inclusive of evangelism and

discipleship. In relation to this Bosch (2011, 28-30) promotes an understanding of the church's mission as being all inclusive. He (2011, 28) says,

What amazes one again and again is the inclusiveness of Jesus' mission. It embraces both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor, both the sinner and the devout. His mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups.

Later on Bosch links this inclusive mission of Jesus with discipleship. He (2011, 37) says,

The sequence of events cannot have been accidental. Mark, in particular, clearly has an explicitly missionary purpose in mind in his account of the calling of the disciples...the true scene of Jesus' preaching and the lake is for him a bridge toward the Gentiles. Mark thus puts a missionary stamp on his gospel from the very first chapter. The disciples are called to be missionaries.

Bosch (2011, 37) concludes that calling, discipleship and mission belong together. In this sense Jesus' evangelism, or calling of His disciples to follow him, is linked indivisibly with mission and discipleship.

It is important to recognize the missional, discipleship and evangelism basis for church planting in that it provides the means for those involved in church planting to look beyond themselves and their own religious traditions in order to serve and witness to the community in which they find themselves. In relation to this Hirsch (2006, 235-236) argues,

If evangelizing and discipling the nations lie at the heart of the church's purpose in the world, then it is mission, and not ministry, that is the true organizing principle of the church. *Mission* is being used in a narrow sense here to suggest that the church's orientation to the "outsiders," and *ministry* as the orientation to the "insiders." Experience tells us that a church that aims at ministry seldom gets to mission even if it sincerely intends to do so. But the church that aims at mission will have to do ministry, because ministry is the means to do mission. Our

services, our ministries, need a greater cause to keep them alive and give them their broader meaning.

A missional church, in this context, sees itself as sent to the community in which it exists, and beyond the community and region to even global applications, for the purpose of discipleship and evangelism through ministry to those outside the confines of the traditions of the church.

Hendriks (2007, 1012-1013) supports this understanding of what it means to be missional. He (2007, 1013) comments,

A missional theology does theology by focusing on global, local and particular issues with the intention of doing something about the reality and problems confronting society. It does this because God, in God's coming to us in and through Jesus Christ, initiated something that changed people and formed them into a missional community of people called to love God and their neighbour.

Hendriks conclusions are based on his understanding of what it means to have a missional theology. In regard to this he (2007, 1001-1002) asserts,

Theology is a faith-based endeavour. The following are basic assumptions on which a missional methodology and its stance on development are based. Theology is basically one (it should not be divided by its many sub-disciplines) and missionary by its very nature (Bosch 1991: 389-393). Theology's epistemological core is a faith-based focus on the Triune God who reveals Himself as a fountain of sending love (mission Dei) through scripture and through the Holy Spirit's ongoing, life-giving and not-to-be-manipulated work...The missional paradigm pursues a missional and practical ecclesiology: it develops a methodological strategy on how to be a contextually relevant church.

In this sense missional theology, discipleship and evangelism are not separate entities but a practical outworking of the great commission and the mission of God.

In one of the foundational works, by an evangelical, for church planting in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*,

Aubrey Malphurs (1998, 28-30), identifies church planting as the practical expression of Jesus' promise, in Matthew 16: 18, to build His church and Jesus' calling, in the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20), to make disciples. He asserts that 80-85 percent of churches are not accomplishing discipleship and that a new emphasis on evangelism and discipleship, through church planting, is necessary to correct this. The essential foundation for new church plants is missional in that it fulfils the great commission. Malphurs (1998, 64-65) says,

Early in the twenty-first century, America will see the planting of a number of new, high-impact churches that will measure their success not so much by how well their people know the scriptures (as important as that is) or how many programs they have, but by whether or not they are making disciples...Biblical knowledge is critical and programs are essential in any church. But far too many of our evangelical churches have majored in these areas, to the exclusion of Christ's more important Great Commission Mandate.

Malphurs work is decidedly missional and thorough in its scope for American church planting, discipleship and evangelism, but often demonstrates the bias of church planting in heavily populated urban areas. An example of this is Malphurs' expected timeline for the birth of a congregation which assumes a fairly receptive target group and population size that facilitates fast growth. He (1998, 299) says, "How long, then, should it take? What time is necessary to prepare for birth? In most cases, this ranges from three months to a year, depending on whether or not there's a pre-existing group of interested, committed Christians in the target area."

Malphurs' missional emphasis on discipleship and evangelism through church planting is at the heart of evangelical theology and pervades much of the literature from evangelical sources. Church planting, in this sense, displays a missional ecclesiology. This is clearly evident in literature sources with a distinctly American bias. George William Garner (2006, 31), in his dissertation outlining a model of leadership for rural church planting, contends that the great commission and Biblical authority are essential elements for effective church planting in the

Southern Baptist Convention. He (2006, 31-32) says, “There is a decided emphasis on Biblical authority and the importance of the great commission. Mission theology and mission practices must have the Bible as their ultimate foundation if they are to be Christian.” He (2006, 32) maintains that an understanding of biblical authority, or lack thereof, has a direct impact on,

a loss of mission and evangelistic zeal; theological defection; undue emphasis upon the material and temporal with a corresponding loss of consciousness of the eternal; reliance upon mystical, personal experience instead of revealed truth; unjustified attachment to human reasoning—to name but a few spiritually-destructive positions.

Church planting viability, in his thinking, is directly related to obedience to the Biblical mandate given in the great commission. The concept of missional transformation of congregations as being directly related to discipleship and the role of scripture is a viewpoint supported by Guder, (2004, 61) who says,

How do such missional communities happen? What forms them? Our discussion of the patterns of missional congregations will make plain that there are many dimensions to the formation of such churches. But the fundamental answer we anticipated is what we found: biblical discipling is crucial. The missional transformation of a congregation is directly related to the priority assigned to the Bible and to the way in which the Bible shapes that community.

In this sense the mission of the church, for church planting among evangelicals is directly related to the Biblical mandate to evangelize through discipleship.

Much of the literature from evangelical sources is guided by a theology of evangelism and discipleship. Outreach and conversion to an evangelical understanding of the Christian faith is directly related to church planting. In a mission conference address on June 1, 2004, David S. Lim (2004, 1) identified church planting as of primary importance in the evangelization of unreached people groups. He (2004, 2) says, “In recent years, especially since 1999, the missionary community has rediscovered the ‘master plan of world evangelization.’ The ‘secret



formula' is CPM (Church Planting Movements) through 'disciple-making in small groups – often called 'house churches' ...." While Lim's paper provides the groundwork for evangelizing unreached people groups of numerous linguistic and ethnic backgrounds globally, a similar theological base forms the cornerstone for evangelism in the North American context. In an article for the Southern Baptist Mission Board, Bill Agee (2005, 210), Director of Associational Initiatives Team, says, "In my own personal observation and practice as a church planter, pastor of a sponsoring church, and as a director of missions, it is clearly evident that church planting is the most effective evangelism methodology we have today." In reference to the Biblical basis for church planting Peter Hay (2000, 5), in an article entitled, *The DNA Factor of Church Planting*, comments, "This is the first lesson from the so-called ideal church described in Acts. They were not focused on planting churches but on something else that resulted in churches. That something was evangelism."

In many cases, church planting is identified as of utmost importance for evangelism.

Will McRaney (2003, 75) writes,

For Christians to evangelize the world, it will take millions of additional churches. To congregationalize 6 billion people at 100 participants per church, it will take a total of 60 million churches worldwide. For Christians to evangelize America, it will take hundreds of thousands of new churches.

Further on he (2003, 77) says, "There are other means to evangelism, but the most effective method of reaching the lost is church planting, and thus it is biblical and reasonable for the Church to continue planting new congregations." Likewise Vang (2012, 156) contends that the church is God's vehicle for the promotion of His mission, saying,

So what is a church, and how does it fulfil God's purposes? Since the beginning of God's grand story, God's kingdom community has been the vehicle for his mission to all nations. It is in and through this community that God's kingdom is

both expressed and experienced on earth. The purpose of missions and evangelism is to bring all of God's creation into a true, life-encompassing worship of God. God's prophetic call upon the church is to call all people—from all people groups and nations—to establish communities whose life-focus is to worship the true, living, triune God....If a church is to be Christian in the true sense of the term, it must be defined by its mission as God's kingdom vehicle.

Church planting, therefore, is an extension of the church's mission as God's kingdom vehicle.

In a similar vein of thought, discipleship is cited as the theological foundation for church planting by other evangelicals. The Biblical basis for church planting is highlighted in *The Church Planting Handbook for the Congregational Churches in Canada*. The manual is based on the doctoral work of Pastor Brad Boydston (2004, 4), who identifies Jesus as the first church planter when he formed a community of disciples. The disciples followed Jesus' pattern and gathered believers into viable communities for both discipleship and service to each other. This manual demonstrates similarities in theological perspective in the Canadian and American views regarding church planting. An Atlantic Canadian Perspective is explained by Harry Gardner (1994, 8) of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. Gardner highlights the importance of church planting for evangelism and church growth. He (1994, 8) writes, "The theology for planting new churches rests upon two great truths –first, that new churches are required to fulfil the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus and second, that the church by its organic nature will grow and this includes the planting of new churches." This is an example of how church planting among evangelicals in Atlantic Canada has a similar ecclesiological basis as church among evangelicals in other areas. A basis that is missional at heart. Guder (2004, 61-62) gives support to this understanding of missional, discipleship and evangelism being inter-connected, commenting,

The Gospels describe how Jesus called together his disciples and intensively trained them for the mission that would follow. Their discipline was a “going to school with Jesus” — and their graduation was the call to be apostles. Jesus’ disciples became his “sent-out ones,” his witnessing people, empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Twelve whom Jesus called became the founding generation of the church. As they lived with Jesus, learned his message, watched his actions, they were being molded by him to become salt, leaven, and light in the world. His ministry reached its climax at the cross and Easter. With the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it now became the ministry of the community initiated by the Twelve. Every community that follows after them and is built upon their foundation is, in the same way, called together by Jesus and is being formed by him for his mission.

Church planting, in this sense is an outworking of the great commission to evangelize and make disciples.

Others assert a direct correlation between church planting and evangelism and discipleship. Ed Stetzer, in his book, *Planting Missional Churches*, identifies the ministry of Paul as a crucial Biblical basis for church planting in the twenty-first century. He (2006, 47-48) says, “...Paul instructed others to follow the model he presented...Paul always asked, ‘How can I best reach unbelievers?’ To reach them he was willing to pay any price and change any methodology short of compromising the gospel.” This, Stetzer (2006, 51 -52) maintains is key to addressing the postmodern emphasis on spirituality from an evangelical point of view. Church planting is an essential element for reaching our culture. He extends the scope of church planting to cultural outreach asserting that, for Paul, evangelism, discipleship and church planting were co-related, not independent of each other. Stetzer (2006, 52) says, “The accounts and details we’ve considered in Acts demonstrate that Paul and other early Christians believed in and practiced church planting as a normal part of their lives---and specifically in response to the commands of

Jesus...church planting was the normal expression of New Testament missiology.” Similarly Garrison (2012, 459) asserts the importance of discipleship in church planting, saying,

Church planting movements multiply churches, communities of disciples.

While it is true that church planting movements include massive evangelistic proclamation, they go the second mile—leaving in their wake hundreds of new churches where discipleship, worship, and spiritual development continue.

The establishment of new churches, therefore, is a direct expression of God’s mission for the church in the world.

Another theological concept that is prevalent in the literature, and requires church planters to develop an understanding from a Biblical perspective, is postmodernism. Coming to terms with postmodernism is an essential element in church planting and mission. In his book, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*, Reggie McNeal (2003, 53-66) discusses the Biblical basis of mission for the church. McNeal (2003, 54-55) asserts that the North American church is thoroughly modern and has defined spiritual success in a congregation to numbers that can be reported. He goes on to identify the need for a new approach to mission in a postmodern world. He (2003, 56) says, “An honest search for God today would lead the church back into the world, because postmodernism is at heart a spiritual movement.” McNeal points to the methodology used by the Apostle Paul, in the early church, as the necessary Biblical basis for mission in the postmodern world. He (2003, 61) says,

Paul came to understand that a vibrant relationship with Jesus would be an attractive way to live and would intrigue people about how they could get hold of the same kind of life. This is precisely how he catalogs his spiritual journey in Philippians 3---a journey from legalistic zealot for God to having an intimate relationship with him.

A Biblical understanding of Paul's approach to mission in the cultural milieu of the first century is essential for a missional approach to church planting in the postmodern milieu of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The foundational biblical concepts that undergird much of the literature produced by the modern church planting movement, then, are the emphases on evangelism and discipleship. These are correlated to church planting and based on the Great Commission teachings of Jesus and the practical application of these teachings in the New Testament writings within a postmodern context.

### **3.2.2 Current Theological Issues**

Current theological issues have caused many church planters to examine the basis of their church planting efforts. In the context of this study current theological issues will be understood as theological issues in the twenty-first century which have an impact on church planting. These issues are not limited to biblical theology but are a reflection of the theological presuppositions of the society in which church planting is being attempted. Regarding the importance of church planting movements addressing current theological issues Robinson (2006, 47) says,

Genuine movements connect with the past but reinterpret the past to such an extent that the essential genius of the gospel is recast in new clothes for the new culture. The term emerging church is a wonderful term if it describes that which is emerging to connect with an equally emergent culture...Church planting that has been conceived as an instrument to renew that which has been will fail. Church planting that becomes a vehicle for the creation of movements can serve us well.

Much of the available literature addresses cultural change from a North American perspective. Central to this discussion in the literature is the concept of postmodernism and its impact on church planting methodology. Commenting on the impact of postmodern thought on the church McNeal (2003, 2) says,

We are witnessing the emergence of a new world. The church of Jesus is moving into the postmodern world. Its expression is going to be more different than most people realize or want to imagine...This phenomenon has been noted by many who tag the emerging culture as post-Christian, pre-Christian, or postmodern. The point is, the world is profoundly different than it was at the middle of the last century.

This change in society is demanding that churches come to understand and address a culture that does not view the church as essential. George Bullard (2005, 1-2) indicates that churches are working within a new paradigm which requires a change even in the way churches think. He (2005, 2) says, “This book is a twenty-first century process, aware that an increasing number of processes relevant to congregational life are right-brained in orientation rather than left-brained, and postmodern rather than modern.” In this sense, church planters need to constantly evaluate what are their own cultural biases and what methods are based in Biblical orthodoxy.

The importance of impacting a church’s local context and culture is also evident in the literature. In his book, *Planting Churches in the Real World*, Joel Rainey (2008, 7-9) discusses his reasons for becoming involved in church planting. He cites statistics that 70% of churches in his home state were in decline while, at the same time, the un-churched population in the same area had grown to 60%. He observed that even large churches were not influencing their immediate context with the gospel. He (2008, 8) says, “...I came to realize that a church is only a success to the degree that it is able to impact its community in a positive way. If they wouldn’t miss you if you disappeared, then you probably have no reason to exist.” Rainey’s point of view

supports a missional understanding of church growth and extension as related to church planting and current societal changes.

Addressing the issue of societal change and Christian relevance in an article in *Theology Today*, Brian K. Smith (1997, 443) says, “That the Christian cultural-linguistic framework assumed by so much evangelism has disappeared is obvious. But what this means for the mission of the church is much less clear. Shouting louder is clearly no answer in a society that no longer views the world Christianly.” Smith (1997, 446-448) argues that the early church was planted in the midst of the Greco-Roman culture that did not understand its Jewish roots. The church faced the challenge of proclaiming the truths of the gospel in culturally relevant language. The contemporary western church faces a very similar challenge. In his doctoral dissertation on the role of prayer in church planting and highlighting the challenge of ministry in a changing culture Slagle (2006, 35) says,

In a time when culture is more pluralistic and resistant, modern missionaries assert that prayer must not be neglected. The advent of postmodernism reveals an American culture quick to embrace spirituality but increasingly hostile to the churches and the gospel. His thoughts reaffirm the need for church planting pastors to be aware of the cultural barriers with which they must come to terms.

In some of the current literature postmodernism is discussed as an opportunity for sharing the gospel. The theological aspect of postmodern thought and spirituality is centred in the church’s ability to interpret the gospel in culturally appropriate terms while still maintaining the fundamental truths of the gospel as defined by evangelicals. Ed Stetzer (2003, 21) comments on this, saying, “Culturally appropriate evangelism answers the actual questions being asked by a given culture, rather than those questions the church believes the culture should ask...the world’s questions, in fact, should help determine the evangelistic methodologies and expressions of the

indigenous church.” In his book, *The World Calling: The Church’s Witness in Politics and Society*, John Ogletree affirms this approach to interpreting or exegeting the society one wishes to reach. He (2004, 4) says, “The next challenge is to discover constructive ways of relating distinctively Christian social ideas to the civilizational ethic resident in a given social order... The attainment of such compatibility requires a ‘cultural synthesis,’ that is, a creative combination of distinctively Christian values with core elements in a reigning civilizational ethic.” His opinion resonates with the purpose of this thesis, as very little literature has been forthcoming on planting churches in the culture milieu of Atlantic Canada. There are also precautions to be noted in this approach. Little (2012, 486) says,

Of course, every culture reserves the right and duty to contextualize the gospel for its own people. This applies to the Western world as much as to the non-Western world. But as any particular community indigenizes Christianity for itself, there is an ever-present possibility to over-contextualize and unknowingly adopt cultural beliefs, values, and practices that are incongruent with Christianity.

It is within this tension that church planters in Atlantic Canada strive to permeate their culture without being overcome by it.

Cultural synthesis is emphasized in Canadian church planting literature. In a paper presented at the April, 2006 Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Reginald W. Bibby addressed the issue of cultural relevance of the gospel in relation to church growth and attendance. He (2006, 3) says, “...people will gravitate toward religious groups that, in the context of their lives, as a whole, provide them with the benefits they seek at appropriate costs.” In a newspaper article, “Who said God is dead?” in the *Globe and Mail*, March 17, 2006, Bibby asserts that there is a new spiritual interest in Canadian society connected directly to churches



and faith groups who address the needs of the society in which they exist. He (Globe and Mail, March 17, 2006, A15) says,

The growing presence in the past two decades of people of other world faiths - notably, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism-has added vitality to the Canadian religious scene. Evangelicals are flourishing. The Protestant Mainline is finally showing signs of awakening from a forty-year slumber.

Changes in Canadian culture have been highlighted in Canadian evangelical publications. In an article in *Faith Today*, Debra Fieguth (2006, 43) addresses Canada's changing cultural milieu and needs in our society from the point of view of one congregation in Longueuil, Quebec, Canada. She reports that Pastor Claude Houde attributes the church's rapid growth and community presence to prayer and meeting people's needs. In another article Fieguth (2007, 37) highlights the ministry of a multi-cultural congregation in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She interviewed Pastor Mark Hughes regarding the church's multicultural makeup. She (2007, 37) quotes Hughes as saying, "It is by design...The leadership at the church made an intentional declaration that it would be intercultural. When we made that decision, that's what we became." Cultural change and differences are gaining new interest in Canadian churches. In the article, "Who is My Neighbour?" Darryl Dash (2008, 26) writes,

Churches often want to understand their communities better but don't know where to begin...Community research is a relatively new practice for churches. Pastors are trained to exegete scripture but have not always been taught how to exegete their community. As Canada has changed, community research is becoming an increasingly important skill for pastors and churches.

In the same vein of thought Phil Wagler addresses the need of Canadian churches to understand their culture. Wagler (2009, 121-122) says,

There is, in our times, a rich and warm embrace of all things spiritual. You can see it everywhere from the marketplace to the political arena. For example, the swearing in ceremony of Paul Martin as Prime Minister of Canada in 2004 included a native incense ceremony, a statement that not only indicated a necessary inclusion of aboriginals in places of influence, but also said spirituality and politics are not as divorced as modernity tries to convince us. Perhaps not so surprisingly, the only message that is ostracized is that of Christians...So the challenge facing the church on mission with God in this befuddling age is whether we will have the courage and ability to unlearn what we have known and be a missional Kingdom culture that understands the times and responds accordingly.

Canada, however, is a nation of cultural and geographical diversity. Literature generated in one area of Canada does not always address the needs of other areas, such as Atlantic Canada therefore, research specific to the region has become even more important.

Some writers also give words of caution regarding cultural synthesis and mention that there are challenges to the church that seeks to keep current with cultural issues. David Henderson (1998, 29) in his book, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World*, addresses the challenges for churches that try to minister in a rapidly changing culture. He asserts that any attempt to be culturally relevant and need oriented must be in keeping with God's agenda to display His glory and further his kingdom. He (1998, 29) says, "Christianity cannot be reduced to God meeting people's needs, and when we attempt to do so, we invariably distort the heart of the Christian message." He indicates that Biblical truth and cultural relevance are not mutually exclusive. He (1998, 31) says, "God's Word speaks with relevance to all humans, crossing every cultural line. But not until it has been translated into words and concepts that speak with particular meaning to each particular culture."

Related to the cultural shift is the pervasive issue of consumerism in North American society. This consumer mind-set has had an impact on church planting that cannot be ignored. Henderson (1998, 54) asserts that the consumer culture shapes not only the way we spend money, but how we think in every area of life including the church. He (1998, 56-57) says, “Consumerism affects the way that we think. But even more deeply, it shapes the way we live...American consumers are being pushed more and more to look to things for what things can never deliver.” Freedom of choice and marketing the faith are not uncommon in our society, but Henderson (1998, 59) says, “Christianity is not something we can pick up after a little browsing, wear for a thirty-day trial period, and then, dissatisfied, drop off slightly used at Goodwill.” This consumer mind-set, according to some, has become a part of church culture in North America. In the book *Best Practices of Growing Churches*, author Tom Nees (2007, 17) quotes the following from the pastor of a growing urban church in the United States. He says, “To find good practices you need to measure your results and those of others. Then you need to go out and aggressively find out who’s doing good things. Your business intelligence efforts should help you find out what’s being done by others.” In this sense church growth is linked to consumer demand and a capitalist understanding of what is important in American society. Reflecting on consumerism Henderson (1998, 59) comments,

So from one perspective it would seem that seeker are consumers shopping for a fulfilling religion and that we should meet them on those terms. But should we? Are people really shoppers when they enter into the area of making religious or spiritual decisions? And do we want to foster that way of thinking?...For us to “sell” Christianity is to make it something far different and far less than it is. It is not an option; it is a claim. It is not a way to have needs met; it is a way of life. When we market the faith by reducing its claims to a set of comforting and

nonthreatening benefits that make it easy to come to Christ, we strip it of its substance and warp its intentions.

In a similar vein of thought, Johnson (2012, 1) describes the impact of a capitalistic and consumer mind-set on church life, saying,

Just as our consumerism culture has reduced, fragmented things into mere commodities to consume, assisted by machine and technology, so the church has tended to fragment, reduce, mechanize the things that are focal, transcendent, things that provide a center of orientation. It looks something like this—worship is reduced to excellence on stage, with passive observers expecting something more next week; fellowship gets reduced to giving units; obedience gets reduced to legalism; sacrament gets reduced to an efficient prefilled communion cup with wafer; and the Bible gets reduced to a sermon extracted from its metanarrative...

This consumer paradigm is upheld by an individualistic humanism as is described by Wagler (2009, 123) who asserts that,

Western society is home of a million little “me’s.” Of course this is not entirely new, but never before has this become the wholesale and mass doctrine of an entire culture. Never before have we been able to broadcast our domain so freely and unabashedly, thanks to the world wide web. We are, as Charles Taylor points out, the first society in history where rejection of God and the spiritual for a purely self-sufficient humanism—a worldview in which humans answer only to themselves—is a completely feasible and available option.

In this sense consumerism and humanistic relativism are linked to the way in which we engage in church life in western society.

Church planting is often caught between traditional thinking and the new paradigm of postmodernism. (Murray 2001, 146) warns of the dangers of this cultural dichotomy, saying,

The challenge facing churches, as they consider mission in a postmodern environment, is to remain flexible and alert, neither buying uncritically into an apparently emerging culture that may be short-lived, thereby leaving the church

stranded in a cultural deadend; nor remaining “trapped in a modernist mode,” ignoring or resisting cultural changes that require clear and creative thinking about the shape and role of the church in society.

This has relevance for church planting in the Maritime Provinces, which are influenced by the paradigm shift of postmodernism but still tend to cling to traditional thinking and practices in church life. This can create confusion in church life and expectations that is difficult to manage and is found in the wider culture of North America, as is described by Stetzer (2003, 147), writing from an American perspective, who says,

Most postmodern thought is a reaction to the failures of modernism and its materialistic perspective, yet postmoderns revert to this same past as a place of stability...The contact with the stability of the past, as well as multisensory worship, gives the postmodern seeker a place to start in his or her journey of truth.

Cultural relevance and consumerism, in this regard, are a reality with which the church must come to terms.

Cultural relevance and consumerism are also linked together, by some writers, in the literature. Consumerism may be directly related to the desire to make the gospel relevant. Smith (1997, 443) says, “Faced with the dechristianization of society...theologians regularly become liberal foundationalists. The first task...in a society that disregards the gospel, is to make it relevant.” In the book, *Where is a Good Church?*, published in 1993 and written by Posterski and Barker, the authors tie religious fragmentation in Canada to a consumer mind-set. They (1993, 122) say, “While Canadians continue to profess a belief in God and continue to refer to themselves as Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians or whatever, the majority in society only use the services of religious institutions for the rites of passage: baptism, marriage and burial.”

Posterski and Barker go on to point out a major difference between Americans and Canadians and their approach to religious life. They (1993, 132-133) say,

There is perhaps one other important difference between American and Canadian styles of religious practice and affiliation that can shed light on overall church attendance and growth patterns in Canada and the United States...In the U.S. people join (churches) in order to belong...In Canada...people rarely join until they have a sense of belonging...Canadian congregations should place a high priority on issues of belonging and assimilation and accept that church growth will be slower than in the United States.

This is both a current theological issue, as well as, a cultural and geographical issue and will be noted in the section on geographical and cultural issues.

The issue of consumerism and church planting is addressed by Peter Hay (2000, 6) in an article in the online *Alliance Academic Review.com*. Hay expressed doubts at the wisdom of trying to appeal to the consumer mind-set of many people when trying to establish a new congregation. He asserts that too much energy is directed in church planting to providing a marketable product to the detriment of real growth. He (2000, 6) says,

Like most church plants we began with a small group of people hoping to become larger. Our denomination was committed to getting a public service up and running as soon as possible. This was to be a sort of denominational showroom for attracting consumers...Great amounts of time and energy are expended to make Sunday morning happen...Do the math and you can see that your entire core group will be hard at work just maintaining the public service.

In relation to maintaining the public service and dealing with post-modern realities, churches face the challenge of being relevant without becoming enmeshed in the cultural milieu. In his article, "Adapting to Your Church's Environment," Raymond Bakke (Shelley. 1995, 56)

asserts the need for churches to exegete both the Word of God and the context of their local ministry. Bakke (Shelley: 1995, 57) says, “If we don’t take time to understand the environment of our ministry, we’re in danger of franchising it. Instead we need to custom-build each ministry—move into a community, exegete the context, exegete the Scripture, and bring the two together.” Stetzer (2003, 115) maintains that Evangelicals often remain in this kind of franchised church which addresses their needs but not the needs of the community in which they reside. He (2003, 115-116) says,

Evangelicals have struggled with responding to these new realities, finding reasons not to respond. It is important to note that the shift to postmodernism has not happened everywhere. The shifts have not yet impacted many in the church culture because the church culture acts a protective shield, unmolested by a secular culture’s music, literature, and values....The evangelical subculture is still predominantly entrenched in the worldview of modernity.

Attempting to address the needs of a postmodern world and the culture of evangelicalism in many churches leads us to the issue of vision and direction for the planting of new churches.

### **3.2.3 Role of Vision in Church Planting:**

The role of vision is important in regard to theological issues because, at its’ core, every church planting endeavour is an expression of the mission of the church and the beliefs that church holds regarding church expansion. Stuart Murray (2001, 171) asserts that church planting does not only address a post-modern era, but a post-Christendom era. He (2001, 172) says, “Post-Christendom need not be perceived as a threat, although mission and church planting in this context are hard work, but as an opportunity to recover ecclesiological and missiological perspectives which were obscured under Christendom.”

Vision is identified as crucial regardless of church size or denomination. John Benton (2005, 43-45), in his book, *The Big Picture for Small Churches*, identifies vision as crucial for any church that desires to have a significant impact on its community. Regarding congregational members and vision he (2005, 45) says,

Apart from wanting to see the pews filled, they have no shared vision for the church. What is required is a vision of the local church that is shared and owned by the congregation and to which they all are committed. They need a shared vision that will stir the members of the church to seek God urgently, take risks and exert themselves for his glory...When people have a vision they are stirred and energized.

In this sense vision is a reflection of the true ecclesiology of the local church and an understanding of its mission and reason for being.

In relation to church planting much of the literature highlights the importance of vision as being fundamental to viability. Robinson (2006, 92-93) says, "It is vital for a church plant to be clear about its purpose before it begins. The larger the church grows the more difficult it will be to sustain that original purpose." The importance of vision is emphasized by John Edmund Kaiser, in his book, *Winning on Purpose*. He (2006, 45) says,

Mission statements and vision statements are good starting points. While sometimes used interchangeably, I find it most helpful to use mission to define our purpose and vision to describe what that purpose may look like...The critical factor is the organizational culture of the congregation, which is woven from its deepest values...the real and rarely admitted priorities that determine how our money, time and attention are distributed.

This connection to viability is often difficult in the face of forces wishing to detract from the original vision. Commenting on the challenges of maintaining a vision Stetzer (2003, 197) says, "In nearly every new church a portion of the core group makes the attempt to redirect-to hijack-



the original vision shared by the church planter and the core group...These attempts often involve the loss of evangelistic passion.” Stetzer (2003, 197) indicates that this phenomenon is directly related to the desire to reach other believers, rather than unbelievers, because believers are more accustomed to and trained for church culture. He (2003, 202) proposes that evangelism must be intentional, in a church planting situation, and employ a variety of means and practices for meeting unchurched persons, and developing ways to share the gospel with them.

Viability is also connected to vision in European sources. Stuart Murray (2001, 115) asserts that church planting without a clear sense of mission or vision will not be able to meet the challenges of a post-Christian era. He (2001, 115) says,

Mission in a post-Christian society is not easy. Unrealistic goals and expectations hinder the careful and prayerful reflection needed to exegete this context and develop appropriate strategies. There are many aspects to consider, but the fundamental issue is the recalling for the church to its primary task. This may be obscured under Christendom, but it is inescapable in a post-Christian society.

In his more recent work, *Planting Churches in the 21st Century*, Murray (2008, 115-117) indicates that a planting church must be prepared with a process of evaluation and communication in order to maintain the initial vision for a new church. Failure to give proper thought to accountability for the vision may lead to discontent, obscuring the vision and ultimately, failure.

The individual or group who has responsibility for casting the vision and its continuity is not universal in church planting and church growth literature. Malphurs (1998, 265) indicates that the planting pastor must be the point person for vision development. He (2006, 298-300) says, “The pastor-leader must cultivate the vision, not someone on the staff or the core group. While good pastor-leaders listen to their constituency, it’s their responsibility and not that of the constituency for developing a powerful, coherent vision for the new work.” Stetzer affirms this

approach to vision, as well. He defends the need to be prepared for vision hijacking in a new church by taking steps to confirm the original vision of the church planter. He designates the church planter/pastor as the primary person responsible for maintenance of the vision. He (2006, 300-301) says,

The planter must continually remind the entire congregation of the vision. People forget. Church members often lose track of the 'main thing.' The vision of the planter must be shared with the church-and not just once...The planter should meet with key leaders at least monthly...to place the vision before the entire group in order to keep everyone headed in the same direction.

The importance of initial vision casting and re-casting is found in a variety of sources and also tied to viability. In relation to vision casting and continuity, Joel Rainey (2008, 33-34) also attributes the responsibility, first of all to the planter/pastor. He (2008, 34) says,

Your team will be inspired by your ability to cast vision. But they will only stay on board in proportion to the dedication they see in you...the dedication of your people will never exceed your own. If you don't have what it takes to finish the job, neither will they. Conversely, if your team sees you consistently facing and overcoming difficulty, they will start to think you really believe in what you are doing.

This emphasis on the church planter as leader and vision caster is supported by reporter Matthew Davies of the Episcopal News Service. Quoting speaker Canon Victoria Heard, from the first annual Plant My Church Conference of the Episcopal Church, Lansdowne, Virginia, Davies (2004, 3) writes, "Pick the right church planter and you have a successful church, pick the wrong planter and you won't plant again in the same place for a very long time." Hirsch (2006, 159-163) discusses the need for visionary leadership in the church that exercises a form of apostolic leadership. He (2006, 162) says,

With inspirational leadership the whole “vibe” changes: things begin to become clearer, competitiveness is diminished, and people feel freer and more empowered to do their tasks; as a result the organization gains focus and energy, becomes healthy. The converse is true and obvious: leadership of a poor quality creates unhealthy organizations. We have only to reach into our own experiences to know the truth of this. Such is the power of people who embody vision and values—they bring inspiration, coherence, and a sense of direction and purpose to the people in their orbit. Leadership is influence. It is a field that shapes behaviours. It is the basis of authentic spiritual power and authority.

Hirsch (2006, 162-163) advocates for a style of leadership that exercises influence based on vision and values as opposed to a CEO-type leadership that he sees in many church movements today. He (2006, 163) writes, “It is this more bottom-up, highly relational quality of leadership that characterizes true apostolic influence. We have been so captivated by hierarchical, top-down conceptions of leadership...that we have inadvertently blocked the power latent in the people of God.” This supports the concept of leader developed vision but also understands leadership in a servant relational model.

A different model for vision development and casting can also be found in the literature. This model is more laity or congregation oriented and supported by the pastor/planter. In contrast to planter led vision Tom A. Steffen (1994, 367) says, “Other models [of church planting] may require team players. Mission agencies and churches, therefore, should not underestimate the importance of spending significant effort selecting the personnel who will represent them.” Further on in the same article Steffen (1994, 367-368) advocates for a church planting team that embraces the vision and the model necessary for reaching a specified target group. Related to this concept but with a slightly different perspective is Mervin E. Thompson’s (1993, 24)

position from a Lutheran perspective. Thompson focuses on the two styles of leadership identified by Edwin Friedman, which are charismatic leadership and consensus leadership.

Thompson (1993, 24) says,

A leader must do two things: self-define and stay in touch. Sometimes this style looks charismatic, at other times it comes close to consensus. But it is intrinsically different. When a pastor self-defines and stays in touch, the emphasis shifts from the personality to the position, a leader remains a self while still a part of the whole...To provide leadership for growth, a pastor must help create a vision for growth. Obviously a pastor does not shape the vision alone...it is the pastor who needs to articulate the vision, to help create a climate for growth.

In a similar vein, in an article entitled, “Building a Firm Foundation in the Faith,” written from a United Church of Christ perspective, Downs and Liggins (n.d. the e. word, vol.1/no. 1.2) outline essential practices and strategies for successful church development. The authors discuss the importance of congregational development of a mission statement as a body. They (n.d. 3) write, “Developing a mission statement can be a very challenging, but a very rewarding experience for a congregation.” Their perspective is important to note, however, it needs to be understood from a more liberal theological perspective than the scope of this research, which is based upon the theological bias of more evangelical churches.

The perspective of Downs and Liggins is shared, to a degree, by some evangelicals. Dennis Bickers (2005), of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky, advocates for congregational development of vision. Bickers is addressing the issue of developing healthy small churches and not specifically church planting, however, his perspective is lay centred rather than clergy. His work is important for this topic because he addresses church growth and re-establishment from a more rural perspective, albeit, still from an American bias. He also

focuses on the small church, which is a reality for many church planting situations in Atlantic Canada. Bickers (2005, 37-38) says,

In the smaller church, vision is unlikely to come from the pastor unless he or she has been there for several years. In fact, it may be counterproductive for the pastor to begin promoting his or her vision for the church...It is better to develop a vision team. These are individuals who will pray together, talk to people both inside and outside the congregation, and seek to understand God's will for the church.

Bickers does not negate the need for mission guided by vision but pursues it from a more lay-oriented perspective.

In the view of some there is a compromise on the issue of who casts the vision and a combination of the two previous viewpoints. Visioning and leadership from an Anabaptist position recognizes both the role of the planter and of the laity. Stoffer addresses vision casting from the point of view of the pastor, as well as, the congregation. He (1994, 216) writes,

I know first-hand that very directive leadership is needed in the early life of a new church. At this precarious stage, the pastor must be the guardian of the philosophy of ministry upon which the church is built... But for those of us in the Anabaptist tradition, our goal as pastors should be to move ourselves out of more and more responsibilities. This occurs as we disciple our people, enlist them in our vision for the church, and entrust ministry to those people who have shown themselves to be capable leaders and workers.

The importance of a guiding vision or mission statement and philosophy is fairly uniform in all of the literature examined. There is a significant amount of agreement in the literature, as well, of the importance of maintaining and developing the original vision of the church. There is divergence between denominations and theological backgrounds as to who is responsible for the

development and maintenance of a new church's vision. Much of the literature identifies the church planter/pastor, while some writers favour a more laity oriented vision development and maintenance. This discussion of accountability for vision leads naturally to an examination of structures and models in new church plants.

### **3.3 Structural Issues:**

Polity structures and models vary greatly across denominations and have an impact on the form a new church plant may take as it is established and moves towards viability. Expectations of structure and viability vary, as well. The research tool for this dissertation examined these issues in the two broad categories of church political structures and leadership issues. Current literature also addresses these as important issues.

#### **3.3.1 Church Political Structures:**

In regard to church political structures, literature from the late twentieth century often betrays an expectation of church planting to result in a recognizable form of church characterized by an accommodation of what are considered to be normal church programs, as well as, by a building that will attract local families and individuals to worship. This emphasis is apparent in material from an Atlantic Canadian perspective. Gardner (1994, 158) says, "Church planters of the different denominations place varying priorities on the acquisition of a physical church building for a new congregation. It is not so much a question as to whether a new congregation needs to have its own church facility but rather when should the facility question be seriously raised." In relation to this Gardner (1994, 159) goes on to list many reasons why a new church

needs its own facility. Several of these reasons are directly related to expected programming such as,

Temporary Sunday School classrooms are inconvenient for teachers, and do not provide for a good teaching environment...People in the community are more likely to visit and attend a church that has a building...Worship environment in a multi-purpose room is not conducive to worship after Saturday night community parties...

It is also apparent in American sources. Malphurs (1998, 185-199) also refers to traditional programming expectations for new church planting situations. He recommends caution in building too soon but indicates the need for recognizable structures. He (1998, 193) says,

One of the difficulties in church planting is locating and keeping an adequate facility in which to meet....It is important to locate the best facility in the target area in terms of cost and other requirements, including seating, lighting, sound, cleanliness, and accessibility. Sometimes church planters overlook these things to their detriment

Peter Hay (2000, 1-2), in the *Alliance Academic Review* describes the expectations he felt for specific structures, in the 1990's, in his new church planting situation. He (2000, 2) says,

Nearly forty attended that first meeting, and within a matter of weeks a core group was formed that became the basis for starting a new church. Immediately plans were made to secure a pastor, rent a meeting place and begin services. 'Build it and they will come'...The evangelical church planting equivalent is the Sunday morning service with all the accessories—Sunday school, Junior Church, a nursery and a contemporary worship team.

He goes on to state that the expected structures did not lead to a successful church plant. Hay (2000, 6) says, "In the modern church, much of our time is spent developing models-ideal churches that will grow if we'll give them a try...Great amounts of time and energy are

expended to make Sunday Morning happen.” This traditional mind-set has had an impact on the ability of church planters to make in-roads into changing cultural patterns.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, however, there has also been recognition of changing thought paradigms within North American culture and of the importance of moving past expectations of denominations and traditional understandings of a church planting situation. Steffen (1994, 375) says, “The continual proliferation of church planting models calls for some means of an analysis so church planters can select or design an effective model for a particular people group....” In relation to this David Hesselgrave (2000, 197) in, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, which is considered foundational and instructional in evangelical circles for ministry in various cultural contexts, says, “It is apparent that cultural understandings, preferences, and ties on the one hand, and Christian ideals and requirements on the other hand, may be very much in conflict when believers congregate.” Further on he (2000, 203) says, “In many (though certainly not all) situations, church planters will need to rethink issues having to do with the relationship between evangelism, conversion and baptism on the one hand and incorporation into the body of believers on the other.”

Other literature downplays the importance of models and structures. In a paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society entitled, “*Money: The Most Critical Issue in North American Church Planting*,” J. D. Payne (2006, 12) discusses structure and models as a side issue. He (2006, 12) says, “A major problem arises whenever church planters and new churches begin to equate the genetic code of the church with their cultural understandings of the church, or the cultural understandings of what church should be among their population.” In the same line of thought Hay (2000, 8) recognizes the importance of how a church is planted and by whom, as being foundational for the future of the work, but also cautions against imposing denominational



expectations. He (2000, 16) says, “We also see a danger in the kind of denominational ‘franchising’ that occurs in some church planting endeavours...Church planters who insist up front on denominational distinctives and who have a pre-conceived result may be limiting their effectiveness.” In this way thinking structures of the church need to be connected more to mission and less to tradition.

In seeming contrast to Hay’s position Stetzer (2003, 83-84) indicates that the church planter must decide on structure before the congregation is founded. He maintains that it is crucial to consider structure in the foundational period. He (2003, 84) says, “Some planters downplay the importance of biblical church structures. They believe that structures are theological afterthoughts or traps to be avoided for the sake of encouraging a streamlined organization. But when these things are ignored at the beginning, they frequently become problems at a later date.” Early attention to structures and long term planning are also emphasized by Bill Agee (2005) of the North American Mission Board. He (2005, 213) writes,

Once a climate for church planting exists, there must be a clear process in place to allow the new church to flow smoothly through the many difficult phases it will encounter in the first few months and years of its existence...Every system should contain a long-term business plan showing the initial starting point and mile markers along the way that ultimately lead the new church to self-sufficiency and strength.

The importance of structure is also asserted by Kaiser (2006, 70-71) as being foundational for the mission success of a church. He (2006, 70-71) says,

The church exists for mission, not for structure. Nevertheless, structure is critical for long-term success because it helps or hinders effective leadership...After staking out a position that mission should be primarily outward in focus, I raised the inherent limitations of mission and vision statements: ‘What, then, is factor

separating mission articulated from mission accomplished? That critical factor is the organizational culture of the congregation, which is woven from its deepest values—not some list of “core values” on display in the foyer but the real and rarely admitted priorities that determine how money, time, and attention is distributed.’ This critical force of organizational culture is rooted in values but shows up through structure...Structure is simply the design and arrangement of tangible factors in time and space.

Alan Hirsch’s (2006) ideas of structure coincide with Kaiser’s emphasis. Hirsch (2006, 185-186) says,

A living systems perspective of community and organization is just one aspect of what it means to be a truly organic missional church...All living systems require some form of structure in order to maintain and perpetuate their existence. And while it is entirely true that structure does not in itself create life (as in a machine), without it life cannot exist very long. The more complex a living system, the more necessary it is to have a built-in means to maintain it.

In this sense structure serves the purpose of the organism, rather than the reverse, and is driven by the organism’s mission or purpose for existence.

There are also cautions, within the literature, regarding the wrong emphasis or an over-emphasis on structures and models. George Bullard (2005) addresses the issue of structure, as well as, the business model mentioned by Agee. Bullard (2005, 115-116) asserts that most congregational leaders do not want to use models that originate from the business world for the congregational setting because of values rooted in relationships and faithfulness. However, he goes on to talk of the significance of appropriate structures. He (2005, 117) comments,

Congregations continue to have unique existence as organic spiritual communities and so need an approach to reaching their full kingdom potential, that begins, is permeated by, and ends with spiritual relationships and discernment...The

principles of organizational development, therefore, have a lot to say about how congregations develop, grow, decline and reach-or fail to reach—their full kingdom potential.

From a British perspective Murray (2010) comments on the need for cultural adaptation of church planting structures. He (2010, 53) says, “There is no one approach to church planting that fits every context. What matters is how the chosen model coheres with the motivation, local context, and expectations of those involved.” Murray (2010, 25) also asserts that expectations for recognizable church structures in a church planting situation may take a significant amount of time. Discussing congregational development, he writes, “The formation of a distinct congregation that meets regularly in a designated place may be much further down the track than church planters have often assumed. It may also look a lot different from the expectations of those who deploy and support them-and from the expectations of the planters, themselves.” He (2010, 119-121) also warns against the desire of some planting congregations to simply clone their church in a different setting without thought or recognition of contextual and cultural differences inherent in communities.

In a similar manner as Bullard (2005) and Murray (2010), there are writers who emphasize proper or appropriate structures. Joel Rainey (2008, 66) highlights the significance of functional structures. He argues,

That is not to say that structure is unimportant. On the contrary, the success of your outreach strategy, small groups, worship, and assimilation plans are predicated largely on the viability of the church structure you build...while each church is different, there are certain structural realities that are common to all of them that must be in place prior to beginning public worship.

Rainey's description of the necessary elements betrays a traditional approach to church planting expectations. But worthy of note among his priorities is that of finances. He (2008, 69) says,

Before your church goes public, make sure baseline financial policies are in place, and qualified people are administering the books. In addition, you should secure an advisory team of pastors and mature believers who will talk honestly with you about your needs and set your salary until the church has inside leaders who are able to take over these responsibilities.

Coinciding with church structures and models then is the issue of financing. Monetary resources are critical to long-term viability, with self-sufficiency being considered a basic tenet of viability. (Gardner 1994, 19; Malphurs 1998, 395). Payne (2006, 1) says, "Based on my observations and research, the number one most commonly mentioned critical issue in North American Church planting today is the lack of money." Payne (2006, 2) highlights the monetary issues of structure and viability in two categories: money for church planting and the church planter's personal finances and how they make ends meet. Financial structures and support for church planting varies among denominations, however most have limitations on the time frame for support.

In regard to church planting funds from the denomination, clear guidelines were in place in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches in the 1990's. In respect to funding the Church Planting Manual (Gardner 1994, 184-185) contends,

The Board will fund only those projects that have the recommendation of the Association Missions Commission...The new group and the church planter must agree to participate in an annual evaluation as long as receiving a mission support grant...The new congregation demonstrate its commitment to missions by contributing an acceptable percentage of its gross annual income to the United in Missions fund of the Convention...In normal circumstances, the maximum

mission support grant will be up to one half of the total salary and allowances package of the church planter...In some cases Mission Support Grants be guaranteed for a longer period than one year, thus enabling the new congregation to grow without anxiety over the level of financial support available from the Board.

While these guidelines address financial issues they also seem to assume viability in a relatively short period with expectation of a membership size and structure that allows for the new congregation to raise enough capital to give support back to the Convention.

Payne, from both experience and research, comments on expectations of structural and financial stability. He (2006, 5) says,

Many of the church planters in my study received a personal income from a denomination or church. In most cases where this type of funding occurred, the personal finances were limited to a commitment of a few years at the most...By the end of the financial commitment from the denomination or church the new church was to be financially supporting the church planter/pastor.

He (2006, 6) goes on to assert that the average duration of support, being between three to five years, is not long enough for most new churches. Murray (2010) also highlights financial and structural stability as expectations for church planters in the late twentieth century. He (2010, 21) says, “the narrow scope of church planting can also be detected in the anticipated outcomes and ‘success’ criteria often applied to church planting in the 1990’s. Church planters, sending churches, and denominational funders alike expected growing congregations, increasing self-sufficiency, and plenty of ecclesial activity...” In this sense there has been a high expectation for viability within a relatively short time frame.

The importance of financial structures and their impact on viability from a Canadian perspective is indicated in the results of a paper by Rick Hiemstra (2010, 1), Director of the

Centre for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism. The paper looks at evangelical congregational income between 2003 and 2008. Hiemstra notes that in the given time frame Canadian evangelicalism was a movement with a relatively flat income growth, averaging 1.5% per year after inflation adjustment. After inflationary adjustments, in the period between 2003 and 2008, he (2010, 1-2) highlights these findings,

...two-fifths of evangelical congregations experienced income declines...Congregations in all income ranges were equally likely to have experienced decline...Rural congregations tended to have half the income of urban ones...While rural churches had smaller incomes, when growth was adjusted for inflation, rural churches incomes actually grew faster...1.1 Canadian Evangelical congregations started up for every one that closed...There was a great income disparity among provincial medians of congregational incomes...When there are more evangelical congregations serving a population, congregational incomes tend to be smaller...Congregations' income growth rate tended to fare better in provinces which were relatively prosperous.

These findings have a direct correlation to the research for this dissertation in regard to Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Provinces, historically, have struggled economically and have been considered “have-not” provinces. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has become somewhat of an exception to this through the growth of the offshore oil and natural gas industry.

In regard to the economy and the average congregational income in Atlantic Canada, Hiemstra (2010, 7) says,

There are striking differences in provincial incomes...Most western provinces' 2003 median congregational incomes doubled those of the Atlantic Provinces. We could try to explain this as a broad regional variation except for Saskatchewan, whose congregations had a substantially lower median income than those of other western provinces. Several other possible explanations for the

differences were explored, including the relative average of provincial wages, the relative strength of evangelicalism in each province based on 2001 census religious affiliation data and the percentage of provincial congregations that were rural. None of these provided a very good explanation for the variation except the ratio of a province's population to the number of its congregations.

Hiemstra's findings demonstrate significant differences between Canadian and American financial expectations for church planting. They also seem to contradict Gardner's (1994) acceptance of prevailing American thought on this issue. This can be seen in Stetzer's assessment of fund-raising opportunities in an American setting. Stetzer (2003, 223) says,

During my final year with Millcreek Community Church, we succeeded in gathering \$200,000 for church planting and growth-money that we could not have generated by ourselves. By building various relationships and partnerships, we found resources to start two daughter churches on the same day-with over two hundred at the first service for each new church.

By way of comparison Hiemstra (2010, 6) writes, concerning Canadian congregations,

Most evangelical congregations have a modest income. The median total income for evangelical congregations was \$120, 360, and close to 70% had a 2003 income under \$200,000...The distribution has a heavy tail, meaning that a substantial proportion of congregations, about 10% had incomes of \$500,00 or more. About 3% of congregations had total incomes of one million dollars or more in 2003; the proportion rose to close to 5% by 2008.

Furthermore, Hiemstra (2010, 8) notes, that in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada the median total income for 2003 was less than \$73,000. This highlights the gap between Atlantic Canadian church income expectations and American based expectations. Furthermore, there is evidence that Canadian Christians are often reluctant to resume giving after periods of financial

stress or cynicism toward churches. John Stackhouse, Jr. (2011, 46), in his article, *Get Out the Chequebook: It's time to give again*, writes,

Canadian Christians are still holding on to our cash, and that's understandable after two-plus years of significant financial restraint...There's no widespread wisdom in spending recklessly when we still don't have any confidence things have gotten better and will stay that way. Canadian institutions, as a result have suffered—from congregations to denominations, from Bible schools to universities, and from local mission to international societies. Most of them, from coast to coast, have had a very difficult two or three years.

His words emphasize the challenge of church work and also church planting in Canada with respect to financial structures. Financial realities have a significant impact on long-term viability.

Stetzer (2003, 223) connects the inability to raise sufficient funds, in an American setting, directly to the issue of leadership. He says, “Some church planters find themselves underfunded because they function as ‘Lone Rangers.’ They refuse to take time to build relationships and maintain partnerships.” Whether this is a fair universal assessment or not, it raises the issue of leadership and structures which will be examined in the next subsection of this review.

### **3.3.2 Leadership Issues:**

The issue of leadership in church planting is broad and with many variations of some of the larger areas of concern. This research has concentrated on several questions regarding recognition of leadership, its contribution to long-term viability, how a leader is chosen, and leadership accountability.



Malphurs (1998) insists on the importance of influential leadership for stability in long-term church planting situations. He (1998, 135-136) comments,

Most definitions of leadership, both secular and Christian, include the concept of influence...Good leaders exert a powerful influence on people. They are like magnets in that they attract people. When they turn around and look behind them, they see people. Those who insist that they're leaders, but have no one following them, are not leaders at all.

He (1998, 137-141) also maintains that pastoral leadership by church planters must be strong and argues for primary pastoral leadership. He (1998, 141) writes,

It is a basic fact of life that in every organization there have to be leaders who have the power and necessary authority to exercise that power. Without these strong leaders, no organization could function properly. This is true in the church as well as the marketplace. However, the issue for the church concerns who has this power and authority to lead.

Malphurs (1998, 146) balances this with a discussion of the importance of accountability for leaders to a lay board, and the entire church. Leadership teams also need to develop mutual accountability and trust.

Other writers highlight the importance of leadership for viability. Martin Robinson (2006) mentions natural leadership and strength as important for church planting leaders. He (2006, 64-65) says,

When I think of many church planters I have met...they are all natural leaders who have an ease around people, are naturally confident without being arrogant and who have a quiet determination to succeed. They are focused on the task and are not easily distracted from it.

He (2006, 66) continues his discussion of leadership by describing the need for gifted leaders to draw other gifted and passionate people around them in order to provide stability for a

new church. He (2006, 85-86) notes the importance of a church planting team that may be entirely composed of fulltime church planters but more likely a mixture of full time, part time and or lay leaders. He (2006, 89-90) emphasizes the importance of work accountability, support and mutual friendship. In this sense he demonstrates a balanced approach to maintain stability and to avoid a sense of isolation in church planting, as well as, a dictatorial approach in establishing a new church.

This emphasis on strong pastoral leadership and initiative is not limited to evangelical churches alone. It is having an impact on mainline denominations. As early as 1993, commenting from the perspective of the Lutheran Church and mainline churches in general, Mervin Thompson (1993, 24) highlights the importance of a pastor creating vision and enlisting a team to help shape and develop it. He challenges traditional thinking of the pastor as a professional minister and private family chaplain as being out of touch with an unchurched culture. He (1993, 20) says, “What is needed...is a radical change in theological education, where we begin to train evangelical public leaders rather than private family chaplains.” This reflects an early emphasis on a missional approach to leadership as opposed to a traditional professional clergy concept. It is an idea which is developed by Hirsch (2006, 120) who says,

Few would deny that in our day we have a crisis in leadership in church in the West. We find ourselves facing an adaptive challenge that will necessitate a certain type of leadership to be able to guide us through the complexities of the twenty-first century. In this book and others, this type of leadership has been tagged “missional.” And it is missional leadership that we need. The problem is that most of our training institutions are geared toward training a more maintenance type of leader...I have long believed that leadership, or the lack of it, is a significant key to either the renewal or the decline of the church. If this is true, that leadership is critical to our success or failure, then we must ask why we are in our current state of demise, and then seek to remedy the situation.

Leadership is crucial, then, for both existing congregations and new churches that will be planted.

In a similar way Stetzer (2003, 88-89) emphasizes the need for pastor-elder led churches with proper accountability to maximize effectiveness. Stetzer's concept of pastor-elder led churches arises from the conviction of the need for church planting teams. He (2003, 68) says, "One of the recurring themes from the church planting surveys was the desire for church planting teams. The survey revealed that attendance was demonstrably higher in plants with more than one church planting pastor or staff." He (2003, 77) also discusses the importance of support, encouragement and accountability that comes to a church planter from a mother church that is involved in the church planting process. This emphasis on leadership accountability and church planting teams, in the authors mentioned in the preceding four paragraphs, indicates an understanding of the work of church planting as missional in its ecclesiology. It allows for both innovation in church planting and safeguards for both the leader and the team. It demonstrates a departure from the traditional concept of denominational extension through the establishment of new churches which incorporate the traditions of the respective denomination and its desire to reach those of the same denominational background.

In collaboration with Phillip Connor, Ed Stetzer (Stetzer and Connor: 2007, 1) did further research into leadership issues in church planting for the North American Mission Board. Together they conclude that viability for new churches increases dramatically in situations where the church planter builds and maintains a peer group for support and accountability. In this light they ( 2007, 1) comment, "The church planter who meets with a group of church planting peers at least monthly increases the odds of survivability by 135 percent." Stetzer and Connors (2007,

1) note, that of church planters who develop such a peer group, 83% of their churches survive compared to 67% for those who do not practice this discipline.

The importance of accountable leadership is widely emphasized in the literature from various sources. Bill Agee (2005, 209-212), of the Southern Baptist Convention, discusses leadership in church planting from the perspective of the local Baptist Association. He argues that leadership cannot be overemphasized in church planting and that the Association has an important role to play in supporting leadership and holding it accountable. In relation to the issue of support and accountability for new churches and their leaders, he (2005, 213) advocates for formal accountability structures, such as a long-term business plan. He (2005, 214) says, “By taking time to see where the needs are for this new church, the association becomes the facilitator for others entering into partnership with the new church to meet those needs. In this way the new church is birthed in success, not in survival.”

Kaiser (2006), coming from a Canadian perspective, indicates the importance of pastoral leadership, as well as, a formal accountability structure. He (2006, 20) says, “Many failures in ministry result from individualism ...crowding out the corporate nature of the Christian mission...we must value the contribution of each individual part, including leaders...”Further on Kaiser (2006, 29) asserts that good leadership goes where it is supported and that formal accountability structures are essential for congregational success. He (2006, 33-34) writes, “Without a structure for accountability, the most dysfunctional people often shape the life of a congregation...” He (2006, 83) also places primary responsibility for accountability on the pastor, saying, “Groups cannot realistically be expected to lead or be held accountable, but individuals can and should. The individual who is accountable for the overall effectiveness of the congregation is its leader, the pastor.”

In a similar way Robinson (2006, 85-95) stresses the importance of the church planting team composed of full and part time leaders as well as lay leaders. He advocates for a group that is committed to the vision for the church planting situation that is accountable to one another, as well as, to the denomination or sending agency, if the work is not independent (2006, 34-39). However, Robinson (2006, 99-102) also identifies the need for a team leader who oversees the vision and its implementation, and guards and develops the original culture of the Church. In this sense he is advocating both a team and a pastor centred vision component to church planting, asserting the need for a central leader. Robinson (2006, 99-101) says,

Team leaders are able to see through the woolly thinking and spiritualization of the current situation, and bring a realistic assessment of how things actually are....Team leaders have the gift of seeing the future in such a way as to make it a present reality in their own minds....Team leaders recognize that the future cannot be built apart from the creation of a team that will enable it to come to fruition...Team leaders need to be able to cast vision, Through stories, preaching, statements, every kind of publication and at every meeting.

In this way, although he stresses team building, he also demonstrates agreement with much of the literature in identifying the crucial role of the lead church planting pastor or team leader. Mutual accountability is recognized but the centrality of leadership is also strongly emphasized, as is the understanding of church planting from a missional perspective with the need for a strong central vision and assessment of the needs of the particular situation.

In concluding this subsection it is important to note the widespread prevalence in the literature of the importance of one specific leader in a church planting situation. In some writers there is a notable emphasis on the strong pastoral leader within a church planting situation. Other writers stress the importance of team development for church planting and of the vision for

the new church coming from the team and even the congregation. There are differences of opinion concerning the ability of a team or a congregation to formulate and implement a vision.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of accountability in church planting, team building and mutual support. Cultural changes, it is believed, have proven the necessity for a wider basis of support for church planters in the form of a planting team. However, within these parameters, there is an almost universal agreement of the necessity of the individual and identifiable gifted central leader, pastor or church planter who develops, protects and leads in maintaining the vision of the new Church. This leads to the third section of this review, cultural and geographical issues.

### **3.4 Cultural and Geographical Issues:**

Changes in cultural understanding of church and religious practices are discussed in much of the literature from both North American and global sources. Geographical issues are not discussed in as much detail, however, a number of writers have identified these areas as important considerations in any discussion of church planting. Subsection 3.4.1 of this section will examine cultural issues discussed in current literature. Subsection 3.4.2 will identify geographical concerns that are currently being discussed.

#### **3.4.1 Cultural Issues:**

Changes in cultural values, beliefs and practices in regard to religious life have had a great impact on church planting in the North American context. For many churches there has been a struggle to understand and adapt to the post-modern paradigm which has resulted in many

traditions which have been cherished by evangelicals, in particular and for the purpose of this research report, having a negative impact on church planting.

In the late twentieth century this challenge of cultural changes to tradition was becoming apparent and is addressed in much of the contemporary literature. Smith (1997, 443) argues that the Christian world view, once taken for granted in North American and much of the western world, has been marginalized, so much so, that without adjustments many Churches are becoming irrelevant. He (1997, 443-444) says,

That the Christian cultural-linguistic framework assumed by so much evangelism has disappeared is obvious. But what this means for the mission of the church is much less clear...Faced with the dechristianization of society, theologians regularly become liberal foundationalists. The first task...in a society that disregards the gospel, is to make it relevant...Because the West is increasingly alienated from its Christian roots, mission can no longer be thought of in terms of “within” and “a return to.”

The impact of this balancing both relevance and tradition has been a major challenge for church leaders in the last few decades and has, accordingly, had a direct impact on the long-term viability of new church plants. McNeal (2003, 2-3) indicates that the challenge to traditional thinking has become evident in the percentage of Americans who attend church on a weekly basis. He maintains that statistics citing average weekly church attendance for Americans being 40 and 43% for over thirty years have been challenged by a study in the late 1990's that asserts only 26% of Americans are regular church attendees. Furthermore he criticizes the response of church leaders to this phenomenon. He (2003, 7, 31) says,

Faced with diminishing returns on investment of money, time and energy, church leaders have spent much of the last five decades trying to figure out how to do church better...Church and lay renewal has given way to church growth to church

health. The results beg the question...It is the expectation of Pharisees that people should adopt the church culture, including its lifestyle, if they want admittance.

McNeal's comments are in keeping with the need for an understanding of church planting as being missional and requiring an understanding of the culture in which a church is planted in order to address the needs of the community effectively. Haney (2012, 320) labels this approach as contextualization, saying,

**Contextualization:** How do we avoid syncretism? We must allow the uncompromised Word of God to confront each people group in such a way that the authority of the Bible is maintained while communicating in a way that people can understand it and own it for themselves. Jerry Ranking, IMB president, suggests that 'contextualization is not implied compromise of the gospel message or the authority of God's Word; it is simply communicating it in a way that will be understandable in a local language and cultural worldview.' The engagement of a people group through their local heart language provide the possibility of engaging them deeply enough that they are able to interact with the gospel, understand it, and be confronted with its relevancy.

This concept of contextualization and relevancy does not only pertain to language groups but also to cultural and geographical distinctions, even in parts of North America, such as Atlantic Canada.

Cultural changes have been difficult to navigate for church planters but have not gone unnoticed or unaddressed. For many planters difficulties have arisen when they find themselves caught between traditional expectations and structures, and the cultural reality with which they are dealing. Commenting on this Hay (2000, 6) says,

Early on in the planting of Churchpoor I had this nagging feeling that we were being boxed in by a predetermined set of factors that were out of our control. Like



most church plants we began with a small group of people hoping to become larger. Our denomination was committed to getting a public service up and running as soon as possible...Great amounts of time and energy are expended to make Sunday morning happen...Do the math and you can see that your entire core group will be hard at work just maintaining the public service.

Hay's observations are indicative of the challenge to many church planters. Expectations of denominations and traditions of people who join the church often threaten the central vision and direction of the new church. This tension is recognized in Southern Baptist work by Ed Stetzer (2003, 17-18) who says, "The unmet challenge is to separate ourselves from unnecessary and traditional cultural wrappings. Many among the conservative evangelical churches retreat to a preferred past...to maintain a sense of spiritual nostalgia." Addressing this issue requires learning and understanding the predominant culture and making adjustments in regard to our traditions rather than compromising our message. In regard to this Smith (1997, 444) suggests that our task is similar to the challenge of early Christianity when it changed from being predominately Jewish to addressing the cultural milieu of the larger components of Greek and Roman society. In a similar vein Hirsch (2006, 143) says,

By my reading of the scriptures, ecclesiology is the most fluid of the doctrines. The Church is a dynamic cultural expression of the people of God in any given place. Worship style, social dynamics, liturgical expressions must result from the process of contextualizing the gospel in any given culture. Church must follow mission...We engage first in incarnational mission, and the church, so to speak, comes out the back of it.

This struggle with culture and tradition is identified, in a Canadian context by Phil M. Wagler (2009, 9-11), who asserts that many people are happily unaware of how effective or ineffective church programs are for outreach. The struggle is destructive to the very heart of church

planting. Wagler (2009, 36) says, “Generally, our offence at vision is related to our own, or congregational, culture of fear and tendency toward idolatry. We fear losing what we know... We fear the unknown.” This fear keeps church leaders and lay people from gaining the freedom to minister in the society in which the church exists. Recognition of cultural change in Canada is present in current literature but very little of the literature addresses Atlantic Canada in particular.

The changing cultural milieu has both global and local implications for church planters. This is reflected in the literature by various writers but none so clearly as David Hesselgrave (2000, 150-151) who says

In the forefront of research and writing on the interanimation between cultural context and communication, students of mission concentrated primarily on ways in which gospel communication is affected by cultural differences... But in our multicultural and fast-changing world it should now be clear to Christian communicators that it will not do simply to turn up the volume or enlarge the print. The old gospel must be communicated, but it must be communicated in new ways that engage the attention, employ the thought forms, enhance the understanding, and merit the consideration of people enculturated in systems very different from our own.

The author brings to our attention the importance of exegeting the culture in which church planting is being considered and the various factors that contribute to that culture. This in itself, points to the need for literature that addresses the Atlantic Canadian cultural reality. The cultural and geographical mind-set of Atlantic Canadians often pervades all levels of society in the region. Drs. Tony and Linda Rhineland (2010, 6-8) comment on this saying,

We too are discouraged by the “have not” outlook of many of our politicians and opinion makers. Here in New Brunswick, the notion that we are “backward” is an

undercurrent of much public expression, and we fear the same undercurrent runs throughout Atlantic Canadian public thinking (with the possible exception of Newfoundland and Labrador). It is evident in everything from the slogan “we’re open for business—meaning our resources are open to exploitation by international business interests—to the tendency to hire outside experts from Toronto or Washington to tell us how to live, although we have our own experts who can hold a candle to anyone in the world.

As Maritimers we resent the inferiority outlook. We like what we have. We are one community made up of smaller communities where, unlike in the rest of North America, generations and relations still live nearby. We may, by economic necessity, move to other parts of the world for education and work, but we remain Maritimers in our hearts, and we look forward to returning “home.”...We are not for sale. We know who we are. We know what we have. We’ve been “green” since long before it became fashionable. We admire self-reliance and we mistrust “globalization.” We are handy. We are HOME. And you are right to illustrate that sensibility in your magazine.

In this context, the task of church planting, identified by the majority of writers as a tool for evangelism and discipleship, must take note of geographical and local issues that have a direct impact on the viability of a new church.

### **3.4.2 Geographical Issues:**

The matter of geographical location is not addressed widely in the available literature, but that which does address it is significant and particularly relevant to the Atlantic Canadian context. Much of the literature available from American resources seems to assume similar demographics as the context from which it is written. The assumption is then translated into expectations for church planting success that may be unreasonable in certain geographical

locations. It is important to understand regional distinctions in order to achieve viability in a given context. In relation to this Vang (2012, 144) says, “Most Christians involved with missions and ministry, and maybe especially church planters, are activists. They are eager to get things done and will gladly read whatever book, or attend whatever seminar, that can help them with their how-to task. The why for some reason seems less important.”

And he (2010, 153) says,

From this it becomes obvious that the extreme individualism that characterizes Western thinking and societies, and resultantly Western churches, can easily generate an understanding of the church that misrepresents the biblical portrayal. Add to this a Western business model that equates success with numerical growth at all levels...and “church” stands in real danger of becoming self-serving and utilitarian.

This assumption is evident in the expectations of success and viability that are mentioned in an almost casual way. Stetzer (2003, 50-52), by way of an example from a Southern Baptist perspective, indicates that a congregation should be formalized within three years and should become stable within seven years. Furthermore, Stetzer (2003, 67) makes reference to an expectation that a new church will be a congregation numbering in the hundreds within a relatively short period of time and he (2003, 224) indicates that a three year partnership with the mother church or denomination for finances and support should be sufficient for long-term viability. Similarly Craig Tucker (1999, 119), speaking about the Pentecostal Assemblies of America, supports a relatively short time span for expected viability. He (1999, 119) says,

The PCAmerica reduced the number of church plants that failed from 40% to 10% by improving the way they selected church planters. (Success in this context is not measured by faithfulness, but by whether a church plant is financial after 3 years and remains financial for another 2 years)

The expectations evident here betray a bias towards a geographical area with the demographics to support this kind of quick development.

In contrast to this literature from sources outside the United States display a different understanding of culture and geography. Murray (2010, 25) asserts that much of church planting literature from the 1990s encouraged planting in mainly growing suburbs, in order to secure success, and discouraged planting in other areas. He (2010, 25) says, “This then created a vicious circle when church planters who were inspired and helped by these resources planted successfully in suburban communities and wrote further books about their experience, reinforcing still more strongly...that this is where church planters should go if they wanted to succeed.” Murray (2010, 25-26) goes on to assert that cultural and social contexts must be considered and methods and expectations adjusted in situations that do not meet the criteria of much of this literature. This perspective allows for the opportunity of church planting in areas of need that do not meet demographic requirements in much of the early literature or more current American literature.

Murray’s conclusions are supported by the findings of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States. In assessing the denomination’s New Church Development (NCD) plan David Snapper (2007, 1) discovered that it is rare for any NCD congregation to surpass the 200 mark in attendance and most stagnate below 150 for at least a decade. He connects this inability to succeed, by the criteria of most American church planting literature, directly to geography. Snapper (2007, 9) writes,

In the historic CRC population centers (such as Grand Rapids) the huge emigration from the city causes most suburban church growth. In medium-sized rural regions...the stable population’s biological growth demands that new buildings be constructed. When they are finished they are filled. Alternatively, in

areas where few CRC people live, the transfer stream is virtually non-existent, and most growth comes from evangelistic outreach. Except for the rare congregation, the evangelized inflow is insufficient to grow a large congregation within ten years...”

Snapper (2007, 5) also refers to research by Carl George of nine denominations and 115, 374 congregations that found that 51% of congregations never exceed 75 in attendance. He (2007, 10 -12) concludes that geographical proximity to areas heavily populated by a specific denomination is directly related to the success marker of 200 in attendance represented in much of the literature available for church planting.

Other studies have demonstrated that success, as defined by current literature and viability within specified time frames, is directly related to demographics and geographical location. In a dissertation studying church planting programs in five similarly sized denominations in the United States Dennis Powell (2000, 61-63) identifies location and population as being key elements in achieving viability within three to five years and indicates that these were prime considerations for planting within an area. He (2000, 62) writes,

When examining the total population of the ministry area, the planter identified the geographic parameters. That is, although the church may have been located in a town, the planter stated whether the ministry area was to the town, the township, or a county. When examining the total population, those churches reaching out to areas over 30,000 in population had a distinct advantage over those reaching out to smaller populations. Those church plants which targeted populations of less than 30,000 (n=7) had a 38 percent success rate, while those targeting larger populations (n=16) had a 60 percent success rate.

His findings have important considerations for church planting in an Atlantic Canadian context in light of the fact that very few communities in Atlantic Canada would have populations higher than 30,000.

The issue of geography and demographics is also addressed in the literature in a positive light for areas with smaller populations. Steffen (1994, 368) contends that effective church planting can take place in areas other than growing urban or suburban regions if the planter's vision, philosophy and planting model take the beliefs and behavior of the target audience into consideration. Steffen (1994, 370) says,

Some church planting models are more effective in rural than urban settings. Some work better among the upper class than the lower class. Some induce better results among those living in more permanent settings than the nomadic...Effective models will attempt to address a people's ethnicity, history, present worldview(s), socio-economic class, learning style and gender preference.

This positive view of church planting in more rural areas is also reflected in American literature.

In reference to church planting in the geographically remote Appalachian region in an article entitled, *Understanding Culture in Appalachian Church Planting*, the author

(n.d., [yom.org/assets/Free-Downloads/UNDERSTANDINGCULTURE.docx](http://yom.org/assets/Free-Downloads/UNDERSTANDINGCULTURE.docx), 6) comments,

The first step in ministering in Appalachia is to understand that it is not only a mission field but it is a cross-cultural mission field. One church planter expressed it this way, "Appalachian culture is so different...that traditional church planting will not work. Appalachia must be approached as a cross-cultural mission." If we are going to enter into a mission field and labor to reach a people with the Gospel we need to take the time to study and truly understand their culture and how it will shape our ministry effort. There is no doubt that Appalachia has its own distinct culture and people. It is "...a region of the United States that is largely ignored and ridiculed at the same time." As missional church planters to

Appalachia we must move beyond stereotypes and become students of the people and the culture of Appalachia.

Such an assessment of a more rural and geographically distinct area within the United States helps to create understanding for the distinct nature of the Maritime Provinces. While the areas have their own unique cultural distinctions, similarities include geographical isolation and a sense of being ignored by the rest of the country of which they are part as has been noted regarding the Maritime Provinces in Chapter 1.3. Among characteristics that have been noted concerning the Appalachian region and the Maritime Provinces, as geographically remote and with a smaller demographic base than larger centers, are traditional thinking and rural isolation. This was reported in Interview 3 (I-3, Appendix A) by the pastor who reported that a previous ministry in rural South Dakota had similar characteristics to the rural attributes of the Maritime Provinces. In this sense, rural distinctions of the Maritimes, as are discussed in Chapter 1.3, that are important for church planting viability, may have applications in regions with a similar population base or geographic isolation.

Geography and culture are often related and this is clear in Canadian and American perspectives on church and religion. As early as 1993 these distinctive were being highlighted in church growth literature. Posterski and Barker (1993, 117-118) comment on this phenomenon, saying,

Canadian and Americans can be united on many issues. But when it comes to religion, what makes for effective churches in either country is often as different as each nation's position on universal health care... Especially in the realm of religion, Canadians are private people...we must pursue the "Canadian way" of doing the work of God—a way that connects with our culture.



There are clearly geographical and national differences in approach to religion from much of the American literature and the Canadian context.

The religious milieu in Canada itself is varied and changing. Clark and Schellenberg (2006, 2-4) note that the degree of religiosity in Canada is decreasing and this is especially apparent among those who are Canadian born. Among immigrant Canadians there has been little change. They also noted a relatively large gap between those who consider themselves religious, but express that privately, and those who are religious and attend worship services. This trend is also noted by Coggins (2008, 1-3) in his article, *The State of the Canadian Church—Part 1: A Nation of Believers*. Coggins comments, “Canada is a nation of believers but not belongers...It is not just churches that are losing members. Fewer Canadians now belong to Boy Scouts, labour unions, political parties or service clubs such as Kiwanis or Rotary.” This Canadian milieu has an impact on church planting in Atlantic Canada but there are also differences in Atlantic Canada that are worthy of note.

The degree of religiosity in Atlantic Canada, according to statistics released by Clark and Schellenberg (2006, 6-7) is generally and significantly higher than in the rest of Canada. This affords a small advantage regarding religious life and church planting to Atlantic Canada. On the other hand, as Hiemstra (2010, 1-2, 7) notes, Atlantic Canadian incomes and church incomes are significantly lower than the rest of the country, which provides a disadvantage to gaining financial stability and more rural congregations tend to have smaller incomes, thus threatening long-term viability.

Geography and demographics have an important role to play in distinguishing the challenges of Canadian church planting from that of American church planting. Regional characteristics within Canada also play a role in the likelihood and the time frame in which a

new church plant may achieve success. Rural areas have distinctly different characteristics from urban and suburban communities in terms of income and religious affiliation.

### **3.5 Sub-Conclusion**

The issue of long-term viability in church planting literature, from evangelical sources, is prevalent in literature on the subject of church planting from American, European and Canadian perspectives. This is as a result of problems emerging in the modern church planting movement as early as the 1990's. The limited literature available regarding church planting in Atlantic Canada reflects the literature and demographics of more densely populated areas of the United States. Among the major source areas for literature on this topic there are areas of agreement and disagreement on the general categories outlined for examination in this research report in the research questions used in interviews.

In regard to theological emphases, both Biblical and contemporary, there is a great deal of agreement in the literature without absolute uniformity. In general, the Biblical emphases that emerge in most sources are mission through evangelism and discipleship. The underlying reason for starting new churches is a missional theology characterized by evangelism in many sources, while other sources define the emphasis as discipleship, and still others combine both concepts. In much of the literature the terms are used together or even interchangeably. Literature from Canadian and Atlantic Canadian sources reflect this same emphasis, which is decidedly missional in its understanding of church extension and church planting.

Also common in much of the literature is the importance of a Biblical, orthodox, as well as, relevant response to the proliferation of postmodern thought in western society. The

postmodern concept of relativism challenges the concept of Biblical authority which is the foundation of many evangelical denominations. Many writers assert the need to address this paradigm shift with relevant methods and means of communicating the gospel, without changing the Biblical message.

Post-modernism is also identified, by many writers, as a primary contemporary theological issue that challenges church planters to examine their relevance in terms of the cultural-linguistic framework in which they minister. In this regard cultural synthesis is an issue of which church planters need to be aware, in order to correctly identify personal and denominational practices which may have more to do with tradition than orthodoxy.

Consumerism also emerges in the literature as a major issue which church planters must address in order to have long-term stability. This is especially evident in literature from Canadian sources that identify differences between American and Canadian religious practices, suggesting that Americans join to belong, while Canadians seek to belong before they join a religious group.

The role of vision in church planting is prevalent throughout the available sources from American, European and Canadian writers. It is generally considered crucial regardless of the size of church or denominational background. There is uniformity regarding the role of vision in church planting and it is considered to be directly related to viability in a vast majority of all sources.

There is some disagreement within the literature as to who is responsible for developing and maintaining the vision of a new church. Many writers identify the church planting pastor as central to vision casting and maintenance and draw a direct connection between vision and leadership. In other sources there is an emphasis on congregational development of the vision

and the importance of developing a team that is mutually accountable and responsible for the original vision of the church.

In regard to structural issues in the literature examined, models and church structures, forms of leadership and monetary issues emerged as significant.

The importance of recognizable forms of church programming is identified by some writers as crucial, as well as, the development of a high quality Sunday morning worship service. This is combined with an emphasis on the need for a suitable facility in which to meet traditional expectations of new congregants. This emphasis is highlighted in literature from an Atlantic Canadian source and reflects the bias of many American writers. Other Canadian writers stress the importance of structure but also caution that this should not be over-emphasized.

Monetary issues are identified in most of the literature as being foundational for functional structures in a new church planting situation. Some writers noted the inherent financial instability of new churches, while the majority of American writers emphasized the need for financial stability and independence in a fixed and relatively short period of time. The financial stability expected is based upon demographics common to growing American urban and suburban communities. Despite the obvious demographic differences, similar time frames are suggested by Atlantic Canadian sources.

In terms of leadership structures there is a similar division in the literature as with the development of vision. While many writers maintain the importance of a strong central leader, the pastor, others strongly emphasize the importance of developing a leadership team or a pastor-elder system. There is emphasis on mutual accountability within the leadership team, as well as, the importance of a peer group for the pastor to develop support and accountability.

Cultural and geographical subjects are addressed in the literature with respect to relevance and expectations. Prominent in much of the literature regarding church planting is the importance of recognizing, preparing for and addressing the rapidly changing cultural milieu of western society in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Although this is noted as being crucial for long-term viability in much of the literature, there is very little evidence available from an Atlantic Canadian perspective on this matter.

Geographical differences between Europe, Canada and the United States are evident in many of the writers. American writers reflect an expectation of stability in three to four years while European literature sometimes contradicts these expectations and points to favourable demographics as the source of such optimistic views. Although demographics in regard to overall population and evangelical population vary greatly in Atlantic Canada, compared to the United States, Atlantic Canadian sources reflect the same expectations for viability.

Canadian sources do highlight Canadian geographical and national differences compared to the United States. Significant among these differences are lower degrees of religiosity and church attendance in Canada than the United States.

An examination of current literature in the field of church planting has revealed areas of agreement and areas of difference between American, European and Canadian sources. Religious values, cultural considerations and unique geographical characteristics of Canada, and Atlantic Canada, in particular, provide an opportunity for this research to determine their impact on the long-term viability of church planting situations in Atlantic Canada.

## **Chapter 4: Empirical Research**

### **4.1 Introduction:**

This chapter will outline the research design and methodology used to obtain practical theological observations that relate specifically to the theological, geographical and cultural area in which the research was conducted through the use of in-depth interviews of pastors in church planting situations across the region and reference to case studies that reflect the researchers own experience in church planting. The use of empirical research in practical theology is fundamental to this research project and will be described in section 4.2.1 below. This chapter will also describe the research instrument used to obtain data by describing the research participants; the strength and weaknesses of the sample; and the method of analysis for obtaining empirical data in the area of common characteristics of church planting practices that lead to long-term viability in new church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The analysis will include coding, and methods of comparison of data among research participants, as well as, in relation to the conceptual framework as defined by the literature review. It will also explain

the method of extracting inferences and interpretations drawn from the interviews and case studies.

This chapter will also give justifications for the choice of sample and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. It will describe the limitations of the study and conclusions, as well as, outlining ethical considerations inherent within the research.

## **4.2 Research Design:**

The research is designed to test the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common to viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The research is approached from a qualitative research approach to obtain empirical data through the use of in-depth interviews of church planting pastors in the region mentioned above, as well as, through case studies drawn from the experience of the researcher in the area of church planting and revitalization in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

### **4.2.1 Qualitative Research:**

The impetus to test the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common to viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada was developed from the researcher's experience in church planting in the geographical area described above. The researcher drew also on the comparison of that experience with available literature about church planting, much of which was written from an American perspective. The cultural and demographic differences in the literature, as compared to the experience of the researcher, led to the development of a qualitative approach to

researching characteristics common to viable long-term planting situations in Atlantic Canada, as compared to the expectations for long-term viability evident in much of the literature from an American bias.

The hypothesis of this research project was tested using a research instrument which was designed to facilitate empirical research from a practical theological perspective. Ballard (1992, 117) argues for the importance of critical reflection in practical theology, saying,

...on the one hand practical theology is called on to provide insights and skills in training for a task or range of tasks. On the other hand, practical theology is a critical, reflective activity whose task it is to evaluate and call into question assumptions and models found in practice. This is done by using resources in theology and by taking into account those other sciences, human and theoretical, that help illuminate the human condition.

The approach of empirical research in this research project has been designed to account for both the theological and human experience aspects of church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Pieterse (1994, 79) comments on J.A. van Der Ven's approach to practical theology saying,

Therefore it becomes a correlation between relations: the relation between the text and context in the past and the relation between the text and context in the present. This insight leaves theology with no option but to do literary analyses of texts as well as socio-historical study of the context of the past. It also creates a need for empirical research of contemporary texts and contexts.

The emphasis on past and present texts and contexts is the foundation for this research project into long-term viable church planting situations in the given geographical and social milieu. The significance of empirical research in practical theology is described by Ziebertz (2003, 181) who says,



...the concept of practical theology is used as a header for practical theological sub-disciplines, such as catechesis, Religious Education, homiletics, church development, poimenics, and diaconics. The adjective 'practical' is not simply the opposite of 'theoretical.' More accurately, 'practical' refers to the material object of practical theology—the practice of religion. Unlike systematic theological disciplines, practical theology focuses on the real-life human action within religious practices rather than logic. The sub disciplines mentioned above reflect religious practice within different fields of human action. As a form of theology, practical theology is not just looking to describe religious practice but also to understand it, explain it, and lay out possible alternatives for future decisions. The goal of orienting decisions is particularly relevant to normative theology. Some would see the formal objective of practical theology as analyzing the tension between what is, what could be, and what ought to be. This does not mean that theology analyses normative aspects in order to compare these with real-life practice. This would relegate the discipline back to applied science. Rather, the goal is to find the theories that define the practice.

Empirical research data obtained from the in-depth interviews in the area of long-term viability for church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada reflects the real life experiences of church planters that assist in understanding the theories that have undergirded these practices; the challenges they have presented in the region described above and possible alternative theories that will help to define the practice of church planting in the Maritime provinces for the future. Ziebertz (2003, 185) also says,

Empirically analytical research is interested in the scientific statements related to experience. The goal is to find rules for the construction and description of theories as well as for their final test. Empirically testable prognoses are gathered from deductive hypothetical connections which should lead to basic conclusions.

This research project is designed to obtain and analyze the experiential data that emerges from the interview process with the candidates who have been actively involved in church planting in the given region.

This approach to qualitative research enables an informed approach to theories and experiences of the researcher and how they may be tested in a systematic manner. It is described by Marshall and Rossman (1999, 25) who write,

In qualitative inquiry, initial curiosities for research often come from real-world observations, emerging from the interplay of the researcher's direct experience, tacit theories, political commitments, interests in practice, and growing scholarly interests. At other times, the topic of interest derives from theoretical traditions and their attendant empirical research. Beginning researchers should examine reviews of literature found in journals....

It is also supported by Berg (1998, 17-18) who says,

I argue from a different model for the research enterprise, a model that encompasses both the research-before-theory and theory-before research models. This is possible because the proposed approach is conceived as spiralling rather than linear in its progression. In the proposed approach, you begin with an idea, gather theoretical information, reconsider and refine your idea, begin to examine possible designs, re-examine theoretical assumptions, and refine these theoretical assumptions and perhaps even your original or refined idea.

The research design of this study follows the model described by Berg (1998) to the extent that the researcher's interest and experience in the field of church planting have informed the process of formatting the research instrument. The formation of the instrument, to some degree, was also influenced by literature with which the researcher was familiar such as Aubrey Malphur's (1998) foundational work, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, which is a comprehensive guide to church planting from an American perspective and deals with Biblical, theological,

structural and leadership issues in regard to church planting. In regard to cultural and geographical issues Harry Gardner's (1994) *Church Planting Manual* was developed specifically for the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces (now the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches), but demonstrated a high level of dependence on American based literature and the demographics of American society. This prompted a desire to determine if there were identifiable regional considerations for church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Personal observations and emphases in current literature regarding several key areas concerning church planting, namely, theological issues, structural issues and cultural/geographical issues, led to the development of a research instrument designed to obtain empirical data from pastors involved in church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces. This approach is also supported by Farley (1987, 8) who says,

The thesis I am arguing is that the interpretation of situations be self-conscious, self-critical, and disciplined. In other words, similar demands are placed on the believer's interpretation of situations as on the believer's interpretation of ancient texts, or of 'heresies' and doctrines. The assumption has often been that if the interpretation of the authoritative texts is done properly, all other interpretations will take care of themselves. It is just at this point that the believer (and the community of believers) falls into uncritical and even idolatrous paradigms of the use of texts. Further, when the interpretation of situations is not itself subjected to critical scrutiny, the believer reads the situation simply out of a kind of obliviousness, an inattention to most of its components.

The intent of this research project is to bring practical theological insights to the concept of church planting in Atlantic Canada by obtaining data from a qualitative approach that will give a holistic understanding of the challenges of church planting in the region. This data enables accurate comparison of characteristics of church planting described in current literature with the

actual experiences, observations and inferences of those involved in church planting within the subject area. It also provides a formal base upon which comparison can be made to discern commonalities and differences of church planting situations within the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

#### **4.2.2 In-depth Interviews**

The research instrument was designed in keeping with a Grounded Theory method as described by Babbie (2004, 372-373). Babbie (2004, 372) defines the Grounded Theory Method as, “An inductive approach to research introduced by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in which theories are generated solely from an examination of data rather than being derived deductively.” Although the questions for all pastors interviewed were uniform, the interviews were conducted in a semi-standardized format. Berg (1998, 61) describes this format saying, “This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or topics. These questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed the freedom to digress...” Use of the semi-standardized format allowed both the researcher and the participant to pursue themes which may have emerged from the interview questions but were not initially part of the research instrument as found in Appendix B. This format enabled each participant to bring their own unique perspective to the research while, at the same time, maintaining general parameters in the research that facilitate the inductive approach and constant comparative method described by Babbie (2004, 372-373). Babbie defines the constant comparative method in grounded theory as consisting of four stages: comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory and writing theory.

The constant comparative method of analysis is promoted by Hennie Boeije (2002, 391-409). Boeije (2002, 391) says, “The constant comparative method (CCM) together with theoretical sampling constitute the core of qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss...Comparison is also the dominant principle of the analysis process in other traditions of qualitative research.” Boeije (2002, 393) goes on to say, “By comparing, the researcher is able to do what is necessary to develop a theory more or less inductively, namely categorizing, coding, delineating categories and connecting them.” The use of case studies describing this researcher’s experience in the given field is also supported by Boeije as lending to research credibility. Boeije (2002, 406) writes,

The present findings demonstrate that during qualitative analysis there are many moments of comparison. The term ‘constant’ might be a slight exaggeration, but comparison is at the heart of the analysis process just as Glaser and Strauss pointed out in their discovery of and later elaborations on the grounded theory approach. The step by step approach to the constant comparative method (CCM) described here systematizes this method for analyzing interview data. Going about CCM in a purposeful way and reporting the researchers’ own experiences when implementing the step by step approach, increases both the traceability and credibility of researchers’ analysis in their qualitative studies.

This is in keeping with a participatory action research method as well. In relation to this MacDonald (2012, 38) says,

Participatory action research has been defined as “a philosophical approach to research that recognizes the need for persons being studied to participate in the design and conduct of all phases (e.g., design, execution, and dissemination) of any research that affects them” (Vollman, Anderson & McFarlane, 2004, p.129). According to Vollman et al. (2004), the purpose of PAR is to foster capacity, community development, empowerment, access, social justice, and participation.

MacDonald (2012, 42) goes on to describe the importance of this approach, saying,

Participant observation is an innovative qualitative research method of inquiry and a rich source of data collection that is commonly employed in PAR (Dargie, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Stringer, 1999). It provides the researcher with privileged access to research subjects in a social situation and captures the context of the social setting in which individuals function by recording subjective and objective human behaviour (Gillis & Jackson, 2002; Mulhall, 2003). The researcher becomes part of the process being observed and immersed in the setting, hearing, seeing, and experiencing the reality of the social situation with the participants (Marshall & Rossman). Thus, the researcher as a participant-observer not only observes activities, participants, and physical aspects of the situation, but also engages in activities appropriate to the social situation (Spradley, 1980).

In this regard the case studies, based on the researcher's own experience of church planting in the region, are an example of participatory action research and, therefore, an important source for the triangulation of data using a grounded theory approach and the constant comparative method.

The research instrument designed for this study enabled the researcher to derive data inductively from the responses and comments of the participants and by comparison to answers given by other participants and current literature in the field. The uniformity of the interviews provided a basis for comparing incidents and experiences of the participants with one another without limiting personal observations unique to each church planting pastor. The research instrument also provided a basis for integrating the commonalities in the data from all sources and focus on areas unique to the geographical area defined above in Chapter 1, section 1.4, while at the same time delimiting the data to that which is pertinent to the research problem. The commonalties and differences derived from the interview data allow for the formation of

conclusions directly related to the research hypothesis. The case studies from the researcher's own experience provide a valid source for comparison and credibility to the interview data.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research Methodology:**

The methodology section of this chapter focuses on a detailed description and justification of the research instrument and case studies; an explanation of the data and how participants were selected, as well as, its strengths and weaknesses; and on the analysis with a description of techniques, coding and the justifications for the choices made in the analysis.

#### **4.3.1 The Research Instrument:**

The primary research instrument used for in-depth semi standardized interviews is included in this study as Appendix B. The research questions were divided into three general categories and then sub-divided into specific categories that enabled deeper insights into the general category. The three general categories are: theological issues, structural issues and cultural/geographical issues. Each category will be described in detail below. The in-depth interviews were with pastors ministering in church planting situations. The secondary source of data is the two case studies which are based on the researcher's experience. The case studies will be summarized below in Section 4.5.

##### **4.3.1.1 Theological Concepts:**

Interview questions in respect to theological issues were designed to reflect the observations and comments of the pastors interviewed and practices of the congregations and communities in which they served. The areas of theological reflection included; key Biblical

concepts that shaped the ministry of the church planter and the people among whom they were applied; current theological issues central to the establishment of the church planting situation, theological concepts common to the geographical area of the church planting situation and the impact of both on growth and stability; and the role of vision statements in church planting, who were the lead proponents of vision and the impact on long-term viability.

#### **4.3.1.2 Structural Issues:**

Interview questions in respect to structural issues were designed to allow a clear understanding of structures and leadership in the church planting situation. Questions on structures in regard to long-term viability include those structures implemented by the church planter, expected because of denominational affiliation or the traditions of congregants involving themselves in the church planting situation, as well as, the role of financial issues. Questions on leadership with respect to viability included topics such as who forms the leadership base, the contribution of leadership to viability and the means by which leaders are chosen, as well as, accountability structures that are both formal and informal.

#### **4.3.1.3 Cultural/Geographical Issues:**

Interview questions in respect to cultural and geographical issues were used to identify the cultural milieu specific to the geographical region defined in this study as being the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Questions with respect to culture and its impact on long-term viability focused on cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada, unique to the community in which church planting was taking place and how cultural patterns might differ significantly from



North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of church planting. This section also provided opportunity for the pastors to comment on the impact of distinct cultural factors on ministry and church viability, as well as, their impact on daily ministry and church life.

Questions with respect to geography focused on regional issues that impact stability and viability, strategies to deal with identifiable geographical issues, denominational support available to the church planter to deal with regional challenges in Atlantic Canada, and factors considered in selecting the geographical region for the church planting situation. Participants were also given the opportunity to discuss research that had been undertaken to decide where the church planting should take place.

#### **4.3.2 Justification for the Research Instrument:**

The theoretical basis for the design of the research instrument is a combination of the researcher's experience in the area of church planting and observations of other church planting situations in Atlantic Canada that have struggled to gain viability, as defined by much of the literature available on church planting, and described in Chapter 1, section 1.2. Research and reflection by the researcher in regard to much of the current literature on church planting from American sources revealed expectations for church planting pastors, structural issues and long-term viability that seemed inconsistent with church planting situations that the researcher had observed in Atlantic Canada. These observations, experiences and preliminary reflections based upon reading of literature in regard to church planting generated a knowledge base for the preparation of the research instrument. Mason (1996, 15) calls this the researcher's intellectual puzzle. Mason (1996, 15) says, "Intellectual puzzles, then, will contain different sets of

ontological and epistemological assumptions and prescriptions, and will suggest distinctive types of social explanation.” She (1996, 33) goes on to say, “...your research design should begin with your research questions and your intellectual puzzle...” The research instrument is derived both from the experience and knowledge base of the researcher and from areas of emphasis highlighted in much of the literature. This is intrinsic to a practical theological approach to research and is supported by Tracy (1983, 76) who says,

I assume, in short, that ethics is critical reflection on moral praxis and that moral praxis is always mediated through historical and social consciousness. This leads me to propose that practical theology is the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and the praxis of the contemporary situation. If the correlation is indeed open to the full spectrum of claims to identity, analogy and pure nonidentity, then the first step must be to see what major models of human transformation are available de facto and what criteria of responsible transformation can be responsibly argued for.

Both the current literature and the researcher’s experience in the contemporary situation have been employed in the design and use of the research instrument.

The questions on the research instrument were designed to enable the subjects to share their experiences and knowledge base in the area of church planting. The interviews were semi-standardized, in that the same questions were used for each church planting pastor, but flexible in that allowance was made by the researcher for each pastor to develop themes that, for them, emerged from the questions. Mason (1996, 33) describes this as essential for qualitative research designs. She (1996, 33) says,

...qualitative research designs invariably need to allow for flexibility, and for decision making to take place as the research process proceeds. Especially if you are working with an ontological and epistemological model where theory is

generated from empirical data, and data generation and sampling decisions are made in the light of the evolving theoretical analysis.

This approach is supported by Enrica Tedeschi in a presentation given at the 7th International Conference on Social Science Methodology organized by the International Sociological Association, Italy, Naples, September 1-5, 2008. Tedeschi (2008) says,

In the theoretical stage, the sociologist displays his/her narrative role. Storytelling is an essential practice in *Grounded Theory*...Due to an attentive handling of writing, the researcher develops the capacity to specify and define the problem, to advance an hypothesis. He/she also becomes capable to offer an explanation and interpretation of the observed phenomena, and finally can furnish relevant guidelines to validate the results of research.

The research instrument, combined with the semi standardized in-depth interview format, in this research project, have enabled the collection of empirical data in the area of common characteristics of church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

The data obtained from in-depth interviews is considered to be an accurate representation of the views, observations and experiences of church planting pastors. It is relevant because church planting pastors are in the forefront of any church planting situation, as is substantiated by current literature reviewed in Chapter 3, and by the experience of the researcher. This research instrument is not designed to provide exhaustive data in the subject area for two reasons. First, although it represents the reflections, observations and experience of church planting pastors, it is not designed to research the opinions of either lay people or denominational leaders with respect to church planting, which, in the opinion of the researcher, would require additional research instruments designed with reference to the concerns and experiences of both the laity and denominational leaders. Secondly, the research instrument was used in in-depth interviews

with a sampling of church planting pastors in the three Maritime Provinces and with pastors from various denominational backgrounds described in Chapter 1, section 1.5, however, the researcher acknowledges that time, distance and financial restraints prevented interviewing every evangelical denomination or pastor involved in church planting in the specified region.

### **4.3.3 Case Studies:**

The case studies used in the research process are in keeping with the emphasis of Mason (1996, 15) on the researcher's intellectual puzzle and the emphasis of Tedeschi (2008) on the narrative role of the researcher. The case studies describe the researcher's experience and observations as pastor of a church planting situation in a growing rural/suburban area of Nova Scotia, and as pastor of a church in New Brunswick in need of replanting and expansion of its vision and ministry and growth of the congregation. The case studies, as stated above, are considered a secondary source of data and as an opportunity to understand the ontological and epistemological framework of the researcher.

These case studies also provide a frame of reference for comparison of the data generated by the in-depth interviews. Berg (1998, 217) argues for the importance of case studies as "the breeding ground for insights and even hypotheses." He (1998, 218) also asserts that case studies provide a general frame of reference for the area of research being undertaken. He (1998, 218) says,

When case studies are properly undertaken, they should not only fit the specific individual, group or event studied, but generally provide understanding about similar individuals, groups, and events...The logic behind this has to do with the fact that few human behaviours are unique, idiosyncratic, and spontaneous.

This understanding of case study significance fits well with the first case, in that it involves the replanting of a new church that had lost viability. It fits well with the second case, in that it involves similarities, through the church revitalization and visioning process for a new ministry, but is not a new church planting situation in and of itself. Babbie (2004, 293) holds that case studies can be descriptive in function but can also produce explanatory insights that contribute to the basis for new theories. It is the researcher's assumption that the case studies used in this thesis will be valuable for both of Babbie's emphases.

The assumption that these case studies can contribute to the development of theory in this research project is based on the understanding that the situations described provide a framework for further comparison and analysis of the data derived from the in-depth interviews. In relation to this Baxter and Jack (2008, 544-559) promote a mixed method approach to strengthen analysis. They (2008, 556) say,

Case study research design principles lend themselves to including numerous strategies that promote data credibility or "truth value." Triangulation of data sources, data types or researchers is a primary strategy that could be used and would support the principle in case study research that the phenomena be viewed and explored from multiple perspectives. The collection and comparison of this data enhances data quality based on the principles of idea convergence and the confirmation of findings.

The two case studies used in this research project are considered to be explanatory and descriptive (Baxter & Jack, 2008, 547-548) as a frame of reference for comparison and validation of ideas, concepts and observations emerging from the data of the in-depth interviews. This method is also supported by Boeije (2002, 398) who says, "It is important to give data triangulation a central place in qualitative analysis...In this third step, interviews from two

different groups are compared with regard to the experience of a specific phenomenon.” The case studies in this research project are a secondary source of data from the researcher’s experience and, in that respect, provide data from a group separate from the church planting pastors.

The limitations of these case studies for generating research data lie in the subjective point of view of the researcher’s experience. The researcher recognizes that their value lies not as a source of primary data collection but as a secondary source of data that explains and describes real life situations relevant to the data generated by the research instrument. They are an important source for “triangulation of data sources” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, 556) that provide further verification of conclusions drawn from the primary data.

#### **4.3.4 Data:**

The data section in this chapter will explain the sample chosen for the research, as well as, the sample size and reasons for choices made by the researcher in regard to these two issues. This section will also describe the population from which the sample was drawn, details of data collection techniques, gaining access to the subjects and the time frame in which data collection occurred.

##### **4.3.4.1 The Sample and Sample Size:**

The sample used for data collection was defined as pastors from Evangelical Churches or Denominations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada who are involved in church planting situations. The choice to interview pastors from evangelical churches or denominations

was based on a desire of the researcher to limit variables in ecclesiology in order to enhance clarity in data collection. Evangelical churches are defined in Chapter 1, section 1.6 as those churches and/or denominations whose theology is based on the sole authority of the scriptures for faith and practice and the emphasis of regenerate church membership through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Ecclesiology for evangelicals is most often missional in its focus and is, therefore, in keeping with the parameters of this study. The focus on evangelical churches as described above does not suggest that there is no sense of mission or evangelism in other denominations. Rather, the researcher chose to limit the study to evangelical church planters to eliminate variables that would be introduced by significantly different theological stances such as the authority of scripture and the church's understanding of salvation by grace, through faith alone.

Pastors involved in church planting situations were chosen because of the depth of insight they would be able to bring to a process in which they were personally invested. The choice of pastors does not suggest that the researcher considers them to be the only reliable source for data. Rather, the choice represents an understanding for the need of a manageable sample size for qualitative research and the reality that some subjects provide a broader base of experience in the field being studied. In regard to sample size for qualitative research Martin N. Marshall (1996, 523) asserts that qualitative sample sizes should be small and the number of subjects governed by the criterion of data saturation. He (1996, 523) says,

An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question...in practice, the number of required subjects becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation).

This is also supported by Curtis, Gesler, Smith and Washburn (2000, 1002), who contend that for qualitative research, “samples are small, are studied intensively, and each one typically generates a large amount of information.” For the purpose of this study eight church planting situations were chosen and in those situations ten pastors were interviewed. Two of the churches had at least two pastors and these same churches were involved in more than one site based on a satellite church concept (for a definition of a satellite church concept see Chapter 1, section 1.6, paragraph 2). The interviews provided the opportunity for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the theological concepts, structural issues and cultural/geographical issues which were unique to each church planting situation and areas of commonality. In the researcher’s opinion, data saturation began to emerge in the seventh interview and was confirmed by the eighth interview.

The rationale for the choice to interview only pastors of church planting situations is based on the criteria of Miles and Huberman (1994), as interpreted by Curtis et.al. (2000, 1002), who advocate for a sample choice that is motivated by the theoretical framework that forms the basis for the research project. Curtis, et.al. (2000, 1002) defend the procedure of choosing samples as compared to random sampling. They (2000, 1003) attest that,

The sample should be likely to generate rich information on the type of phenomena which need to be studied. Miles and Huberman (1994:34) phrase this in terms of whether the phenomena of interest in the research are likely to ‘appear’ in the observations. Intensive research depends on the collation of ‘thick description’ of the phenomena which are conceptually important.

In relation to this Marshall (1996, 523) contends that, “Qualitative researchers recognize that some informants are ‘richer’ than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher.” In the researcher’s opinion, for this study, pastors



involved in church planting situations provide the depth of insight and experience within the theoretical framework to provide a rich and thick description of the phenomena being researched.

#### **4.3.4.2 The population of the sample:**

Based on the criteria described in the section immediately above, population of the sample was accomplished through the researcher's knowledge base of those involved in church planting situations; through contact with denominational offices to ascertain if the denomination was involved in church planting; and through professional contact with those involved in the field of church planting.

Of the eight churches who agreed to be interviewed, four of the subjects from three different denominations were contacted as potential candidates for the in-depth research interviews based upon the researcher's knowledge base of pastors involved in church planting. Pastors who agreed to the interview on this basis were from two regions of New Brunswick and two regions of Nova Scotia. The remaining four churches that agreed to an interview were made known to the researcher through denominational offices in the region and through contact with ministerial colleagues.

In the first interview, a church planting situation in New Brunswick, two pastors were interviewed. Their denominational background is Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. The senior pastor had been involved in the planting (or replanting) of a church in a small rural community. The church had experienced rapid and stable growth that led to the planting of a second site for the church in a nearby community, using a satellite concept of church planting. The associate pastor had oversight, primarily, for the new site, however, pastoral leadership at both sites was united and interchangeable on any given week. There was one Church Board for

both sites. Both sites of the congregation are located in rural areas that are close to large town or urban centres. The congregation had grown with younger families who were attracted by the church's purpose of providing a new way to do church. The congregation continued to receive financial support for five or more years from the denomination's mission board for assistance with salary obligations for the second site.

The second interview was with a pastor from New Brunswick who was involved in planting a francophone church in a small bilingual town. The pastor's denominational background was the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches. The pastor and his wife had a young family and were bi-vocational in order to support their family and maintain church planting in the area. The church was located in a large town that was approximately eighty five percent francophone. Outreach focused, primarily, on French speaking families who were nominally Roman Catholic but not necessarily actively involved in their church. Congregational growth, in light of traditional religious loyalties and family expectations, was slower than literature based expectations. The church struggled to achieve viability according to literature based expectations and the pastor relocated resulting in the dissolution of the congregation after more than a decade of ministry.

The third interview was facilitated by The Wesleyan Church, Atlantic Division, who gave the researcher contact information for the pastor of a church planting situation in a suburban area of Prince Edward Island. The pastor and his wife were a young couple with experience in ministry in rural areas of the western United States. The congregation was of mixed age groups but generally younger families looking for a less traditional approach to church life. Church growth was slowed by traditional religious expectations of congregants who would experiment with different new churches and then move on when their expectations were not met. The

church had not yet achieved financial stability nor official status within the denomination. Little financial support was received from the denomination but deputation had resulted in individuals who supported the work financially. The pastor relocated before the church achieved viability.

In order to broaden the denominational scope of the sample, the Canadian National Baptist Convention was contacted and an agreement for an interview with a church planting situation in Prince Edward Island was made. This interview had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and was not able to be rescheduled.

The fourth interview was facilitated by colleagues within the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches who identified another church planting situation in Prince Edward Island. This opportunity allowed the researcher to interview two pastors of a multi-site satellite church situation who were involved in church planting in two suburban areas of the province. The original church planting situation had struggled to achieve viability for over ten years until a model of a leadership-led church was successfully implemented and supported by the congregation. The senior pastor was a younger man with a young family and a desire to move into less traditional expressions of worship and church life. The church had grown with members of various age groups but a significant number of young families, many of whom were travelling from the community in which the second site was eventually planted. The associate pastor was also a younger man with a young family and was called by the church to have primary oversight for the second site. The model of church planting was that of a satellite church, therefore, the pastors and church board provided leadership for both sites. The church had continued to receive some financial support for the new site from the local Baptist association and the denomination's mission board.

The fifth interview was with a pastor from Nova Scotia who was from a rural area that was experiencing rapid population growth through suburban development close to the city of Halifax. His denominational background is Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches. He was an older pastor who was close to retirement. He had first been involved in the church planting situation as a lay leader and then had been called by the congregation to be the pastor and to essentially revitalize the work that had been organized originally on a largely attractional model with a very conservative approach to outreach and evangelism. The pastor had led the church into a more community minded ministry and had networked with other local churches to overcome competition with other denominations. The church had grown with a relatively balanced representation of different age groups and had focused on a blend of traditional and contemporary worship in order to meet the needs of the various age groups and expectations. Support from the denomination had been minimal and, after several years, the church had achieved financial stability.

The sixth pastor to be interviewed was in a rural agricultural region of Nova Scotia with a relatively stable population base and close to a university town. His denominational background is Associate Reformed Presbyterian. His approach to church planting was largely traditional with an attractional model for people of similar theological beliefs or denominational background. He and his wife were middle aged with young adult and teenage children. The congregation was comprised of a balanced representation of various age groups and families who travelled to worship from a fairly large geographical region in order to participate in a church with a theological and structural basis that was consistent with their own. Church growth had been slow but stable and congregants tended to remain committed to the church. After six years the congregation had achieved financial stability and was self-governing.

Contact was made with the pastor of a Mennonite Brethren congregation in an urban area of Nova Scotia. The interview was agreed upon but then was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and it was not able to be rescheduled.

Through professional contacts, among pastoral colleagues, two additional interviews were scheduled. The seventh interview was with a pastor from the Free-Will Baptist denomination who was involved in church planting in an urban area of New Brunswick. The pastor and his wife were in their mid-fifties and had moved from the southern United States to plant the church several years before the interview. The congregation was of various age groups and the pastor had focused on a fairly traditional approach to church planting using a largely attractional model and a blend of contemporary and traditional approaches to worship. The church had attracted both unchurched people and those who were unhappy with their previous church. Growth had been fairly rapid in early years but had plateaued and the church continued to rely on mission support from the denomination after almost a decade.

The eighth interview was with a pastor from an interdenominational charismatic background who planted a church in a large town in New Brunswick. The pastor and his wife were in their mid-thirties and had a young family. The pastor was bi-vocational in order to support his family. The congregation was comprised of various age groups and denominational traditions. Many of the congregants had traditional expectations for church life and would leave the church if their expectations were not met. The church failed to achieve viability as to literature based expectations and the pastor relocated before such viability was achieved.

The interviews were conducted and data compiled over a period of three years from the Spring of 2008 until the Spring of 2011. The interviews were conducted within church office facilities or private dwellings to ensure privacy and the least interruptions. Pastors were

encouraged to elaborate on themes as they felt appropriate and to clarify questions which were somewhat unclear. The researcher took abbreviated field notes during the interviews and recorded the interviews for later review. As soon after the interviews as possible, the recordings were reviewed, compared to field notes and eventually recorded verbatim.

#### **4.4 Analysis:**

The analysis section of this chapter describes the theory base for techniques used to analyze data, coding methods, and the role of case studies, as a secondary source of data, in relationship to the in-depth interviews, as the primary source of data. It also describes techniques of constant comparison between the conceptual framework and the empirical data generated by the research interviews.

##### **4.4.1 Grounded Theory Paradigm:**

A Grounded Theory methodology was employed and participants were selected from various denominations based upon their experience in church planting situations. Interview questions were guided by theories of church planting in the current literature, as well as, the experience and observations of the researcher. The interviews were flexible to allow the participant to express ideas and issues specific to their own situation. Interviews were interactive so that the conversation enabled pursuit of specific topics raised by the participant. The strength of this paradigm for this particular study is the fact that the researcher is able to analyze and

understand the dynamics of church planting, in a specific context, from the church planter's own perspective. This is in keeping with Ossmer's (2011, 2) approach, who says,

In my recent book, *Practical theology: An introduction* (Osmer 2008), I argue that much contemporary practical theology attends to four tasks along the lines of a hermeneutical circle or spiral:

- Descriptive-empirical: What is going on? Gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts.
- Interpretive: Why is this going on? Entering into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why certain actions and patterns are taking place.
- Normative: What ought to be going on? Raising normative questions from the perspectives of theology, ethics and other fields.
- Pragmatic: How might we respond? Forming an action plan and undertaking specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions.

I make no claim to originality in my description of these four tasks. Indeed, I believe that something like these four tasks have commonly been represented for many years in the writings of various practical theologians, as well as within the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and Doctor of Ministry programmes and field education seminars.<sup>1</sup> This leads me to believe that the four tasks I have highlighted are indicative of a particular paradigm in contemporary practical theology – what I will call here a paradigm of reflective practice.

The subjective observations of church planters, in comparison with one another, enabled the researcher to categorize common characteristics and to note significant differences. Church planting pastors alone were chosen, to the exclusion of lay leaders, not because lay leadership would not have valuable insights, but because of the desire of the researcher to triangulate data from different denominational backgrounds and areas of the Maritime region while maintaining the consistency of a pastor's perspective. This is consistent with the methodology described by Wagner-Ferreira (2011, 3) who says,

Osmer (2008:48–53) indicated that clarity about the purpose of the research and strategies for inquiry is important. The purpose of this preliminary research was to get an indication from woman pastors (from different churches) whether they also experience that their churches expect of them to focus more on counselling. The strategy used was life history or narrative research. This strategy of inquiry focused on gathering information and telling stories (Osmer 2008:50–51). During the interviews conducted with the woman pastors, they shared their life stories. The pastors were given the opportunity so share several incidents on their experience regarding the congregation's role expectations and role concepts in their context. The literature study was done to enlighten the themes that were constructed from the life stories.

Interviewing lay leadership would have introduced another variable that would have required triangulation of data from lay leaders of different denominational backgrounds and then comparison and triangulation of data from clergy interviews and the conceptual framework. While the perspective of lay leaders would have value for future study, in the researcher's opinion, the consistency of church planting from a pastor's perspective assisted in clarifying unique characteristics and challenges facing church planters in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

Implications drawn from the data that are based upon comparison of responses and allowances for variables such as denomination, geographical location (e.g. urban and rural) and years of experience have been noted. These implications are also compared to major emphases in the case studies and the current literature to provide a triangulation of data and, from this data, appropriate conclusions drawn. This approach provides an analysis base that is not unilateral and adds validity to the research. In support of this approach Mason (1996, 25) discusses the process saying,



Testing different analyses, explanations or theories against each other? This may involve building a study which is designed to test out the validity of different ontological perspectives, for example. That might mean that you conceptualize the social entities under scrutiny in more than one way, and link these up with different sets of data generation methods.

Similarly, Salinger, Plonk and Prechelt (2008, 10-11) defend the importance of a Grounded Theory method and the technique of comparing relationships found in the data. They contend for the importance of observations obtained directly from the data. They (2008, 11) write,

GT, first described in Glaser and Strauss (1967), is a data analysis approach that is largely data driven and aims at producing a theory that describes interesting relationships between things, situations, events and activities (together called phenomena) reflected in the data by means of abstract concepts...observed phenomena (and their contexts) are compared many times in order to create codes that are precise and consistent.

The analysis of the in-depth interviews and emerging themes from all of the participants has enabled the development of consistent codes in this research project that will be discussed in the next section. The codes were discovered through an inductive and comparative approach to the interviews and emerged from similarities in responses to the research instrument used for the interviews. Through comparison of responses to interview questions, and the observations that ascribe unique characteristics to the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, data emerged that help to give a broader understanding of the needs of church planting situations in the region that either agree with or vary from the literature based expectations.

#### **4.4.2 Coding**

The codes used for analyzing the data emerged from common themes in the interviews. The researcher employed an inductive approach in the in-depth interviews in order to facilitate the emergence of codes from the interviews themselves and not from the presuppositions of the researcher. The codes are representative of similar responses to the questions in the semi-standardized in-depth interviews and are in keeping with a Grounded Theory and Constant Comparative method as is described by Pearse (2011, 2) who says of his own research,

The interview data was analysed using open coding and constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin 1990) to generate categories. Open coding is the 'process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorizing data' (Strauss & Corbin 1990:61). Constant comparison 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.

Some of the codes were widely represented in all of the interviews, while others were less common, but significant in some of the interviews. A two or three letter abbreviation was given to each code in order to expedite recognition in the analyses of the transcription of the interviews. The codes are listed below in alphabetical order according to the abbreviations. The order of appearance does not represent their importance in the data.

The following codes, listed in alphabetical order below, emerged from the in-depth interviews: AS, accountability structures; CM, consumer mind-set; CD, cultural differences; DB, demographic base; GD, geographic differences; LBE, LOS, limited outside support; MDE, missional, discipleship, evangelism; MD, missionary deputation; PFV, pastor formulated vision; RI, rural isolation; SC, slower change; SE, slower establishment; SFS, sustained financial support; SG, slower growth, SI, structural issues; SLL, strong lay leadership; SPL, strong pastoral leadership; TT, traditional thinking; and VS, vision statement.

These codes have been used to identify statements in the interviews that pertain to the issue they represent but do not necessarily categorize the participant's opinion on the matter being discussed. These opinions will be clarified in the formal analysis of the data in Chapter 5, with reference to the literature based expectations that have emerged from the conceptual framework provided in Chapter 3. References to specific issues are explained in Chapter 5 as supporting or differing from literature based expectations. The responses and opinions of participants have been compared to one another to determine areas of commonality and differences. Conclusions regarding common characteristics of long term viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada have been made based upon the responses of participants in comparison to literature based expectations and their commonality or differences with other participant responses, as well as, with the case studies.

The in-depth interviews and case studies have been examined and data compiled based on the participant responses, observations and inferences that reveal themes coinciding with the codes listed above. Codes in the case studies were identified in the body of the case studies by the researcher. All of the in-depth interview responses have been recorded with reference to common themes in the other interviews. Kawulich (2004, 100) emphasizes the importance of identifying themes that reveal the overall experience, the structure of the experience, its function in relation to the meaning of the whole experience, stability or variability and the recurrence of the experience within the data. Codes have also been examined in relation to the specific section of the research tool used for the in-depth interviews in which they are found and compared to the responses of other participants in the same sections. Responses have been recorded by section of the interviews to which they pertain. These responses have also been

compared to the case studies provided. This approach enables the analysis to be more reliable and credible. In relation to this Suter (2012, 350) says,

Qualitative analysis of text is often supplemented with other sources of information to satisfy the principle of triangulation and increase trust in the validity of the study's conclusions. It would not be uncommon, for example, to analyze transcribed interviews along with observational field notes and documents authored by the respondents themselves. The purpose of multiple sources of data is corroboration and converging evidence.

The examination of the in-depth interviews and case studies with reference to the literature, the other interviews and themes and codes that have emerged in each, have established the credibility of the data presented in Chapter 5.

#### **4.5 Two Case Studies**

The case studies used in the research are drawn from the personal experience of the researcher in the area of church planting and revitalization. They are employed as a secondary source of data for use in the constant comparative method described by Kawulich (2004, 99) who says, "Data are analyzed on an ongoing basis. The constant comparative method of data analysis is typically used for theory building, but it is appropriate for much of the inductive data analysis that takes place in qualitative research." The case studies are consistent with Participatory Action Research in that the researcher's experience in church planting is being acknowledged as a source of information on the subject both to augment data and to disclose obvious biases of the researcher. This is consistent with fundamental principles of participatory research as described by Bergold and Thomas (2012, 4) who comment,

Participatory research requires a great willingness on the part of participants to disclose their personal views of the situation, their own opinions and experiences. In everyday life, such openness is displayed towards good and trusted friends, but hardly in institutional settings or toward strangers...participatory research seeks these dissenting views; they are essential for the process of knowledge

production because they promise a new and different take on the subject under study, and thereby enable the discovery of new aspects.

and with the understanding of action research promoted by O'Brien, who says,

Action Research is more of a holistic approach to problem-solving, rather than a single method for collecting and analyzing data. Thus, it allows for several different research tools to be used as the project is conducted. These various methods, which are generally common to the qualitative research paradigm, include: keeping a research journal, document collection and analysis, participant observation recordings, questionnaire surveys, structured and unstructured interviews, and case studies.

In this sense the cases studies below are an essential aspect of the overall research into church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces.

The first case study describes the church planting situation in a rural area of Nova Scotia experiencing rapid population growth through suburban development. This first case study prompted the researcher's initial interest in the research problem. The second case study describes the researcher's experience in planting a new ministry concept of collaboration and eventual unity between several struggling churches and Christian organizations within a relatively small rural geographical region of central New Brunswick.

The significance of these case studies is, firstly, in their impact on the biases and presuppositions of the researcher and, secondly, as an additional source for comparison of common themes that emerge from the data. They also represent the cultural milieu of two communities within the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada that help to establish concepts that are held in common and concepts unique to each community.

The case studies are considered a secondary source of empirical data because they are written from the perspective of the researcher and the research instrument was not used directly to obtain data. The observations of the researcher are subjective, in that they represent the experience of the researcher in the field of study, but are used as a body of information for comparison with data that was obtained, in a more objective approach, through the in-depth research interviews and literature study. The importance of these case studies is that they reflect the basis of the researcher's analytic approach and provide a framework for the research data

obtained through the research instrument and the in-depth interviews. In regard to the value of case studies, Berg (1998, 217-218) says,

The scientific benefit of the case study method lies in its ability to open the way for discoveries. It can easily serve as the breeding ground for insights and even hypotheses that may be pursued in subsequent studies...If the investigator's findings and analysis were correct, subsequent research will corroborate this. If the research produced from a case study is faulty, in error, or inaccurate, this too will be shown by subsequent research.

This is an example of the strength of triangulation of data from the in-depth interviews, case studies and the conceptual framework of chapter 3.

The first case study is an example of the researcher's experience before the development of the research problem and conducting the interviews. The second case study is an example of the researcher's experience both during and after the in-depth interviews were completed. Both are included in order to provide a frame of reference for the theological, structural and cultural/geographical setting in which the researcher has worked and, therefore, has been motivated to complete the study of the research problem defined in Chapter 1, section 1.3. The case studies are included immediately below, in section 4.2.4 as Case Study 1(C-1) and Case Study 2 (C-2). Coding in the case studies is identified at first by name and then by the two or three letter abbreviations as are found in Chapter 4.4.2.

#### **4.5.1 Case Studies 1 and 2 (C.1 and C.2):**

##### **C.1 - Case Study 1- Church Planting in Nova Scotia**

###### **C.1.1 Introduction:**

This case study represents my observations and opinions, as the researcher for this research project, and as the church planting pastor directly responsible for the church planting situation. This situation will be referred to as Church A for the remainder of this study. The case study has six sections. A.1 is an introduction to the study. A.2 gives the background of Church A and outlines my calling, as a church planting pastor to Church A. A.3 includes

observations that follow section 1 of the research tool (Appendix B). A. 4 includes observations that follow section 2 of the research tool. A. 5 includes observations that follow section 3 of the research tool. A. 6 is a conclusion to the case study.

This case study is limited by the subjective opinions of the researcher. It does, however, follow the guidelines of the research tool in order to establish objectivity and credibility. It is considered a secondary source to the in-depth interviews but an important source for comparison to literature based expectations as described in Chapter 3 and to the data collected from the in-depth interviews. This coincides with the constant comparative method described by Babbie (2004, 372-373) as being an essential component to the inductive approach of the Grounded Theory Method.

### **C.1.2 The Situation of Church Planting:**

Church A was a new church planting initiative of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches in the late 1980's. It began under the influence of a well-known, retired pastor who began canvassing the region for Baptist people to start a church. He also arranged for the Convention to purchase land for a building before the formation of the congregation. The local Baptist Association and Convention arranged for a recent seminary graduate to become the church planting pastor. His ministry began well but there was soon a great deal of conflict in the congregation of approximately 50 people. The church plant faltered and the pastor moved on. There was a one year period interim ministry by a retired pastor until a new full time pastor was called to replant the work that had failed to reach viability.

Under the second full time church planter the work grew quickly to eighty people in attendance and chartered as a church within a year with approximately 30 members. After six years the internal conflicts had caused the church plant to be greatly reduced in size. The pastor resigned, an interim retired pastor was appointed until such time as a new pastor could be called. The congregation continued to shrink. In 1999 I was called to replant the work. The Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches informed me that this would be the church plant's last opportunity to receive funding from the Home Mission Board and that there was a very small and weak core

group with whom I would be working. This was an example of SI (structural issues) that emerged early on in my ministry there, as well as, the absence of clear AS (accountability structures.) The denominational leadership were of the mind-set that I would need to be willing to give annual reports to the local Baptist Association and the Convention Home Mission Board (now the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board). Otherwise I was on my own to develop the church plant. This again was an example of poor AS.

My response to these expectations was my desire to build stronger accountability ties (AS) both locally and regionally so that we would not have a repeat of previous difficulties. Throughout my years as church planter for Church A I developed support groups, accountability with the local Baptist Association and regionally, at the Baptist Convention level, and also developed a program to enable raising of funding for the ministry of church planting. As a result, stronger ties with the Baptist association and Convention provided stability in the midst of difficult situations that emerged from the relatively weak core group. It became obvious very early on that the church plant lacked strong lay leadership (SLL) and resisted strong pastoral leadership (SPL). There was also a need for sustained financial support (SFS) and missionary deputation (MD )to meet the needs of the new church. Through discussions with the Convention Mission Board and through their own research the Mission Board became more aware of other denominational expectations for accountability and church planters being involved in raising some of their own financial support (MD). This resulted in a modest program of deputation and mission support being developed for the church planting situation. Individuals and churches were contacted by letter, as well as, through visits to churches to raise additional funding with some success.

The history of conflict and failure to achieve viability in the church planting situation in the past was a challenge to overcome. As a church planter, my task was to essentially start the planting process over. My desire was to take the church planting situation back to the very beginning by establishing a new structure and name. This was highly discouraged by the Mission Board and the original name and current structure was maintained. In my opinion, this became a structural issue (SI) that made changes to the church planting model difficult to achieve in the years that followed I believe this made the task of replanting Church A into more of a challenge and made viability(LTV) more difficult.



### **C.1.3 The Theological Basis for Church Planting:**

The purpose for planting Church A, and subsequently replanting was in keeping with the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches' (formerly the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces) desire to evangelize and serve communities without a Baptist witness. In regard to this Gardner (1994, 12) says, "The examination of the Biblical material reveals that the foundation for developing a strategy for church planting must be primarily based upon the implications of the Great Commission and an understanding of the organic nature of the church."

This theological basis was certainly evident in my conversations with officials from the Convention. It was also the basis for my ministry there. It was my commission from our convention to replant a church with a viable ministry of outreach and discipleship in a growing community. There were, however, among the core group, theological assumptions in the church planting situation that were based on a more universalist understanding of salvation and an understanding of the church as an organization rather than as a community focused on evangelism and service. This brought instability in relation to structure and polity (SI) as a mind-set developed that anyone who began attending services should have an equal say in the vision, direction and administration of the church as the appointed leadership. Theological issues which were central to the establishment of this church planting situation are the fundamental need for faith in Christ to receive salvation and the importance of the church as a family, and the local expression of the family of God and it within a missional theology of discipleship and evangelism (MDE).

A common theological concept in the church planting region was the traditional thinking (TT) which understood the church as being a building. Without a building there really was no church. Also common to the area was the concept of universal salvation as opposed to salvation by faith in Christ through the grace of God. As a result of this difference in theological orientation of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches and the church planting pastor in comparison to the theological presuppositions of the existing core group, different visions for the mission and stability of the church emerged and sometimes caused conflict. This impacted church growth and stability negatively in several ways. Firstly, an inordinate amount of time

was spent encouraging the core group to accept the vision of the church and to adopt a missional attitude rather than a traditional understanding of the church as a building. Secondly, competing visions (vision statement or VS) and concepts of the church created times of conflict which resulted in newer people becoming discouraged and leaving the church. Therefore, growth and stability were slow (SG, SE).

The replanting of Church A was under the vision (VS) of a family friendly church established on the firm foundation and the scripture verse, 1 Corinthians 3: 11 (NIV), “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The vision was a combination of a previous vision statement from the former church planting pastor and the importance of family ministry and personal faith in Christ of my ministry. As the church planting pastor (PFV- pastor formulated vision) I took the initiative in formulating and casting the vision with the core group, Convention and local Baptist association. The vision statement was useful in helping to focus ministry for the small congregation that began to emerge and to avoid the pit fall of trying to be a full service congregation. The greatest challenge was to keep the core group focused on the vision and not trying to recreate every ministry of larger congregations in communities that were in close geographical proximity. In times of conflict the vision statement provided a tool to refocus the ministry and stay on course. The vision, supported by both the Convention and local Baptist Association, enabled the congregation to achieve a degree of stability which had not been achieved in previous planting attempts.

#### **C.1.4 Structural Issues of Church Planting:**

The core group which was in place when I began the ministry of church planting had organized into a steering group. Their understanding was that they were going to direct the church and the pastor. The concept of leadership that was understood by me and by the Convention officials was that I would develop the ministry in cooperation with the steering group (SPL, SLL). The weak theological stance of the steering group and relatively small amount of leadership experience within a Baptist context brought challenges for stability and viability (LTV). The church planting structures were similar to but not identical to most

traditional (TT) denominational structures. There was no Board of Deacons until more than three years into the church planting process because of a lack of qualified leaders and the need to disciple and train leaders for those positions.

Through study of church planting literature and consultation with denominational leadership structures were modified to reflect a more functional approach to the church planting task and accommodate a leadership directed church. Over a three to four year time span a Board of Deacons was formed and the steering committee was changed to an Advisory Board with representation on the Board from ministry leaders involved in the actual programs of the church as opposed to a steering committee of individuals who may or may not have been involved in regular ministry. This led to development of better AS, and more effective SPL and SLL.

In the church planting situation new individuals coming into the church came with varying levels of traditional expectations(TT). Some who were transferring from other churches in close proximity came with expectations of ministries and traditions that were familiar to them from other congregations. Those who came to the church from a relatively non-church background had few traditional expectations and were more likely to embrace new ideas and change. We (The Board of Deacons, the Pastor and Advisory Board) tried to keep structures simple, functional and easy to change as the need arose (SI, AS).

The small size of the core group with which I began made it necessary to receive home mission support for salary. The Convention suggested a three year commitment. I requested a sustained financial support (SFS) in a 5 year commitment and a concerted effort on the part of the church to reduce requests each year. Expectations for viability by the denomination were very similar to those reflected in much of the literature based expectations(LBE) with a desire for the congregation to be self-supporting by three years but with the allowance of two extra years if necessary. There was also a willingness on the Convention's part to continue support of the work if it was showing signs of growth and stability (SFS).

In order to support ministry costs and move towards reducing denominational support, I designed and implemented a church planting support system (MD). It entailed deputation work and regular correspondence with a group of individuals and churches who had been asked to consider prayer and financial support for the establishment of Church A. Initially there was resistance to this program from the Mission Board of Convention but upon further research, on their part, they discovered that many denominations were involved in a similar expectation of

mission funding by church planting pastors. This funding program augmented the funding coming directly from the Convention Mission Board and giving at Church A. It provided much needed funds for ministry initiatives in the community and, eventually, to support operating costs of our new building.

In Church A the official leaders were the Pastor and the Steering Committee in the first three years. This was replaced by the Pastor, Deacons and Advisory Board in the last three years of my ministry there. There was a desire to maintain congregational government with a leadership directed church (SPL, SLL). In reality, the small initial group and people who transferred from other nearby Baptist churches, constantly campaigned for a traditional (TT) Baptist Church concept that has developed in the region in which the congregation micro-manages the ministry and its leaders. This inhibited the ability of the leadership to develop new and culturally significant ministries.

### **C.1.5 Cultural and Geographical Issues:**

In respect to the geographic and cultural region in which Church A was planted there were several notable distinctions. The demographic base (DB) of the region was largely Roman Catholic and, therefore, was slower to embrace an evangelical church (SG, SE). Also, within the region, and perhaps in many areas of Atlantic Canada, a church is understood as a building. This TT and lack of a building was perceived as the inability to plant a permanent church. Within three years we had constructed a new building and people seemed more accepting of the congregation. Attendance at services grew for a time but then began to plateau. The growth of the population of this rural/suburban community also brought congregants with traditional expectations (TT) in conflict with those who were looking for a more culturally relevant ministry. This is an example of cultural differences (CD) within the demographic base which resulted in slower growth (SG) than literature based expectations (LBE). Other cultural distinctives (CD) that differed from much of the American literature based expectations were reluctance of local people to join organizations, and a longer period of time before local people

were ready to commit themselves both personally and financially to the new church. This resulted in a longer time period for the congregation to achieve long-term viability (SE, LTV).

### **C.1.6 Conclusion:**

My experience as a church planter in Church A confirmed some of the literature based expectations of church planting and challenged other expectations. Those which were confirmed were the missional evangelical basis(MDE) for church planting both from a denominational and a personal point of view. The importance of a vision (VS) and that vision being led by the Pastor (PFV) and leaders were also confirmed.

Challenges to literature based expectations (LBE) became evident in several areas. Traditional thinking (TT) in the area had a negative impact on long-term viability (LTV) in respect to identification of the church as a building; understanding of congregational government as the congregation micro-managing the leadership; a strong Roman Catholic community that was resistant to development of an evangelical church; as well as, a clash between traditional understandings of what constitutes a church and contemporary culturally relevant ministries(CD) for the growing demographic base (DB) in this rural/suburban community. A reluctance to become a member, commit to the ministry of the church and give financial support also slowed the establishment (SE, LTV) of this church into a viable self-supporting congregation.

## **C.2 Case Study 2 – Church Planting in New Brunswick**

### **C.2.1 Introduction:**

This case study represents my observations and opinions, as the researcher for this research project, and as the church planting pastor directly responsible for the church planting

situation. This situation will be referred to as Church B for the remainder of this study. The case study has six sections. B.1 is an introduction to the study. B.2 gives the background of Church B and outlines my calling as a church planting pastor for the situation. B.3 includes observations that follow section 1 of the research tool (Appendix C). B.4 includes observations that follow section 2 of the research tool. B.5 includes observations that follow section 3 of the research tool. B.6 is a conclusion to the case study.

### **C.2.2 The Situation of Church Planting:**

Church B was an older church that had been in existence for many years in a small town in north-western New Brunswick. It had been established in a predominantly English town but over a period of time the demographics (DB) had changed significantly so that the town had become predominantly French Roman Catholic. Many English people had moved away and there were only 5 members remaining in the congregation. The members entertained a discussion to disband but were encouraged by the Regional Minister of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches to consider re-planting Church B. The congregation already had an existing building that was in need of many updates. Until just before my call to the area a new French Baptist Church had also used the building for Sunday Morning Services whereas Church B held their service in the evening to accommodate the wishes of another congregation with whom they partnered in order to have full time pastoral ministry. Of the 5 members only 4 were active and there was one family who attended occasionally. With encouragement from the Regional Minister they decided to try to replant the church.

In my contact with the same Regional Minister mentioned above I was encouraged to consider a call to Church B as a church planter and to simultaneously pastor the church with whom they partnered to pay a pastor. The Regional Minister spoke of the potential in the small town which had no English evangelical Church. His concern was to see the development of a mission focused church to bring an evangelical witness to the town, as well as, to have a pastor for the partner church. My wife and I had already decided that the ministry at Church A (Appendix A) was coming to a conclusion. We decided to accept the dual ministry of replanting Church B and pastoring the partner church. We were unaware of deep divisions in the partner

church that would result in almost half of the congregation leaving the church shortly after our settling our family in the area. This created a great challenge financially but also a great opportunity for Church B to receive a greater focus than had been possible in the past because of the demands of the partner church. An immediate result of the division in the partner church was the need to apply for support (SFS) from the Mission Board of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. This was approved on the basis of the potential for replanting Church B despite the challenges provided by problems in the partner church.

With the help of the Regional Minister, the local Baptist Association and the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches' Mission Board, the vision of replanting Church B went forward.

### **C.2.3 The Theological Basis for Church Planting:**

The theological basis was to be Missional in focus so that we reached out to the town that had little in the way of an English evangelical ministry (MDE). The desire of the Convention was to re-establish the Church to provide a continuing presence in the town and, if possible, to reach both Anglophones and Francophone people in the community. As with Church A the replanting was in keeping with the Convention's desire to evangelize and serve communities without an evangelical witness as described by Gardner (1994, 12) who says, "The examination of Biblical material reveals that the foundation for developing a strategy for church planting must be primarily based upon the implications of the Great Commission." (MDE) This understanding was clear in my conversations with the Regional Minister who expressed a concern over the lack of an evangelical English presence in the town. He also indicated his belief in the potential of the area for growth of a replanted church.

The few members who remained in the church were committed to the concept of re-establishing the church with a desire for personal and numerical growth. They expressed a desire for strong pastoral leadership (SPL) in terms of outreach and new ideas and were supportive of me, as the pastor, in new ideas proposed. Theological issues which were central to the replanting of this church included the vision of a family focused ministry with evangelism and discipleship as key issues (MDE). This was a vision concept that, as pastor (PFV), I transferred from the previous ministry of church planting in Nova Scotia. To that end we began a small multi-age Bible study group to build community, and the idea that the church is the family of

God, within the small core group. We also began to plan youth and children's events for the church and community (MDE). This was a ministry focus which had not been in place for many years in this particular setting as the other church with whom they shared a pastor had always dominated in these areas. Contacts through community events and sports provided opportunity for inviting people who had little church exposure to participate in the ministries of the church. The town was in need of opportunities for children and youth ministries that supported family life, as a result, there was a slow but positive response to the family focused outreach (MDE) of the church and new families began to become involved.

The vision statement (VS) for the church replant reflected the vision of my ministry in previous situations and was the same as Church A. It was, "A family friendly church established on the firm foundation." It was based on the same scripture, 1 Corinthians 3: 11 (NIV), "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." The vision statement and corresponding scripture verse also reflected a missional and evangelical approach to ministry. This approach was strongly endorsed by the core group who desired change and growth through new families. The vision enabled Church B to maintain a central focus that helped in decision-making regarding programs and ministries (AS). The vision was also supported by the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches and the local association both of whom were in favour of a renewed evangelical witness in the town.

### **C.2.4 Structural Issues of Church Planting:**

The structure of Church B was minimal when we began ministry in the town. With only five members there were only three people holding leadership positions. They were a deacon/treasurer, clerk/assistant treasurer and trustee. All three were supportive of strong pastoral leadership (SPL, SLL) and new initiatives, as were the other two members. Business meetings were relaxed and focused on issues facing the congregation. The most pressing issue was a small, aging building in which they worshiped. The building had recently been shared with a French Baptist congregation but they had moved out and found other facilities. The building was in need of major repairs and renovations to accommodate ministry. Although the group was small they recognized the importance of the building in the cultural context of their



town. Traditional thinking was that the church was a building. Gaining an understanding of this traditional thinking led to a commitment to do renovations, a little at a time, to make the building more weather tight and appealing for ministry.

Structures at Church B were minimal and through regular communication and discussion with the small core group we were able to keep them functional. There was a fair degree of flexibility in structures for new ministries and the small core group was willing to try new approaches as the needs arose. This allowed for tailoring programs to meet the needs of new individuals and families. Since the church had come so close to closing permanently there was little expectation to carry on traditional programs. They simply had not existed there for many years. There was a desire for preserving some of the traditional hymns and music for worship but there was also openness to new and contemporary music.

Early on in the ministry of replanting Church B, the congregation with whom it shared a pastor faced difficulties that led to a large group leaving the church. This caused financial hardship for both churches. As a result the Mission Board of the Convention and the local association were contacted with a request for financial support so that the work could continue. Both the convention and the association were very supportive. Financial support was received for ministry initiatives, as well as, capital grants for building improvement. Convention and Association expectations were that requests for financial support would decrease by 20% each year for a maximum of five years, at which point the church was expected to be self-sufficient. This was in keeping with literature based expectations with some allowance being made for the slower growth considered normal for the region.

In order to deal with regularly reduced funding the church encouraged members and adherents to increase their giving, as they were able. Increased giving in Church B enabled the replanted church to gradually assume a higher percentage of the cost of pastoral ministry as funding decreased from the denomination and from the other church with which they shared a pastor. Long-term viability in this town required significant congregational growth numerically and personal growth in terms of giving for new members. In light of a culture in which many people were reluctant to give to churches in any great amount this situation needed time and commitment of funding for support outside the church for a longer period of time than suggested by most literature.

In Church B the official leaders were the Pastor, Deacon and Trustee. Unofficial leadership was also recognized for my wife's ministry with children and youth. The small core group was very respectful of the initiatives she was taking in this area of ministry and recognition of her leadership was an example of functional structures (SI) at work in the church plant. Schwarz (1998, 13) in his booklet, *The ABC's of Natural Church Development*, describes functional structures saying,

Church structures are never an end in themselves but always only a means to an end. Whatever does not measure up to this requirement (e.g. demeaning leadership structures, inconvenient worship service times, or programs that do not reach their audience effectively) is changed or laid to rest. Through this process of self-renewal traditionalistic ruts can be avoided to a large extent.

As a Level 2 Coach in the Natural Church Development organization, I was concerned with the development of a healthy congregation as described by Schwarz.

As my wife and I led in the development of non-traditional times and programming for children and youth, the core group responded with support and encouragement (SLL). This unity in ministry became attractive for new families who were being introduced to the church through these new ministries.

Accountability for leadership in the church was established on a number of levels (AS). As Pastor of a church receiving support (SFS) from the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board and the local Baptist Association, I was accountable through annual reports to both the Convention and the Association. Informal contact with the Regional Minister of the Convention was an aspect of informal accountability (AS) that was valuable for the development of the church replant.

Within the church accountability was maintained through monthly meetings with the Deacons of Church B and the Deacon of the church with which Church B shared a Pastor (AS). There were also annual and semi-annual business meetings when the whole church body was able to discuss the direction of the ministry. These regular meeting kept lines of communication open and helped to foster unity. They were very important in providing stability and unity as the small church replant began to see slow but steady growth.

## C.2.5 Cultural and Geographical Issues:

In respect to the geographic and cultural region in which Church B was replanted there were several notable distinctions. The town had once been about 50% English speaking but the demographics had changed in two decades to a predominantly French speaking population at about 85% of the total (CD). The town was formally bilingual, which enabled English ministry to carry on and also provided the impetus to incorporate bilingual elements in worship and Bible studies. This was an encouragement to families in which one parent was English and the other French, as well as, to bilingual families (CD).

The region had very traditional thinking (TT) about the church, as being a building, therefore, care for and renovation of the existing building became a very important witness to the community that the Church was experiencing renewal. Creative ways of ministry also had to be developed in order to encourage people from a traditional Roman Catholic background to even enter the building of an evangelical church. Many of these people had only nominal association with their church but were cautious (TT) about a church with an evangelical background. This was addressed by having celebrations and informal gatherings for youth and children's events in the basement fellowship hall. As individuals became comfortable with the fellowship area they were more willing to enter and become part of worship in the sanctuary.

Another aspect of the region's culture that affected long-term viability was the attitude toward giving. Cynicism of people from the predominant denomination over clergy moral failures in the past had led to an attitude of reluctance to give financially to the church (CD). This carried over when new people from that background became involved in Church B. Achieving financial self-sufficiency, therefore, required a longer time period (SFS) than in major urban areas represented by much of the American based church planting literature (LBE).

Although many people had left or distanced themselves from the denomination into which they were born, there were still strong family and community pressures on individuals who were seen as abandoning their faith if they became involved in an evangelical church. This impacted long-term viability (LTV) by causing slower growth and establishment (SG, SE) of Church B. It was a factor that could not be ignored in the area.

### **C.2.6 Conclusion:**

My experience in replanting Church B confirmed some of the literature based expectations (LBE) and challenged other expectations. Those which were confirmed were the missional evangelical basis for church planting, both from a denominational and a personal point of view (MDE). The importance of having a clear vision (VS) and of the Pastor being the main proponent of that vision was clear (PFV, SPL), as was the importance of the core group's unity (SLL) with the pastor in promoting the vision. Also, in keeping with much of the literature was the importance of functional structures and accountability (SI, AS). In the case of Church B, the small but supportive core group brought stability and unity as we worked together to promote the vision and missional direction of the church (SLL). This was a clear distinction from my experience with Church A in which informal and unhealthy structures led to constant struggles and had a negative impact on viability.

Traditional thinking (TT) of the church as a building and slower personal growth in the area of financial giving caused slower growth and financial viability for Church B. A strong Roman Catholic community also resulted in slower growth (SG) for an evangelical church in the town in which Church B was being replanted than may have been experienced in an area with a larger, historically evangelical population base (DB, CD).

### **4.6 Sub-conclusion:**

The methodology of this research project has been approached from a practical theological perspective in order to gain insights into viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. A Qualitative research approach was used in design of the research tool.

The research instrument (Appendix B) was designed to facilitate in-depth interviews with pastors involved in church planting situations in the designated geographical region. Case studies based on the researcher's own experience in the field of church planting were used as a

secondary source of data for the purpose of comparison and triangulation of data. The research tool was divided into three sections for the interviews, namely, theological concepts, structural issues and cultural/geographical issues. The research instrument provided a stable structure for all interviews while allowing opportunity for participants to freely express their opinions. The case studies were used to bring the researcher's perspective and experience in the field of study to the research project, with the understanding that his own biases, opinions and presuppositions would be represented in the data. The researcher's observations in the case studies, therefore, are considered secondary, as a source of data, to the participant observations from the interviews.

Data was gathered and coded based upon the participants' responses to the research instrument. The sample included pastors of church planting situations from several different denominational backgrounds and from various urban and rural areas of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Data was coded according to recurrent themes in participant responses to the in-depth interviews. A grounded theory approach using constant comparison of participant responses with one another and with the case studies, as well as with literature based expectations provided practical theological observations for long-term viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. These observations will be discussed next in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis of Empirical Research Data.**

### **5.1 Introduction:**

The purpose of this research project is to test the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common to viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The research tool employed was a semi-standardized in-depth interview that followed the same basic sections and questions for each participant but allowed for individual expression of personal ideas, as well as, the development of themes originating from each participant. The responses to these interviews have provided the data for the constant comparison approach of the grounded theory method of analysis described in Chapter 4, section 4.4.1 above. Participant responses are compared to one another, to the case studies and to the prevalent themes that have emerged from literature on church planting from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This literature examined has emerged mainly

from American, Canadian and European sources, as representative of western thought in the area of church planting.

Chapter 5 is an analysis of the data from the research sample and the case studies. It highlights areas of commonality of thought and practice, as well as, areas of distinction from prevailing concepts emerging from the literature as outlined in the conceptual framework of Chapter 3. Section 5.2 describes the prevalence of codes described in Chapter 4, section 4.4.2, that emerged from the interviews as a whole and that crossed over all sections of the research tool and case studies and gives examples of responses to interview questions that reveal the code in the data. It also makes comparisons of the codes between the interviews and the case studies and makes limited reference to the conceptual framework as found in Chapter 3. More in-depth comparisons to Chapter 3 are found in section 5.5. Section 5.3 describes the prevalence of significant codes that were not universal in all of the interviews and case studies but are important in gaining a more complete understanding of the challenges of planting long-term viable churches in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Section 5.4 analyzes the significance of the emergent codes in the research data from both the interviews and the case studies and identifies common characteristics of long-term viable church plants in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. It also discusses the similarities and differences of the common characteristics, in comparison to literature based expectations, as developed in the conceptual framework of Chapter 3. Section 5.5 consists of a sub-conclusion outlining the discoveries of the research analysis.

## **5.2 Prevalence of the Codes in the Data:**

The prevalence of the codes that emerged in the interviews are described in the subsections below with reference to the primary and secondary sources and an initial analysis of

their significance. This section identifies the most prevalent and universal codes which emerged in the interviews and case studies and makes comparisons between the interviews and case studies, as well as, limited reference to the conceptual framework as found in Chapter 3.

### **5.2.1 MDE-Missional, Discipleship and Evangelism:**

The most prevalent code in all of the interviews, as well as, the case studies was MDE (Missional, Discipleship and Evangelism). Responses from all candidates in the research sample indicated a high level of commitment to a missional understanding of church planting as described in Chapter 2, section 2.3 above. Along with the missional theme, and very much intertwined were the concepts of discipleship and evangelism. Examples of this code are found in statements from the interviews such as: (Interview 1 or I-1) “When we talk about being missional here we really believe that God is at work...How do we get out of the church , how do we serve the community, how do we build relationships?” The senior pastor of I-1 elaborates on the missional focus of the church plant when discussing their vision. He (I-1) says,

So how are we going to fulfill our mission and our vision? It’s all about CRAVE, and we’re going to create a craving environment. So CRAVE is this. C is Core habits. Basically discipleship. We want people to develop the core spiritual habits. Radical generosity in a consumeristic society and in a church where in Acts 2 people would even sell stuff if people needed help. They were radically generous. We want to develop a culture in a consumeristic society that is radically generous. The third is Authentic friendships. Jesus had his disciples but he also had Peter, James and John. They were a little bit tighter, he shared stuff with them that I am sure the rest didn’t know. So we wanted to develop authentic spiritual friendships. You wanna grab two or three other people that you get



together with that you can develop authentic spiritual friendships with. These vital communities, we want communities around here that are vital and healthy, whether that's a small group, a life group, or the elders board or the youth team or the ministry team, we want to develop vital communities where people belong and have a sense of ministry together.

His emphasis in the above quote includes congregational development, as well as, outreach and discipleship through generosity, development of authentic relationships and vital, healthy communities.

The presence of MDE is evident in Interview 2, or I-2, from the response to the question regarding practical ways that the church's vision was applied. The pastor (I-2) says, "I think you can put it in one word, it would be discipleship for church planting because discipleship, in the first place, involves witnessing." He also identifies key Bible passages that all reflect the church's purpose and mission as being based in discipleship and evangelism. In regard to this he (I-2) comments,

You mean some Bible key verses? Yeah sure, I've got a few passages. Ah one of my,, ah I got 3 or 4. Like 1 Tim. 2: 4, for me it says that God wants us to share the gospel with all the people. He wants everybody to get saved, and, also to know the truth, right? And with that, Matt. 28: 19-20. That's for sure. That's a commandment to go and make disciples. I think here I'm just underline the word disciples, which is very important to me. Also Acts 1: 8. It talks about our mission, how wide our mission is, starting with your home community, and just, and then go wider, larger, and with that I will join Acts 2: 42-47, probably 41-47. It talks about Apostles were doing, like you know, reading the Bible, teaching of the apostles, and the prayer is there, the fellowship is there, even testimonies, the service. You have a lot of things there. So that is about the Biblical base I have.

The church's focus is clearly on making and new converts, on discipleship and outreach beyond their own communities.

The missional, discipleship, evangelism code was evident in various parts of the in-depth interviews but was especially prevalent in the first section of the interviews. Interview 3 or I-3 is an example of this. In answer to the question regarding key Biblical concepts that form the basis of the church plant the pastor (I-3) says, “Well Acts 2 would be one with the church meeting together regularly and sharing about Jesus with others in the community with the purpose of bringing them into relationship with Him.” There was also a strong MDE in questions regarding vision. In relation to the MDE the pastor of I-3 says,

It guides a lot of our Sunday messages. What I choose to speak on lines up with our mission statement. It also provides the foundation for the ministries we offer in that we have our life groups to be about connecting people with each other, God and having people involved in the life groups equipped to be involved in ministry themselves. And how to grow on their own, as well as, corporately. And to provide opportunities to express their giftedness and their interests and their passion in actual ministry.

In this instance the mission statement was designed to expand the service of the members beyond themselves in order to have an impact on the community around them.

In the same way Interview 4 (I-4) stresses MDE in the key Biblical concepts. The senior pastor (I-4) says, “I think that, to keep it really simple, Great Commission, ah, and to sort of further that, as it is our desire to reach people and see Christ’s church grow. In this particular context there has been a real need in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ for a long time.” This is evident in I-4’s vision statement, as well, and is explained by the senior pastor who (I-4) says,

Both of us, S. and I, are highly relational people. And our mission statement is, “We exist to disciple people to live and love as Christ did.” And ultimately we know that good effective ministry is not just a light switch you can turn on and

turn off, um, but its routed in deep relationships with people, where you work with them, you love them, serve them for years at a time. And in that time frame you hope that you are a part of what God is doing in their lives, to live and love as Christ did. And because we are so highly relational, because we invest in people's lives in tremendous ways, ah, that really does shape and dictate everything we do. We're not a church that has a big event, "Let's bring in a band or bring in a speaker," because it misses the relational element. We really don't shy away from difficult relationships or difficult conversations because it will make or break ministry and that really does drive a lot of stuff that we do. And discipleship is a process of time where you invest in people, they watch you, they see you, they hear you and in time they inevitably become like you because you are like Christ, is kind of the heart of it.

I-4's interpretation of their vision statement displays a desire to break with traditionalism, in terms of the attractional model of church planting and move to a more relational and discipleship based concept of church growth that is rooted in the mission of investing in the lives of people and the community.

This MDE emphasis is reflected in the vision statement of Interview 5 (I-5) which is, "Touching life with the word of God to evangelize and make disciples." The pastor asserts that this is the foundation for their ministry in tangible ways. He (I-5), says,

It guides us in that we will use...I grapple with Paul's statement, "Be all things to all men that you might win some." So we will become all things to all men that we might win some. So I could come up with a whole realm of things that we might do to , ah (pause),First and these are examples of how that is live out, the church is available for local children's programs, political meetings, community meetings, etc....We've done Food Bank outreaches where we go out and knock on doors and ask people to give to the Food Bank and tell them we are from \_\_\_\_\_ church. We have a project where we're working with a cemetery down here, an old Puritan cemetery. So the people see us visible in the community.

In these examples the church is serving the community with a sense of mission in order to find opportunities to evangelize and make disciples.

The pastor of Interview 6 (I-6), a church with strong denominational ties and doctrinal expectations that has attracted people of similar faith backgrounds still maintains a MDE focus. He (I-6) describes a key Biblical concept of the church as, “I would say the need of the lost, the people who need to hear the gospel that goes through all of scripture.” The church of I-6 did not have a formal vision statement, however, the pastor describes their purpose in clearly missional terminology. He (I-6) says,

It is because we think our vision statement is to be the church with the leadership we have, faithfully proclaiming God’s Word, if you want to call that a vision statement, uh, just being the church...Maybe I should reiterate this. We do have the vision of Matthew 28: 18-20, of course, the great commission. We see that fulfilled in the everyday labour of the church.

Similarly, the pastor of Interview 7 (I-7) expressed that he and his wife had been sent to establish a denominational church with traditional structures and doctrine, however, their focus was to be decidedly missional. He (I-7) says, “We felt we were sent here to reach people who were lost, not just become a transplant church.” Even in the more structured church plants, denominationally, the focus of church planting was for outreach to people outside of church life.

The key Biblical concept for Interview 8 (I-8) is also an example of the MDE code emerging in the interviews. The pastor (I-8) describes this key concept, saying, “I guess ‘Go into all the world, it is not a great suggestion but the great commission.’” In the same way the case studies, based on the researcher’s experience, reflect a missional/discipleship and evangelism basis. In Case Study 1 the pastor/researcher (C-1) writes, “It was my commission from our convention to replant a church with a viable ministry of outreach and discipleship in a growing

community.” Likewise in Case Study 2 the pastor/researcher (C-2) says, “The Regional Minister spoke of the potential in the small town which had no English evangelical church. His concern was to see the development of a mission focused church to bring an evangelical witness to the town...” In light of the data it is important to note that all of the interviews and both case studies display a strong presence of a missional/discipleship/evangelism focus in the ministry of the new church plant.

The significance of the MDE code will be discussed in regard to commonalities of church planting situations in the region in comparison to the literature based expectations in chapter 6, below.

### **5.2.2. SC – Slower Change and SE - Slower Establishment:**

Another common code that emerged universally in the data was SC (Slower Change). All participants spoke of slower change in the Maritime Provinces for a variety of reasons including financial, cultural and geographic reasons. Slower change was often connected with SE (Slower Establishment) in corresponding sections of the interviews and they are, therefore, being examined together. Participants generally were in agreement, regardless of their location in an urban or rural area, that establishing a new church plant in the Maritime Provinces would take a longer period than the standard three years or less expressed in much of the American based literature as is indicated by Tucker (1999, 119) who suggests that funding for new church plants was limited to three years, after which viability was expected. He (1999, 119) says, “Success in this context is not measured by faithfulness, but by whether a church plant is financial after 3 years and remains financial for another 2 years.” This difference from the literature is evident in statements from pastors such as (I-1), “I think that it is always slow, because we’re working with a lot of the people we’re working with are unchurched.” I-2 speaks

of slow growth in relation to people moving from a traditional understanding of religion to an evangelical understanding of the church. He (I-2) says, “So that’s a lot of teaching there, and I would say that in this community that it takes time because if you go to a church for 30 to 40 years, you just sit there and listen to the priest...So people are not used about the concept of church. What is a church?” In respect to cultural dynamics in a more traditional region with a smaller population base change is more difficult and establishment of a church takes longer than literature based expectations mentioned in this paragraph above.

The concept of church and outreach in traditionally strong Roman Catholic communities have resulted in slower growth and establishment for some churches. This is noted by I-2 in the paragraph above and is reinforced by the thoughts of the associate pastor in I-4. He (I-4) says,

But it’s not uncommon for people to have anywhere from 3 to 5 year expiration date. You know? Kind of a revolving door when a church is what they attend. So that’s one of the dynamics. I don’t know if it’s much of a theological concept but I’ll give you the theological concept, particularly in the town of \_\_\_\_\_, is that it’s a hyper-saturated Roman Catholic background in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ and surrounding areas. A predominantly Roman Catholic population upwards of 90% and Roman Catholic background. So all of the divergences and clashes in theology that you find there. One of our deacons, who really worships in \_\_\_\_\_, strong Roman Catholic, he’ll often translate for me to say, like he can understand the heart, the upbringing for salvation by works. The challenges of culturally understanding the Roman Catholic priesthood instead of the priesthood of Christ or the priesthood of all believers. But many of those things are involved in our regular basis of preaching and teaching and I’ve done so in my context in \_\_\_\_\_.

Another pastor (I-3) indicated SC and SE based on traditional religious loyalties saying, “So we find that difficult for starting a new church. People seem to have their loyalties.”

Similarly, another pastor (I-5) said, “I find it frustrating at times, because people won’t move away from what they know in a cultural way as it relates to, say, your church back ground.”

Others tied SC and SE to cultural mindsets that emerge from a more rural area. One pastor (I-6) says, “Here, where I am, it’s a farming culture and it’s a culture that it’s hard to break into the busyness of people’s lives. And like I said, I think people are generally laid back in their expectations...for church growth.” In the same way I-7 relates slower change and establishment to a way of life different from urban areas. He (I-7) says, “It’s a slower life than major metropolitan areas that I’ve been around and that slowness, that traditional, the desire to hang onto the past is a characteristic of this area.” In I-8 the pastor tied slower change and establishment to the lack of a building saying, “Here in Atlantic Canada, without a building you are not considered a church.” This statement coincides with I-2 who says, “So people are not used about the concept of church. What is a church? What is a church member? And that is another thing that is very interesting. In their mind the church is a building.”

SC and SE were also related to financial issues. One pastor in a multi-site church spoke of the need to be fiscally responsible. He (I-1) says, “We are trying to figure out how this site fits in financially before we go out and start five more sites. It is a sense of responsibility. Another pastor in the same church said (I-1), “...but we tend to be pretty conservative and pretty slow and have a lot of our eggs in a basket and all of our questions answered, you know, before we move out...You have to be honest about the financial one. Something can’t just keep going in the hole.” In their opinion slower establishment and slower growth were linked to people in the Maritime Provinces being fiscally conservative and careful about how and where to spend money.

In the case studies SC and SE were noted as being related to cultural and traditional understandings of the church as is evident in the statement from C-1, “A common theological concept in the church planting region was the understanding of the church as a building. Without a building there was really no church.” These codes are related to growth in C-2, as well, in the statement, “Although the group was small they recognized the importance of the building in the cultural context of their town. Traditional thinking was that the church was a building. Gaining an understanding of this traditional thinking led to a commitment to do renovations, a little at a time, to make the building more weather tight and appealing for ministry.”

SC and SE emerged as major emphases in the data and their appearance and prevalence will be discussed in section 5.4 with regard to the common characteristics of church planting in the Maritime Provinces as compared to the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3 above.

### **5.2.3 PFV – Pastor Formulated Vision:**

In relation to vision there was consensus that the lead pastor was primarily responsible for the development and promotion of the vision. This development took various forms and was not necessarily in isolation from other church leaders but the Pastor Formulated Vision (PFV) was prevalent in the data and is evident in statements such as the pastor of I-1 who says, “...you know, I came up with a missions statement before, because, you know, there was only six of them, so I had to figure out who we are...” In the same way the pastor of I-2, “It came out in the process. When we realized that was what the Lord wanted us to do I just put things altogether. Then this vision came out...” In I-3 the pastor says, “I was actually on a sabbatical last year and I spent a lot of time formulating that and brought it back and presented it to the leadership team.” Another pastor I-5 comments about vision saying, “That was my initiative. I presented it to the



board and they accepted it. That would be about 15 years ago.” The leadership teams, in these churches accepted the vision statement, as presented by the pastor.

The senior pastor of I-4 asserted that PFV was logical and necessary for sustained growth and viability. He also indicates a belief that it is Biblically correct for pastors to act in this capacity of developing the vision. He (I-4) says,

Well even just, I know this is going to sound really negative, and it’s not meant to be, but if the vision comes from the body why on earth would there be pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets who are called to lead? Romans 8 – lead with all diligence. Those who have been called by the Holy Spirit are called to lead the church. Now it’s not a dictatorship, it’s not a power struggle or something to be coveted or really desired. Just Biblically, the whole idea of leadership is its evident, it’s strong. Paul speaks of it all the time and every church he appointed elders and deacons and leaders that kind of governed over local bodies of people. Because in your church or my church, wherever we go, if it comes from the body, oftentimes it is the lowest common denominator. And if your church is like my church they’re sometimes not all that interested in spiritual things.

Vision in most of the interviews was considered to be not so much the prerogative of the pastor as it is his responsibility as a leader.

In I-6 the pastor stated that the church did not have a vision statement but he then went on to explain his understanding of purpose in these words, “It is because we think our vision statement is to be the church with the leadership we have, faithfully proclaiming God’s Word, if you want to call that a vision statement.” This lack of a vision statement was related to the situation in which the church was planted to reflect identifiable denominational structures. Similarly, I-7 reflects the planting of an identifiable denominational congregation and was planted without a vision statement. I-7 said, “The vision statement initially was to plant a

Freewill Baptist Church in this area and ah, now that we are at this point, we are revisiting our vision and trying to test a new vision.” These two interviews were unique from the others in their lack of a formal vision statement but their purpose was also clear, from a denominational stand point, and was led by the pastor.

In the case studies, as well, vision was primarily that of the pastor and is represented by such statements as C-1, “As the church planting pastor I took the initiative in formulating and casting the vision with the core group...” Similarly in C-2 the vision was pastor formulated, as evident in this statement, “The vision statement for the church replant reflected the vision of my ministry in previous situations.” The data from all of the interviews and both case studies reveal that a pastor formulated vision, to a certain extent, was common to all situations.

PFV will be discussed as a common characteristic of Maritime church planting situations and compared to the conceptual framework of Chapter 3 in the next chapter.

#### **5.2.4. SPL – Strong Pastoral Leadership and SLL –Strong Lay Leadership:**

Strong Pastoral Leadership (SPL) and Strong Lay Leadership (SLL) were codes that emerged universally in the interviews and the case studies, as well. The importance of SPL was noted in all the data, as was the necessity of SLL. They are being examined in the same section of this chapter because they usually emerged, as distinct and identifiable codes, in the sections of the interviews on leadership, but were very often linked to one another in the responses of the pastors. Lack of one or the other had a negative impact on long-term viability. This is clear in comments from the interviews. In I-1 the lead pastor comments on the questions, “Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders,” saying,

Official, I mean the official leaders are the staff and elders and we have a board of management. I see the board of management as sort of the operational side of

things. Who are the official and unofficial leaders? Certainly our elders and staff and board are the official. Unofficial? I mean I know who the unofficial one is in certain churches. I mean they may not be in a position of authority, but if you don't have their ok this things not flying. I'm not sure I would differentiate between the two. We really try to keep communication lines open.

In another comment he says, "We are, in a large part, a staff led church, but under the authority of the elders and the ultimate authority of the congregation." The implication of these statements is that the strength of the church plant viability is in a modified congregational polity that allows the pastoral staff and lay leadership to take initiative in leading the church.

Other interviews reflected a similar attitude toward SPL and SLL. I-2 implies the reality of slower growth in his church planting situation due to the lack of strong lay leadership and a traditional form of congregational government that, at times, impeded pastoral leadership. In response to the importance of accountability structures he says,

Well, again, it is very important because that involves church members. See the church members, they understand that they make the decisions. I will bring a decision (issue) to the church but the church members, they need to decide that. They need to address, to say we want that or we don't want that, OK? So that's their decision, and if they say no the project won't go on. You can't change people. The Spirit of God will change people. But it is very important, that's accountability.

I-3 also indicated SPL and described leadership of his church plant as consisting of himself, as pastor, along with the district denominational board. He also emphasized the importance of SLL saying, "Leadership is critical for long-term stability...with committed leadership they'll be able to continue to provide direction for the church and will hold people together because I think the tendency is for people to drift apart and go in different directions and adopt different purposes

which aren't necessarily wrong purposes but can just lead the church to go in different directions."

Similar to the description to SPL and SLL in I-1 is the response of I-4. The pastors who formed part of the interview described a modified understanding of congregational government. Their lead pastor says,

In a very quick nutshell, *Church 4* is a pastor led church. We have three pastors which we are accountable to our Deacon's board or Elders board, whatever you want to call it. Together we make up what is called our Vision Team. It's our Vision Team that's responsible for the ministry: for where we go, for what we do, what we don't do. All major decisions kind of rise and fall on their shoulders. Ah, our congregation endorses our pastors when we call them. It endorses its leadership team and in that endorsement they almost hand over the responsibility of church life to them. When that handing over is there, there is all kinds of conversation that takes place with the church body, to get a sense of how things are going.

This emphasis on SPL and SLL was common in churches that were experiencing relative stability over a longer period. The pastor in I-5 indicated the importance of congregational government, as was expected on a denominational level, however, leadership was very much in the hands of the pastor and elders. In response to a question on church structures he emphasized strongly the role of pastoral and lay leadership. He (I-5) says,

We have a mix of two political structures. We have pastors and deacons in some churches, with usually trustees taking care of the building and physical plant. But us here, we are the other side. We are pastor and elders and trustees, no deacons...We are pastor-elder and I'm perceived as being the main spiritual leader in the church. And yet, when it comes to decision making, political things, for church politics, I'm simply one voice among the other elders. And we have congregational government, which is typical of our Baptist churches.

This emphasis on a strong leadership team of pastor and elders is found in the very structured approach of I-6. The pastor of this church with traditional Presbyterian structures (I-6) says, “Anything that comes under the auspices of the church goes through our session. The session approves guides and directs them.” And later on the pastor indicates careful selection of lay leadership by himself as pastor. He (I-6) says, “You can have a strong core group, but if your leadership is not strong. Ah. I have three standards for leadership: gentle, compassionate, strong. And that’s something to consider in the men that are going to be leading your congregation.”

The pastor in I-7, another church plant with strong denominational structures and expectations also emphasizes the importance of SLL and SPL in the selection of leaders for the church. He (I-7) says,

I try to look for people that I think would make good leadership material and after praying about it and seeing if I can get peace in that direction, then I will approach a person to see if they want to serve in a particular capacity. I don’t force anybody. I ask them to pray about it. And I ask for a year...If a church is to grow no one person can do everything.

The importance of strong pastoral and lay leadership emerged from the majority of interviews and was an obvious factor in the stability of the church plant.

On the other hand, lack of a strong pastor and lay leadership relationship brought instability to some situations. In I-8 the pastor attributed lack of SLL to the eventual failure to achieve long-term viability. He speaks of being isolated as a congregation, and as a board, as being an organizational weakness. He (I-8) comments, “There really was no requirement upon us, no longevity...we were on our own with our own identity, our own board.” Further on in the interview he (I-8) explains, “That’s where we fell apart, the leadership of the board didn’t have

the same vision and long-term goal as the pastor. They didn't have the goal of longevity. The whole breakdown was in leadership.” Likewise, C-1, discusses the difficulties of a strong pastoral and lay leadership base for a new church plant. In discussing structural issues the researcher and pastor of C-1 writes,

In Church A the official leaders were the Pastor and the Steering Committee in the first three years. This was replaced by the Pastor, deacons and Advisory Board in the last three years of my ministry there. There was a desire to maintain congregational government with a leadership directed church. In reality, the small initial group and people who transferred from other nearby Baptist churches, constantly campaigned for a traditional Baptist church concept that has developed in the region in which the congregation micro-manages the ministry and its leaders. This inhibited the ability of the leadership to develop new and culturally significant ministries.

In the researcher's own experience SPL and SLL also became a recognizable positive influence on growth and stability as is indicated in the following quote from C-2, which says,

In Church B the official leaders were the Pastor, Deacon and Trustee. Unofficial leadership was also recognized for my wife's ministry with children and youth. The small core group was very respectful of the initiatives she was taking in this area of ministry and recognition of her leadership was an example of functional structures at work in the church plant.

The relationship between SPL and SLL will be discussed in Section 5.4 with reference to common characteristics indicated by the research data in comparison to the conceptual framework above.

#### **5.2.5. AS – Accountability Structures:**

Closely associated with SPL and SLL were accountability structures (AS). This code was also significant in all the interviews and case studies. The presence of strong AS or lack thereof had an impact on both stability and viability over the long-term.

Positive accountability structures were reported by a number of the pastors who were interviewed. In most cases the positive AS reported reflected a “small p” Presbyterian structure across denominations. That is, the structures developed by the new church plants allowed for ministry leadership strategies that were more staff and board led than managed by the congregation. The pastor of the church in I-1 describes AS that are distinctly different, in his opinion, from traditional denominational views. He (I-1) says,

We are congregational in the sense that the congregation has the ultimate authority and passes the budget, which, no matter how you cut it, creates some boundaries. So they call the senior pastor and kick him out, so it is congregational in that sense. So we then would be, have Elders who are responsible for vision and mission and protecting of the bride. Then we would have Staff responsible for implementation of our vision and our mission... We are in a large part a staff led church, but under the authority of the elders and the ultimate authority, the congregation.

He (I-1) elaborates on this saying,

We are very different from most Baptist churches. We still have churches where the whole congregation has to vote on the purchase of a microphone. In large part, the reason it works here is that we have been able to build a level of trust in the leadership, both elders and staff. And so you have to be able to protect that trust and to be wise with that trust. But when there is trust people will allow you to make decisions and have authority.

These comments give positive reflections on an elder/pastor led church that has enjoyed relative stability and viability for more than three years. Similar to these structures are those described in I-4. One of the pastors (I-4) in that Church says,

With us together, the pastoral team, we're accountable to our Elders and that whole leadership team is accountable to the congregation. Again, the congregation has basically three votes and, and, one of those being its leadership team and that's an annual vote. And our leadership team, our Elders particularly, are voted on as a slate.

These comments reflect accountability structures that were primarily local and secondarily to the denomination. Church planting situations with strong pastoral and lay leadership that were accountable to one another tended to be more stable over the long-term. This is substantiated by I-5, which had gained and maintained viability for more than a decade. The pastor (I-5) comments on questions regarding accountability saying, "It's kind of—the pastors are responsible and accountable to the Board—the elders. The elders' board is accountable to the congregation and really we, in an autonomous, self-supporting independent type of Baptist environment, we also have a respectful accountability to the director of the Fellowship."

In regard to formal versus informal accountability I-5 had a similar response to I-1 and I-4. He (I-5) says, "Formal, as far as the pastors are concerned, monthly reports to the elders. I guess the elders give annual reports to the congregation. So much of it is going on trust by the congregation. We try not to break that trust,"

The pastor of I-6 was planting a more traditional and theologically conservative Presbyterian church. The church had been demonstrating long-term viability and stability. The accountability structures followed the traditional structures of their denomination, however, that structure was similar to those described by pastors in I-1, I-4 and I-5. The comments of this



pastor reflect strong pastoral and lay leadership governed by both local and denominational structures. He (I-6) says,

Well, the way our denomination does it, I should say, the way our presbytery does, when it comes to church planting, we call them mission works. A congregation comes to us, I'm sorry, it can be a group of people or a congregation. But church planting usually begins with a group of people who desire to be part of our denomination and our presbytery sends in a committee to check them out and to see if there is mutual compatibility. If they do not have leadership that we can ordain and install to watch over them in a mission work, the presbytery will provide ruling elders and a teaching elder to care for that congregation until they are able to have their own leaders, until they are able to organize...that's what it is all for, stability of the church. Especially when you factor in that most new churches are beginning because of prior issues...And so that kind of stability that you need for a new church plant has to come as much from the outside as it does from within, because people are coming together with issues.

In this sense I-6 calls for both local pastor-elder directed church plants but with strong guidance from outside accountability structures or denominational policies to safeguard and bring stability.

I-7 displayed a similar accountability structure as I-6. Although the churches are from two different denominations, AS were set up to be both local and denominational, with the intent of providing guidance, stability and longevity. The pastor (I-7) says,

The official leaders, as far as our denomination is concerned and with the government is a three person board. Two of the leaders inside this church, myself and one other man, and then the director of our Home Mission Department... is the third person. We have him on there just so, as a protection, so some church can't do anything with its property without him being aware of it.

I-7 had also demonstrated stability and viability over more than 5 years, although the pastor did speak of a plateau in their growth and the need for a new vision.

In contrast to the viability of these church plants was the instability of others that seemed to be linked, at least in part, to weak AS. This instability was evident in I-2, I-3, I-8 and in C-1. Examples of AS that contributed to the instability, lack of viability or failure of these church plants to continue emerged in the interview questions dealing with accountability structures. I-2 speaks of the church planting situation as being solely the responsibility of the missionary pastor, but later establishment of more formal structures. He (I-2) says,

In the beginning we start with a pioneer model, which involved to have a pastor/evangelist staying in town and doing the work. Now this church in \_\_\_\_ is a daughter church of a mother church and it's better to have a team instead of just pie in the air. It's almost like a satellite model. It's not really a satellite church. Our mother church is 600 km from here. So it can't be like they just can't come and help us every week.

Distance from the mother church that came on board after the original church plant made accountability and support on a regular basis difficult. Lack of leadership on the local level also slowed the development of the congregation. In response to questions in the interview regarding who is the official leadership the pastor (I-2) says,

Right now it will be the people who are responsible for ministries, for different ministries. You have the pastor and you have the people who are responsible. Officially, we made the motion at the annual meeting. We have people that the church is recognizing as leaders. And they are the leadership of the church. I mean they are the influence...But they are going to influence the church in a good or bad way. It depends upon not only their skill but their character. It takes time to build their character, but the Lord is doing that. But it is a long-term process.

Lack of strong lay leadership on the local level impeded the growth and stability of this congregation.

A lack of strong AS also had an impact on the viability of I-3. The pastor described a structure that had formal accountability ties to the denomination but they were distant geographically and only necessary on an annual basis, or if there were problems. He (I-3) says,

Our church plant is officially endorsed by our district conference, our district conference held once a year. There is a district director of evangelism and church growth who oversees the churches, the church plants, and, ah, we're accountable to the district. We don't have an official board as a church plant. We are a pioneer or new or developing church. We don't have a church board at this time. We report to our district

The pioneer model mentioned in both I-2 and I-3 allowed for a great deal of pastoral direction but often left the pastor without strong local support. This is evident in statements from I-2.

Regarding the help of the mother church he (I-2) says "Our mother church is about 600 kilometers from here. So it can't be like, they just can't come and help us every week."

Similarly, I-3 refers to the pioneer model as being both negative and positive in providing opportunity for pastoral initiative but lacking strong local accountability. He (I-3) says,

It gives the pastor a lot of autonomy or authority which can be good and bad. But instead of being tied down with red tape you can see what needs to be done and take steps toward that. We do have a leadership team right now which consists of some people with leadership ability in the church that I, myself, identified and appointed. Eventually we will have an elected board when we become an established church.

Positively, the pastor had freedom in ministry, but negatively, there was a need for leadership development that was his responsibility which suggests isolation on the local level for strong

accountability structures. In the same way the pastor in I-8 refers several times to instability as a result of the lack of AS. He (I-8) says, “There was not really, not a lot of support other than the Pastor/Supervisor. He gave us money for the sound system...we made him our overseer...” He (I-8) goes on to describe the weakness of the local board, saying, “That’s where we fell apart, the leadership of the Board. They didn’t have the same vision and the same long-term goal. They didn’t have the goal of longevity.” He also contributes the failure to achieve long-term viability to the lack of denominational accountability. He (I-8) says, “I think that’s probably the issue. Because we were not accountable to a denomination. I think that would have been more successful.”

In C-1 a lack of accountable leadership on the local and denominational level had led to instability in the church plant over the long-term. This was identified and steps were taken to address the lack of AS. The researcher (C-1) says,

The weak theological stance of the steering group and relatively small amount of leadership experience within a Baptist context brought challenges for stability and viability. The church planting structures were similar to but not identical to most traditional denominational structures. There was no Board of Deacons until more than three years into the church planting process because of a lack of qualified leaders and the need to disciple and train leaders for those positions.

Through study of church planting literature, and consultation with denominational leadership, structures were modified to reflect a more functional approach to the church planting task and accommodate a leadership directed church. Over a three to four year time span a Board of Deacons was formed and the steering committee was changed to an Advisory Board with representation on the Board from ministry leaders involved in the actual programs of the church as opposed to a steering committee of individuals who may or may not have been involved in regular ministry.

The result of this initiative was the ability to maintain ministry and deal with issues common to church planting such as small groups hijacking the vision as is evident in the literature and was identified in Chapter 3, above, by Stetzer (2003, 197), who says, ““In nearly every new church a portion of the core group makes the attempt to redirect-to hijack-the original vision shared by the church planter and the core group...These attempts often involve the loss of evangelistic passion.”

C-2 represented a church replant with a small local leadership group that was supportive, as was the denomination. The researcher (C-2) says,

The structure of Church B was minimal when we began ministry in the town. With only five members there were only three people holding leadership positions. They were a deacon/treasurer, clerk/assistant treasurer and trustee. All three were supportive of strong pastoral leadership and new initiatives, as were the other two members. Business meetings were relaxed and focused on issues facing the congregation

He (C-2) also says, “The vision was also supported by the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches and the local association both of whom were in favour of a renewed evangelical witness in the town.” Cooperation on the local and denominational level allowed for ministry development and outreach that led to church growth and stability over more than 5 years, however, despite numerical growth, the congregation remained small and financial viability was not attained in that time.

AS or accountability structures on the local and denominational level were identified as crucial to long-term stability and the lack thereof was identified as a major contributor to

instability. AS will be discussed in terms of common characteristics and with respect to the conceptual framework in Section 5.4.

#### **5.2.6. TT – Traditional Thinking:**

TT or traditional thinking was identified in all interviews and both case studies as being a significant factor in achieving long-term viability especially in relation to literature based expectations as outlined in Chapter 3. The individual expressions of traditionalism varied in each church planting situation but the impact of TT was generally identified as a factor in SG (Slower Growth) and SE (Slower establishment).

Examples of TT varied from theological concepts common to the region of Atlantic Canada to denominational expectations of church planting situations from denominational leadership. One aspect of TT that emerged early in the interview process was the church planter centered model of church planting expected in the region in which the pastor's job is to create an environment that will draw people to the church. The senior pastor in I-1 says,

Churches in this region – Atlantic Canada—and even nationally, in large part [are] still working from an attractional model, (get people to come to church). We are shifting, and I still think there is a place for an attractional model, you still want to do Sunday well and the weekend well, you want people to come and you want to provide a place for community when they do come. I don't think that's dead in any way but that really, in large part, is the only model that the church in Atlantic Canada knows. How do we get people to come? In fact, preacher, how do you get them to come? And I think the shift has to be not only attractional but missional. How do we get out of the church? How do we serve the community? How do we build relationships? How do we build friendships? How do we build redemptive types of relationships? So I would say that in Atlantic Canada we're working from a model that says we gotta get them to come...boy I sure wish it

was like it was 40 years ago, now there's too much T.V. right? And there's still an older generation that that's their thing.

In a similar manner the pastor of I-3 alludes to an attractional model that is expected and which centres on the pastoral ministry. He (I-3) says, "I know we battle for the priesthood of all believers instead of the professional ministers being the ones responsible for the ministry. That's kind of a view that a lot of people have. We try to emphasize that everyone is a minister." Further on in the interview he (I-3) says, "I believe that everyone is a minister. All followers of Christ are gifted in unique ways to contribute to the kingdom, so that contradicts what the standard belief in our society is." This pastor's need to emphasize the importance of the priesthood of all believers substantiates the concept of attractional ministry and the professional minister which is common in the Atlantic Region.

In I-2 the pastor discusses his development of the vision statement and in the process reveals a model of church planting that is heavily reliant on the pastor. Although his original purpose had not been to plant a church, his response to situations that emerged early on in his life in the community led to establishment of a church that, to some degree, was attractional in its format. He (I-2) comments,

First when we start the church here that was not on my agenda at all because first when we came here it was for a business issue and it turned into an evangelism week. And we end up with people who ask us to come to their homes with Bible studies. So I stayed here and I brought some people with me and I just, you know, shared the gospel in this community. And three families came to the Lord on the first time. So we just realized that God was showing us His will of planting a church here, a French church. So when we did that we need to organize a church and spend time with non-Christians and just plant the church. It came out in the process. When we realized that was what the Lord wanted us to do I just put

things altogether. Then this vision came out and what ah, Biblical principle to plant this church.

Another example of TT in regard to the attractional model emerged out of two interviews with pastors who planted churches that were designed to follow closely the structures of their respective denominations. In I-6 the pastor speaks of people from his own denomination moving into or close to his area and seeking out the new church. He (I-6) says,

For example, being a reformed congregation, when people of reformed tradition move into our area, because of work related reasons, they will seek out our church and are willing to drive quite a distance to come to our church...But it is because of being a reformed church...That means we take in quite a geographical area because of who we are and how we're defined.

Development of a traditionally structured congregation brought theological stability but slower growth. I-6 explains this saying, "Reaching people with the gospel, getting people off of the street and into the church, it's a long work or something that isn't going to happen in the snap of a finger." The pastor of I-7, another denominationally traditional church has a similar perspective. He (I-7) comments, "The vision statement initially was to plant a Freewill Baptist Church in this area and, ah, now that we are at this point we are trying to test a new vision...The year we got into the sanctuary, three or four months later our attendance began to decline." The denominational vision of establishing a structurally traditional church of I-7 impacted the church's decline in growth and the church's need for a new vision. In regard to this the pastor (I-7) says,

But when we made the transition, of course with the building being basically done, then the drive was gone. And within a year attendance began to decline, and it's trackable. I wrote it down last night, as a matter of fact, working on



something for myself. And there were some, ah, other signs of unrest at the same time, as well, but from an administrative leadership perspective the thing that happened at the time was that we reached our goal and they could do what they want.

Unrest and lack of support for the leadership was also tied to traditional thinking in the data. This is obvious in I-8 as the pastor describes the unwilling attitude of some of his core group to find new ways to reach out to people. He (I-8) says, “Sometimes people don’t see the benefit of seeing people through the eyes of Christ. It seems there are people who can’t relate to that and cannot see the benefit of that. Some of that is the reason why that didn’t succeed.” The quotation immediately above indicates that a model of church planting that leaves the new church on its own in a relatively short period of time leads to difficulties in reaching long-term viability. The importance of departing from this traditional model of church planting emerged in I-1. The pastor speaks of the experience of church planting situations he was familiar with in the past, as well as, the current model that his church is using. He (I-1) says,

We are really one church, two locations, so they really don’t have structures for them in the plant situations. That will change as it goes...I think that it is different from your traditional church planting model where the church, First \_\_\_\_\_ Church plants \_\_\_\_\_ church and they’re an independent work where it sinks or swims on its own and responsible for their elders, leadership, budget, everything on their own. They might give you some money but you’re still responsible. This is a different model, a multi-site model where we are really one church in a couple of locations. I have a lot of biases why that is a lot better...

In I-1 the emphasis was on mutual accountability and support for a church planting model. This also emerged in the I-4 interview which was using a similar model. The pastors of both I-1 and

I-4 assert that there is a level of stability in their model that would not be evident in a traditional church planting model. Commenting on this concept the lead pastor of I-4 says,

“...\_\_\_\_\_Offers more of a different site of\_\_\_\_\_ versus a different church...We have one budget. We have one Deacon’s board. We have one pastoral staff. We have one church where the staff are swapped among the two sites.” This emphasis on one church with multiple sites, in the opinion of I-1 and I-4 has led to stability in the church planting situation.

In the case studies different attitudes in the congregations toward traditional issues led to results that were completely opposite. In C-1 traditionalism impeded the growth of the church. The pastor and researcher (C-1) writes,

In the church planting situation new individuals coming into the church came with varying levels of traditional expectations. Some who were transferring from other churches in close proximity came with expectations of ministries and traditions that were familiar to them from other congregations. Those who came to the church from a relatively non-church background had few traditional expectations and were more likely to embrace new ideas and change.

Conversely, the church in C-2 was able to recognize traditional thinking and put it to use for outreach and growth. The pastor/researcher tells of the experience in these words (C-2),

The region had very traditional thinking about the church, as being a building, therefore, care for and renovation of the existing building became a very important witness to the community that the Church was experiencing renewal. Creative ways of ministry also had to be developed in order to encourage people from a strong Roman Catholic background to even enter the building of an evangelical church. This was addressed by having celebrations and informal gatherings for youth and children’s events in the basement fellowship hall. As individuals became comfortable with the fellowship area they were more willing to enter and become part of worship in the sanctuary

In both the interviews and the Case studies TT among church people and those to whom the church was involved with outreach meant a slower rate of growth than expected in much of the literature on church planting, especially American based literature on the subject.

TT also centred on the need of a building in order to be considered a church. This emerged in some of the interviews or case studies in one form or another. Traditional thinking of Maritimers (residents of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada) connected having a building with being a legitimate church. This is first evident in I-2. The pastor comments

Because of the Catholic background people think the church as a building. For the Christian, they get through that. Through discipleship they learn that the church is the community. Doesn't matter where you are meeting. But for the non-Christian, and more so the Catholic people, if you are a church and you don't have a church, they saw a problem there. Because, you know, in their mindset a church is a building.

Similarly, I-7 refers to the traditional connection of people to their own church. He (I-7) says,

You are dealing with family heritage, parents, grandparents and you know, so when someone says I was baptized in such and such a church, that is where their family has always gone, that's where they are married, where they have a funeral. And of course the church doctrine is in those cases, sometimes the church actually saves. Uh, salvation is the church, you enter the kingdom through the church.

I-8 also affirmed this traditional concept of the church. He (I-8) says, "We met at a hall. It wasn't ours. We would have been better off with our own place in the community, saying we we're there to stay. Here in Atlantic Canada, without a building you are not considered a church." Not having a permanent location was perceived as a factor in slower growth.

This emphasis on the church as a building is also found in the TT of the Case Studies. In C-1 the small core group was initially focused more on a building than on issues surrounding

ministry. The pastor/researcher (C-1) comments, “Also, within the region, and perhaps many areas of Atlantic Canada, a church is understood as a building. The lack of a building was perceived as the inability to plant a permanent church.” In C-2 the church being replanted already had a building but recognized the need for improvements in order to demonstrate that viable ministry was taking place. In relation to this the pastor/researcher says,

The most pressing issue was a small, aging building in which they worshiped. The building had recently been shared with a French Baptist congregation but they had moved out and found other facilities. The building was in need of major repairs and renovations to accommodate ministry. Although the group was small they recognized the importance of the building in the cultural context of their town. Traditional thinking was that the church was a building. Gaining an understanding of this traditional thinking led to a commitment to do renovations, a little at a time, to make the building more weather tight and appealing for ministry.

In this context the building, as it was renovated, became an asset that facilitated numerical growth and a measure of stability.

TT or traditional thinking was evident in responses to various parts of the in-depth interviews and will be discussed in relation commonalities in the region and literature based expectations in section 5.4. TT often coincided with CD or cultural differences which are discussed in the next subsection.

### **5.2.7. CD - Cultural Differences:**

The final code that emerged universally in the in-depth interviews and the case studies was CD or cultural differences. CD are of particular importance for this research project as they relate to expectations that have emerged from literature sources reviewed in chapter 3 and the

differences of Atlantic Canadian culture that were highlighted in the in-depth interviews. Cultural differences were noted in a number of areas including: distinct differences from American culture represented in much of the literature; the prevalence in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada of a small town mindset; a conservative outlook on religion and finances; the church being understood as a building; a negative outlook on change and the challenges of planting a viable new church; the impact of worldliness on the church; the need for transparency in relationships that emerges from a small town mind-set.

Differences in the culture of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada as compared to much of the American based literature on church planting were referenced in the data by several pastors. In I-1 the Senior Pastor argues for the need for literature that reflects cultures similar to Atlantic Canada. He (I-1) says, “We don’t understand our culture and it has changed dramatically. Therefore, how are we going to reach the culture, and how do we live as missionaries, missionally in this culture that is almost as hard to understand today as if I was planted in Europe or Africa.” I-1’s emphasis on missional thinking reflects the need for understanding church planting in Atlantic Canada from a different paradigm than past endeavours of church planting which focused on reaching people of similar denominational backgrounds who may have moved into a new area or community. Later on in the interview the pastor makes a lengthy reference to our need to understand and interpret our cultural differences accurately in order to do church planting effectively. He (I-1) says,

We read everything that comes out of the US and so much doesn’t relate. Some of it does, like the big philosophical stuff. But most of it doesn’t relate to the culture here. And part of it is we just don’t have the population, the demographics are so different from the churches and the leaders that are writing

this stuff that you just can't make what works there work here. A little example is how do we integrate people into small groups. So Andy Stanley at Northpoint, every once in a while they have a meeting where they bring anybody who's interested in small groups to come together and they form a whole bunch of small groups out of that meeting. Well we probably would have four people show up because we just don't have the population, the demographics. So all of the great ideas that come out of Northpoint and Willow Creek and Saddleback and places like that, all these places don't work here. And so that's the stuff we read. I think we're much better off to read some of the stuff that's coming out of the UK. I think culturally they are much more similar to Canada. You still have a pretty strong kind of Southern Baptist Bible belt in the US. I think we're more secular. I know we're way more secular in Canada than in lots of parts of the US. I think our culture is much more similar to the UK and to England and some of those places, but we read everything and try to do everything that comes out of the US.

I-2also reflects at length on distinctions between American based literature and church planting practices and those needed for Atlantic Canada. The pastor (I-2) says,

Well, in the first place my experience is not here. It is in Quebec, but I can tell that it is a very different culture. It is very different from North America. Um, I know that there's a lot of church planting that we hear about in the U.S. who are amazing. It's like you should, you just put a program and then you bring a structure to the community and then in a few months you have 1000 people. See, that's a different setting. You have people who are doing marketing and they are, have... But that's different in these communities. I know there are some great people like Hybels, Rick Warren. They have done really great things and you know, you read some of their literature and it's incredible and wow! This is great. But I don't think you can use, like these settings everywhere. Like some principles are good but the way people are thinking is different. Like I remember I was reading about Bill Hybels saying that his church was moving from one location to another before they have a building. That's something that is

workable. But here, if you bring your church from one building to another, people know each other. They will say this is not (right?) These people are not serious. They are just like a chicken with no head on it. They are just going from place to place and they are not stable. It is a matter of culture. But I believe in these good principle.

Both I-1 and I-2 make reference to differences in the population base. This is also emphasized in I-3. The pastor (I-3) makes this comment, “A lot of the literature for church planting seem to be focused in the large urban areas in Southern California and Hawaii. Which are very different cultures than we have here. We have a much more traditional and conservative religious society.” This difference in the population base has an impact on the time line for viability. In relation to this one of the pastors of I-4 says,

Uh, when I consider a few churches, a few multi-site churches that (the literature) a couple mention in the States in Seattle and life Church TV based out of Oklahoma City, they have like a half dozen or eight or ten campuses, one church, multi sites kind of thing, umm, I don’t actually know whether that’s American or Canadian, or whether that has to do with larger urban centers. I don’t think, I don’t mean to be crass at all and to suggest that church planting isn’t difficult always but there are some of these churches that can put up a campus, something in place overnight and hundreds of people will show up because they know brand, right.

The data from these interviews high light population and cultural differences that need to be considered in order to be effective in church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. These comments also coincide with a small town mindset, which is another aspect of Maritime culture that is important to consider and emerges in the data from the in-depth interviews.

The concept of a small-town mindset and its impact on church planting in the Maritime Provinces is found in interviews 1, 2, 3 and 8. The small town mindset is an emphasis on the importance of community and knowing those with whom you worship both in the smaller communities and even in the urban centres of Atlantic Canada which have grown to the detriment of smaller communities as people from rural areas have moved to the cities. In their move to the cities they have taken with them a rural understanding of church and community. In regard to this the senior pastor of I-1 asserts that the need for a sense of a local and geographical community remains strong in this region. He (I-1) says,

The other thing that I would say that I think is somewhat theological, if I had to prove it I could find it, or make it up (Ha ha!) but is certainly philosophical and strategic for us is... I have a sense, people will drive to a church for something meaningful to them, they will drive. If it's something meaningful for their family they will drive. But they'd rather not. They'd rather stay/ be in their community and serve in their community and worship in their community and have influence in their community. And I think that you could make a strong theological case for the church, certainly the Acts church meeting in homes and being very fluid and being very central in the community, part of that was for that day, travel was more difficult anyway. People in our day will travel. But I still think that you could make a strong theological argument that the New Testament Church was very localized. And was working within a certain circle of influence relationally, geographically, whatever. So we have moved (theologically or philosophically or whatever) we have moved to be much more, let's be in communities rather than have people drive 45 minutes, or whatever.

This importance of community and relationships in an area with a smaller population is highlighted in I-2, as well. The pastor of I-2 makes reference to the importance of community early in the interview saying, "Fellowship is very important, that's we're talking about



relationship here.” Later on he (I-2) expands on the significance of small town relationships in his own church planting situation in a community which is bilingual. He (I-2) says,

Well, just like the Catholic background, the people here have their traditions. If you are an English man or English woman here, you are protestant, an evangelical. If you are French you are Catholic, see? So in this community people live well together, French and English people. But for some reason they know if you are French, you are Catholic. So if you accept the Lord and become evangelical, well, that’s weird, if you are French. And they have a trend to think you, if you are changing religion, you are changing your family. It’s a family matter. It’s more like, “Why are you changing religions? Are you rejecting?” I don’t know how to say that, “Are you saying no to your family” See? So the people, that’s a pressure, that’s a big pressure.

The implication here is that it will take longer to grow an evangelical church plant due to the familial and religious background of much of the population, regardless of a person’s commitment to his own church, or lack thereof. In C-2 a similar perspective emerges of the influence of the small town and family mindset in Atlantic Canadian culture. The pastor/researcher (C-2) comments, “Although many people had left or distanced themselves from the denomination into which they were born, there were still strong family and community pressures on individuals who were seen as abandoning their faith if they became involved in an evangelical church. In I-3 the pastor makes comparable assertions. He (I-3) says,

In \_\_\_\_\_ we tend to be a very religious community. And by that I mean everyone knows which church is their church, whether they attend there or not. Everyone seems to have their family church home, even if they haven’t attended there for years. So we find that difficult for starting a new church. People seem to have their loyalties and also the population is highly Catholic. I’m not sure of the exact numbers but I believe it is somewhere around 60% that are Catholic,

which lends to what I was saying about people having their church and sometimes that makes it difficult to reach them. We're not interested in taking people out of a church if they're attending it and are happy there and it would be a biblically functioning church. But we do want to reach people who are un-churched and may be religious but don't have a relationship with Christ.

The small community or town mindset, in this sense makes drawing people to a new church more difficult.

Another sense of small town or community is described by I-3 as being a distinguishing feature of the region of Atlantic Canada. He (I-3) comments,

One of the differences that I've seen is in some church planting materials they talk about how people want to come and be anonymous when they enter in to a new church and might not want to sing. Men don't want to sing. But what we have found here, in Atlantic Canada, is that people are looking for a sense of family when they walk into a church. They want to be accepted and they enjoy music. Here, in the Maritimes, kitchen parties are a way of life. Here in\_\_\_\_\_, we have Ceilidhs in just about every community centre. So we tend to try to welcome people with open arms and we're not afraid to use a lot of music in our services.

This cultural variation from current literature on church planting identifies unique features of the culture of Atlantic Canada that need consideration when seeking to plant a new church. It also highlights the need for cultural understanding and research to assist those who seek to plant viable new churches in Atlantic Canada.

I-8 describes another aspect of the small town mindset that was a challenge for the pastor, who had moved into the area to plant a church, to overcome. He asserts that pastors from outside the community had a more difficult time being accepted. He (I-8) says, "They were a farming

community. One of the oldest in (the province) with a lot of culture and history...If you had come from the area you had better success than someone who moved into town.” This small town mindset also revealed another cultural difference significant for the region. Most pastors who were interviewed spoke of the conservative and reserved nature of people in the area.

In respect to people being conservative and reserved a number of challenges for church planters were mentioned. One area that seemed especially important was that of being financially conservative. In I-1 both pastors spoke of their leadership in terms of being conservative and of the expectations of their people being conservative. One pastor (I-1) comments, “We are trying to figure out how this site fits in financially before we go out and start five more sites. It’s a sense of responsibility...to reasonably and responsibly use the resources we have...before we start other sites.” The senior pastor (I-1) followed up on this observation saying,

That’s a great comment. We talked about that this week. You know I, we’re pretty conservative here...some would be surprised by that statement, but we’re pretty conservative and I was talking to a couple of guys this week who want to go multi-site and I said, “Do you have any money budgeted?” “No, no, no. We just want to go to the community and start. And so that’s one end of the spectrum and then there’s us and maybe there’s something in the middle that’s better, but we tend to be pretty conservative and pretty slow and have a lot of our eggs in a basket and all of our questions answered, you know, before we move out, so we plan very carefully. And are probably pretty conservative, in terms of starting something. We might be a little more of a risk taker, but anyway, this works for us.

This pastor speaks of being conservative, himself, yet in the area he is seen as a risk taker and as being innovative. An article (Scott-Wallace, January 10, 2007, C7) in a local newspaper about the pastor and church is entitled, “Pastor’s different approach packs pews.” The journalist

(Scott-Wallace, 2007, C7) describes the pastor and church in these words, “It is called the church in the hayfield but there’s nothing modest about the size of the crowds...Some traditionalists may turn up their nose at the hype surrounding this institution, but Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ is OK with that.” She (2007, C7) goes on to describe an approach to worship that is far from conservative for the Atlantic region, saying, “On a Sunday morning, with pews full and a band ready to perform upbeat Christian music , \_\_\_\_\_ takes his place at the altar, often sitting on a stool. It’s hardly preaching, he insists, but a casual, lively discussion. He could be wearing chords or jeans, and most of the congregation does the same.” In spite of this perception the senior pastor speaks of being cautious with finances. He (I-1) says, “You have to be honest about the financial one. Something just can’t keep going in the hole. We have said here that no matter how many sites we have at some point, they have to be financially viable.” Being fiscally cautious is also an attitude evident in the people of the area. In respect to this both pastors of I-1 agree that it is a cultural mindset with which a church planter in the region must come to terms. In answer to the question, “Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?” the pastors (I-1) responded,

TR. I don’t know if it’s what really answers the question or not, but I think there is a cultural reality locally that basically, every dollar earned is a hard earned dollar and so that decisions that are made, that people make in terms of spending, that to be wise in using money. In terms of the church that they want us to be accountable for that and that we’re not just throwing money around on fads and I don’t know if that is specifically one.

KV. That’s good and in fact that ties into when we did stewardship campaigns and the fund raising guys wanted us to do all the multi-media and all the letter head and all that stuff, which may work well in more urban areas, but I pushed back and I think our leadership pushed back and said, “I don’t think that will fly here.” I think here people say, “That’s pretty fancy letterhead, must not need our

money. So that is a cultural reality. And so we thought that would backfire on us, so stewardship and wise money management is valued here.

This distinction from financial reality of urban areas identifies a key cultural reality of the Atlantic region which has often faced economic struggles.

In other interviews an understanding of Atlantic Canada was described in terms of being reserved in interacting with newcomers and resistant to change. This has an impact on the church plant in terms of expectations of what a church be like and in terms of developing relationships.

In I-3 the pastor describes the reality of dealing with traditionalism as it relates to the practices of worship. He outlines the expectation of some who visit his church (I-3) saying,

Some come expecting, probably, a more formal structure than we have at our particular church. We are more relaxed. People coming in have a pre-conceived notion of what the church is like. They may be expecting that they're not going to hear anything that is relevant about their life. Because we try to explain the Bible in terms that are practical and meaningful for everyday life.

The pastor of I-5 says, "We might still have a flavour of conservatism, that say Western Canada, or I mean British Columbia or the United States, we might have more of a traditional flare." This reserved nature and conservatism, according to I-6, comes through in personal relationships and community. In regard to this the pastor (I-6) says,

"I would say that Atlantic Canada would be a little more laid back and somewhat cliquy in the rural settings. There is an open friendliness and reservedness in people's reception of you. You will be able to walk down the street and stop and have a conversation with a perfect stranger, but, ah, when it comes to actually being more intimate in your discussions with them, there tends to be a reservedness that comes to play.

He (I-6) goes on to describe the challenge of being involved with people on a spiritual basis, saying. “Here, where I am, it’s a farming culture and it’s a culture that is hard to break in to the business of people’s lives. And like I said, I believe people here are generally laid back in their expectations.”

This sense of being a reserved people in Atlantic Canada is noted by I-7 as being a barrier to change and development. He (I-7) asserts his view of tradition in these thoughts,

This area is traditional. By traditional I mean that there is a resistance to change. Tradition for one person may not be tradition for another but people change more slowly here than in some parts of the States, and not only that, the church here is identified, to a large part with a building. I’m thinking Catholic churches, Anglican churches, a large Baptist Church downtown. \_\_\_\_\_ is an old city. The community here recognizes church almost as a landmark church. The church buildings become part of the city’s features. So for us to say, “We’re starting a church in our home. Come.” There were people who just said, “No, we will not come.” There were others who wouldn’t say no, they would say, “When are you going to get a building?”

The emphasis on a building noted here relates to TT or traditional thinking described in the subsection immediately above and is reaffirmed by most of the pastors including I-8 who says, “Here in Atlantic Canada, without a building you are not considered a church.” He (I-8) also describes the manner in which many people in Atlantic Canada relate to one another, saying, “Atlantic Canada are more working type people. We are laid back and like to do stuff around the kitchen table, whereas other areas would have a board meeting. We are around the table and like to work one on one, with our culture.”

This need for a sense of belonging and relationship within Atlantic Canadians is also noted in C-1. The pastor/researcher identifies three areas in which regional culture is distinct from expectations in American based literature. He (C-1) writes,

Within three years we had constructed a new building and people seemed more accepting of the congregation. Attendance at services grew for a time but then began to plateau. The growth of the population of this rural/suburban community also brought congregants with traditional expectations in conflict with those who were looking for a more culturally relevant ministry. The result was slower growth than literature based expectations. Other cultural distinctives that differed from much of the American based literature were reluctance of local people to join organizations, and a longer period of time before local people were ready to commit themselves both personally and financially to the new church. This resulted in a longer period of time for the congregation to achieve long-term viability.

Traditional expectations of what a church should be like, reluctance of people to join an organization until a strong relational or community base was established and reluctance to commit both personally and financially to the church are the three areas which delayed viability in this church planting situation. These observations are in keeping with aspects of Canadian culture that were noted in Chapter 3.4.1 and 3.4.2. In 3.4.1 Wagler (2009, 36) makes reference to a fear of change among many traditionalist thinking people in Canadian churches. In 3.4.2 Posterski and Barker (1993, 117-118) assert that Canadians are far more private when it comes to religious matters than their American counterparts. Coggins (2008, 1-3) contends that Canadians may participate in church or even community organizations but are reluctant to join or become members. This is a significant consideration in regard to the time frame in which long-term viability can be achieved. Both the time to build relationships and develop trust and the time

frame for becoming active giving members of a congregation has an impact on achieving literature based expectations of viability.

Observations in C-2 correspond to this need for a longer time period to build relationships and trust in order for people to join and commit to a new church. Regarding this the pastor/researcher (C-2) expresses his opinion on some of the underlying reasons for this phenomenon saying,

Another aspect of the region's culture that affected long-term viability was the attitude toward giving. Cynicism of people from the predominant denomination over clergy moral failures in the past had led to an attitude of reluctance to give financially to the church. This carried over when new people from that background became involved in Church B. Achieving financial self-sufficiency, therefore, required a longer time period than in major urban areas represented by much of the American based church planting literature.

In this regard traditional religious loyalties may have been overcome, to a certain extent, but individuals from religious backgrounds that had faced such difficulties often brought a sense of cynicism with them to the new church.

Traditional religious loyalties were also highlighted in I-2 and I-7. These loyalties often impeded an individual or family's ability to make a commitment to a new church. This is reflected in an event concerning traditional loyalties related by the pastor of (I-2) who says,

Ah, it's not that bad today. It's changing. But ten years ago we had a man come to church here and he came back the next week and said, "I don't want to go to your church anymore." And I said, "Why?" And he said, "I parked my truck in front of your church and one of my uncles went by in the street and saw my truck. So he called my family. So my family said, "If you want to come to this church you are not in our family. You choose between this church and your family." So the poor man said, "I can't go. I need my family." It's very strong.



The pastor in I-2 also contends that these traditional loyalties in the Maritime Provinces are different, and perhaps stronger, than in other regions of Canada. He (I-2) says,

OK. You mean Maritimers. The culture here is very different. I grew up in Quebec. This here, it is different; people do things differently...Even if they are Catholic. It's not the same Catholic as in Quebec. You know in Quebec they do restaurants with church. You won't see that here, not at all....Well, in the first place, my experience is not here. It is in Quebec, but I can tell that it is a very different culture. It is different from North America. Um, I know that there is a lot of church planting that we hear about in the U.S. who are amazing. It's like you should, you just put a program and then you bring a structure to the community and then in a few months you have 100 people. See, that's a different setting. You have people who are doing marketing and they are, have... But that's different in these communities. I know there are some great people like Hybels, Rick Warren. They have done really great things and you know, you read some of their literature and its incredible and wow! This is great. But I don't think you can use, like these settings everywhere. Like some principles are good but the way people are thinking is different. Like I remember I was reading about Bill Hybels saying that his church was moving from one location to another before they have a building. That's something that is workable. But here, if you bring your church from one building to another, people know each other. They will say this is not (right?) These people are not serious. They are just like a chicken with no head on it. They are just going from place to place and they are not stable. It is a matter of culture. But I believe in these good principles.

I-2 highlights the need for understanding of principles that are common in literature concerning church planting but also the need for cultural adaptation for the Maritime Provinces. This concept is also supported in the I-7. In response to the question, "Do cultural patterns differ here, the pastor (I-7), who moved to the Maritimes from the southern United States, comments,

“Well, again, we’re back to the traditional. I don’t know enough about this to really say a lot. The French overlay is part of this, the French culture. The European mindset is more pronounced here than it would be in the States. In my view you have those things. The idea of how you do church.” The cultural distinctions in relation to traditional loyalties and a more European mindset draw attention to the need for culturally sensitive approaches to church planting with the context of the Maritime Provinces and even regional differences within these provinces.

Traditional religious loyalties and the traditions of how you do church have also had an impact on expectations for success of new church plants in the Maritimes. These expectations are also impacted by the economic struggles that have often been a part of the region’s history. Low expectations for success are a challenge to those who attempt to plant viable long-term churches in the region. In relation to this the senior pastor of I-1 says,

There is one cultural factor. It says that it can’t ever happen here. This is the back-ass part of the country. I think that is a cultural factor and one of my goals from the very beginning was to dismiss that and to say that the God who does it in Rick Warren’s church in California is the same God who wants to do big things here too. It’s going to look different, and there are all kinds of reasons for that. But I think there is a cultural reality that’s not only in the church. It’s in education, it’s in business, it’s in politics, it’s in everything. It’s part of a whole Atlantic DNA that says, “You know ah, things can’t happen here quite as much as other places.” And that kind of infiltrates the church, as well. So that’s one cultural reality.

The reticence to believe that anything big can happen in Atlantic Canada is reflected in people’s expectations of how large a church should be, or can be and, therefore, on its ability to achieve long-term viability. The senior pastor of I-4 argues that establishing a large congregation in Atlantic Canada is more likely to happen through multiple sites than in one larger area. He (I-4) says,

I know one right off the top of my head. This weekend I spent some time with my family and I know that it's very difficult to grow and make a church in Atlantic Canada, say of 500 people, but I want to reach 500 people, and I think that we can do that better through two churches, three churches, four churches ah because we are a community that's close knit across Atlantic Canada,. I think for a different that we are afraid of a big church because it's cold, it's informal, it doesn't really speak to me, whatever. So I know that if we really want to reach a thousand people for Christ and His kingdom, it will be done better through four churches vs. one.

This is a more positive outlook on achieving viability in Atlantic Canada. A more negative sentiment in regards to the sense of low expectations in the region is expressed by another pastor (I-6) who states, "Culturally, I have always thought of Atlantic Canada as being ten years behind the rest of the world in its technological advances. But I think it is starting to catch up a little more." He (I-6) goes on, further down in his response to the question on cultural awareness, to connect his opinion about technology to the culture in general saying, "Here, where I am, it's a farming culture and it's hard to break into...And like I said, I think people here are generally laid back in their expectations." Lower expectations lead to a longer period to achieve viability for a church compared to more urban areas.

In contrast to this I-6 also asserts that, despite lower expectations and lagging behind other areas in technological advances, the region has been highly influenced by spiritual, moral and political viewpoints of more urban areas. In response to the question on distinct cultural patterns in the Maritime Provinces he (I-6) says,

Oh, I don't think so, what I've looked at and seen, what has gone on in the rest of the world finds its place here. If not it takes a few years to come along. I use to think that our area, here, was conservative. But I've come to realize that politically and spiritually, this area is as liberal as other areas are. The things that

we struggle with in evangelism and ministry, I have talked to other ministers from other areas and found that they are struggling with the same things.

This phenomenon of a culture that is reserved religiously and has low expectations for change but has, in many ways, become very similar morally and politically to other more populated regions is an important factor in a church's desire to achieve long-term viability. The views of I-6 directly above are very similar to the response of another pastor (I-5), who says, "Number one, I do run into problems with people who have fallen into the culture and they somehow want me to bless them. But they know I can't. But then, along with that is the pain that it causes the whole congregation when we refuse such people ministry in the church." In relation to a more liberal moral and spiritual stance the pastor of I-7 connects a slower time frame to achieve stability with the cultural impact of the world on this region. He (I-7) says,

I'm sure there are people who have said they are not here because the walk is too tight and the preaching is too ah, what is the word to use, ah, strong. I don't know, something like that. Ah, the idea of being able to casually acknowledge a doctrine is viewed as having saving faith, I strongly disagree with that....you know I'm not going to lower that standard just to bring people. I just can't do that. So, so that has impacted us.

This impact of the prevalent western culture on Maritime society is seemingly a paradox when compared to the cultural and religious reservedness already mentioned above, but it is a reality with which church planters in the region must come to terms. The senior pastor of I-1 maintains that the impact of western culture and a loss of Biblical understanding among many people has created a situation which requires thought and patience. He(I-1) says, "We don't understand our culture and it has changed dramatically, therefore, how are we going to reach the culture and how do we live as missionaries, missionally in this culture that is almost as difficult today as if I

was planted in Europe or Africa.” Moving from this thought to a question on the integration into the lives of the congregation of theological concept foundational for the ministry of his church he (I-1) answers,

I think that that is always slow, because we’re working with, a lot of the people we’re working with are unchurched, away from the church for a while and even those who have been engaged in the church for a while don’t really understand what it is to live that way, missionally. I think that the whole idea of the kingdom, I think people are getting it here now, people are beginning to watch. I think people are starting to catch it – only way to do it is to continually dropping it, constantly, whether that is in the way an announcement is done, whether that is in conversations over coffee’s kingdom I think it is continually dropping it, you know, where it is about God’s kingdom and you are part of God and you have a circle of influence that you are in and God’s calling you to work into that circle of influence for His kingdom’s sake, so I think that people are starting to get that here. Certainly the leadership is understanding that, and then that starts to filter down. There’d be lots of people here who don’t catch it at all, because they’re so new in their faith, but I think it does filter down slowly.

In this context the concept of church planting in the Maritime Provinces needs to be understood as missional as opposed to an extension of denominational ministry through new churches. The need to be missional is based on both the challenges of a culture that is conservative and reserved in respect to changes and expectations but that has been heavily influenced by secular western culture to the point that there has been a great loss of Biblical knowledge and a Christian world view. In that respect planting new churches from an evangelical basis requires an understanding of the cultural issues a church planting pastor will face and the need for patience in achieving expectations of long-term viability.

There are, most likely, other cultural differences that distinguish the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, however, those mentioned above have been evident from the research data. CD or cultural differences will be discussed with regard to their emergence as a common characteristic, and in comparison to the expectations of literature as reviewed in the conceptual framework of Chapter 3, in Section 5.4 below.

### **5.3. Additional Codes That Were Not Universal in the Data:**

In addition to the data described above there were significant codes that were evident in much of the research data but were not mentioned by all of the pastors that were interviewed. These codes include the following: SG or slower growth; CM or consumer mindset; RI or rural isolation; SI or structural issues; MF or mission format; DB or demographic base; LOS or limited outside support; MD or missionary deputation; SFS or sustained financial support. Although these codes were not found universally they emerged in some or most of the data and are important to examine as contributing to the overall challenges of achieving long-term viability for church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces.

#### **5.3.1. SG or Slower Growth:**

SG became evident in several of the interviews, as well as, the case studies. In the data it was often connected to SC, slower change and SE, slower establishment. It is significant as a separate code because it is indicative of the realities church planters face in an area with a smaller population base than that from which much of the American literature is generated.

SG is connected, as well, to the lack of a strong Biblical foundation for many people that is mentioned in section 5.2.7 and is explained by the pastor of I-1, who says,

I think that that is always slow, because we're working with, a lot of the people we're working with are unchurched, away from the church for a while and even

those who have been engaged in the church for a while don't really understand what it is to live that way, missionally.... There'd be lots of people here who don't catch it at all, because they're so new in their faith, but I think it does filter down slowly.

He (I-1) implies for the need to recognize that slower apprehension of Biblical principles means slower growth. Other pastors express similar concerns about the rate of growth. In I-5 the pastor relates stability and growth to his congregation's acceptance and assimilation of the church's mission statement. Concerning growth he (I-5) says, "We went through nine years of just between 9 and 10% growth each year of average attendance. We have been holding our own on that attendance four years now." This church experienced modest but steady growth and then reached a plateau in their attendance. The pastor (I-5) explains this plateau saying, "...and I know it is because of the people who have come and gone in that time period, and I know we're growing, but not in average attendance. But involved in that there have to be people getting saved." Maintaining their average attendance was possible because of new people coming to Christ but there were also people who had left the church, which prevented numerical growth. Slower growth is also attributed to a consumer mindset, which will be discussed in detail below, but in regard to SG the senior pastor of I-4 comments,

\_\_\_\_\_, you know, it's a city of 60,000 plus in the greater \_\_\_\_\_ area and in the church life there would be a few names, a dozen or twenty or so, that you would know when so and so shows up at your church you've got about a three year window before they go to someone else's church. And it's not that they leave because they're mad, it's just, "Well, it's been fun, I'll try somewhere else for a bit."

Freedom to come and go without joining or commit to a church has resulted in slower growth in this region. Doctrinal matters have also impacted the rate of growth in some new churches.

Both I-6 and I-7 make reference to this. The pastor of I-6

Well, on church growth, our position has caused us to grow slowly, of course. People have difficulty understanding who we are and what we're about. But those who come into our midst have found a warmth of fellowship and the communion of the saints that has really kept them here. We have not had too many that have come and gone, that sort of thing.

I-6 planted a church with strong denominational oversight and doctrinal expectations. He (I-6) asserts that a lack of spiritual awareness in the general population makes numerical growth slow.

He (I-6), goes on to say,

I believe we live in an area where most people are inoculated spiritually. Reaching people here with the gospel, getting people off of the street and into the church, it's a long work. We don't look at just a quick work or something that is going to happen in the snap of a finger. We realize that that work is long and drawn out. But we're patient with that because we respect, very much the Holy Spirit's work.

A missional sense of evangelism and discipleship underlies this response, but with it is the realization that timing is in the control of the Holy Spirit and that discipleship is a slow process.

In a similar way the pastor in I-7 expresses slower growth due to resistance to a strong doctrinal position and expectations from his denomination. He (I-7) says, "I'm sure there are people who have said they are not here because the walk is too tight and the preaching is too, ah, what is the word they use, ah, strong...I'm not going to lower that standard just to bring people. I just can't do that." In response to the question regarding theological emphases central to the establishment



of his church he (I-7) goes on to suggest that slower growth is connected to a cultural resistance to evangelical doctrine, saying,

I believe many people will say yes to faith before they say yes to repentance...There have been people who have visited us and have said they could not go to church here because, because they felt convicted or they, they felt uh it was just too close, the requirement was too close, uh, which I don't know what to do about that, because if the gospel requires that, I can't change it...so in that sense that has affected the response of people.

Here, again, there is a slow growth due to resistance to foundational evangelical doctrine.

In C-1 growth was impeded by a traditional understanding of the church as a building and resistance to the vision to replant the church with an evangelical and missional foundation and conflict with the existing core group regarding the overall vision and its practical applications.

The pastor/researcher (C-1) writes,

A common theological concept in the church planting region was the understanding of the church as a building. Without a building there really was no church. Also common to the area was the concept of universal salvation as opposed to salvation by faith in Christ through the grace of God. As a result of this difference in theological orientation of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches and the church planting pastor in comparison to the theological presuppositions of the existing core group, different visions for the mission and stability of the church emerged and sometimes caused conflict.

The constant need to re-focus on the vision and deal with issues of unity resulted in a slower rate of growth to bring stability and viability. The pastor/researcher (C-1) continues, saying,

This impacted church growth and stability negatively in several ways. Firstly, an inordinate amount of time was spent encouraging the core group to accept the

vision of the church and to adopt a missional attitude rather than a traditional understanding of the church as a building. Secondly, competing visions and concepts of the church created times of conflict which resulted in newer people becoming discouraged and leaving the church. Therefore, growth and stability were slow.

In this sense a lack of unity in the area of vision and mission had a negative impact on church growth and, therefore, on long-term viability.

Slower growth was also an issue in C-2. The issues surrounding SG, however, were related to cynicism as a result of clergy moral failure, as is described by the pastor/researcher (C-2) who says, “Cynicism of people from the predominant denomination over clergy moral failures in the past had led to an attitude of reluctance to give financially to the church.” Familial pressure on people who considered changing denominations was also a deterrent to growth. The pastor/researcher (C-2) writes, “Although many people had left or distanced themselves from the denomination into which they were born, there were still strong family and community pressures on individuals who were seen as abandoning their faith if they became involved in an evangelical church.”

Slower growth is an important consideration for church planting situations in the region studied. It is closely connected to slower change, slower establishment and cultural differences that distinguish the region from more populous regions of North America.

### **5.3.2. CM or Consumer Mind-set:**

CM or consumer mind-set emerged in three of the interviews. I-1, I-3 and I-4 spoke of the concept as being a factor in their church's goal to become viable over the long-term. A consumer mindset is identified as both a hindrance and an opportunity in the data.

Interview I-1 categorizes CM as both hindrance and opportunity. It is a hindrance in the sense that it is a product of a self-serving society. It is an opportunity in the sense that the church decided to emphasize relationships and service to one another as central to their mission. The pastor (I-1) comments,

We said we think in North American culture, because consumerism is the God, when Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself," they don't really grasp that that might mean serving because we are so much about ourselves. And so much about consumerism, and so we said, "We really want to flag that one because we want to be a church that is passionate about serving. Serving each other, serving our community."

The church made a proactive decision to address a cultural reality common to North Americans. For other pastors, CM was a difficulty that threatened stability and prevented earlier achievement of viability. In relation to this the pastor of I-3 says,

In a consumer society people tend to jump ship more often. They tend to shop around and not really invest themselves in any local church. Once they do get involved they tend to stick around and tie in and aim to grow that church themselves. (Others are) spectators, going from church to church meeting their felt needs instead of seeing how they can contribute themselves.

In this instance CM is understood as a lack of willingness to commit to the church community and invest oneself in the mission of the Church.

The phenomenon of consumerism is based, according to the pastors of one church, as being related to a saturation of evangelical churches in their region. This leads to greater choice for those who desire an evangelical church but do not want to make a long-term commitment.

Addressing this matter the associate pastor of I-4 says,

I suspect this is not too far off from \_\_\_\_\_, although I do know that its two things. First, ah, I don't know how to say it diplomatically. For PEI, particularly, it's just a buffet of churches that people sample from, based on their appetite, throughout their life. It is not uncommon in PEI, and after having lived in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and ministered in both places, it never seemed quite to this extreme. But it's not uncommon for people to have anywhere from 3 to 5 year expiration date. You know? Kind of a revolving door when a church is what they attend. So that's one of the dynamics.

In terms of long-term viability this mindset leads to a pattern of attendance increase and then decline, which, ultimately impacts the church's unity and financial stability. There are also competing expectations from people of diverse denominational backgrounds that create a sense of confusion in the congregation at times. This is evident in the thoughts of the senior pastor of I-4, who says,

That's a great point, a great point. \_\_\_\_\_ for example, there are 2 Baptist churches that belong to Convention. Whereas in most cities this size there would be 5 or 6 or 7. So that when they get mad at one I can go to the next. I know how it works. But here it's, you know, you come from a Southern Baptist to a Convention, to a United, to a Catholic, to a Presbyterian to , you know, you start naming them. And Brethren is a real strong background on the Island. And people come to church life and they don't have any idea what's going on and it creates all kinds of wonderful tensions and dynamics because, everyone's background and church life is so different.

The pastor identifies this a cultural distinction of Prince Edward Island, but from the comments from I-1, it is clear that it is an issue in other areas of the Maritime Provinces, as well.

This consumer mindset is part of the tension within which church planting takes place within the Maritime Provinces, as well as, within the larger North American society, as is discussed in Chapter 3.2.2 above and in this Chapter, sections 5.2.6 and 5.2.7 on traditional thinking and cultural differences. Both TT and CD were interpreted in these sections as causing slower growth and establishment. TT and CD issues that emerged were the concept of the church as being a building; if there is no building there is really no church, therefore people are reluctant to join, and nominal traditional religious loyalties that often caused a sense of reticence in becoming involved in an evangelical church plant. A consumer mindset also contributed to slower establishment and long term viability as new congregants sometimes moved from church to church, as they felt the desire to have their needs met.

### **5.3.3. RI or Rural Isolation:**

Another issue, RI or rural isolation, was mentioned in two of the interviews and reflects the smaller population base of the Maritime Provinces, as well as, the challenges of planting a church in a smaller community. This issue, in itself, is an example of a geographical difference specific to smaller communities which can be found in the region studied, and perhaps in other places a with similar population base. In relation to this I-3 compares the Maritime Provinces to his ministry in a more rural area of the United States. Part of his (I-3) interview is included below in which his answers reflect the need for an understanding of Rural Isolation which is evident in the belief that in rural areas the pastor is the one who is responsible for ministry. This is similar to the models of church planting discussed in the section on TT (traditional thinking) above, but is important to note because there are distinctions of RI that emerge in other rural

areas. A portion of the dialogue in I-3 makes the connection between two rural areas that are separated from each other by considerable distance. The dialogue unfolds as follows:

Researcher: What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation?

Pastor: The community would be a value we have, being the body of Christ and not just a group of strangers coming together. Umm-along with that would be united in ministry. Also we value offering new beginning, offering a fresh start and forgiveness. Intimacy with God is a primary focus.

Researcher: Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister?

Pastor: I know what we battle for with the priesthood of all believers instead of the professional ministers being the ones responsible for the ministry. That's kind of a view that a lot of people have. We try to emphasize that everyone is a minister.

Researcher: How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts? I believe that everyone is a minister. All followers of Christ are gifted in unique ways to contribute to His kingdom. So that contradicts what the common belief in our society is.

Researcher: has your ministry always been in Atlantic Canada or have you ministered elsewhere?

Pastor: No. I was in South Dakota, as well.

Researcher: Did you come across this contradiction there?

Pastor: Yes, it was similar.

Researcher: Now South Dakota would be fairly rural?

Pastor: Yes, fairly rural and a farming community.

Researcher: What impact has that had on church growth and stability?

Pastor: In a consumer society people tend to jump ship more often. They tend to shop around and not really invest themselves in any local church. Once they do get involved they tend to stick around and tie in and aim to grow that church

themselves. (Others are) spectators, going from church to church meeting their felt needs instead of seeing how they can contribute themselves.

There is a connection here of rural areas with smaller populations to the concept of the pastor as being the paid professional minister who serves the people. They, in turn are the recipients of ministry. This may be a result of a level of discomfort in reaching out to neighbours and community members whom they have known all their lives. The pastor of I-2 comments on this saying, “But when you live in a town here it is very difficult for them to say to their neighbours, ‘I am here to talk about Jesus Christ.’ So we need to find some other ways to bring the gospel to other people.” In two other responses later on in the interview the pastor (I-2) speaks of the difficulty of church planting in a rural area and also of the necessity to do so. He (I-2) says,

First of all I would say, geographically, it is not a good move to plant a church in \_\_\_\_\_, OK? I plant a church here and I’m supported by my Fellowship, but it was not wise to plant church here because it was hard, it is hard to, oh, have the full salary for a pastor for many reasons...so it is by the grace of the Lord I’m still fully supported as a pastor/missionary...But the Lord is leading some people into communities like this. So you need missionaries. You need people who have burdens for some communities.

Two concepts are evident in these answers. The first is the challenge of becoming financially viable in a rural area where numerical growth tends to take longer. The second is the need for pastor-missionaries who have a burden for planting a church in a rural area that may mean a slower time frame for reaching viability.

Another aspect of RI is brought forward in I-6. This church planting situation has strong doctrinal and structural expectations from its denomination. Its growth has often been through families with similar denominational background moving into areas close to the church plant.

This has had an impact on ministry to and with the congregation. The pastor of I-6 comments on this saying,

Well for us, yes, there has been a bit in the way of geographical and regional. From the perspective of where families are located. For example, being a reformed congregation, when people of reformed tradition move into our area, because of work related reasons, they will seek out our church and are willing to drive quite a distance to come to our church. We have families from \_\_\_\_\_, which is over thirty minutes on the highway...But it is because of being a reformed church. That geographical issue has an impact on us, as far as the ministry we do. But being the only reformed congregation with a conservative view, we attract a larger geographical area of people...Most of our people spend over twenty minutes driving to our services.

This highlights the challenges of planting a church in the region that is designed with those who are comfortable with the doctrinal and structural format of the church and/or those who have been part of the same or a similar denominational and doctrinal background. The resulting achievement of viability is likely to take longer than in more populous areas. The pastor (I-6) acknowledges this saying, “Well, on church growth, our position has caused us to grow slowly, of course. People have difficulty understanding who we are and what we’re all about.”

RI is an issue with which church planters in the region must come to terms, in respect to numerical growth, the expectation of the pastor to be the professional minister and the willingness, or lack thereof, of congregants to reach out to long time neighbours and community members. It also highlights the need for pastors who understand these dynamics, but have a burden to plant churches in such rural areas, despite the realities of obvious slower growth and geographical distance between congregants of similar beliefs. It is a characteristic common in the Maritimes but is also found in other rural areas such as in rural South Dakota or the



Appalachian region of the United States, as was discussed in Chapter 3.4.2. The significance of this distinction is the necessity for strategies of church planting unique to these areas and notably different than larger urban areas for which much of literature based expectations from an American perspective are written.

### **5.3.4 DB or Demographic Base:**

Similar to RI and somewhat related is the DB or demographic base of the region. DB emerges in four of the interviews. DB is mentioned as a negative factor, in terms of literature based expectations and as a positive factor, from the perspective of church planters in a town with a quickly growing population.

In I-1 the demographic base of the region is discussed as an area of distinction from much of the literature generated by American sources. The senior pastor of I-1 elaborates on this saying,

We read everything that comes out of the US and so much doesn't relate. Some of it does, like the big philosophical stuff. But most of it doesn't relate to the culture here. And part of it is we just don't have the population, the demographics are so different from the churches and the leaders that re writing this stuff that you just can't make what works there work here. A little example is how do we integrate people into small groups. So Andy Stanley at Northpoint, every once in a while they have a meeting where they bring anybody who's interested in small groups to come together and they form a whole bunch of small groups out of that meeting. Well we probably would have four people show up because we just don't have the population, the demographics. So all of the great ideas that come out of Northpoint and Willow Creek and Saddleback. and places like that. All these places don't work here. And so that's the stuff we read. I think we're much better off to read some of the stuff that's coming out of the UK. I think culturally they are much more similar to Canada.

The demographic base of the Maritime Provinces is a significant concern for effective church planting in this region.

Local demographics are also highlighted by several pastors. The pastor of I-2 spoke of the difficulty of church planting in the town and surrounding area in which he ministered due both to a smaller population and to the language and religious background of the area. He attributes a longer period to attain sustainability because of these issues. He (I-2) says,

Another reason is you have, in this county ca. 12,000 people including the villages. \_\_\_\_\_ has ca. 6,000 people, and it is mixed French and English, by the way. So it is different if you plant a church in a 50,000 community. So you can expect to have full support there. So it's by the grace of the Lord. I'm still fully supported as a pastor/missionary. But we know, if man were deciding (I don't know if you are going to understand what I am going to say here) but the church exists here because the Lord say, "I want a church here." Because when I came here, I didn't come to plant a church, in the first place.... But if we were, you know, a bunch of wise people around the table and say, "Ok, where is the best place to start a church in New Brunswick?" well it's probably Moncton, see? Don't start with \_\_\_\_\_.

In this sense, I-2 identifies a common problem of church planters in the Maritime Provinces.

The problem is the conflict generated by a personal sense of call to a smaller area and the reality of generating enough growth and income to support a ministry in that specific area. This is an issue which emerges in I-3, as well. The pastor of I-3 expresses a desire to have known demographic information before beginning the process of church planting in that local area. He (I-3) says,

What I wish we had done, before we moved, is a study of the population to determine what trends are here; what the population is like; what the values are locally. We did some research online, trying to find those facts out, but we were

pretty limited in what we had access to. And I'm not sure how that has impacted us. It may have given us some insights but I'm not sure.

Both I-2 and I-3 struggled to maintain long-term viability, as defined in Chapter 1 of this research project.

In contrast to this DB is mentioned in a positive light by I-4 because of the decision to plant a church in an area of rapid population growth. The thoughts of the associate pastor reflect much of the expectations of American based literature. He (I-4) comments, "Its real simple for us. \_\_\_\_\_ was and still is one of the top ten fastest growing communities in Atlantic Canada....that didn't have an evangelical presence...It just made a lot of sense to start a church over there." From a practical stand point this church was able to benefit from a growing population base. Whereas this is an important point for consideration when beginning a church plant, it does not address the issue of sustainability for new church plants in areas of smaller and more rural populations to which a pastor may sense a call to plant an evangelical church.

Although not mentioned in all interviews DB is an important factor to be considered in church planting in the Maritime Provinces, both negatively, because of smaller population base and positively, in relation to growing communities in the region.

### **5.3.5 GD – Geographical Differences:**

Also related to RI and DB is the concept of geographical differences. GD or geographical differences were only clearly evident in two interviews but are worth mentioning for two reasons. Firstly, one pastor who mentioned this brought the perspective of an American from a larger and more southern part of the United States and, therefore, brought an outside perspective to geographical differences. Secondly, reference to geography is directly related to the cultural differences prevalent in an area of a smaller population base and rural isolation.

The pastor of I-7 made comments about the geography of the Maritime Provinces that related, in his opinion, to slower growth and establishment of viable congregations in the region. The expectations of his denomination for recording growth did not account for the more northerly climate of Atlantic Canada. In regard to this he (I-7) says,

Again, the slower lifestyle, seasons. When I first moved here our denomination would have a big day every Easter and call it Roll Call Sunday. And on that Sunday you would count those that stood, and send in the figure. And theoretically they can track where the denomination is going because on that given Sunday everybody turned in their attendance. Well what it turned out to be was the growth day for many of your large mega churches. And in our church context the interesting thing was there were two or three years when we couldn't even have church on those dates...But I just said, "Look guys, this doesn't work for us. It's hard to imagine but the weather is controlling what we can do..."

Bad weather resulted in service cancellation in the winter and, in the pastor's opinion, longer winters resulted in more depression in the region. Missing services also had an impact on income and weather had an impact on morale. He (I-7) says, "I find a lot more depression here than I have found anywhere else...when people who are part of your core are unable to function properly in the ministry they are trying to do just because they are in a state of depression, it affects your ministry." Even though these things are not widely discussed in the interviews the perspective of I-7, as someone new to the region, gives support to the concept that growth and viability are slowed by geographical concerns.

Geographical differences were also cited by the pastor of I-8 in terms of more local concerns. As highways in the three provinces have improved the ability of people to travel to some of the larger centers has become easier and have, therefore, negatively impacted smaller areas. The pastor of I-8 says, "A few years ago people would go to church within ten miles of

where they lived. Now people don't mind travelling. With the larger centers it is harder because people don't mind driving to bigger city structures. That's kind of hard on Atlantic Canada for the smaller areas." This coincides with the concept of rural isolation for pastors who plant churches in smaller areas and, therefore, also with the concept of slower growth fostered by greater choice and a consumer mind-set among many people.

Geographical differences also coincide with cultural differences which were mentioned in all of the interviews, as well as, the case studies. In that regard, though only mentioned specifically in two interviews, the geography and culture of the Maritime Provinces combine to provide a unique challenge for church planting when compared with much of the current literature on church planting both from an American perspective and a more global view of the issue.

### **5.3.6 SFS or Sustained Financial Support, LOS or Limited Outside Support, MD or Missionary Deputation:**

Three codes that emerged in some of the interviews and the case studies were SFS (sustained financial support), LOS (limited outside support) and MD (missionary deputation). All three of these codes emerged in discussion regarding financial issues and long-term viability of church planting situations. They provide insight into distinctions of financial issues for church planting situations. The three are combined in this section because, when viewed together, they are found in all of the interviews and case studies.

The need for longer term support to obtain viability has already been recognized by some church planters. An example of this is found in I-1. The pastor describes the request of the church for financial support with reference to a longer term than the literature based expectations of self-sufficiency within three years. In answer to the question regarding a denominational

financial support program he (I-1) says, “ABMB basically salary support for the pastor. They did here in \_\_\_\_\_ and they do it in \_\_\_\_\_. We said when we started here, ‘We want you to give us 5 years and don’t cut us back. Give us 5 years.’ So they put money into the salary package for the pastor.” Similarly I-2 describes his denomination’s program of support as recognizing the need for longer term support, however, it is in regularly decreasing amounts. He (I-2) comments, “Usually the mainline is, I should say was, because that has changed, you’re going to have a full support that first year and we’re going to reduce that 10% every year. So about ten years you end up with no support, but your church is supporting your right? So that is the mainline.” The support of the church was not always enough to address the financial needs. I-2 also speaks of the need for MD or missionary deputation to supplement the financial giving of the church. He (I-2) says, “...in our association who provide salaries for pastors and missionaries...what we need to do for that is you need to raise your salary and you need to do some deputation. So what I do every year, I go and visit churches and donators during the Fall mostly.”

The financial issue was approached from a slightly different manner by the denomination supporting I-3. The denomination provided a set amount of cash which could be used in the first three years or spread over a longer period. The pastor also describes the need for LOS or limited outside support. He (I-3)

I presented a proposal to our District of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and, as part of that, I included a budget with them donating \$48,000.00. At the time it stretched over three years. We didn’t use all those funds early on so those funds were stretched beyond that time. But each church plant approved by the district would have a different financial structure...We still receive support from people outside but not from the district.

The expectation of self-sufficiency was evident from the denomination district, but there was also allowance for the monies to be dispersed over a longer period and allowance for outside support, as well.

The pastors of I-4 speak of sustained financial support in terms of literature based expectations. They (I-4) say,

P: We receive money from the Convention through its Home Mission Board and through the PEI association. S: Atlantic Baptist Mission Board, I was corrected on that. P: The Atlantic Baptist Mission Board and the PEI Association, we received this year, I think its \$20,000.00 between those two organizations, uh, back when we first started it was around \$30,000.00. They have diminished their support as the church has grown over the last three years and this is the last year for financial support through both of those organizations.

The pastors of I-4 make no mention of requests for longer term support for their work. On the other hand the pastor of I-6 speaks very clearly of the need and use of SFS. Speaking of denominational assistance he (I-6) says, "...we petitioned our presbytery for help as we saw the need each year and our presbytery always responded. They never declined to help us. It wasn't until our sixth year that we said, as a session, 'We think we can go it on our own.'" In a similar way the pastor of I-7 describes the need for SFS far beyond three years. In regard to receiving denominational support he (I-7) says,

We do. We have since the day we started. Ah, and that's been since 1996. We moved here in August 1996. So we're still on their support, ah, the church here sends back a portion of our offerings to underwrite our expenses, so we're still probably, I don't know, maybe 15 or 20% away from being full time. So we are still receiving support, but not at the level that we were before.

I-7 received some denominational support. Other denominations provided little in the way of salary support and the church relied on missionary deputation and outside support to supplement income of the new church. In regard to this the pastor of I-5 says, “We had other churches supporting us during the first four years...but our denominations doesn’t work that it has money to give out. And the only other support which was from the denomination was a loan to buy this piece of land originally.”

In the experience of the researcher, both church planting situations in the case studies required SFS, MD and LOS in order to continue the ministry for which the researcher was called. Financial assistance was necessary beyond three years, in decreasing amounts. Help from other churches and individuals was essential for the continued progress of the ministry.

The combination of data from the codes of SFS, LOS and MD describe the need for church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces for financial support beyond the literature based expectation of three years in all of the interviews and the case studies.

### **5.3.7 SI or Structural Issues:**

The final code which was significant in the data was SI or structural issues. SI emerged in most of the interviews and in both of the case studies. SI was viewed both positively, in terms of the church planters ability to have flexible structures, and negatively, in terms of traditional expectations for denominational structures.

Positively I-1 indicated that their structures were very flexible and they were able to make changes as needed. Similarly I-2 describes the ability to create functional structures that met the need of the situation. The pastor (I-2) explains,

You know I just want you to be sure you understand me here. I believe in the church leadership with elders, which is Biblical. They are the leaders of the



church. But you have some people in the church `called the deacons, who are their servants, who are the leaders of different ministries, who are the servants, OK? I believe that. What I mentioned here is that in a church planting situation you don't have that. So you have to start here and move there. And in the process you have the team.

The need for flexibility and time to develop leadership is highlighted here. The senior pastor of I-4 also speaks of the need for flexibility and asserts that his church does not follow traditional denominational structures. In response to the question about following traditional denominational structures he (I-4) says,

Not at all. Well, I would argue that it's an actual reflection of what it should be. But I think over the course of time...we've taken the priesthood of believers and the local autonomy of the church and made it something it was never meant to be. We've turned into a Canadian democracy of, "I have human rights and individual human rights," versus a theocracy of the leading of the Holy Spirit....Our church body...they have three votes. They vote on pastors, they vote on deacons and they vote on the budget.

The focus, in this setting, is on a pastor and deacon led church, rather than a traditional congregational style of government the pastors of I-4 believe is part of their denomination's history.

In contrast to this I-6 describes adherence to traditional denominational governance. The pastor (I-6) says, "As far as church polity, no. Our structure is eldership rule and the elders are the ones who look at people when they come in and are there to help them." The pastor does, however, go on to describe flexibility in ministry programs. He (I-6) says,

Well that's on an individual church basis. Our congregation, we have in place what is called children's catechism and youth group and mid-week prayer and Bible study. We do not have a Sunday School because Sunday School does entail

a great deal of resources from a church, both financial and people-wise and especially, where you're beginning a church plant, to have a number of people in place, who can adequately teach other people, is very limited.

In a similar way I-8 describes fairly traditional structures and a modified congregational style government but with some flexibility. He (I-8) comments about structures, saying, "Probably informal, not as formal as established churches. We did have Board meetings and annual meetings, so in between formal and informal." This pastor also equates lack of formal accountability structures as one of the weaknesses that brought instability to his situation. He (I-8) says, "I think that is probably the issue. Because we were not accountable to a denomination. I think that would have been more successful." The lack of accountability structures and church governance structures crossed over one another in this situation and led to a lack of long-term viability.

In the case studies SI were significant in delaying long-term viability and creating instability. In the replanting situation described in C-1 traditional expectations and pre-existing structures hampered progress. The researcher (C-1) comments on this saying,

The core group which was in place when I began the ministry of church planting had organized into a steering group. Their understanding was that they were going to direct the church and the pastor. The concept of leadership that was understood by me and by the Convention officials was that I would develop the ministry in cooperation with the steering group. The weak theological stance of the steering group and relatively small amount of leadership experience within a Baptist context brought challenges for stability and viability. The church planting structures were similar to but not identical to most traditional denominational structures. There was no Board of Deacons until more than three years into the church planting process because of a lack of qualified leaders and the need to disciple and train leaders for those positions.

Attempts to overcome this weakness took a significant amount of time that delayed viability.

The researcher (C-1) says,

Through study of church planting literature and consultation with denominational leadership structures were modified to reflect a more functional approach to the church planting task and accommodate a leadership directed church. Over a three to four year time span a Board of Deacons was formed and the steering committee was changed to an Advisory Board with representation on the Board from ministry leaders involved in the actual programs of the church as opposed to a steering committee of individuals who may or may not have been involved in regular ministry.

Structural issues were addressed but not within literature based time expectations.

The situation described in C-2 differed in that the church replant involved a very small core group that was enthusiastic and supportive of leadership. This enabled development of appropriate structures, however, the small size of the core group meant that there was a significant time factor involved in developing leadership abilities in new members of the church who often came from diverse religious backgrounds. In relation to this the researcher says,

Structures at Church B were minimal and through regular communication and discussion with the small core group we were able to keep them functional. There was a fair degree of flexibility in structures for new ministries and the small core group was willing to try new approaches as the needs arose. This allowed for tailoring programs to meet the needs of new individuals and families. Since the church had come so close to closing permanently there was little expectation to carry on traditional programs. They simply had not existed there for many years. There was a desire for preserving some of the traditional hymns and music for worship but there was also openness to new and contemporary music.

Whereas the church planting situation demonstrated positive growth, stability in leadership and structures took place over a five year period rather than three years.

SI played an important role in church planting stability. Leadership defined structures assisted in the stability needed for growth and viability. Traditional structures sometimes hampered growth. Structures that defined clear accountability lines were considered an asset for attaining viability.

## **5.4 A Comparison between the Empirical Research Data and the Literature Study**

In comparison to the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3, the empirical research revealed areas of similarity in church planting situations in the Atlantic Provinces and areas of clear distinctions. This section will compare the data that emerged from the in-depth interviews with the conceptual framework. It will compare the prevalence of codes in the research data, as described in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 above to their presence in the conceptual framework. Section 5.4.1 will discuss codes that were universal in the empirical research. Section 5.4.2 will discuss codes that were found in some of the interviews and case studies but were not universal.

### **5.4.1 Comparison of universal codes to the conceptual framework:**

The basis and motivation for church planting that was evident in all of the in-depth interviews and in the case studies was also the motivation in most of the literature on church planting. The code used to describe this in the interviews was MDE or missional, discipleship and evangelism. Chapter 3.2.1 identifies a missional mindset that stresses evangelism and discipleship as the primary Biblical and theological concept that undergirds church planting both

in the North American context and globally. Church planting in the in-depth interviews, as well as, the case studies was based, universally, on the concept of the God who sends us with the gospel for the purpose of evangelism and discipleship. Section 5.2.1 describes the emergence of this code as “Responses from all candidates in the research sample indicated a high level of commitment to a missional understanding of church planting as described in Chapter 2, section 2.3 above.” Two of the pastors who were interviewed described their commission from their denomination as being to establish a congregation which mirrored the denomination’s traditional structures, however, the guiding biblical and theological principles for development of these new churches was decidedly missional with a focus on evangelism and discipleship.

The emergence of the codes SC, slower change, and SE, slower establishment was a distinct characteristic of the interviews and case studies that was not well represented in the literature from American sources, in particular, but also from literature based in Atlantic Canada that was heavily reliant on American sources. Examples of the expectation of viability within three years, proposed by Henry Venn (Bolton, 2007, 2-3) and described in section 1.2 above, are supported by Malphurs (1998, 395), Stetzer (2003, 50-52) and Bolton (2007, 1-3). From an Atlantic Canadian perspective Gardner (1994, 184-185) also supports the shorter time frame for attaining long-term viability. From a Canadian perspective Posterski and Barker (1993, 132-133) assert that Canadians are slower to join any organization than Americans and, therefore, imply a longer period to attain viability for new churches. The emergence of SC and SE in the interviews and case studies for Atlantic Canadian church planting situations, as described in section 5.2.2 above, are universal in support of a longer time frame for establishment of a new congregation because of the tendency for slower change which is characteristic of the region.

The evidence for the code PFV, or pastor formulated vision in section 5.2.3 above, was universal in the interviews and case studies. The empirical data revealed that in every case, even when other leadership was consulted, the primary responsibility for formulating and promoting the church's vision was the pastor's. One pastor reported no vision statement but a clear purpose to establish an evangelical congregation modelled on his denomination's expected structures. Another pastor reported his initial vision was to plant a new church that followed denominational structures. In both of these cases the pastor was the key proponent. This was in keeping with the many opinions cited in the conceptual framework but was not universally accepted. In Chapter 3.2.3 above examples of those who promote PFV in the literature include Malphurs (1998, 265), Stetzer (2006, 300-301), Rainey (2008, 34), Davies (2004:3) and Hirsch (2006, 162). A divergent view also emerged in the literature but was not evident in the empirical data. This view purported the necessity of vision coming from the congregation. It was supported by Steffen (1994, 367-368), Thompson (1993, 24), Downs and Liggins (n.d. 1-3) and Bickers (2005, 37-38) but even within these authors was the recognition of the important role of the pastor in supporting and promoting the vision.

The need for both SPL, strong pastoral leadership, and SLL, strong lay leadership was also universal in the empirical data from interviews and case studies. In some cases the lack of one or the other of these characteristics led to instability or lack of viability. This was in agreement with the conceptual framework as discussed in Chapter 3.3.2 above. Strong pastoral leadership was emphasized by authors such as, Malphurs (1998, 135-136), Robinson (2006, 64-65) and Thompson (1993, 24). The need for strong pastoral leadership and a strong supportive lay leadership is discussed by Stetzer (2003, 88-89), Kaiser (2006, 29) and Robinson (2006, 99-102). In section 5.2.4, above, examples are given from the empirical data of how both SPL and

SLL strengthened a church planting and how the lack of one or the other undermined the ability to achieve long-term viability.

Closely associated with SPL and SLL both in the data analysis and in the conceptual framework was the code AS or accountability structures. In section 5.2.5, above, situations are discussed in which the presence of strong accountability structures between pastor and lay leadership, as well as, with denominational leadership, promoted health and long-term viability. Church planting situations that placed sole responsibility for viability on the church planter, with little local or denominational support and accountability, led to instability and failure to achieve viability. AS is discussed in Chapter 3.3.2, above. The literature consistently asserts the need for clear mutual accountability structures, between pastor and congregation, peer groups and denominational leaders, in order to provide stability and viability. Examples of this are cited by Stetzer and Connor (2007, 1), Agee (2005, 209-212), Kaiser (2006, 20, 29, 33-34, 83) and Robinson (2006, 85-89).

TT or traditional thinking emerged as a major issue in the empirical data for church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. This issue is discussed with regard to the empirical data in section 5.2.6 above. TT was more prevalent in the in-depth interviews and case studies than was evident in the conceptual framework. In Chapter 3.3.1 traditional thinking emerges in terms of church structures. Gardner (1994, 158) asserts the need for a suitable building for a new congregation is essential. Hay (2000, 1-2) and Payne (2006, 12) discuss the expectation of traditional structures in a new church planting situation as being a negative factor in achieving long-term viability.

In the research data all of those interviewed, as well as the case studies, reflect the reality of dealing with traditional thinking in the Maritime Provinces. Slower growth and establishment

of new congregations was related to theological concepts common to the region, such as a strong focus on the attractional model of church growth versus a missional concept and traditional structures expected by the new church's denomination. These expected structures were positive in some cases, because they provided stability, but negative, in most cases, because they tended to lead to slower growth. Also prevalent in the research data was the concept in the region that the church is a building. This was noted as a challenge for church planting situations without a building because of a reluctance of people to attend or join a church with no visible presence in the community. The importance of a building is a significant issue that reflects cultural distinctions of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada from much of the literature from sources outside of the region.

Closely tied to TT in the research data was the emergence of CD or cultural differences in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Cultural differences were both regional and local to the church planting situations in which each pastor was ministering. In Chapter 3.4.1 the issue of culture is highlighted in terms of the shift in North America and globally to a post-modern paradigm as described by Smith (1997,443), McNeal (2003, 2-3, 7, 31) and Haney (2012, 320). The paradigm shift in the research data was most notable in reference to a consumer mind-set toward church life. In general the CD generated from the data was more focused on regional and local distinctions, as discussed in section 5.2.7 above. Distinctions that were evident in the interviews and case studies for Atlantic Canada were related to a small town mind-set in the Maritimes. This mind-set manifested itself in a sense of religious and financial reservedness in relation to new churches. Traditional religious loyalties remain stronger here than in larger urban centres. The church is understood as being a building. Lack of a building slowed the growth and establishment of new churches. A negative outlook on growth and change was noted, most



likely as a result of regional economic struggles. The importance of considering and adapting to regional and local cultural distinctions is supported in the literature by Hay (2006, 143), Wagler (2009, 36) and Hesselgrave (2000, 150-151). The cultural distinctions of Atlantic Canada are supported in the literature by Rhineland (2010, 6, 8).

Several codes emerged in some of the data but not universally. Slower growth or SG was often connected to SC and SE in the data. It also was mentioned in terms of other universal codes that were distinctions of the region such as TT and CD. CM or a consumer mind-set emerged in some of the interviews as a factor in slowing the stability and viability of a church that resulted from people moving from church to church with little sense of loyalty other than to their own needs. The closest parallel in the conceptual framework was the emphasis on a post-modern paradigm that has also allowed for a high level of consumerism to develop. The negative impact of consumerism is discussed by Henderson (1998, 54), Nees (2007, 17) and Smith (1993, 443). From a Canadian perspective Posterski and Barker (1993, 122, 132-133) assert that there is a cultural distinction of Canadians versus Americans in this respect. Americans are more inclined to join an organization. Canadians are slower to make a decision to join an organization. From a Maritime perspective those interviewed spoke of the tendency of parishioners to shop around for a church that met their needs and of the tendency to move from one congregation to another in order to have these needs met. This is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, above.

RI or rural isolation received little attention in relevant literature on church planting. It did, however, emerge in several of the interviews as a significant factor in slowing growth and viability of new churches in the Maritime Provinces. DB or demographic base was mentioned in the literature with respect to the challenge of a smaller population base that Canadian evangelicalism and Atlantic Canada, in particular, must come to terms by Hiemstra (2010, 1-2,

7). This smaller population base from which to draw upon, economic struggles of the region and conservative financial practices are tied to the emergence of three codes that are connected to financial viability for new churches. These codes are SFS, sustained financial support; LOS, limited outside support; and MD, missionary deputation.

In the conceptual framework in Chapter 3.3.1 SFS is defined by Gardner (1994:19, 184-185) and Malphurs (1998, 395) in terms of limited time periods so that the church does not become financially dependent. In contrast to this Payne (2006: 5, 6, 21) asserts that the normal limited time frame of three to five years for financial support is not long enough for a new church. Most of the pastors interviewed reported some form of SFS that was usually expected to conform to the time frame of three to five years. Exceptions were made but lack of funds required several of the pastors to seek LOS, limited outside support from individuals and churches and to be involved in MD, missionary deputation work in order to raise those funds. When combined with the cultural reserved attitude toward finances, this led to slower growth for new churches.

Also mentioned by one pastor who had moved from the southern United States, were GD or geographical differences. Much of the literature focus is on cultural differences in any given region, however, in this instance a colder climate, bad weather in the winter and the desire of people to enjoy the short summer of the region made regular growing attendance more difficult to achieve, in the opinion of the pastor.

The final code which was significant in the data but not universal to all interviews and case studies was SI or structural issues. Structural issues are discussed in Chapter 3.3.1. Within the literature there is some disagreement as to the importance or timing of structures. Opinions vary, from the need for a building and traditional and recognizable denominational structures

Malphurs (1998) and Gardner (1994, 158-159), to the need for flexibility and time to develop structures (Hay 2000, 1-2), Murray (2010: 25, 53). Steffen (1994, 375) and Hesselgrave promote the need for culturally sensitive structures that meet the need of the local church in the local situation. Payne (2006, 12) downplays the need for formal structures while Stetzer (2003, 83-84) and Kaiser (2006, 70-71) assert the need for structures that are in place before the church plant is launched. SI played an important role in church planting stability. Leadership defined structures that were flexible assisted in the stability needed for growth and viability. Traditional structures sometimes hampered growth. Pastor and deacon/elder led churches were favoured over traditional congregational style government. Structures that defined clear accountability lines were considered an asset for attaining viability.

### **5.5 Sub conclusion:**

The analysis of empirical data gathered through semi-standardized interviews of church planting pastors and case studies based on the experience of the researcher, have tested the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics common to long-term viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The constant comparison method of the grounded theory approach to analysis, as described in Chapter 4.4.1, was employed to determine commonalities among church planting situations in the region. Comparison to the conceptual framework from current literature on the subject of church planting, provided in Chapter 3, enabled identification of characteristics unique to church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces and those characteristics which were held in common with other geographical regions in North America and globally.

Characteristics that new churches in the Maritime Provinces held in common with literature based expectations as developed in Chapter 3 were: a missional focus on discipleship and evangelism, strong pastoral and lay leadership that functioned as a supportive and accountable team; the need for clear and strong accountability structures both locally and regionally; and, in some areas, a consumer mind-set that emerged from a post-modern paradigm in which historic religious loyalties were less significant.

Characteristics of new church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces that were distinct from the literature in the empirical research data were: a tendency toward slower change in the region that led to slower establishment of long-term viable congregations; a pastor formulated vision in all of the interviews and the case studies; traditional thinking and cultural differences that led to slower growth in new church planting situations; rural isolation and a smaller demographic base which resulted in slower growth; and the need for sustained financial support, limited outside support and missionary deputation in order to supplement funds that were slower to obtain from the giving of a new congregation.

Characteristics that were mentioned by some and not all, both in the literature and in the research data include: geographical differences based on a more northerly climate; and structural issues, such as flexibility and the need for pastor and leader led churches, mentioned by most of the pastors interviewed and for which there were varying opinions in the conceptual frame work of Chapter 3.

In regard to areas of commonality with the literature in the conceptual framework, from both North American and global sources, further research is warranted in the areas of strong pastoral and strong lay leadership with reference to their relationship to clear accountability structures on the local and denominational or regional level. Directly related to this was a

regional distinction in the data which revealed that in all cases vision was formulated, at least in the formative stages, by the pastor. Much of the literature described either a team or congregational approach to vision formulation that was evident only later on in the church planting situations represented in the data. This emphasis on leader guided vision and leader directed churches is an important commonality in viable long-term planting situations which could add to the theoretical base for church planting in the Maritime Provinces, as well as, for church planting in general.

In regard to areas of distinction from the literature in the conceptual framework the concepts of slower growth and slower establishment of new congregations in the region are worthy of further research to help understand underlying causes and possible solutions to these challenges for long-term viability. New approaches to overcoming traditional thinking and the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada are worthy of investigation. Seeking to gain a deeper understanding of rural isolation and the impact of a smaller demographic base on the rate of growth and expectations for long-term viability is also important for church planters, churches and denominations in order to avoid instability or loss of viability for new church planting situations in the region.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusion:**

### **6.1 Overview of the Research Project:**

The purpose of this research project, as stated in Chapter 1.1, has been to identify common characteristics of church planting practices of churches and denominations during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The aim of the research has been to conduct an in-depth study by researching the common theological, practical, structural and regional characteristics of viable, long-term church plant practices, and by comparison, exploring the reasons why some of the churches struggle to maintain viability in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The research was designed to test the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common among viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

The impetus for this research developed as a result of the researcher's experience in church planting in two situations in the Maritime Provinces and his observation of the lack of literature addressing church planting specific to the region of Atlantic Canada. In the researcher's opinion there were significant differences encountered by church planters in the Maritime Provinces compared with much of the literature that was available on the subject, especially from American sources.

This research was conducted from an empirical qualitative research approach, based on a conceptual framework derived from literature for the field of church planting in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Much of the literature, especially from American sources, demonstrated an acceptance of the Indigenous Church Mission Theory, which asserts that a new church should become self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing within three years of commencement. This framework formed the basis for developing a research tool to obtain data

through in-depth interviews with church planting pastors from several evangelical denominations in all three of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, as well as, two case studies based on the researcher's experience. The interviews were semi-standardized in that they were guided by a set agenda of questions for every person interviewed but allowances were made for additional questions and comments by the person interviewed and by the researcher. Participants in the research included church planters from the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, The Wesleyan Church in Atlantic Canada, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Denomination, The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, The Freewill Baptist Denomination and an Interdenominational Charismatic Church.

The research interviews were focused on evangelical denominations, although the conceptual framework in Chapter 3 includes reference to denominations which may not consider themselves to be within the evangelical sphere of churches. The researcher anticipated that the qualitative empirical research would provide examples of common characteristics essential to church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. It was anticipated, as well, that some of these characteristics would be similar to church planting situations in other regions, as revealed by the literature in the conceptual framework, and that distinct characteristics would emerge that were specific to the cultural milieu of the region.

The research data was analyzed using the constant comparative process of a grounded theory methodology. Codes were identified that emerged in the interviews and case studies. Some of these codes were universal in the data. Others were found in some of the interviews and case studies. Codes that were not universal were often connected, theoretically, to codes that were universal in the data. Those that were unique to only one interview were noted as worthy of consideration. Codes were also compared to similar themes that emerged in the conceptual

framework in Chapter 3. Based on the comparison of interviews and case studies, to one another and to the conceptual framework, characteristics were identified that were unique to church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Characteristics that were common with other regions were also noted.

## **6.2 Chapter Summaries:**

This dissertation consists of six chapters including the introduction and the conclusion. Chapter 1 describes the aim of the research and the background from which it emerged, based on the experiences of the researcher in two of his ministries involving church planting in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The research problem is described as being the lack of a clear understanding of how new churches were planned or the consequent outcomes for long-term viability. It was noted that there is no existing body of knowledge or accepted theories to describe and theorize about issues specific to the Maritime Provinces. It seems that the theoretical basis for church planting is largely dependent upon what is happening in the United States of America and not on the differences related to diverse situations in the Canadian context, nor, more specifically the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The research was conducted in order to begin to provide a theoretical base for church planting in this region. The thesis statement that was tested is: There are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common to viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

Chapter 1 also includes a description of the methodology that was employed. The research problem was approached from a practical theological perspective. In order to gather data a qualitative research method was used through semi-standardized in-depth interviews, with pastors involved in church planting in the region, and case studies based on the researchers own



experience of church planting in the region. Analysis of the data was conducted through the use of a constant comparative process of the Grounded Theory Method. Key concepts were defined. Anticipated outcomes were suggested, as well as, the limitations of the research. Chapter overviews were also provided in the introduction.

Chapter 2 provided the framework for the research from a practical theological perspective. It began with an overview of the development of practical theology as a social science. It described the continued development of practical theology, throughout the 20th and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, from an applied discipline designed to develop ministry skills, to an interdisciplinary theological science that uses social science methodology. Van Wyk's (1995, 85-88) emphasis on the importance of practical theology to conduct empirical research with reference to context and situational analysis, social change and equipping of the church community provided the basis for research in the area of church planting in the Maritime Provinces that has gone beyond applied ministry skills to examine the religious, social and cultural milieu in which church planting takes place in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada and has begun to provide a theoretical base for the practice in the region.

The chapter describes the importance of a missional ecclesiology, which is becoming normative for many evangelical denominations. Missional ecclesiology understands that God sent His Son into the social context of His world to redeem it, therefore, the Church is sent to that same world to bring the gospel to it in culturally appropriate and sensitive practices. Ecclesiology, from a missional perspective, has a unified concept of missions that is both local and global. A missional church, or church planter, in the postmodern paradigm, needs to engage the specific socio-historic milieu, in culturally appropriate practices, such as the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces. Much of the literature in the conceptual framework undergirded the

emphasis of a missional ecclesiology approach to practical theology. Ballard's (1992, 112-115) argument for practical theology to be recognized as a practical discipline, a recognizable field of study and a critical, reflective discipline has been instrumental in developing the research instrument and in analyzing responses of participants with regard to gaining a theoretical base for church planting crucial to the social milieu of the Maritime Provinces. Hendriks (2007, 1000-1002) and Dames (2007, 3-4) promote a relationship between practical theology and a missional ecclesiology that enable spiritual discernment for the church that is contextually relevant by gaining an understanding of the culture to which the church is sent. This proved crucial for this study in which a missional, discipleship and evangelism basis for church planting was universal among participants in the in-depth interviews. Analysis of the data revealed regional distinctions from the conceptual framework that were based on the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces.

A qualitative approach to practical theology, through semi-standardized in-depth interviews and the use of case studies, as examples, was used, in keeping with social science methodology, and has provided the opportunity to obtain data and understand it in terms of context and situational analysis. The research was understood to be the opinions, beliefs, perspectives and values of the participants as they engaged the cultural milieu of the given geographic region and also acknowledged that both the researcher and participants have been impacted by the socio-historical context, upon which they have shared their observations, whether that be from a different belief system or not. The research has, therefore, been limited by the experiences of the researcher and participants and is not considered to be an exhaustive body of knowledge on the subject matter.

The discipline of practical theology has provided an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the cultural milieu of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada that will

enable church planters to develop culturally sensitive and effective practices and assist new church planting situations in attaining long-term viability.

Chapter 3 provided a conceptual framework for the practice of church planting in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries from available literature on the subject from both North American and global sources. In examining relevant literature the chapter followed the basic outline of the research instrument in order to provide insights from the literature in keeping with the questions upon which interview candidates would reflect.

Theological issues including key biblical concepts that formed the foundation for church planting, current theological issues with which church planters must come to terms, both in the church and within the cultural milieu locally and globally, and the role of vision in church planting were examined in section 3.2. Among theological issues that emerged were the importance of a missional ecclesiology asserted by Ogletree (2004, 4) and understood by Stetzer (2003, 21) as requiring culturally appropriate practices, and Bibby (2006, 3), who asserts the need for cultural synthesis. The importance of a central vision for church planting was discussed in the conceptual framework. There were different theories on who was responsible for the development of vision. Benton (2005, 43-45) and Malphurs (1998, 265) are among those who advocate for the pastor while others such as Steffen (1994, 367-368) and Bickers (2005, 37-38) assert that vision must be developed by a team or by the congregation. Participants in the research interviews and case studies all indicated pastoral responsibility for development and casting of the vision in church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces.

Structural issues including church political structures, denominational expectations for structure, accountability structures, leadership issues and financial issues were examined in section 3.3. Financial viability as suggested by the Indigenous Church Mission theory were

supported by authors such as Malphurs (1998, 395) and Stetzer (2003, 50-52) while others such as Payne (2006, 6) and Murray (2010, 21) advocated for the need of longer time frames for support. Research from the in-depth interviews and case studies revealed a consistent need for sustained financial support for new church plants for more than three years.

In section 3.4 the literature was examined with regard to cultural and geographical issues which may have an impact on church planting both in the church planter's local area and in the Maritime Provinces as a whole. Hiemstra (2010, 1-2, 7) and Rhineland (2010, 6-8) asserted cultural and geographic differences for the region that were in agreement with responses to questions about culture and geography from participants in the empirical research.

Chapter 4 presented the research methodology of this research project. The methodology was approached from a practical theological perspective in order to gain insights into viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. A Qualitative research approach was used in design of the research tool.

The research instrument (Appendix B) was designed to facilitate semi-standardized in-depth interviews with pastors involved in church planting situations in the designated geographical region. Case studies based on the researcher's own experience in the field of church planting were used as a secondary source of data for the purpose of comparison and triangulation of data. The research tool was divided into three sections for the interviews, namely, theological concepts, structural issues and cultural/geographical issues. The research instrument provided a stable structure for all interviews while allowing opportunity for participants to freely express their opinions. The case studies were used to bring the researcher's perspective and experience in the field of study to the research project, with the understanding that his own biases, opinions and presuppositions would be represented in the data. The researcher's observations in the case

studies, therefore, are considered secondary, as a source of data, to the participant observations from the interviews.

Data was gathered and coded based upon the participant responses to the research instrument. The data sample included pastors of church planting situations from several different denominational backgrounds and from various urban and rural areas of the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. Data was coded according to recurrent themes in participant responses to the in-depth interviews. A grounded theory approach using constant comparison of participant responses with one another and with the case studies, as well as with literature based expectations, provided practical theological observations for long-term viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada.

Chapter 5 provided the analysis of coded data retrieved from the interview responses and case studies. The analysis of empirical data gathered through semi-standardized interviews of church planting pastors and case studies, based on the experience of the researcher, tested the hypothesis that there are unique and identifiable characteristics common to long-term viable church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. The constant comparison method of the grounded theory approach to analysis was employed to determine commonalities among church planting situations in the region. Comparison to the conceptual framework from current literature on the subject of church planting, provided in Chapter 3, enabled identification of characteristics unique to church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces and those characteristics which were held in common with other geographical regions in North America and globally.

The analysis revealed several characteristics that new churches in the Maritime Provinces held in common with literature based expectations discussed in the conceptual framework. They

were: a missional focus on discipleship and evangelism, strong pastoral and lay leadership that functioned as a supportive and accountable team; the need for clear and strong accountability structures both locally and regionally; and, in some areas, a consumer mind-set that emerged from a post-modern paradigm in which historic religious loyalties were less significant than in the past and resulted in a lack of long-term loyalty to a new church planting situation by some congregants.

Characteristics of new church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces that were distinct from the literature in the empirical research data were: a tendency toward slower change in the region that led to slower establishment of long-term viable congregations; a pastor formulated vision in all of the interviews and the case studies; traditional thinking and cultural differences in the region that led to slower growth in new church planting situations; rural isolation and a smaller demographic base which resulted in slower growth; and the need for sustained financial support, limited outside support and missionary deputation in order to supplement funds that were slower to obtain from the giving of a new congregation. Traditional thinking and a smaller demographic base were similar to other rural areas such as the Appalachian region and South Dakota. Traditional ties to historic religious backgrounds and identifying the church as a building, combined, paradoxically, with a postmodern consumer mindset and a conservative attitude toward finances and new expressions of the church tended to cause slower growth and establishment of new church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces. In this sense literature based expectations of self-sufficiency in three years were not identified as realistic by the church planting pastors who were interviewed.

Characteristics that were mentioned by some and not all, both in the literature and in the research data include: geographical differences based on a more northerly climate; structural

issues, such as flexibility and the need for pastor and leader led churches, which was mentioned by most of the pastors interviewed, and for which there were varying opinions in the conceptual frame work of Chapter 3.

### **6.3 Summary of Findings:**

The hypothesis, that there are unique and identifiable characteristics that are common to viable long-term church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada, was tested by the research methodology using a grounded theory method and a constant comparative process. The research data attained from the semi-standardized in-depth interviews and from the case studies revealed recurrent codes pertinent to establishing new churches that were viable over the long term. Several of these codes revealed characteristics that new church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces held in common with new church plants in other regions of North America and globally. Other codes revealed characteristics that identified unique challenges to church planting in the Maritime Provinces and, therefore, identifiable characteristics for church planting in the region.

#### **6.3.1 Significance of Common Characteristics:**

The importance of areas of commonality between the conceptual framework and the data derived from the research lies within the theoretical basis of church planting in evangelical denominations in general. The theory base which undergirds the decision of evangelicals to plant new churches in North America, globally, as well as, the Maritime Provinces is a missional approach to evangelism and discipleship. Even in new churches that have strong expectations for conformity to denominational doctrine and structure a sense of responsibility for discipleship and evangelism undergirded the decision to plant new churches.

Three codes that emerged in the research data and that were in common with the conceptual framework were strong pastoral leadership, strong lay leadership and the importance of clear accountability structures. Both in the conceptual framework and in the research data these concepts were linked to viability and stability. For denominations that were traditionally centred on a congregational polity for church governance the literature and the interviews and case studies indicated the need for a modified form of congregational governance in which leadership in the vision and direction of the church's ministry was the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders. Traditional congregational government led to instability and an inability to maintain the initial vision of the church planting situation. Along with strong pastoral and lay leadership was the concept of clear accountability structures between pastor and lay leaders, as well as, with supporting denominational leadership.

Another concept that the conceptual framework and the research data held in common was consumerism or a consumer mind-set stemming from a post-modern paradigm in which many traditional religious allegiances are no longer considered important by many people who become involved in a new church planting situation. Although historic religious alliances were considered more important in the Maritime Provinces than in other regions, church planters in the region did experience the instability of congregants who moved freely from one church to another without a sense of loyalty to any congregation.

### **6.3.2 Implications of Unique and Identifiable Characteristics:**

The implications of the characteristics that are unique and identifiable for church planting situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada form the beginning for a theoretical base for church planters in the region. The evidence of these distinct characteristics demonstrates the lack of a theoretical base that is consistent with the cultural and geographic milieu of the region.



The concepts of slower growth and slower establishment of new churches were prevalent in the interviews and case studies among the characteristics that emerged which differed significantly from the conceptual framework. According to the research data there is a very small likelihood of a new church planting situation in the Maritime Provinces being able to become viable and self-supporting in three years, as asserted by the Indigenous Church Mission theory described in Chapter 1.2 and as undergirding much of the theoretical base for church planting in American literature described in the conceptual framework of Chapter 3. The tendency for slower growth of a new congregation and slower establishment of that congregation is a characteristic that should be considered by both church planters and denominations. Expectations for viability and the necessary sustained financial support that take into account the factors of slower growth and establishment should become part of the church planting plan for new churches in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. This may well be a characteristic which this region holds in common with other more rural areas of North America, as is noted in Chapters 3.4.2 and 5.3.3, but is significant because the majority of North American literature on the subject of church planting is focused on larger, more urban areas to the exclusion of more rural or geographically remote regions.

The importance of recognizing the role of pastors in formulating vision for new church planting situations should also become part of the planning process for new churches in this region. It coincides with the characteristics of strong pastoral leadership, strong lay leadership and clear accountability structures that were held in common with the conceptual framework. It suggests that planting a viable new church in the region will require support of strong lay leaders and denominational leaders for the central vision of the church planter. The

pastor/church planter's vision and its' practical application on the local level should be monitored through clear accountability structures both at the local and denominational level.

Traditional thinking in terms of religious background, identification of the church as a building and a greater resistance to change in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada implies the need for strategies in new church planting situations that recognize these realities. There was also a sense both within the Maritime Provinces and noted in attitudes from outside the region, that there was a sense of the region being behind the times compared to other areas of North America and with a defeatist attitude. Adjustment of literature based expectations for viability in a relatively short period, such as three years, to a longer period for growth and viability, such as five years or more, may be normative for the region in light of these factors.

Contributing to slower growth and attainment of long-term viability for new church planting situations in this region are the concepts of rural isolation and a smaller demographic base from which to draw new congregants. Both of these issues suggest that church planters will need a longer time frame than literature based expectations of three years to build a large enough congregation to be self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. These issues underscore the need for sustained financial support from denominations or churches and individuals outside of the local region in order to continue to carry out the call to missional discipleship and evangelism, which undergirds church planting by evangelicals in this region, as well as, in North America and globally. An important aspect of gaining sustained financial support is the concept of missionary deputation work for church planting pastors. This implies that church planters and denominational leadership should consider new church planting as a practical expression of the mission of their church and denomination. Traditionally, sustained financial support and missionary deputation were often reserved for foreign mission. A missional focus on

discipleship and evangelism, that manifests itself in domestic church planting requires, a similar approach to sustained financial support and missionary deputation as has undergirded a more traditional understanding of mission.

### **6.3.3 Significance of Isolated Characteristics:**

Two characteristics that were not universal in the data but are worthy of mention for the possibility of further research are geographical differences, related to a northerly climate, and structural issues, related to the perceived need for pastor and leader directed churches.

The reference in one interview to the more northerly climate of the Maritime Provinces, compared to the more southern United States base of the church planters denomination, identified issues worthy of further investigation. In the pastor's opinion longer winters and shorter summers led to an increased incidence of depression in the region that impacted long-term viability. The pastor also mentioned that winter weather interrupted consistent attendance at services and caused periodic cancellation of services. Short summers led to inconsistency in attendance during months of warm weather as congregants tended to take advantage of a narrow window for outside activities. In the pastor's opinion, these inconsistencies in attendance slowed growth and viability.

In the opinion of many but not all pastors who were interviewed structural issues highlighted the importance of new churches that were directed by the pastors and lay leaders, as opposed to a more traditional approach, in their opinion, to congregational government in which the congregation directs the ministry of the pastor. While this characteristic was not universal in the data, it does coincide with the concepts of strong pastoral and lay leadership that are monitored by clear accountability structures on the local and denominational level. In that capacity the concept suggest the need for further investigation by evangelical denominations,

with regard to structures and polity related to church practice and governance, which have an impact on the long-term viability of new church planting situations.

#### **6.4 Contribution to Practical Theology to the Theoretical Base:**

The importance of this study for the science of practical theology is in the use of the grounded theory method and constant comparative process to reveal data that provides a contribution to the theoretical base for church planting in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada. This theoretical base may be used by church planters and denominations, as a reference to facilitate realistic expectations for new churches and to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural milieu in the region, in order to assist in attaining long-term viability.

The semi-standardized in-depth interviews allowed for consistency in data collection, as well as, flexibility that enabled participants to share their own opinions and perspectives on church planting. The constant comparative method enabled the researcher to triangulate data between church planting pastors who were interviewed, the case studies based on the researcher's experience in the field of church planting, and the conceptual framework derived from literature on the subject from North American, Canadian and global sources.

The triangulation of data revealed several characteristics of church planting in the region that were distinct from the conceptual framework. Church planting pastors, leaders and denominations should consider these characteristics as an important part of their theory base and practical assumptions for achieving long-term viable churches in the region. These characteristics are: slower change and slower establishment of new congregations in the region compared to literature based expectations; the prevalence of a pastor formulated vision among church planters in the region; the importance of acknowledging traditional thinking in the region with regard to religious loyalties and the concept that the church is a building; rural isolation for

church planters in the region and a smaller demographic base from which to draw new congregants; and, lastly, the need for sustained financial support, limited outside support and missionary deputation to supplement congregational income.

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## Appendix A – In-depth Interviews

As stated in Chapter 4 above, the following codes, listed in alphabetical order below, emerged from the in-depth interviews: AS, accountability structures; CM, consumer mind-set; CD, cultural differences; DB, demographic base; GD, geographic differences; LBE, LOS, limited outside support; MDE, missional, discipleship, evangelism; MD, missionary deputation; PFV, pastor formulated vision; RI, rural isolation; SC, slower change; SE, slower establishment; SFS, sustained financial support; SG, slower growth, SI, structural issues; SLL, strong lay leadership; SPL, strong pastoral leadership; TT, traditional thinking; and VS, vision statement. The two or three letter abbreviations will be used to designate the emergence of the codes in the responses of those who were interviewed and will be visible in underlined bold faced capital letters beside the text of the interviews.

### Interview 1

#### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

##### Section I: Theological Issues.

###### A. Key Biblical concepts:

1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter?

K.V. One of the things that is really **MDE** Central to ACC is our theology of the kingdom, that would be this belief that God is at work in the world and that he is building His kingdom. Jesus said, I will build my church.” We have this sense that God is at work in the world and so our role, in a missional sense Before I came here I don’t think I had any sense of what God was doing in the community, but He was so when we got here I believe we became beneficiaries of what God was already doing. I remember people saying Apohaqui, no children there. When we talk about being missional here we really believe that God is at work , a little like the theology of Blackaby(Henry Blackaby). Why try to create something or recreate something, God is already at work and why try to manufacture something. Our sense of starting here was that God was at work.



TR. Don't know if I have so much to add, its just the way we ended up in Hampton and being part of the plan.

2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation.

K.V. That's who we are. **VS** The whole idea of the kingdom of God and where God is at work has become our DNA of who we are we really I think hopefully get better at it, the more we get in tune with who God is and how He speaks and how we listen, in terms of the serving things we do and how we serve the community, how we design our schedule and programs, we want it to really relate to what's God doing, and lets get on board with that. And, and that also helps to us simplify structure because you don't get bogged down in doing a whole pile of stuff. You figure out where's God working and just sort of join Him there. **MDE** So really that part of our theology really effects, and it really is missional. I know its sort of cliché today but it is very much missional, in the sense of true mission. For me that really is the easiest way to understand it, you know, if I was in a culture like Africa that I had no sense of that culture and I wasn't from there and God for some reason had put me in that culture to reach that culture, I don't think that's too far from the culture where we are in North America now . **CD** We don't understand our culture and it has changed dramatically, therefore, how are we going to reach the culture, and how do we live as missionaries, missionally in this culture that is almost as difficult to understand today as if I was planted in Europe or Africa, in terms of its secularism.

Comments: Issues of cultural understanding and significance have been referenced by several of the pastors interviewed.

3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts?
4. Have they integrated them into their own lives?

K.V. I think that that is always slow, because we're working with, a lot of the people we're working with are unchurched, away from the church for awhile and even those who have been engaged in the church for awhile don't really understand what it is to live that way, missionally. I think that the whole idea of the kingdom, I think people are getting it here now, people are beginning to watch. **SG** I think people are starting to catch it – only way to do it is to continually dropping it, constantly, whether that is in the way an announcement is done, whether that is in conversations over coffee's kingdom I think it is continually dropping it, you know, where it is about God's kingdom and you are part of God and you have a circle of influence that you are in and God's calling you to work into that circle of influence for His kingdom's sake, so I think that people are starting to get that here. Certainly the leadership is understanding that, and then that starts to filter down. There'd be lots of people here who don't catch it at all, because they're so new in their faith, but I think it does filter down slowly. And so that's here, probably your leadership(Tony's ) would catch it.

Comments; In regard to the text highlighted above, a common theme of slower development of Biblical concepts and practice have been observed in several interviews by the researcher.

T.R. Yeah and I would even say that there's a bit of a suggestion people are catching it because when people first come in its not a question of "what's your denomination?" Its more about following Christ and even back to the sense of missional mindedness of the people coming. People are understanding that when it comes to their journey that God's already at work even before they "cross the line" as far as making that commitment to him and following him that God's already at work in their lives and I think that people, that resonates with people in the way that they talk to me and I have shared with the Hampton people that even that type of thinking is monumental is for me Because growing up it was more like getting people to cross the line and to have fire insurance. So I think that whole journey and kingdom building.

K.V. That's good and that is key. That is a key theological difference for me from 40 years ago. We talk a lot here about journey. And that does so much, it levels the ground for everybody. It just means we're on different parts of the journey, but its not a ladder journey, where someone's higher or deeper or whatever, right.

B. Current Theological emphases:

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? Let's talk about Hampton in that regard.

In regard to Hampton(new site) – the kingdom one. And the journey one would be important, as well.

The other thing that I would say that I think is somewhat theological, if I had to prove it I could find it, or make it up (Ha ha!) but is certainly philosophical and strategic for us is... I have a sense, people will drive to a church for something meaningful to them, they will drive. If it's something meaningful for their family they will drive. But they'd rather not. They'd rather stay/be in their community and serve in their community and worship in their community and have influence in their community. And I think that you could make a strong theological case for the church, certainly the Acts church meeting in homes and being very fluid and being very central in the community, part of that was for that day, travel was more difficult anyway. **CD** People in our day will travel. But I still think that you could make a strong theological argument that the New Testament Church was very localized. And was working within a certain circle of influence relationally, geographically, whatever. So we have moved (theologically or philosophically or whatever) we have moved to be much more, let's be in communities rather than have people drive 45 minutes, or whatever.

Do you have anything to add(T.R.)?

I don't know that there is at this point.

Comments:

2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister?

K.V. One that hits me right off the top is Churches in this region(Atlantic Canada) even nationally , **TT** in large part still working from an attractional model,(get people to come to church). We are shifting, and I still think there is place for an attractional model, you still want to do Sunday well and the weekend well, you want people to come and you want to provide a place for communion when they do come. I don't think that's dead in any way but that really, in large part, is the only model that the church in Atlantic Canada knows. How do we get people to come? In fact, preacher, how do you get them to come? And I think the shift has to be not only attractional but missional. How do we get out of the church, how do we serve the community, how do we build relationships, how do we build friendships, how do we build redemptive types of relationships? So I would say that in Atlantic Canada we're working from a model that says, we gotta get them to come....boy I sure wish it was like it was 40 years ago, now there's too much T.V., right? And there's still an older segment that that's there thing.

T.R. I'm just trying to process the concept some, Jim, so maybe you could help me with that...

Jim: O.K. I'll try to give you an example, well, ah, an example of a theological concept that I deal with in pastoring a church replant situation, on the one hand and on the other hand a dying church situation, ah, the concept of evangelizing outside your religious and ethnic group, that's a theological concept, they have their church, they have their religion, they have their language, and we're the English church here, and that for me is not only a philosophical problem but a theological problem. **MDE** It says, in my mind that there is a poor understanding that Jesus said to go out to all ethnic groups and preach the gospel, so that's a challenger we are facing.

K.V. The other one is the priesthood of all believers, we hang onto that one as Baptists and we say that we believe in the priesthood of all believers, everyone has direct access to God, soul liberty **TT** and all that but we don't exercise it because we have a pastor to do the work of the church, really. In a lot of places that's still a popular concept, I mean that' your role where you are, I would think, certainly with your Ortonville people.

Jim comments on the call to replanting in Grand Falls and the process of moving from closing down to discussion at Bible studies, compared to down the road where it's how am I going to get through another Wed. night prayer meeting?

T.R. Yeah, I don't think I have a lot to add to that particular question, I guess its being, I mean part of that is the context too of Apohaqui, Hampton, Sussex, there's not a lot of variance a lot of times.

3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts? And what impact has that had on church growth and stability?

K.V. in term of priesthood of all believers, when I showed up, 13 years ago, it would, I mean, the original six no sense really of what it meant to be the church really, they went to church, they did church. They had a Pastor who would come every other week and to a service for them with the old language and so they had no sense of what it really meant to be the church in a community. So they were not very( I mean I don't want to take anything away from them because they were a great group who were completely open to change) but I don't think that they really had any sense of what it meant to be the church in fact be a priest or live out.. so that was the original and now here I don't think that we have it in anyway, or have got it but people understand here that kingdom work is all of our responsibility and I am , one person on the team and I help lead the team in certain areas and other people lead the team in other areas but were all on the same team and we're priesting it together on each other's behalf and in the community. And that is huge(with excitement) when you have one person verse a few hundred people understanding that the reason they were born and live and breathe is for the kingdom's sake and they have a responsibility within their own circle to make a difference for the kingdom's sake. Does everyone get that, not at all and I don't want it to sound like we've got it but a lot of people do have that around here, but that's a huge factor in what has happened around here and that people do get that. And the first concept was kind of decentralizing your place of worship, I guess or your place of worship service, mission. I mean I think that jury is still out on that one because we're so young, we're so new into it, but our first six months have proven it to be very effective.. You know we probably released 40 –50 people from here and they've got probably 100 to 130-140 on the list now, probably Some are from other churches some were'nt going to any church. Its still a little bit premature for us to say yes that theological concept is in fact working but so far it is.

#### 4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability?

K.V. see above

T.R. I would say that that's part of the DNA of Hampton, that we don't have, "so much of the original six ," or some to that thinking that its all about the pastor, that if the Pastor's not there they're not ripped off., they don't get ripped off, they don't think the Pastor isn't there. They get used to Kevin being there. Its taken the onus off of just one person, its not all about the Kevin or the Tony, it has decentralized, the people have the understanding that they need to be involved. And again, I think that we see that lived out. People don't come with, if I can use the word baggage, with that kind of baggage of that way of thinking. That there's now an environment that when people come they just understand that we need to have influence in our own circles, that people are going to care for one another and their life groups or small groups. That its not about getting a Pastoral visit. I think people have appreciated it, I think we have a few people that come through and have more of that centralized thinking but for the most part its that there's a sense of living out missional sense.

K.V. **SPL, SLL** ... You mentioned life groups or small groups and I think of Pastoral care is of another kind, talk about pastor as shepherd. I think pastoral care looks different in many ways than It does in the old model. You know, report to your deacons how many visits you have done in the past month. Where here, most pastoral care here takes place, for the most part in small groups.

T.R. And its more than just us visiting, I mean an elder or someone else may go along on a visit. (K.V. yeah,yeah yeah)

C. Vision:

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement?

Yes

2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? Under whose initiative was the statement formed?

K.V. We have actually a mission statement and then a vision statement and we are in the process of working out a clear strategy as to how that's going to happen. The mission statement probably came into being, you know I came up with a missions statement before, because, you know, there was only six of them, so I had to figure who we are, so before we even came here, I came up with one. **PFV** And I thought it was a real sexy statement that everyone would like and it was good, and had everything that we needed to do, and probably a few years in realized that nobody knew it, and I couldn't even tell you probably. So it came to a point where we needed to come up with a different statement that was a little more concise but really about who we are. And I was sitting at the back of an Arrow leadership class, when I should have been listening to the instructor, but it was a little slow that day, and I wrote this down and then I came back to the elders, because we had been thinking about it praying about it and working through it, and came back to them and said, "make it better." Every once in a while, we all know, sometimes you come up with something like, "That's it." And you can't make it better. This was one of those statements. And it just came really quickly. So the statement is, "ACC exists to help people who are far from God come near to God and become passionate Christ followers." So that's why we exist. Far from God..steps near to God. .. so that's the statement and most people around here know that one. I call it the Grover statement, you know, Sesame Street, this is near, this is far...helping people who are far from God, get on the journey so that they come near to God and become passionate Christ followers. That's the mission. We just spent probably six to eight months as elders working on fleshing that out. So we've got a great mission but we're not sure, "How does that..

Comment: In almost every interview the pastor has indicated taking a lead role in the vision process. Much of the literature suggests that vision needs to come from the congregation but these interviews indicate otherwise, at least, for the majority.

Jim: You're leading right into the next question so you're answering the next question.

b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?

3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry?

**VS** So we just spent 6 to 8 months – probably year or so ago – so as the elders we determined what is really our vision, what are the core things, how do we say, “Here’s what we’re about so we can really define what we’re about and not about.” How do we help people come from far from God, near to God and become passionate Christ followers. So what we said, this is the elders, we said, “We only do three things at this church, only three.” Now they’re broad categories but if they don’t fit in we don’t do them, and these are the three we are going to hang all of our hats on. The only thing we do at this church is we help people connect with God, we help people connect with others and we help people connect through serving. In a large part it is (quotes Matthew 22:37ff), Love God, love others. We have added the connect, and we talk a lot about connecting here. So its about helping people really connect with God relationally and understand a relationship with Him. Help them connect with others, priesting it with each other, on each other’s behalf, caring for each other and developing spiritual friendships. We said we think in North American culture, because consumerism is the God, when Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself,” they don’t really grasp that that might mean serving because we are so much about ourselves. And so much about consumerism, and so we said, We’re really want to flag that one because we want to be a church that is passionate about serving. Serving each other, serving our community. So those are the three things we do. Connect with God, connect with others, connect through serving. **PFV** Then we said, “O.k. what’s that going to look like? How we going to do it? How are we going to structure ourselves?” So we came up with, we are trying to create an environment here, we’re trying to create an environment that’s all about one word and it’s an acrostic and the acrostic is CRAVE.

So how are we gonna fulfill our mission and our vision? Its all about CRAVE, And we’re going to create a craving environment. So CRAVE is this. C is Core habits..basically discipleship. We want people to develop the core spiritual habits. Radical generosity in a consumeristic society and in a church where in Acts 2 people would even self stuff if people needed help. They were radically generous. We want to develop a culture in a consumeristic society that is radically generous. The third is Authentic friendships. Jesus had his disciples but he also had Peter, James and John. They were a little bit tighter, he shared stuff with them that I am sure the rest didn’t

know. So we wanted to develop authentic spiritual friendships. You wanna grab two or three other people that you get together with that you can develop authentic spiritual friendships with. These vital communities, we want communities around here that are vital and healthy, whether that's a small group, a life group, or the elders board or the youth team or the ministry team, we want to develop vital communities where people belong and have a sense of ministry together.

4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision?

The elders. I would say that at first it was the me, the Pastor, but now it is the elders and staff that are driving it. **PFV**

5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement? I'm wired that way.

I think you have to know what you are trying to do. I think a clear mission, a clear vision, otherwise it's kind of a shotgun approach. I mean we're all about Matthew 28, you know, go into all the world, preach the gospel. We're all about that. But I think we have to understand who is God calling you to be in the community, who is God calling us to reach. A clear vision, you've got to be clear in the head for focus. **VS**

6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church -planting situation?

T.R. I would say it helps assure and give direction to the site Pastor. Because of the way I'm wired it wouldn't have appealed to me at all to sign on the dotted line to be in Hampton if it was just kind of a smorgasbord of let's just figure it out as we go. – would not have worked for me – not always best model – It helps retain the core people that went from here, from Apohaqui down and I think it help to retain the leadership we have because, again, it comes back to measuring here's why we're doing what we're doing so let's continue on in that path. So for me it helps encourage whoever is going to be the lead person but it helps retain those who already understand the vision. Because I truly believe, because of the caliber of people who sit on our lead team, that we would quickly lose them if there wasn't a vision in place.

K.V. A church can do well without a vision, you know one church that has a dynamic leader and some good leadership. But I think it's almost impossible though to plant something well without clear mission and vision and have that same thing happen because you need the DNA transfer there. You know if you think, "Why has God blessed and why are things working here," you know, I think part of the answer is we were pretty clear about who we are and what we do and why we do it. And I think that to begin to reproduce that, it's pretty tough to reproduce unless you have clarity on mission and vision and strategy and DNA. If you don't replant that DNA, I think it's really difficult. **SPL, SLL**

TR. It creates that buy in. I think that's why some churches are failing, because the leader maybe passionate and enthusiastic about his vision but if the people, especially the leadership **AS** people, if the people don't buy into that mission and vision then its just futile, they maybe just show up. So again it creates buy in and results in action because of that..

## Section II: Structural Issues.

### A. Church Political Structures:

1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures.

We are congregation in the sense that the congregation has the ultimate authority and passes the budget, which, no matter how you cut it, creates some boundaries. So they call the senior pastor and kick him out, so it is congregational in that sense. **AS** So we then would be, have Elders who are responsible for vision and mission and protecting of the bride. Then we would have Staff responsible for implementation of our vision and our mission.. We are in a large part a staff led church, but under the authority of the elders and the ultimate authority, the congregation. **LTV**

Comments; In several churches that are growing and stable There has been a distinct emphasis on being staff(pastoral) led churches.

2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all?

K.V. We are very different from most Baptist churches. We still have churches where the whole congregation has to vote on the purchase of a microphone. In large part, the reason it works here is that we have been able to build a high level of trust in the leadership, both elders and staff. And so you have to be careful to protect that trust and to be wise with that trust. But when there is trust people will allow you to make decisions and have authority. But I would say our structure is quite different from most Baptist churches. Different from a traditional church plant on its own **AS**

T.R. Haven't had to deal with it

3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation?

K.V. we are really one church, two locations so they really don't have structures for them in the plant situations That will change as it goes. We are going to have to ask questions like what does it look like. Questions like how do we deal with the site, do we have elders in a second setting. What issues will Hampton have to pass on their own and deal with do they begin to pass on section of the budget which relates to them or does that always come back budget to full congregation. I mean those are issues we just haven't crossed yet because we haven't had to. We're just starting so at this point they haven't had to deal with all that junk, is that right? We haven't had to deal with that. I think that is different from your traditional church planting **TT**



model. Where the church, First Baptist Dartmouth plants Eastern Passage and they're an independent work where it sinks or swims on its own and responsible for their elders, leadership, budget, everything on their own. They might give you some money but you're still responsible. This is a different model. This a multi-site model where really we are one church in a couple of locations. I have lots of biases why that is a lot better, so...

Comments: The research indicates that the traditional model mentioned here has struggled in Atlantic Canada and viable works are trying different models.

4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

T.R. With no church background in Hampton there are no expectations for traditions.

And with some church background, a breath of fresh air, usually. People still call it Sunday School here, but that's just semantics anyway, so...

K.V. Yeah and I would say even less here. Because you're in a school and when you're in a school there are no traditions. Here we'er a little more established now but when people come in they realize very quickly that a lot of their church models. very little and even less questions about it.

5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need?

Very yes

**SI**

6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past?

Yes yes

7. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place?

ABMB basically salary support for the pastor. They did here in Apohaqui and they do it in Hampton We said when we started here we want you to give us 5 years and don't cut back. Give us five years. So they put money into the salary package for the pastor.

8. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability? **SFS, LBE**

I think they want every situation they are investing in to be stable. And I think that they have a high level of confidence that we will. They are pretty excited to be a part of this project because they see it as a viable model, I think.

TR.: It's pretty hard for them to define what their expectations might be because the model is so unfamiliar. KV. Yeah, good point. They don't know, don't understand the model really. It's a brand new. I don't know if they have supported a multi-site, I don't know is Cornerstone?

9. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

Reach more people get them to give

I don't know if it's a strategy but we want to reach more people. Get them to be financially responsible, good stewards, and get the resources to come in. **LBE**

TR. **SE** We are trying to figure out how this site fits in financially before we go out and start five more sites. It's a sense of responsibility. It's a sense that as we kind of explore this multi-site model, it to reasonably and responsibly use the resources we have and just explore some of the implications and ramifications of serving that site before we start other sites.

KV. That's a great comment. We talked about that this week. You know I, we're pretty conservative here..some would be surprised by that statement, but we're pretty conservative and I was talking to a couple of guys this week who want to go multi-site and I said, "Do you have any money budgeted?" "No, no, no. **SC** We just want to go to the community and start. And so that's one end of the spectrum and then there's us and maybe there's something in the middle that's better, but we tend to be pretty conservative and pretty slow and have a lot of our eggs in a basket and all of our questions answered, you know, before we move out, so we plan very carefully. And are probably pretty conservative, in terms of starting something. We might be a little more of a risk taker, but anyway, this works for us.

10. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective?

K.V. is that the Site?

JKR "Yeah so we will deal with the site."

KV. What does the viability of the Hampton site look like? Financial is part of that and self sufficiency in some ways. Viability is also related to mission and vision, you, know, if for some reason Hampton fell off the rails in terms of mission and vision and just was floundering, for what ever reason, and was headed in another direction So I think mission and vision and being true to that is one defining factor of viability. And the financial well yeah You have to be honest about the financial one. Something just can't keep going in the hole. We have said here that no matter how many sites we have at some point they have to be financially viable. **LTV**

B. Leadership Issues:

1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders?

KV. Official, I mean the official leaders are staff and elders and we have a board of management. I see the board of management as sort of the operational side of things. Who are

the official and unofficial leaders? Certainly our elders and staff and board members are the official. **SPL, SLL**

Unofficial? I mean I know who the unofficial one is in certain churches. I mean they may not be in a position of authority, but if you don't have their ok this things not flying. I'm not sure I would differentiate between the two. We really try to keep communication lines really open. So sometimes it will seem like we're moving slow on some things but Tony laughs at me because I'm one who will just drop ideas that I know aren't going to happen for five years but I just start dropping them now. I just keep drooping stuff and dropping stuff so eventually people say, "Its about time you started that thing. I'm sick of hearing it." So we really do try through emails and announcements and stuff, we try to communicate I don't say that we do it well all the time, but we try. So we really value an environment of questions where people can ask their questions, so I think that' a key factor. Communication is really a key factor in keeping people on target and on vision.

TR. And as far as the Hampton site we've put together a leadership team, which I facilitate and give direction to. Part of that is on behalf of the church to ensure that the DNA and the one vision in two locations that we're still totally responsible to the one elders board and to the congregation as a whole. **AS**

KV. So they have a lead team in Hampton, that sort of oversees the direction. At least we call it a lead team right now because I don't know what else to call it. Its working fine.

TR. It works.

KV. Yeah we'll figure it out as we go along.

2. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability?

Key factor on target with vision

TR Hampton – leadership team – DNA transfer

3. How does a person become a leader in your church?

KV. Provenness , I mean, you can pretty well do anything around here, as a non-member, except be on boards, the two boards and ah, and so provenness is a factor ...that's and issue of character, an issue of giftedness, its an issue of passion. You know, for me, how do you become a leader, you're proven. We want to know that your character, your relationship to God, all that . Provenness is to me the big one. **AS**

4. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation?

Already answered

5. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place?

Informal really, its pretty relational really. What is the formal one, is it evaluation ? We have very little of that, really. We have more informal conversations. What do you think of that Tony? We don't have a lot of formal accountability structures? **AS**

T.R. No I would echo that.

KV. Formal I would define as paper. A formal structure is a paper structure, something that is written.

TR. Right.

6. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability?

K.V. key. I mean people are accountable is very important. I mean they have to be accountable to the vision. If they're heading off in another direction we need to haul them back on track. So I think accountability is key but we're doing it more through relationship and leadership meetings and making sure there's lots of communication taking place. And so sometimes there maybe a hard conversation that has to be had with someone, because whatever, its not that we avoid tough conversations. Its not that we won't do what needs to be done, and accountability is central to long term stability, but so far we've been able to do it informally AS

T.R. I think yeah that is the reality about the way its working know is that it works.

### Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

#### A. Cultural Issues:

1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry?

K.V. There is one cultural factor its says that it can't ever happen here. TT This is the back ass part of the country. I think that is a cultural factor and one of my goals from the very beginning was to dismiss that and to say that the God who does it in Rick Warren's church in California is the same God who wants to do big things here too. CD Its going to look different, and there are all kinds of reasons for that. But I think there is a cultural reality that's not only in the church. Its in education, its in business, its in politics, its in everything. Its part of a whole Atlantic DNA that says, "You know ah, things can't happen here quite as much as other places. And that kind of infiltrates the church, as well. So that's one cultural reality. And that effects... and Laurel Buckingham has talked quite a bit about that. It's one of his frustrations too. So that's a cultural reality. God here

Comment: In more than one interview reference has been made to the regional differences of

Atlantic Canada vs. the American culture.

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?

K.V. I don't know

TR. I don't know if it's what really answers the question or not, but I think there is a cultural SC reality locally that basically, every dollar earned is a hard earned dollar and so that decisions that are made, that people make in terms of spending, that to be wise in using money. In terms of the church that they want us to be accountable for that and that we're not just throwing money around on fads and I don't know if that is specifically one.

KV. That's good and in fact that ties into when we did stewardship campaigns and the fund raising guys wanted us to do all the multi-media and all the letter head and all that stuff, which may work well in more urban areas, but I pushed back and I think our leadership pushed back and said, "I don't think that will fly here." I think here people say, "That's pretty fancy letterhead, must not need our money. **CD** So that is a cultural reality. And so we thought that would backfire on us, so stewardship and wise money management is valued here. Yeah, that's a good point Tony.

3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability?

Stewardship campaigns – all multi media

Leadership pushed back – pretty fancy – stewardship and wise money management

4. Do cultural patterns In Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

Yes. **CD** We read everything that comes out of the US and so much doesn't relate. Some of it does, like the big philosophical stuff. But most of it doesn't relate to the culture here. And part of it is we just don't have the population, the demographics are so different from the churches and the leaders that re writing this stuff that you just can't make what works there work here. A little example is how do we inter=grate people into small groups. So Andy Stanley at Northpoint, every once in a while they have a meeting where they bring anybody who's interested in small groups to come together and they form a whole bunch of small groups out of that meeting. Well we probably would have four people show up because we just don't have the population, the demographics. So all of the great ideas that come out of Northpoint and Willow Creek and Saddleback., and places like that. **CD** All these places don't work here. And so that's the stuff we read. I think we're much better off to read some of the stuff that's coming out of the UK. I think culturally they are much more similar to Canada. You still have a pretty strong kind of Southern Baptist Bible belt in the US. I think we're more secular. I know we're way more secular in Canada than in lots of parts of the US. I think our culture is much more similar to the UK and to England and some of those places, but we read everything and try to do everything that comes out of the US. Does that answer it or no?

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

What works there won't work here

Integrate into small groups all of great ideas don't work here – much better to read UK, closer to Canada

B. Geographical issues:

1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant? K.V. I'm an optimist at heart, so I say no. I mean otherwise I wouldn't have come back to Apohaqui. TR. Not at this point. I think Hampton is growing because St. John is moving closer to Hampton, so I guess for us that is just geographical, regionally there are more people.

KV. I mean geographically there are issues but I just don't think that way. I think there are still people who don't go to church, so we still got work to do. I just don't, I'm kind of an optimist at heart...

2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

Avoidance, avoidance. (laughter)

3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada?

Greg Jones is great. Greg is there if I need someone to talk to or to bounce things off. He stops in He's supportive (Regional minister) There's the financial support, the support of just knowing you're part of a larger family. In terms of real practical types of things other than those things I'm not sure there's really anything other.

4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered?

KV. A large part of it was because there are people there. So it was a community we thought could use, could benefit from a type of church like this. And we had a good chunk of people already living there, and our bias was that there were people in Hampton who would rather go to church there than here if they could find a meaningful place to worship. **DB**

TR. And outside of that there are people in Hampton who are not going to church, not in church or connected to a church period.

KV. Right, exactly, and it's a growing community. I call it the new Quispamsis. St. John is moving out.

5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?

K.V. again we just had a sense that there's lots of people there who don't go to church. We worked here so we thought we could reach some there. We try there to be sensitive, as much as

possible, to other churches in the area and to some of the pastors. We wanted to be sensitive, as much as possible, and not to be coming in and seen as some kind of saviours, kind of. But I think that there was just a sense of, here's a growing community that could use a church, probably, with our type of DNA. I mean we didn't do any big study of demographics. We checked the census. We checked that stuff out.

TR. Fair demographics, census H

## Interview 2

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### Section I: Theological Issues.

##### A. Key Biblical concepts:

1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter?

**MDE** AR. You mean some Bible key verses? Yeah sure, I've got a few passages. Ah one of my,, ah I got 3 or 4. Like 1 Tim. 2: 4. for me it says that God wants us to share the gospel with all the people. He wants everybody to get saved, and, also to know the truth, right? And with that Matt. 28: 19-20. That's for sure. That's a commandment to go and make disciples. I think here I'm just underline the word disciples, which is very important to me.

Also Acts 1: 8. It talks about our mission , how wide our mission is, starting with your home community, and just, and then go wider, larger, and with that I will join Acts 2: 42-47, probably 41-47. It talks about Apostles were doing, like you know, reading the Bible, teaching of the apostles, and the prayer is there, the fellowship is there, even testimonies, the service. You have a lot of things there. So that is about the Biblical base I have. I work the church planting on these bases.

2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation. Its always there. In French we have a word like **CD** ACTES. So what I do is I try to fix my agenda, my priorities on that. In French A is for adoration, but in English its worship. So worship is one important thing in Church planting. Ah, second we have the fellowship. C is Communion. Fellowship is very important. that's we're talking about relationship here. Another thing is T for Temoignage. That's ah witnessing. It's a big part of church planting. E, enseignement, that's teaching. Now ah, in church planting your talking about making disciples. The Bible is very important for teaching there. And, ah, S is for Service which we can translate ministry, doing ministry, like a kind of ministry in the church.
3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts? Yeah, well, in the first place, when someone comes to the Lord, he is going to follow you – join you. So the principle is if you do it they will do it. If it is important for the evangelist, all these things here, they will just follow them. And if you keep being balanced in these four principles, five principles here, if you keep the balance in that so they will just follow you. Like, for example, last year, a woman came to the Lord and we did some follow up with her and I shared the gospel with her with some friends, she accepted the Lord. So I brought her with me to visit some other people. So now what she is doing, she is visiting people because that the model she got. And I start to do some Bible studies at her place. So now what she do, she's inviting people to Bible studies in her home, you no. so that's the model that she got.



4. Have they integrated them into their own lives?

B. Current Theological emphases:

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? You may have answered that already in terms of Biblical concepts, so if you feel that is a repeated question its not necessary. Yes, probably the same as question A1. Yeah that's exactly the same.
2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister? You mean people come to our church with different theology? Yeah, what, in your ministry, what concepts do you encounter quite often? Yeah well for me, I'm working in a Catholic area...(could not understand a few words) Like the Catholic doesn't have the entrance of salvation, because their salvation is based on the believing that they do good deeds. So if they are good people that's ok, but if they do bad deeds they never know if they are going to be saved. They hope to be saved but, you know, they never really know. And so you need to talk about the salvation. By using books like 1 John and the gospel of John, just to add many teachings of Paul's theology, to bring this idea that our salvation is based on what Jesus did on the cross. So we don't need to deeds to get into heaven, but we need to just believe in Christ, put our confidence in what Jesus Christ did already for us. And it's a matter of faith. So that's one thing a lot in working with people of this area. And with the French community it is different than with English people.

The idea of hell is a big, big question for people in this area. Many believe God is so good He will never, never let people go in hell. So that's one major thing here. Ah, God is good, that's right but you know you have the concept of justice with God, the concept of love. And so you need to deal with people here. And so you need to talk about what Hell is for. What is it and so you can really with some Bible passages, just to bring that teaching but its tough for them because it the concept of \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know how to bring that in English, but its like you're a good man, you know?. Like we can't be bad with you, anyway, because you're good, you know...you're a good man so you will never say "Ay yih, you know?"

3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts?
4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability? **SE** Well, I would say it has made it slower. It takes time to change minds. It takes time to change habits. You when you are 40 years old and older people, its hard to change. **TT** My Mom came to the Lord years ago and she's been giving her life to Christ and she's been baptized. She was 78 years old when she went into get baptism. She's been baptized and went through the ceremony and that's good and she have good faith in Christ. And still it – took a long, long time for her to deal with some Biblical basis like just understanding that – she can go to Lord only by faith. Only by confidence with Christ. You know she would say, "What can I do more to get more saved?" So its that my mother-in-law came to the Lord in 2006 and she passed away this week and she asked to have the funeral in the Catholic church.

She believed in Christ and she know now that Jesus Christ died for her sin on the cross and she asked for forgiveness but she been so long in the Catholic that she don't know too much about the evangelical church, and she had her funeral in the Catholic church and just before she passed away she had her confession. Because she learned that when she was very young and she know that in order to get ready to die she has to do her confession. **SC** So you can't change people like that, but I think that more and more they know Jesus Christ and understand what is Heaven like. Because to me God is the gospel. To me the gospel is more than heaven and not to going to Hell. For me the gospel is being with God and be just in His presence and that's great, that's a lot. So it's a challenge for this French community.

C. Vision:

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement? **Yes.**
2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? I mostly used the verse I shared to you at the beginning and just bring some Bible principles together and just try to bring it to an understandable emphasis for the people here. In a way, in a sentence its like, "Sharing the Word of God in the **VS** Love of God." Sharing the truth with the love of God in our community. That's an ideal but our church is almost what we do. Bringing people to Christ and them teach them the word so they can relate with other people and do the same with other people. Has that come mainly from you as the founding Pastor? Under whose initiative was the statement formed? **PFV** Yes and no, yes and no. First when we start the church here that was not on my agenda at all because first when we came here it was for a business issue and it turned into an evangelism week. And we end up with people who ask us to come to their homes with Bible studies. So I stayed here and I brought some people with me and I just, you know, shared the gospel in this community. And three families came to the Lord on the first time. So we just realized that God was showing us His will of planting a church here, a French church. So when we did that we need to organize a church and spend time with non-Christians and just plant the church. It came out in the process. When we realized that was what the Lord wanted us to do I just put things altogether. Then this vision came out and what ah, Biblical principle to plant this church.
- b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?
3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry? **MDE** I think you can put in one word, it would be discipleship for church planting because discipleship in the first place involves witnessing. And you disciple with the non-Christian. So we need to witness in our community and when people are interested you hear about that so you want to bring the gospel and share the gospel with him or her and the day that he make a commitment to the Lord or a profession of faith you just go on with bringing the gospel to them, make sure they understand what is their commitment to the Lord. And so that involves their life right there. And then they need to know what God wants us to do in our life and there's different things. I should say, like in Acts,

God wants us to worship Him. So you have all these questions, like “Why?” you know. And how do you do that . And then you talk about evangelism. You want to share your testimony with other people and how to do that, and why we need to do that. So they need to understand that’s what the Lord wants us to do. So that’s **TT** a lot of teaching there, and I would say that in this community that it takes time because like if you go to a church for 30 years or 40 years, you just sit there and listen to the priest and you just go out and its finished until next week, you know? So people are not used about the concept of church. What is a church? **SE** What is a church member? And that’s another thing that is very interesting. In their mind a church is a building. So that’s nothing to do with people. We are going to church. We are going to a building. And so we just are people who sit there and watch, and that’s it. But according to the Word of God, 1 Cor. 12: 27 say we are all the body of Christ. So you are a member, so God has given you some gifts, so God give you, you have something to do in this body. So it took time to just say, “Ok, I’m here sitting for forty years just watching and suddenly I came to the Lord and I need to work in this church. You know, How can I do that and why?” So it takes a lot of teaching, right there and discipleship, right there, to bring the people to serve the Lord.

4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision? I’m not sure if I understand the question well, you mean who is the leader of the church?

Well not so much the leader of the church, but in terms of your vision statement you talked about sharing the truth and the love of God with the community. I know I’m not quoting you directly there but I am trying to bring it to remembrance. Who’s the one who talks about that most often? **SC, SPL** Ok, Yeah, I would say the pastor. The pastor is the key there. And I would say the leaders of the church, because they do it by just by their own testimonies, just by how they live, you know, the gospel.

5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement? **LTV** Yeah I would say it is better with a good statement because that involves to understand your community, you know. Just to bring a vision for your church involves that you know you people, your community. You will find out the needs of your community. Like if you plant without that you tell that you just don’t know where you’re going. So you start the church and you do evangelism and we’ll see where that will go. **CD** So I think that if you can sit there and just understand your community, and do some demographical kind of studies and know the geographical area where you want to work, so that’s, that’s better. Like me, when I start the church planting in Grand Falls we start without a statement because we didn’t even know where to plant a church. See? **SE** We did that because a missionary came here from about 1980-1990. For about ten years this missionary stay here and he witness to people, and he start to pray for a church planting and he start to pray for a pastor or an evangelist. See? So when we came here it was just a response for his prayer. It was just an answer from the Lord and we didn’t know that in the beginning, but we just discovered that, See? But right now we are starting to plant a church planting in Edmunston. Which is about an hour from Grand Falls. So now we are going to do it very different, you know? We plan to have a statement before we go there. I already have

a **PFV** statement for the church there. And we're not even start to witness there, see?

Like, just an example, here in Grand Falls we call the name of the church, Eglise Baptiste Evangelique de Grand Sault. If you do that in Edmunston, we can't title, you know give a name to the church like Eglise Baptiste de Edmunston or Edmunston Evangelical Church. But if you do that demographical and geographical studies there, you will understand that this community is plugged together. Like Edmunston is one thing but you also have St. Basile, you also have St. Jacques, and you also have some little communities like Claire, Baker Brook, and even up to St. Anne. This large territory we call that La Republique. See? So the name of the church in Edmunston will be, Eglise Baptiste Evangelique de La Republique. Instead of Edmunston, see? And you know what, because, if you want to reach all these areas, its better to plant a church so people are not saying, "I'm not going to the Edmunston church, I'm going to the Republique church. Republique is not political, like some countries. It's more like some people came together and just decided that yeah this is our territory, is here. And that came from the 1840's, or something like that. It's a region, so we plant a church now in a region instead of a town. **CD** So that's a big difference you know, because people from \_\_\_\_\_ will come to the church because that is their community. So that's an example of the kind of studies you need to do before just going there and you plant a church. You have to have all these studies together. So you have your statement, so we are going to share the word of God in the love of Christ in the Republique. Our vision is getting more accurate.

6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church -planting situation? You mean for here in Grand Falls? Well, here, or what you are doing in Edmunston. One is established and the other in progress.

Yeah, it makes all the difference because you know, its just like you are now drawing a line or a road . so this will tell you if your still on the road or not. See? So if we do like some activities or some things you want to do with your church, you just take a look at your statement and you will realize that we are losing our time, see? We're losing time here doing that. You know it might be good to do things like that, but you know we have a role here. We have a goal. We have a vision. So I think it helps us, the leaders, to stay on the road.

## Section II: Structural Issues.

### A. Church Political Structures:

1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures. In other words, how is your church organized, or how is the denomination organized? In the beginning we start with a pioneer model, which involved to have a pastor or evangelist/pastor staying in town and doing the work, but with time we star t to relate that to at larger church. **AS** Now this church in Grand falls is a daughter church of a mother church and its better to have a team instead of just pie in the air. It's almost like a satellite model. Its not really a satellite church. Our mother church is about 600 km from here. So it can't be like, they just can't come and help us every week. Like if you plant a church like.. Not long ago

they just plant a church in Montreal, a large church. Well about 50 people got out of the church and they built a new church. So they just witness in their area and they start a church with 50 people coming out of this 400 people, see? **DB** Already you have the **CD** mentality, already you have a strong church. Already you have a strong maturity in the church. And that's a good model. But here if you split a church its really bad, because if you're talking about a church of 40 –50 people and then you took twenty people out to plant a church you just kill you r church. So we need to work differently in the region. So what we try to do is to have a some people coming up some other are a coming here in town and do some work so that the church planter can work here but that helps the church planter., Like, I'll give you an example. A couple years ago we decided we are going to bring all of our accountability to the mother church. See? So at the mother church there is an accountant there. There is a financial minister who works with me at Grand falls. Here at the church, we have some people training to just keep the offering and count the offering, you know. And all the papers, and we have our bank account here and all the papers we just get together and we send that to the mother church. So there's a team there. So now, if we have a problem with financial, we're not here alone. We have a team back up and that's a really good thing. And we try to do that with all different parts of the Church. Like we do that with evangelism. We try to do that with conference, ok? **AS** It's like a mixture of the pioneer model, mixed with the modern church model. And ah, so iits better like that.

2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all? OK, that's a good question. **SE, SC, SG** So when you talk here [about] church planting, you're not going to start with elders and deacons. You don't have, you don't have this structure. And it will take a long time sometimes to have structures like that. So, ah, you need to have a team. A team planter or a church team planter and you need to decide that before your plant the church. So all the decisions are made. Like in our church we have one year meeting with church members.

First we went to the province and we officially filled the formula to be a church. So we did that so now if someone gives an offering, we can give a receipt for that. So we are there. And, but in the church now you can't say to people you are the financial minister and you are the prayer minister. You don't have these people. You know if someone comes to the Lord he needs to know his Bible, he needs to know a lot of things without thinking of church structure, church leadership or things like that. **SE** It takes time, so you need to have a team. But the people want to get involved, the people want to be part of it. Even if they are not the mature Christian, they want to be part of it, eh? So what, what we can do is just have the team set up and then you have some people to think about ministry and to think about problems, things like that. And when you come to the church you can bring like some division. So that's our vision. You don't let people decide our vision. You don't let people **SPL.PFV** decide what we're going to do with the church. But you bring the vision and you don't let anyone change that. And you ask the people what they want to do to get the vision. What are you ready to do, what do you want to do just to get the vision alive? So now they are sharing their ideas and are happy to say, Yes, let's do that. I think we love to do that. Like in the beginning we did a lot just like evangelism. At the beginning we did a lot of door to door with young teens and teenagers and things like that. And the people

outside of this town, they don't care for, door to door is OK. They just say we're from Quebec and we're here to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. **RI** But, when you live in a town here its very difficult for them to say to their neighbours, "I am here to talk about Jesus Christ." So we need to find some other ways to bring the gospel to other people. So what I did, for the first few years is had some evangelical teams, some groups who came here with me to just to the door, to do skits and music and carrying the gospel on the streets and it was pretty good. But now there is a church, so now what I try to do is to teach the people, you can bring your friend to Christ. Just by relating with him. You can bring your Mom, your brothers and sisters. And now it's a matter of relationship. It takes more time but its good. So you can just bring this vision that it is a commandment that the Lord gives us to bring our community to Christ. To share the gospel in our community. So how do you want to do that? And some will raise his hand and say I don't know what we can do, but don't do door to door. And that's great that's good. Now, but what can I do, what can we do? So they start thinking of you know, doing some activities and going where the people is. So that is some ways you can involve people in the vision. But don't let them ....

I have a burden to plant a church in Edmunston, OK? But I can't ask this church here to plant the church, because it is a small church. They don't have this vision of OK, we are going to pray for Edmunston because we need to pray for Grand Falls.

So you can't give the vision to the church and ask the church to plant a church in Edmunston because they never will. So what I did was I work(ed) with my team.. See? And our team is with mature people, with some other pastors and some evangelists. I got a good team there. And we sit there and pray and ask God how we are going to plant a church there. And we are going to plant this church and just organize it. And some day we are going to have two churches in this area.

And now these people can get together and just have some worship and sometime have some fellowship together. And by the time we do that maybe some in our church will grow up and say, "OK, that's what mission is about. That is mission. We understand the mission now."

You see Jesus says you start in Jerusalem and go into Judea. So now the people here will say, "That's Grand Falls and now we can go to Edmunston, and now we can go to Campbellton or can go now to Moncton." So they start to have the vision, the Biblical vision.

3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation? You know I just want you to be sure you understand me here. I believe in the church leadership with elders, which is Biblical. They are the leaders of the church. But you have some people in the church `called the deacons, who are their servants, who are the leaders of different ministries, who are the servants, OK? I believe that. What I mentioned here is that in a church planting situation you don't have that. So you have to start here and move there. And in the process you have the team. **SI**

Jim: We talked about some of the traditions. What level of tradition is expected?

4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

That's a good question. I would say, you need to have some things, like stable. I think if they feel like establishing—its something important for the people. Like, if you have a worship

service, you do it every week. You don't do it once a month or once in a while. You do it on a regular basis. It is important. Ah! One thing I am deal with at Grand Falls, probably I will be the same in Edmunston. **TT** Because of the Catholic background people think the church as a building. For the Christian, they get through that. Through discipleship they learn that the church is the community. Doesn't matter where you are meeting. But for the non-Christian, and more so the Catholic people, if you are a church and you don't have a church, see they saw a problem there. Because, you know, in their mindset a church is a building. So you are a group, a spiritual group. You are probably good people, you know. Looks positive for them. But you are not a church, see? So that's one thing.

I've been at PTA(a school)for three years now and we don't have visitors. When I was in this building(English Baptist church), for five years, almost every week we have visitors. People in town, people coming from out of town. Because, in their mindset, that's a church.

I've got a woman living here leading another woman on Broadway and she said, When are you going to be in town as a church she will go.

Jim: so if you move to the Anglican church it will help?

I think that's a good thing to do.

Jim: So it's a concept that's not worth fighting at the door, so to speak? It's a concept that has to come through discipleship?

That's right. That's why its hard, I don't know...To plant a church in Halifax, in a suburb of Halifax, it is an English speaking community with people of a protestant background. Mostly mixed . But when they plant the church there, they just move the church from one building to another and it doesn't matter. **CD**

Jim: Well it did in the community I was in. It was very difficult without a building. But it was also a problem because when they got the building they worshiped the building. Not all of them, a few of them.

That's interesting.

5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need?

Yeah, it is going to be, it needs to be flexible, especially when you plant a church, because you go with needs. You go with people> If you plant a church with, if you are rigid, like you know, you need to be fixed with Biblical principles, you need to be fixed with what you believe. You know, you don't change your theology. But you can change the way you do it, the way you do church.

Like, I'll give you an example of that. I don't know how it is in other churches, but in our church it causes problems. Um, we had a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, right? So we had this meeting for 10 years in this church here. But a few years ago I noticed that a lot of people were not coming to the prayer meeting. So we just go down and have a few people here and there. I had a few people who were regular but most came once or twice a month. Some others maybe one or two times. So if you are rigid you say, "This is the prayer meeting. It is on Wednesday evening. That's it. Come or not."

But what I did was I just pass a survey in the church. And I said, "What would be interesting for you having a Bible study? See? And what I did was I stopped the prayer

meeting and I said to the church, “We are not going to have any prayer meeting anymore, because you don’t go on a regular basis. So I started home Bible study. And what I do now is I say, “We’re going to have a Bible study 4 weeks on a subject.” In every meeting we do, we pray. This is very important. I just remind them, you know when we have our prayer meeting, now we don’t have it but we can pray. So I start to have prayer on Sunday a.m., to have a group of prayer there. And they love that. Um, you know, like I’m going to start a discipleship class for 8 weeks and you can come to this Bible study if you want. And if you are a Christian you are going to give your testimony. And that makes a lot of difference. That’s flexible.

Especially for a church. I believe that if a church is older it is hard to be done, because if you have someone who is going to their prayer meeting for 20 years and then the pastor will just mention that there is no prayer meeting anymore, you’re going to kill yourself, you know(Laughter). But that’s alright you know? We’re talking about church planting here. So that’s why it’s, “Me I grow up in church,” people say, “that’s the way it was and don’t change that. But I understand that with new believers things are different. And now I’m looking to meet their needs and its very helpful for me.

6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past? Yes
7. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place?

**MD, SFS** Well me, I’m a missionary. I’m working with the fellowship French Mission. It is the service agency in our association who provide salaries for pastors and missionaries, especially the missionaries. What we need to do for that is you need to raise your salary and you need to do some deputation. So what I do every year(is) I go and visit churches and donators, during the Fall mostly. Sometimes I go to Ontario once a year and just visit from visiting churches that support us. They support us not only financially, but they are( and some churches feel that they are) a part of their(our)ministry.

Jim: How long do you expect it to be in place? Yeah, that’s a good one.

Jim: I know things change but does the denomination say,”I want this to be done in 5 years?”

**SFS** Yeah, Usually the mainline is, I should say was because that changed, you’re going to have a full support that first year and we’re going to reduce that 10% every year, so about 10 years you end up with no support, but your church is supporting you right? So that is the mainline.line.

That’s really crucial for what I am doing because so many churches struggle with this and the goals for me have to be different Grand Falls and even thw goals for Halifax have to be different from Grand Falls so that’s what I’m trying to determine and I’m betraying my bias here, somewhat .... I’m trying to hear it from you, as a pastor, and from other pastors. Along that line do you have strategies and goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency.

O.K. That’s a real good question. **RI, DB** First of all I would say, geographically it is not a good move to plant a church in Grand Falls o.k.? I plant a church here and I’m supported by my Fellowship, but it was not wise to plant church here because it was hard, it is hard to- oh, have



the full salary for a pastor for many reasons. One reason is people here have a Roman Catholic background so when they come to the Lord they've been giving a dollar or two every Sunday to the Catholic church maybe for 30, 40, or 50 years so they come to the Lord and they come to the church and when you pass the offering what they put in the plate is a 1 or 2 dollar. If you feel generous maybe 5 bucks, you know? So you need to teach the people and do discipleship. That's why the word discipleship is a main word for church planting. By the time they get up so they will give more and more, you know, according to what they can give so they will have just approached the Biblical basis. The Biblical principle for the offering, so if you start with that don't think that the Church will support you. After awhile, for years. So that's the reason.

**RI** Another reason is you have, in this county ca. 12,000 people including the villages. Grand Falls has ca. 6,000 people, and it is mixed French and English, by the way. So it is different if you plant a church in a 50,000 community. So you can expect to have full support here. So it's by the grace of the Lord. I'm still fully supported as a pastor/missionary. But we know, if man were deciding (I don't know if you are going to understand what I am going to say here) but the church exists here because the Lord says, "I want a church here." Because when I came here, I didn't come to plant a church, in the first place. I mentioned to you that I came for business reasons. But we made some evangelism and a church came out of there, a church planting. **SG** But and so we just realized a missionary pray for 10 years here, and God just answered the prayer. But if we were, you know, a bunch of wise people around the table and say, "Ok, where is the best place to start a church in New Brunswick?" well it's probably Moncton, see? Don't start with Grand Falls. But you have people here who are saved. We do have some people who are Christian and some of them were not Christian before. That's what the Lord decides, see? Man as man, we try to do the best way to do things and the more accurate way to do things, but sometimes the Lord changes our decision.

**What expectations do/does your denomination have** for long-term stability? In Grand Falls? I think, uh, this church could have a pastor who is retiring or maybe, probably have 30 or 40% of a full salary. If this church can get her own building. We are talking about facilities here. And they don't own this building, they probably will be able to have a pastor full time. Like me, a part of my salary comes from the Fellowship. But I have a business here, you know that. If I did not have a business I would not be in Grand Falls. But I have, God gave me that business. Probably, when I plant the church in Edmunston, you know, there's more people there. There's about 25,00 people there (16,000 in Edmunston and 25,000 in the whole region) Probably they can afford to have a church there of 100 people, a full time pastor. But here, if we went up to 50 people, that's a good group. And if they have their own building, probably they can have their own pastor. If you have a pastor with 6 kids, forget that. But if you have an older pastor, whose house is paid, if you don't need so much money. So they probably can have a pastor here. God knows that.

Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective?

## B. Leadership Issues:

1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders? **AS** Ok, you mean in the church? Jim: In the church. Right now it will be the people who are responsible for ministries, for different ministries. You have the pastor and you have the people who are responsible. Officially we made the motion at the Annual meeting. We have people that the church is recognizing as leaders. And they are the leadership of the church. I mean they are the influence.

In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability? Well, if your leader is as the Biblical principle, you have good leadership. If they are models. The more they put Biblical principles [into practice], the more you come up with good leaders and it takes time. But they are going to influence the church in a good way or a bad way. It depends upon not only their skill but their character. It takes time to build their character, but the Lord is doing that. But its a long-term process. **SE**

But some people come to the Lord, they already have good character, just need to get spiritual people and have good priorities in their life. And usually that's the people who want to serve in the church anyway. And you can tell just by seeing the people.

2. How does a person become a leader in your church?
3. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation? The congregation.
4. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place? Formal.

Jim: Those are? I mentioned those already. Jim; you have an annual meeting, as well. And we have people, if that's possible. They don't have the title of deacons but the doing, they are just leaders for their ministry. I have leaders for fellowship and I've got different people. **AS**

5. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability? Well what I try to do is, what I need to do in a church planting setting is visiting the people.

Jim: Can I just rephrase that, because I'm not sure I communicated that. Um, the accountability structures that you've put in place are formal. How important are they in maintaining the stability of the church?

**SPL** Well, again, it is very important because that involves church members. See the church members, they understand that they make the decisions. I will bring a decision(issue) to the church but the church members, they need to decide that. They need to address, to say we want that or we don't want that, OK.? So that's their decision...and if they say no the project won't go on. You can't change people. The Spirit of God will change people. But it is very important. That's accountability.

## Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

### A. Cultural Issues:

1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry?

**TT, CD** OK. You mean Maritimers. The culture here is very different. I grew up in Quebec. This here, it is different; people do things differently. I've been here for 12 years now and I understand how people think now. Even with French people it is different. Even if they are Catholic. Its not the same Catholic as in Quebec. You know in Quebec they do restaurants with church. You won't see that here; not at all. People, they love the Catholic church. They love their priests. And I have some respect for the priests. I have some respect for the Catholic people. And one word they are saying is love and I think it is a good word. So you have some good people.

Jim: What is another example of how it is different from Quebec?

**CD** Well, just like the Catholic background, the people here have their traditions. If you are an English man or English woman here, you are protest ant, an evangelical. If you are French you are Catholic, see? So in this community people live well together, French and English people. But for some reason they know if you are French, you are Catholic. So if you accept the Lord and become evangelical, well, that's weird, if you are French. And they have a trend to think you that if you are changing religion you are changing your family. It's a family matter. Its more like, "why are you changing religions? Are you rejecting," I don't know how to say that, "Are you saying no to your family?" See? So the people, that's a pressure, that's a big pressure.

Jim: You already answered the next question.

Ah, it's not that bad today. It's changing. But ten years ago we had a man come to church here and he came back the next week and said, "I don't want to go to your church any more." And I said, "Why?" And he said, "I parked my truck in front of your church and one of my uncles went by in the street and saw my truck. So he called my family. So my family said, 'If you want to come to this church you are not in our family. You choose between this church and your family.'" So the poor man said, "I can't go. I need my family." It's very strong.

Jim: So this is an example of the characteristics, so how would you think this impacts on ministry and church viability?

You need to work with the people. I give you one example. What I do now, before we name someone to the church we need to work that out outside of the church. Like what I mean is I've got some new people who've come to the Lord. So I'm going to start a home Bible Study. So that gives the people time to talk to their families and probably have time so they can meet me, so they have time to meet some people in our church you know? So this Sunday I will come into the church. His family is already aware of that. They know that, see? So this man I was talking

about, instead of bringing him here in this church. I should bring him home, back to my place and have supper with us. Or I will go to your place, meet your Mom, brothers and sisters and they will see that I am a Pastor but I can talk about hockey, about a lot of things, you know. And some day they will just come to church to see and they will know people in the church, see?

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?

3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability?

4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

Well, in the first place my experience is not here. It is in Quebec, but I can tell that it is a very different culture. It is very different from North America. Um, I know that there's a lot of church planting that we hear about in the U.S. who are amazing. Its like you should, you just put a program and then you bring a structure to the community and then in a few months you have 1,00 people. See, that's a different setting. You have people who are doing marketing and they are, have... But that's different in these communities. I know there are some great people like Hybels, Rick Warren. They have done really great things and you know, you read some of their literature and its incredible and wow! This is great. But I don't think you can use, like these settings everywhere. Like some principles are good but the way people are thinking is different. Like I remember I was reading about Bill Hybels saying that his church was moving from one location to another before they have a building. That's something that is workable. But here, if you bring your church from one building to another, people know each other. They will say this is not (right?) These people are not serious. They are just like a chicken with no head on it. They are just going from place to place and they are not stable. It is a matter of culture. But I believe in these good principles.

Jim: You just answered the next question.

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

## B. Geographical issues:

1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant? Yeah, well, just as I mentioned earlier, if you plant a church in a 50,000 population community it is different than in a 6,000 population community. People have...so there's a lot of differences. But it doesn't mean that we don't do church planting in a small town. We just work it differently. I think that that's my thinking. But I think if I plant a church in Edmunston it will have areal impact on Grand Falls for many people. I think, for one reason, that will bring some strong...the Christian community will be stronger. Because, if we could plant a church in Edmunston with 50 people, it can go to 100 easily. So if you join the 2 churches together it is stronger.

What I mean is, if you are strategic in your church planting, you can have more service in your area. Like, if you move to Montreal, there is so much you can have. I was just thinking about having a conference, different conferences, different tools. You can have your university, you can have a lot of tools to help you in your church planting. And you have support from other communities and other Christians. But in an area like here, it is a far, far away area. Like this church planting, we don't have a library, French material. You have to bring someone here. So you need to be strategic. Like if we plant a church in Edmunston it will be a big help for Grand Falls. And these 2 communities together can be just a step for Moncton and Dieppe. But it is a step.

Jim: That answered the next question, as well.

2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?
3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada? **SFS** Financial support. A lot of support comes from our mother church. Also support from the Bible School. Like here, we have the New Brunswick Bible Institute, which is a good support for us. Like during the week we have students who are coming for their practical and they help us with Sunday School and things like that. The French seminary, this is a great tool for me, for my personal studying.

We have different agencies in the Fellowship and like you heard about L'Espoire Aujourd'hui- Hope for Today. So that's the kind of support we have. We are an independent church from the Fellowship. A good church is an interdependent church. A bad church is an independent church which says, "Hey, we are not talking to you anymore. You know, we do everything we do and we don't need other people." OK? That's not good. **SFS** We are a dependent church. Like we depend on our mother church and for support from other people. We need to become an interdependent to be self church that can work by itself, but we are involved with others. So we're sharing. If this church is growing enough we will have Edmunston, we will have church planting in Moncton, just working together.

4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered? And what makes Edmunston more strategic? And like I mentioned, we're talking the republic. So you are not only talking Edmunston, but a large territory. I think it's a wise strategy for now.
5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location? **RI** If we, ah, can do this, having a good community of Christians in the area, I think it is a good message we send, that it is possible to have churches in the area. Some church

planters, when they think of church planting, they think of going to Montreal. There's millions of people and it is, you know, you have all these communities to help. But the Lord is leading some people into communities like this. So you need missionaries. You need people who kind of have burdens for some communities.

I remember some years ago I had a call to Pastor a church in a large city in Quebec. You know, and just come as a pastor. They had a congregation of about 150 people and a salary. But, you know, God put a burden. I stayed about 14 years in Quebec and I studied the Bible all these years, and I like Quebec. But I grew up here in New Brunswick and my wife's from New Brunswick. And then I was (there) 14 years and the Lord lead me here for church planting. I have a burden for New Brunswick and Edmunston and for Moncton. So maybe someday someone will say, "We don't have money to send you in Grand Falls." And I just keep on saying, "My God is big. I don't know how He is going to do that and I have this burden on my heart."

## Interview 3

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### Section I: Theological Issues.

##### D. Key Biblical concepts:

1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter? **MDE** Well Acts 2 would be one, with the church meeting together regularly and sharing about Jesus with others in the community, with the purpose of bringing them into relationship with Him. I would also say that the concept of spiritual gifts and having people directly involved in ministry has been a foundational aspect of our church planting.
2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation. Well, our church couldn't function without people being involved and using their gifts. It did take a while, when we first started to get people involved and we were quite limited in what we could do at that time. But with people getting involved our potential is vastly increased for impacting our community and being a healthy, growing church; growing spiritually and numerically. **SC**

Jim: How long has your church been established? We started holding services in October 2002, so we are 6 and one half years old. **SE**

3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts? The ones who are involved in the church are very open to it and have really adopted them or bought into them. In fact, most of the people attending are involved in some form of ministry at some level, with something as basic as being a greeter to leading a Bible study through the week.
4. Have they integrated them into their own lives?

##### E. Current Theological emphases:

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? The community would be a value we have,; being the body of Christ and not just a group of strangers coming together. Umm-along with that would be united in ministry. Also we value offering new beginning, offering a fresh start and forgiveness. Intimacy with God is a primary focus.
2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister? I know what we battle for with the priesthood of all believers instead of the professional ministers being the ones

responsible for the ministry. That's kind of a view that a lot of people have. We try to emphasize that everyone is a minister. **TT**

3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts? I believe that everyone is a minister. All followers of Christ are gifted in unique ways to contribute to His kingdom. So that contradicts what the common belief in our society is.

Jim: has your ministry always been in Atlantic Canada or have you ministered elsewhere? No. I was in South Dakota, as well. **RI**

Jim: Did you come across this contradiction there? Yes, it was similar.

Jim: Now South Dakota would be fairly rural? Yes, fairly rural and a farming community.

4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability? **CM** In a consumer society people tend to jump ship more often. They tend to shop around and not really invest themselves in any local church. Once they do get involved they tend to stick around and tie in and aim to grow that church themselves. (Others are) spectators, going from church to church meeting their felt needs instead of seeing how they can contribute themselves.

#### F. Vision:

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement? **VS** Yes. It's actually just three words. It's Connecting, Equipping and Empowering. We stand on those. Those are our three key words that express our mission as a church and our strategy for growth. Connecting with god and others; Equipping for ministry and for growth; Empowering for mission. **MDE**
2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? Under whose initiative was the statement formed? That was under mine (initiative). I was actually on a sabbatical last year and I spent the time formulating that and brought it back and presented it to the leadership team, talked about it some and ended up adopting it.. we had another one before that was a little stale.

Jim: Sabbatical? Is that something your denomination has brought in?

Our district. Just about 5 or 6 years ago (decided) that once a pastor has been in a specific church for 7 years they can take a month sabbatical.

- b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?
3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry? It guides a lot of our Sunday messages. What I choose to speak on lines up with our mission statement. It also provides the foundation for the ministries we offer in that we have our life groups to be about connecting people with each other, God and having people involved in the life groups **MDE** equipped to be involved in ministry themselves. And how to grow on their own, as well as, corporately. And to provide opportunities to express their giftedness and their interests and their passion in actual ministry.
4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision? That would be me.



Jim: And do you feel that the church on in side with you? Yes I do. That's one of the unique benefits of being part of a church planting, is that people who aren't on side with what you are doing generally don't start coming.

5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement? I think with a vision statement it gives a lot of direction to the ministry. It helps you to say no to some of the demands that are placed on churches and pastors. It helps you to know your focus, so that you can do a good job at a few things instead of being so strung out that you can't do a good job at anything. **VS**
6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church -planting situation? I'm not quite sure how it has impacted it. I hope it gives direction to the congregation and the leadership of the church. And it helps them to envision what we can be as a church. Instead of wandering in the wilderness, it gives us a destination. **AS**

## Section II: Structural Issues.

### A. Church Political Structures:

8. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures. Specifically as it relates to a Church plant?

Jim: Yeah.

Greg: our church plant is officially endorsed or commissioned by our district, our district conference, held once a year. There is a District Director of Evangelism and Church Growth who oversees the churches, the church plants and, ah, we are accountable to the district. We don't have an official board as a church plant. We are a pioneer or new or developing church. We don't have a church board at this time. We report to our district. **AS**

Jim: How does that work for you from day to day? Is it a help or a hindrance? I think it's a help. It gives the pastor a lot of autonomy or authority. Which can be good or bad. But instead of being tied down with red tape, you can see what needs to be done and take steps toward that. We do have a leadership team right now, which consists of some people with leadership ability in the church that I, myself, identified and appointed. Eventually we will have an elected board, when we become an established church. **SPL,AS**

Jim: So that's following the Wesleyan structure?

Greg: Yes, that's right.

9. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all? Well, what I just talked about. That's part of our denomination and our structures. **TT**
10. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation? We don't expect any at all, actually. We try to gear our Sunday services specifically for people who have never been to a church before. We talk about how we exist for people who aren't part of our church yet. Although we don't water down anything, we try to explain things in terms that the uninitiated can understand.

Jim: So, in terms of the uninitiated, what expectations do they come with?

Greg: **TT** It varies from person to person. Some come expecting a more formal structure than we have at our particular church. We are more relaxed. People coming in have a pre-conceived notion of what the church is like. They may come expecting that they're not going to hear anything that's relevant about their life. Because we try to explain the Bible in terms that are practical and meaningful for everyday life.

11. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?
12. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need? We do. We have quite a bit of flexibility.

Jim: And that is approved by your district?

Greg: Yes. I don't check with them on every little thing.

13. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past? **SFS** We did as we began. We had a set amount of funds. I presented a proposal to our District of the Wesleyan Church and, as part of that, I included a budget with them donating \$25,000.00. At the time it stretched over three years. We didn't use all those funds early on so those funds were stretched beyond that time. But each church plant approved by the district would have a different financial structure.

Jim: so, effectively, you are supporting yourselves?

Greg: That's right. We still receive support from people outside, but not the district. **MD**

Jim: People who support your cause?

Greg: That's right.

14. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place?
15. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability? That was never defined for me, which I really appreciated.

Jim: OK. Why did you appreciate that?

Greg: I never felt pressure to be a certain size by a certain time or we would be shut down. **SE**

Jim: And that helped in what way?

Greg: Well it just, ah, lowered our stress level. We just didn't have that pressure on us. Our church has not had explosive growth. **SG** We've had consistent but slow growth. And I often think the expectations are different for new churches than for an established church. New churches are...If an established church stays the same size for a couple of years, nobody sees a problem. But if a church plant stays the same size people are wondering what's wrong. But I know we're fine that way with our denomination.

16. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency? No.
17. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective? Long-term viability would be having a qualified leadership in place. Being able to meet our obligations, financially, and having a clear purpose for existing. **LBE**

B. Leadership Issues:

1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders? The official leaders are the District board and myself, as the local leader. Unofficially, there are some key people, that have been attending our church for awhile, that I rely on and look to them for advice and counsel. **SPL, SLL**
6. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability? Leadership is critical for long-term stability. With committed leadership they'll be able to continue to provide direction for the church and will hold people together, because I think the tendency is for people to drift apart and go in different directions and to adopt different purposes, which aren't necessarily wrong purposes, but just can lead the church to go in different directions.
7. How does a person become a leader in your church? Right now, with our leadership **SPL** team, it is not elected. It is appointed. It's officially called the Pastor's Advisory Committee. And that's officially our structure with our denomination. When we've become an established church, we will have elected leadership. And we may move to that, in an unofficial capacity, before we become an established church.
8. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation? Well, I'm accountable to the District, as well as, to the congregation, in an established church. When we become established I will be accountable to the congregation. And the leadership team is accountable to the congregation. **MF**
9. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place? A mixture of both. Formally I have the annual reports for the district.
10. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability? **SI** I haven't really thought a lot about that. I think accountability is really important. But we don't have any established structure, no official accountability structure for the local church. Along with our reports to the church and to the district, if they see a cause to interview us(the district) they will do that.

Jim: So, if I understand you, there's oversight without control. Is that accurate?

Greg: **AS** Yes. They could exercise control, if they wanted to, but they tend to let us see out own direction. The District Supervisor does make a visit to each church plant about 2 times every three years. So every year and a half.

### Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

#### A. Cultural Issues:

1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry? **TT** In Prince Edward Island we tend to be a very religious community. And by that I mean everyone knows which church is their church, whether they attend there or not. Everyone seems to have their family church home, even if they haven't attended there for years. **SC** So we find that difficult for starting a new church. People seem to have their loyalties and also the population is highly Catholic. I'm not sure of the exact numbers but I believe it is somewhere around 60% that are Catholic, which lends to what I was saying about people having their church and sometimes that makes it difficult to reach them. We're not interested in taking people out of a church if they're attending it and are happy there and it would be a biblically functioning church.

But we do want to reach people who are un-churched and may be religious but don't have a relationship with Christ.

Jim: Does your denomination help you to address that at all ?

Greg: I think they would if we asked them to, but I think it's our own responsibility to address it locally.

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves? Answered.
3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability?

Well it makes it difficult to grow a church numerically which makes it difficult to grow a church financially, so it can be stable and have long term viability. **SC, SFS, SE, SG**

4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting? **CD, LBE** Yes, I think they do. A lot of the literature for church planting seems to be focused on large urban areas, in southern California and Hawaii. Which are very different cultures than we have here. We have a much more traditional and much more conservative and religious society. And some of those things that work in other places just don't work here. I think there are principles we can take from them and adapt them, but that's a bit of a job to do.

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life? **CD** One of the differences that I've seen is in some church planting materials they talk about how people want to come and be anonymous when they enter in to a new church and might not want to sing. Men don't want to sing. But what we have found here, in Atlantic Canada, is that people are looking for a sense of family when they walk into a church. They want to be accepted and they enjoy music. Here, in the Maritimes, kitchen parties are a way of life. Here in Prince Edward Island, we have Ceilidhs in just about every community centre. So we tend to try to welcome people with open arms and we're not afraid to use a lot of music in our services.

B. Geographical issues:

2. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant? I think a lot of people are moving away from this area. The population seems to be aging and a lot of younger families are moving away, moving west. **CD, DB**
3. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues? I don't have any.
4. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada? Nothing specifically. What I wish we had done, before we moved, is a study of the population to determine what trends are here; what the population is like; what the values are locally. We did some

research online, trying to find those facts out, but we were pretty limited in what we had access to. And I'm not sure how that has impacted us. It may have given us some insights but I'm not sure. **DB**

5. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered? Well, when I first approached our district about starting a new church, I didn't have a specific location. I had 3 or 4 locations as possibilities. And we ended up visiting several areas. And we ended up in Charlottetown through those conversations and by visiting here and seeing the community and developing a heart for the community.
6. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location? Yeah, that's one of the things that we didn't do that we probably should have done. I'm not sure that would have made any difference other than that it would have made us more informed.

Jim: Anything else that you could add?

Greg: Nothing comes to mind right now.

## Interview 4

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### Section I: Theological Issues.

##### G. Key Biblical concepts:

1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter?

S.C. : I think that, to keep it really simple, Great Commission, ah, and to sort of further that, as it is our desire to reach people and see Christ's Church grow. In this particular context there has been a real need in the town of Stratford for a long time. An almost absence of an evangelical presence for a long, long time, even upwards to a century. And so those two things cover a lot, along with an Eastern Canadian and particularly an island mindset. In our situation to pull from a community that's 25 minutes to half an hour away, it seemed like a pretty logical step to plant a church in Stratford that reaches, ideally, that whole area. **MDE**

P.W. Paul's approach to ministry in regard to the church's he planted, um, there's nothing really new under the Sun. Paul himself started a whole number of churches throughout Asia Minor, back in these missionary journeys, and just following that model, if you will, of starting new works where there is a void of an evangelical voice and to grow the kingdom of God faster through many effective local churches than through one mega-church which can eliminate Atlantic Canadian culture. These would be driving forces behind it for the most part, I think. **MDE**

2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation. **SL, AS**

P.W. : One of the things, I don't know if this is what you want in the answer, but one of the things that we found early in is that where we planted , but Stratford offers more of a different site of Cornerstone vs. a different church of Cornerstone. We have one budget, we have one deacon's board, we have one pastoral staff, we have one church and the staff are swapped among the two sites. Our deacons are from both sites. All of our ministries are built from people that go to both locations. We don't want to create and us and them where we do this together. It's the same principles, the same goals, the same objectives, the same values that define this place, defines Stratford.. What's in Stratford defines Cornwall. And we've learned what that looks like

more in what its not than what it actually is and we've got two sites and we've got 300 people between two sites. And we know that not all 300 people are going to know each other like best friends though they sit in the chair next to them. So we know that that's not the case, so we try not to force them because its kind of futile energy poured into something that is just not going to happen. But we are one church in its mission, in its goals, in its values, in its structure, in its staff, in its, you know, whatever we do together, we do together.

3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts? **SC**  
P.W.: Um, in the early days, when we started talking about church planting in Stratford, before Stephen had arrived, just by virtue of change there's resistance, there's push back. There's people who don't want to see their friend go, but staying true to the great commission and the desire to reach people, you kind of move forward and those who are excited remain and those who are not happy, the generally find a new address for church life to call home. But generally speaking it was a great time of anticipation, excitement, ah, kind of frustration as we tried to figure out what it looked like. How's it going to play? What's the daily routine going to look like?

Because we went almost a year without an onsite Stratford pastor and those were difficult days. When Stephen arrived it was fantastic and kind of all the thoughts we think it should actually look like began to take shape. But its from the congregations' perspective, there were some that hated it, but they left. The majority loved it but were nervous of what it looked like as we moved into really uncharted waters for all of us. **TT**

Do you, Stephen, have anything to add to that? How have people responded? **MDE**  
Stephen: Cornerstone in corporate, by its nature, is not for the faint of heart. That's kind of word on the street and we're totally o.k. with that. Stratford, I should say, have the same bias. Cornerstone is an ambitious church, ummm, we've, we're working on paying down some land that we've purchased in Stratford, for the very near future, to have a physical home there. I think people have been really excited in Stratford and beyond. Because we have a number of people that come from surrounding communities. People are just really excited to have a forward thinking, evangelical, bold, ambitious, energetic church to call home, because that's really been a void.

It's been a complete happenstance at the same time, but a long standing Convention Baptist church in Hazelbrook came to and end and was more or less de-commissioned. Just accidentally when this transpired, so there's been handful of core folks from that church that are just really excited to have the mission and the energy, ummm, but again, for those that are really excited about church and all that

means from a biblical standpoint are just very excited. For others that are interested to attend every 4 weeks, its probably not all that exciting. But no, its been really- that's been played out week by week and month by month, as we go.

4. Have they integrated them into their own lives?

H. Current Theological emphases:

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? **PFV**

Phil: We have some values that we hold pretty close to our chest. 1. The centrality of Christ- not just for church planting but that seem to be the focus for who we are, as a church. In both our sites we really want to create a dynamic, kind of an Acts 2 church, where the community is really close knit, really interested and caring for each other as Christ would, care for each other.

We have a real desire to keep scriptures in front of our people, make them relevant, make them applicable to life. Those are some of the things that are very important to us in the church and we kind of measure our ministries through those lenses. None of those are intrinsically related to church planting, its just church life. Its been fun when we started Stratford, that the same values of Cornerstone are present in Stratford, so that the DNA of this place has rubbed off on a church that is 2 years old and 2.5 years old.

2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister?

Concepts that we come up against, what do you mean by that?

Jim: To give you an example, in the little rural community in which I minister... there is a real concept that everyone has their own church. They only go to their church and we have those who only go to our church. That's a theological concept that we come up against in terms of outreach.

Phil: I think, in the early days, the Stratford community is very proud that they're the Stratford community. And part of the battle to reach Stratford is that people in Stratford like to remain in Stratford. You know they've built their own Sobeys, their own stores, their own malls and industry in Stratford. They're very proud of their community and to ask them to drive 30 minutes to the other side of the city just seemed like a futile effort. So instead of working away, countless hours, to build a church that is not in the community, we just put a church in their community, and so far so good. **TT**



Jim: Anything else?

Stephen: I suspect this is not too far off from Cornwall, although I do know that its two things. First, ah, I don't know how to say it diplomatically. **CM** For PEI, particularly, its just a buffet of churches that people sample from, based on their appetite, throughout their life. It is not uncommon in PEI, and after having lived in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and ministered in both places, it never seemed quite to this extreme. But its not uncommon for people to have anywhere from 3 to 5 year expiration date. You know? Kind of a revolving door when a church is what they attend. So that's one of the dynamics. I don't know if its much of a theological concept but I'll give you the theological concept, particularly in the town of Stratford, is that it's a hyper-saturated Roman Catholic background in the town of Stratford and surrounding areas. A predominantly Roman Catholic population upwards of 90% and Roman Catholic background. So all of the divergences and clashes in theology that you find there. One of our deacons, who really worships in Stratford, strong Roman Catholic, he'll often translate for me to say, like he can understand the heart, the upbringing for salvation by works. The challenges of culturally understanding the Roman Catholic priesthood instead of the priesthood of Christ or the priesthood of all believers. But many of those things are involved in our regular basis of preaching and teaching and I've done so in my context in Stratford. **SC, TT**

Phil: One of the other concepts or barriers or frustrations of the island is if you're not from here, you're not from her. And they are almost proud of that. "I'm an Islander., you're from away." And to the point in local church life, if you are from away you really feel like you are from away and one of the things that has been fun for us is that our church is made up of people who are basically from away. All of its staff are off islanders, most of the deacons are off islanders, in one capacity or another. So people who come from away, not born on the island, they feel at home pretty quick, because its made up of people who are just like them.

Jim: You actually answered the next question:

Stephen: Because of the Island, I find particularly in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, you know, there are Baptist churches everywhere. When people connect the dots, travelling from church to church, or have, from my own experience, relatively short tenure of participating in another church, its often of another denominational background, which can really muddy the theological waters when it comes to things like communion and baptism and salvation, church governance, all these types of things.

Phil: That's a great point, a great point. For Charlottetown for example, there are 2 Baptist churches that belong to Convention. Whereas in most cities this size there would be 5 or 6 or 7. So that when they get mad at one I can go to the next. I know how it works. But here its, you

know, you come from a southern Baptist to a Convention, to a United, to a Catholic, to a Presbyterian to , you know, you start naming them. And Brethren is a real strong background on the Island. And people come to church life and they don't have any idea what's going on and it creates all kinds of wonderful tensions and dynamics because, everyone's background and church life is just so different. **CM, CD**

Jim: So that's kind of the impact. My next question is what impact has this had on church growth? You've talked about the 3 to 5 year cycle, you've talked about moving around.

3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts?

4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability?

Phil: Its funny, Charlottetown, you know, it's a city of 60,000 plus in the greater Charlottetown area and in the church life there would be a few names, a dozen, twenty or so, that you would know that when so and so shows up at your church you've got about a three year window with them before they go to someone else's church. And its not that they leave because they're mad, its just, "Well, its been fun, I'll try somewhere else for a bit." **CM**

I. Vision:

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement?

Yes.

2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? Under whose initiative was the statement formed?

Phil: Um, the initiative really comes out of Pastoral staff, ultimately, our church model is driven by the pastors, endorsed through the elders of the church and then down into the body with lot of collaboration and cooperation with each other. But it came from us, as staff. Well, it came from the Scriptures. **PFV**

Jim: Well, I appreciate that, but I appreciate the answer you gave, as well, because I think this is one of the issues that, in my experience, comes to play in what is going to be viable or not viable, as to where the vision's coming from. In our convention there is a sense that the vision comes from the body. But when you have a body that is as diverse as you have been describing, that's very difficult for the vision to come from everyone with different backgrounds.

Phil: **PFV** Well even just, I know this is going to sound really negative, and its not meant to be, but if the vision comes from the body why on earth would there be pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets who are called to lead? Romans 8 – lead with all diligence. Those who have been

called by the Holy Spirit are called to lead the church. Now its not a dictatorship, its not a power struggle or something to be coveted or really desired. Just Biblically, the whole idea of leadership is its evident, its strong. Paul speaks of it all the time and every church he appointed elders and deacons and leaders that kind of governed over local bodies of people. Because in your church or my church, wherever we go, if it comes from the body, oftentimes it is the lowest common denominator. And if your church is like my church they're sometimes not all that interested in spiritual things.

b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?

3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry? **MDE**

P: both of us, S. and I, are highly relational people. And our mission statement is, "We exist to disciple people to live and love as Christ did." And ultimately we know that good effective ministry is not just a light switch you can turn on and turn off, um, but its routed in deep relationships with people, where you work with them, you love them, serve them for years at a time. And in that time frame you hope that you are a part of what God is doing in their lives, to live and love as Christ did. And because we are so highly relational, because we invest in people's lives in tremendous ways, ah, that really does shape and dictate everything we do. We're not a church that has a big event, "Let's bring in a band or bring in a speaker," because it misses the relational element. We really don't shy away from difficult relationships or difficult conversations because it will make or break ministry and that really does drive a lot of stuff that we do. And discipleship is a process of time where you invest in people, they watch you, they see you, they hear you and in time they inevitably become like you because you are like Christ, is kind of the heart of it.

4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision? **PFV**

S: That comes out our pastoral team. With P., as our lead pastor we work very closely, not in isolation, with the pastors taking the lead but always working very closely wit our elders. And that group of men, our pastors and elders comprises our vision team, vision board. That is the name we put on it in the past and it really trickles down from there. Our elders being made up of people who are neck deep in ministry with Cornerstone and meeting all of the qualifications in every sense. But the most important one perhaps, beyond all those Biblical characteristics of eldership, these are men that our people look to and say, "These guys believe in the church and are leading us and we're glad to have it. That's really a culture and climate that's being bought into more and more as time goes by.

**AS**

P: And you don't have to fight for the office of Pastor here, which is very, very nice. The people of this church look to us to lead. The speed of our leadership is the speed of the church. If we're slow, they're slow. If we are ambitious they will be ambitious with us. Very seldom do you have a fight over who's going to make the decisions because they will generally wait for you to make the call of where we want to go. With that comes a tremendous amount of accountability with our elders board, a tremendous amount of freedom, but a tremendous amount of fear, at the same time, because that's a gift that most churches and pastors don't have. And we want to use it smartly, we want to be wise with that. When the days come that you have to make a really difficult decision, because we're so relational with people, they understand that this is a decision that we do have to make. And it's not meant to hurt or harm or to bowl anyone over. There's always one or two that looks to throw stones and those kind of things, but it's a nice gift to have when you minister like that.

Jim: I think you've answered, pretty much, the next question, which is: "What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement?" I'm hearing that your vision statement is that of highly relational, of living, loving, serving as Christ has loved. You've got the basics of it there and the challenges of that. You've talked about being the lead proponents and the accountability. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement? **SPL**

P: I think, real quick, everyone has a great idea. Everyone thinks we do this and do this. With the statement, with the set goal, with the set purpose, oh you can get rid of about 90% of the bad ideas, because everyone knows they are bad ideas and it gets rid of the shot gun approach to ministry and you get real focused and everyone kind of buys in and in time you stay the course, you see the fruit of the ministry, versus, a randomness and a bit of chaos that sets in and people get frustrated and no real fruit from ministry.

6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church -planting situation?

**SPL**

P: I've often kidded S., that if S. resigned tomorrow, ah, it would be a real tough sell for me to try to keep that site going. Because the long-term viability of any church plant, like our situation, or just life in general, I think is deeply connected to the longevity of the Pastor's stay in the church. Stratford, as a site, as a ministry, really is on S's shoulders, to his commitment to be there long-term. If there is a trend, like in Cornerstone, Cornwall. It was planted in 1987, in its first 10 years they went through 4 pastors. The church never grew more than 25 people. And St. arrived in '97 and we've seen the fruit of Cornerstone having pastors who have been here long-term. St. was here 10 years. D. was here 9 years. I'm going on my 6<sup>th</sup> year. S. has been here

for 2 years. And I know that we've both talked that this is where we'd like to finish. Unless God speaks from the heavens it would be good to see ourselves here for a long, long time. **LTV**

Growing up in a home, watching a pastor, my father, be at a church for 23 years, you see the fruit of ministry that most people never get to see, when you're there that long. And again, that comes from the relational side of who we are and we have no desire to begin that process of making relationships again in a new context. I think that the long-term viability of any church, church plant included, is to how committed, how long is the guy going to stay there at the top.

## Section II: Structural Issues.

### A. Church Political Structures:

1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures. **AS, SPL, VS, SI**

P: In a very quick nutshell, Cornerstone is a pastor led church. We've three pastors which we are accountable to our deacon's board or elders board, whatever you want to call it. Together we make up what is called our Vision Team. Its our Vision Team that's responsible for the ministry: for where we go, for what we do, what we don't do. All major decisions kind of rise and fall on their shoulders. Ah, our congregation endorses our pastors when they call [them]. It endorses its leadership team and in that endorsement they almost hand over the responsibility of church life to them. When that handing over is there, there is all kinds of conversation that takes place with the church body, to get a sense of how things are going. Generally speaking that is our structure.

2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle?  
Not at all? **SI**

P: Not at all. Well, I would argue that it's an actual reflection of what it should be. But I think, over the course of time and baggage, we've taken the priesthood of believers and the local autonomy of the church and made it something it was never meant to be. We've turned into a Canadian democracy of, "I have human rights and individual human rights," versus a theocracy of the leading of the Holy Spirit.

S: We've hopefully, and we're continually in process, but we've moved away from, and I think you'll know what I mean when I say this, a 50 + 1 culture, which exists in a lot of churches, which, if things are going awry, according to my opinion of awry, of what I don't like (Pause) I know my constitution says this, or I can kind of rally the troops, if we get 50% + 1. Which again, speaks of vision and where does vision come from? Does it come from 200 people, who just kind of cast lots or whatever feels good in your belly that day? Instead our constitution, which we are re-working, reflects that Jesus Christ is the head of the church, which is the body. The body includes the pastor and elders, everybody. But in essence the congregation hands over

the reins to the Vision team, to the elders and pastors, and ah, short of having a situation where you have some real bad personalities in that leadership group, or maybe some destructive things or immoral things there, it's the only way to fly, in our context, at least. **SPL, SLL**

P: Our church body, we joke about it, they have three votes. They vote on pastors, they vote on deacons and they vote on a budget. **SI**

3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation?

P: It was kind of funny, because basically we took what Cornwall was and we said these are going to be basically the same principles that we will operate in Stratford. And it worked in Cornwall and it's working in Stratford. That's very good and God's been very good that way. And a lot is trial and error. "Let's try this, oh that seems to not work so well." But generally speaking these values seem to work well here, let's find someone that has those same values and some of the Cornerstone people went over to Stratford, ah, they took that culture, those values with them and it seemed to go very well. **LTV**

4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

P: I think, offering, would be a tradition that they would expect to see in Church. That and Communion, song, prayer., a sermon. Anything else?

S: Yeah, I don't think we put a label on, like are we seeker sensitive, are we post modern or emergent or traditional. I mean there'd be no mistaking, unapologetically, that we ...Using that as an adjective, we are not a particularly traditional feel in our use of space.

S: I really believe, I hope that an unbeliever coming in the door on a Sunday for the first time, You're not going to have to speak the language. .... I have felt, at times, when I have entered more traditional worship settings, and I'm a Pastor, and I felt very much like an outsider, like I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know when to sit or stand or when to pray, or when to go up, so I think it would be very safe to say that you could feel quite welcome, that you would not be wondering what's happening at each segment of our service. And that's a really good thing, so...

P: We have, and I think part of the fun is that we're both 30 so we understand the mindset of someone who is our age and younger, a little bit better than folks who sit around church tables here. And we have all the components of the same kind of service that I grew up in, um, but there just done in a comfortable and relevant way that makes sense and people enjoy it. And, uh,

we take risks. We have the freedom to dress up a service and be really kind of high church, but relaxed at the same time. Comfortable and relaxed are kind of words that...

5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need?

P: Ah, are you talking worship here?

Jim: I am talking all structures. **SI**

P: We'll flex as need arises. We're twenty-one years old, as a church, and we don't have any traditions, as such, that say that every year at this time this is what we do. It's just, let's just do this or let's do this, or let's think outside the box. There's not a , not a , there's no pressure I guess... And the other side of that coin is that we have incredibly gracious, kind, forgiving people, that are quite happy to say, sure thing, we'll try this.

S: And if there was a tradition we would probably break it and our people would almost applaud. Even if we failed it would be like, "Great job, that was a great job, but ah we don't think it worked but thanks for trying.

P: Freedom to fail is great. It really is wonderful here, ah, but you know, I think our Good Friday service would have been very different from most people expect from a Good Friday service. People really enjoyed it, ah, well a year ago, we didn't have a Good Friday service, we had a Seder supper, per se, and that was a complete stretch for a lot of people.

P: About 60 -70 people came. There's a real sense of O.K., let's just go with that.

6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past? **SFS, LBE**

P: We receive money from the Convention through its Home Mission Board and through the PEI association. S: Atlantic Baptist Mission Board, I was corrected on that. P: The Atlantic Baptist Mission Board and the PEI Association, we received this year, I think its \$20,000.00 between those two organizations, uh, back when we first started it was around \$30,000.00. They have diminished their support as the church has grown over the last three years and this is the last year for financial support through both of those organizations.

Jim: This is your last year?

Yeah.

7. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place?

8. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability? **SFS, LBE**

P: They've been great cheer leaders for us. We've met with them over the last three years as we have applied for funds and they are always excited to hear what's going on. They want it to go well. They are investing in us, in the ministry and hoping that it is long term and viable.

Generally speaking they are pleased with our approach, with our model, with our example. Umm, but no like pressure from them. Like, if you fail that's not good for you.

9. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

P: Well, yeah, I think back to when Cornwall use to meet in the gymnasium across the field in the school behind us, and that was kind of a real good example of how the two sites worked good together. Because we made votes as a church to build buildings and buy land and you know people from Cornwall are putting money into a pot for a piece of property that they'll never see it or never walk on it and people in Stratford are paying for a building that they'll never sit in. So, it's fun to have two congregations who give generously to projects that they're a part of and yet are at arms length from in time, so that's been fun for us. Long-term viability strategies, you know we're a million and a half dollars in debt, we have 3 thirty year old pastors. The congregation of 250 plus, you know it's a real fun ride for us as we see God's hand provide time and time again, as he surprises us.

10. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective? **SPL, SLL, LTV**

S: We've kind of championed the phrase that we obviously, mission statement, great commission, those are non-negotiables but that we are, not that we want to be, but that we are a church that plants churches. I suspect that we will continue to be. That's not to say that in 5 years time or two years time we're going to plant another church in the Charlottetown area. Its just to say that we want to continue to be a church that engages its community, its world, its region. And so in terms of long-term viability, I don't know how we arrive at the place where we say we're viable, you know? We've been very careful to not make the distinction between the two sites. We do have a common budget, that goes along with that. I guess I just hope and pray that we would be a church that God can use to bless over the long-term and that we continue to grow. And that will be what long-term viability looks like.

P: ...the process by which we replace someone or add someone to the elders board, that process is very careful to assure that the elders board remains strong . Its pastoral staff, we want really deep quality staff who are true and who bring a lot to the ministry. When I think of my time here Stewart was the senior pastor and the whole idea of replacing from within is that you bring someone on staff so they can learn the culture, learn the dynamics, learn the values, ah, so that when the senior guy goes, the church has the option, this last time to appoint staff from the leaders. They have a relationship with the people, the trust is there, they understand the culture. And I think that part of the church's being successful over the long-term is that when you move



away from, when the senior pastor changes that they bring in a whole new bag of tricks. You know, this is what we're going to do, and then they leave and someone else comes in and this is what we're going to do. It moves away from a constant reorganization of the church for ministry. This is what we want to be as a church and this is what we want to do well into the future. And that seems to have been working well, more so in the last 15 years or so. **CD, LTV**

Jim: Is that a similar process for your elders board?

P : Ah, our elders board , you don't get on our Elders Board unless you are an elder without the title. And then every Fall we begin the conversation, do we need more? Is someone tired who needs to get off? Do we want to add someone who is just fantastic? Uh, so we look across the congregation. It doesn't come from the nominating committee, it doesn't come from the church body, it comes from that group of men routed in relationship with other men in the church. And when we ask, its, "You're already doing the work anyway, you're flexible, you agree with the ministry, you're supportive in its ministry, would you come sit around this table and be a part of this team. **AS, SPL, SLL**

Jim: You answered three questions in one here and I was about to switch to leadership and you have answered some of those questions already, which I am quite pleased about. In terms of time that is helpful and you've already told me that the official leaders in the church are the pastors and the leadership team. Are there unofficial leaders other than these?

P: There's always the girl or the guy who are invaluable to the ministry but don't any office or power in our church. The only official person is the moderator and \_\_\_\_\_ is a real asset and I wish every church could have someone like him. He will fight the battles with you side by side and is your biggest cheer-leader. And that's a joy.

B. Leadership Issues:

11. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders?

P : Pastors

12. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability?

Jim: I think you've answered this in the way you talk about different pastors being invited in to become part of the staff and then eventually, senior pastor. Is that accurate, I don't want to put words in your mouth.?

P : Well, when we were looking for someone for Stratford, we wanted to find someone that was quality, that was good, that had gifts, ah and ultimately would come into a culture and be invested in it, and uh Stephen came on staff and its been excellent. I've enjoyed him and its been a good working relationship. And if anyone of us ever got run over by a bus the others could take over and the ministry would continue. We kind of want to work ourselves out of a job and continue that model.

13. How does a person become a leader in your church?

14. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation? **AS**

S: Ah, with us together, the pastoral team, we're accountable to our Elders and that whole leadership team is accountable to the congregation. Again, the congregation has basically three votes and, and, one of those three being its leadership team and that's an annual vote. And our leadership team, our Elders, particularly, are voted on as a slate, its not here's Jim's name and Phil's name and Steve's name, kind of voted on as a slate. If it were the case that there was a significant breach of trust, ah really manipulative, sinful practices, ah taking place in the congregation, I would hope that we would vote that slate down at the annual meeting.

15. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place?

P: Umm, I'm trying to think of the word, ah, they are more, I think on staff issues, we're very transparent with each other, ah, it takes a very--- there's nothing formal that we operate under. At times relationships are...Its being honest, its' "This is what's going on with your work, that and different and that carries over into our elders board where, uh, its not uncommon to get a phone call saying great job, you missed the mark here. Ah, so you get a pretty good temperature reading very quick, in the context of...

16. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability?

P: Oh, actually incredibly important, because you have anyone of those could find themselves thinking that we are more powerful than we should be. We could just kind of get lazy in your work, ministry suffers,

S.C. I think its just everything is just ratcheded up several notches. Everything that we do is as a team here. And whether that's pastoral team, umm, our vision team, our pastors and elders together, everything that we do is as a team. Umm, its hard for me to over state that. With team and the Elders its built in accountability.

### Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

#### A. Cultural Issues:

1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry? **SC, CD, SG**

P: I know one right off the top of my head. This weekend I spent some time with my family and I know that its very difficult to grow and make a church in Atlantic Canada, say of 500 people, but I want to reach 500 people, and I think that we can do that better through two

churches, three churches, four churches ah because we are a community that's close knit across Atlantic Canada,. I think for a different that we are afraid of a big church because its cold, its informal, it doesn't really speak to me, whatever. So I know that if we really want to reach a thousand people for Christ and His kingdom, it will be done better through four churches vs. one. **CD**

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves? **CD**

S.: Well just some of the things we alluded to previously. Tenure at churches, people's denominational background. Then again Phil's response there, its Eastern Canada, its Atlantic Canada, people generally want to know and be known. I think community context and relational context, just everything so...

3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability? **TT,SC**

P: I find it frustrating at times, because people won't move away from, from what they know in a cultural way as it relates to, say, your church background. If you're from a Brethren background or a Presbyterian background, all that is what you've come to know church life to be without really giving the gospel a chance to actually shape you and transform you and alter the way you live and think as it relates to church life. Uh, its frustrating that there are people who will give you three years to their time and then I'll go elsewhere. I don't think that they understand the negative impact they have on a church body and on the kingdom of God. Its frustrating, and if that's all our church was, then the church wouldn't be viable at all.

4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

S: Yes, no question, no question. Uh, when I consider a few churches, a few multi-site churches that (the literature) a couple mention in the States in Seattle and life Church TV based out of Oklahoma City, they have like a half dozen or eight or ten campuses, one church, multi sites kind of thing, umm, I don't actually know whether that's American or Canadian, or whether that has to do with larger urban centers. I don't think, I don't mean to be crass at all and to suggest that church planting isn't difficult always but there are some of these churches that can put up a campus, something in place overnight and hundreds of people will show up because they know brand, right. **CD**

P: I think if there is any differences in the literature, church planting when I was a kid was, "We'll set up a church and that church has to become sustainable by itself overnight. " When you think about how Cornwall was started, you know, it was basically left to sink or swim by the churches that planted it where the viable models for church planting now is more of a site base

than where, you know I think of Apohaqui, I think of Cornerstone, I think of Allison ...and Saddle back its churches that have a desire to reach people who start another site, that already have a brand that already have a ministry that already have the resources, to support multi-sites under this umbrella of a particular name. And those are the churches that seem to be doing it particularly well. Versus, “Hey there, here’s 50 bucks and you guys can establish a church and you sink or swim on your own. **LBE, SE**

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

**B. Geographical issues:**

1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant?

P: I guess if I were trying to plant a church in North Sydney and the industry was going to shut down, not that I perceive any difference between one place or another, except unless the economy is bad. For the past few years the big boom has eluded PEI, but now it seems the big bust has eluded PEI, as well, so its all good. A comment on CBC.com has suggested that for a long time PEI has been grounded in the field, no highs, no lows just going along.

2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada? **LOS**

P : The only real support I can think of is , you know our Regional Minister, John Weiler calls. When he’s down on the Island he tends to stop in just to check in on us. David Watt at ADC, he call, its funny, he just kind of calls randomly, no rhyme nor reason, but we appreciate the call and that’s more of the support from than on a local church level or the Convention level, but no real, uh, nothing beyond that. Now if something happened that was real significant I think there would be some resources that would show up in a hurry. S.C. : Association has been a monetary support for us but beyond that if we get together(?) and they hear about what happens they are just thrilled, but in a part of the world where churches are in decline they’re excited when there is a church that’s doing something or taking some initiative and taking the lead in that.

4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered? **DB**

P: Its real simple for us. Stratford was and still is one of the top ten fastest growing communities in Atlantic Canada, if not Canada, and to look at that region that didn't have an evangelical presence, it didn't rocket science to figure that one out, umm, homes and sub-divisions going up left right and center, ah, no viable work for the kingdom of God. It just made a lot of sense to start a church over there.

5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?

S: Basically, did you do your market research to see if this made sense? How did you determine whether you should or you shouldn't type of thing?

Jim: yeah.

P : Stratford was just simple in that here was a town of 6 or 7 thousand people that had no evangelical churches to speak of and was continuing to grow numerically in people, getting larger and larger. It didn't have an evangelical church there. And you know, we got the community profile from Stats Canada. But all that stuff didn't really matter what the data said, here was a community that didn't that was bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to it. And we said shy not. Oddly enough there has been three churches planted in Stratford in the last two years. We are one of them and there are two independent works other than ours. **MDE**

## Interview 5

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### Section I: Theological Issues.

A. Key Biblical concepts: 1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter? Ok, first I want to go on record by saying that, although I've been in this work since it began in 1987-88, I've not always been the Pastor. I came to pastor in 1994. Prior to that I was a member of the congregation that shared in leadership, some preaching, some teaching, and various aspects of ministry. So just as long as that is on record, I am not the church planter per se, as part of this work. But I was here at the beginning. **MDE** I would say the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has drawn me away from the legalism we may have been saddled with in our early days of the church, and has drawn me to a greater more open position with other denominations and church leaders with the hope that we all have common ground.

2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation. It's affected drastically in the last few years especially, our outreach to the community around us. We're doing everything we possibly can to touch – make our church visible in the community.

3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts? We have a lot of first generation Christians or recommitted Christians who really are not settled on a lot of tradition or pre-existing traditions. So our people are most excepting of this whole idea. And the people that have stood against us have gone.

Jim: so the people have integrated this into their own lives? F: They're working at it, I would say – that's the goal. Certainly with a lot of people

#### B. Current Theological emphases:

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? **MDE** The value of the local church. You know Bill Hybels structure? Jim: Yes. F: Well Bill Hybels has a book, *The Local Church: The Hope of the World*. And I use that book all the time. I just can't get away from that thought. So I go alongside of that, is the fallenness, the brokenness of our culture and our society, theologically speaking, brokenness of our culture and society. The love of God and the fall of man. These things permeate my preaching

and teaching. The value of fellowship. We must fellowship. The need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ... That's four, I think, that come to my mind first.

2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister? Ok not necessarily common to our church, Yes, Ok, the first one that comes to mind is universalism. It's a, huge. I think Deism maybe not known by that name, but Deism where there's a d\_\_\_\_ god – that's everybody believes in God around here. But it's not a relational God. It's a deistic god. You understand what I'm saying?

Jim: Absolutely

F: The other is the church is falling into the culture, where everything goes. An example of that is so called Christians who feel it is alright to live common law for a long period of time and can actually be self-righteous about everything else. So that is an example of that and when the church is fallen into the culture, the church has collapsed into the culture, so we have to battle against it every day. **CD**

Jim: So you have answered my next question - How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts?

F: Number one, I do run into problems with people who have fallen into the culture and they somehow want me to bless them. But they know I can't. But then along with that is the pain that it causes to a whole congregation when we refuse such peoples ministry in the church. An example: A talented singer here in the church and a musician who lives with his girlfriend and he's forever trying to find ways to challenge me and the elders, because the elders back me one hundred percent and all the other ministry leaders who back me one hundred percent, that person can't, we don't allow that person to do any ministry on the platform, whatsoever. Nobody that has a lifestyle that's an ongoing deliberate sinful lifestyle, they are not going to be a part of our ministry that's going on the platform. We will let them do ministry, but not public ministry, whatsoever,

because there is too much credibility at stake for the whole church. So that's gives us, that runs head on. **SPL, SLL**

Jim: The next question you've kind of touched on. It is what impact has that had on church growth and stability? **SC, SE**

F: It's ah, we've remained stable, we've remained – it takes the pastor's time. And yet we believe, and the elders believe, on the other hand, from what I've just said, that everybody deserves a place to worship, to fellowship. So we don't try to chase anybody away. The Lord will have to deal with us on that, whether it's right or wrong. For example, I have asked anyone, like this man – I have been friends with him for a long time. He is not a member; he's not allowed to be a member.

Jim: That's very similar to a situation I've been dealing with in one of the little churches. A move of permissive lifestyle and legalism. It's hard to understand how a permissive lifestyle and legalism go together.

F: But they are self-righteous and yet permissive for themselves and promiscuous even.

C. Vision: 1. Does your church have a formal vision statement? F: Vision or mission statement?

Jim: I don't differentiate between the two a lot – but I do call a vision statement a nine or ten word sentence that sums up your ministry.

F: For us the mission statement is the shorter statement that guides over a long period of time. So our mission statement is: Touching life with the word of God to evangelize and make disciples.

The vision is two words – Building Community. That's for this time period – for two years. **VS,**  
**MDE**

Jim: How did you arrive at the mission statement?

F: That was my initiative. I presented it to the board and they accepted it. That would be 15 years ago. So that didn't come from any consultations. The vision statement "Building Community" has come from a lot, almost a joint work by the elders and ministry leaders. **SLL**

We break down the mission statement into four areas, Building Community in the Nuclear family, small groups, the local church family, and the community around us. **PFV**

Jim: So far, every church that I've interviewed that has a vision (mission statement) it has been pastor generated. For some it has been a consultative process but as the discussions have gone it has been a consultative process but the leadership and pastors have taken the lead.

F: Right.

2. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry? **VS** It guides us in ways that we will use...I grapple with Paul's statement "...Be all things to all men that you might win some." So we will become all things to all men that we might win some. So if I could come up with a whole stream of things that we might do to, ah. First and there are examples of how that is lived out. The Church is available for local children's programs, political meetings, community meetings etc. We've done food bank outreaches where we go out and knock on doors and ask people to give to the food bank and tell them we are from

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We have a project where we're working with a cemetery down here, an old Pastor Cemetery. So the people see us visible in the community. I am part of the \_\_\_\_\_ Community association. We've done community breakfasts where we just invite the community in for breakfast, a barbeque last September on our own anniversary. We didn't do the typical church anniversary where you gather all the saints that were here before. But what we did was we invited the community to the barbeque and we set up a paint park here in the church. That's all touching all of life with the word of God. So building community the vision statement goes along with that very well right now.

Jim: Who was the lead proponent of your vision? F: I was. Can I change that from just me to include the associate pastor and the elders. **SPL, PFV**

3. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement? **LTV**

The first six or seven years a mission statement wasn't in vogue at the time. I think that without a mission statement you fly by the seat of your pants and by the whim of the pastor and the mood of the church leaders. Because we all have bad times and good times, up times and down times,



so it's awfully easy to fall into the trap of first treading water and doing maintenance ministry. And that's ah getting by and the status quo. But with a mission statement that becomes, it's put in front of the people and it's thought of by the pastor and the leaders, then it gives your focus.

4. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church -planting situation?

**VS, LTV** Very positively. We went through nine years of just between nine to ten percent growth each year of average attendance. We have been holding our own at that attendance four years now. Jim: so thirteen years of growth and or stability. **SE** F: Well yeah, if you can call it that, stability, and I know it is because of the people who have come and gone in that time period, and I know we're growing but not in average attendance. But involved in that there have to be people getting saved and that to me, I know there's always people coming to the Lord and shown up in our baptisms.

## Section II: Structural Issues.

A. Church Political Structures: 1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures. **SPL, SLL**

We have a mix of two political structures. We have pastors and deacons in some churches with usually trustees taking care of the building and physical plant. But us here, we are the other side. We are pastors and elders and trustees, no deacons.

2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all? **SPL, AS**

No, I would say that our denominations structures are open enough that either one of those forms are acceptable. I find our constitution here, which is different from a lot of constitutions in our denomination, as the pastors join one of the elders. A lot of places have pastors and elders. We are pastors-elders and I am perceived as being the main spiritual leader in the church. And yet when it comes to decision making, political things, for church politics I'm simply one voice among the other elders. And we have congregational government which is typical of our Baptist churches.

3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation? **SPL, SLL, AS**

It's been evolutionary. It has been an evolution because we started out with pastors and deacons and a very much pastor run church. And now I don't that it's a pastor run church, although it's a pastor led church. This congregation knows that they can't expect me to do all the outreach and all the ministry to all the new people that come in. they have to do it. They're learning that. They're still in the process. **SG** Personally I want to see us breakthrough the one-hundred fifty mark, that's my goal, as for the elders and myself that by the end of 2010 we want to be approaching the 200 mark for attendance.

4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

F: No the younger people – what they want or expect? Jim: Want and expect. F: I think that people coming in, the younger families won't use tradition, the older people coming in,

especially from a transfer situation from another church, want tradition and that dichotomy is kind of troubling. We kind of go fifty- fifty. Lean a little bit on tradition. That's evidenced in our music; we try to keep a blend. So that kind of thing is evidenced. **TT, LTV**

5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need?

As long as it's Biblical, yeah. Um we determine what's Biblical and try to stay on track with that but nothings "sacred" outside of Biblical things.

6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past? **LOS**

We had other churches supporting us during the first four years from 88-91. But our denomination doesn't work that it has money to give out. And the only other support which was from the denomination was a loan to buy this piece of land originally.

Jim: You've just described the support programs and they are no longer in place. And this may not apply, but I'll ask it anyways what expectations does your denomination have for long term stability. I guess.

F: Long term stability – Ah. Fellowship Baptist Denomination expects every church to be independent and autonomous within the group. We have to be Baptist, baptistic (better word) we have to be Baptist in our name. We have to subscribe to male leadership at the elder and pastor level. That's about all that comes to me. That last one really doesn't jump out because it really doesn't lend itself to our support. Stability mainly depends on one being dependent or self- supporting.

7. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

F: Yeah I guess to make everyone that is currently in our church, focus on the goal, on the mission and the vision.

8. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective?

F: Personal relationship with Christ and teaching the word of God as the word of God as a communication from God, a revelation from God. I think that it has been key to what we are and one more thing the integrity of the leadership. **LTV**

B. Leadership Issues: 1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders? **SPL, SLL**

The official leaders are the pastor and elders and beyond that the ministry leaders and I don't think there are any unofficial leaders. There are influencers, that if their lifestyle was such that they were credible right now, they would be in leadership as well.

2. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability? **SPL, SLL**

It's huge too long-term stability. Leadership and structure, just like in a family, where children have to follow who is in charge and the foundation within which they work and live, so the church is the same. There have to be boundaries, there have to be limits. There have to be structures without being legalistic.

3. How does a person become a leader in your church?

F: Show themselves to be leaders, not just workers but leaders. You have to have people follow you. You have to be perceived as a person to follow. And you have to have integrity and

credibility. Those things are so important. Character is important than their ultimate ability to lead. I can't stress that enough.

4. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation? **AS**

OK. It's kind of – Pastors are responsible and accountable to the board – the elders. The elder's board is accountable to the congregation and really we, in an autonomous, self- supporting independent type of Baptist environment, we also have a respectful accountability to the regional director of the fellowship.

5. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place? **AS**

Formal as far as pastors are concerned, monthly reports to the elders. I guess the elders give annual reports to the congregation so much of it is ongoing trust by the congregation. We try not to break that trust.

Jim: You've kind of answered the next question by saying that, how important are accountability structures.

F: They're important – but there always has to be a level of trust and if trust is broken it grows.

Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

A. Cultural Issues: 1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry? **CD**

People in Atlantic Canada, what I've noticed over the years, demand transparency and realness, if there is such a word. Ah, we are on the border of a Black Community. We've not really touched that community. There are major cultural differences.

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?

Well the same problem probably exists everywhere is prevalent here, the church is perceived as being unnecessary or of no relevance to the people. We are always striving to help them see differently, to show them that it is relevant.

3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability?

Always striving to show our relevance, to show our, we've also tried to be more open to working with other churches, than we use to be. We actually have common ground. That goes back to something I said earlier.

4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

I don't really think so. We might still have a flavor of conservatism. That say Western Canada, or I mean BC or the United States, we might have more of a conservative flare. **CD**

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

B. Geographical issues: 1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant? 2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada?

4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered?
5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?

## Interview 6

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics Interview 6

#### Section I: Theological Issues.

A. Key Biblical concepts: 1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter? Well, I would say preaching is one major thing that has shaped my ministry as a church plant, the need of the gospel being proclaimed. Are you looking for actual scriptural texts that have moved me into the ministry because I can say this: I would say the need of the lost, the people who need to hear the gospel, that goes through all of scripture; the love of God for sinners and the desire to see people repent, and the love that God has for His church. I think that is a key thing. In church planting and that one thing that we're really about Um, and early on in my own ministry, in my preparation for ministry, I did feel the burden of being a church planter. **MDE** One of the things that I always looked at was the Apostle Paul's ministry and realize that his goal was not to just move out and save souls. He went out to establish churches. He went out to do that work of the gospel that brings salvation to souls, and that would also build up and mature people in the faith. But it was always in the context of the church. I think that is one key thing about church planting, that you're looking to do both aspects of the gospel work and the gospel is not just the lost, its for those who have come to faith, aw well, that they grow up and live the gospel in their lives. I think that's one of the things that I always looked at the Apostle Paul and I looked at the words of the Lord Jesus and building the church and doing that wherever he went. I think its different from a lot of evangelism today where people are soley concerned about individual salvation and not so much about their life in

the church and the place of the church in their life too. So I think that all of that comes together. Does that answer your question? **TT**

**2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church**

**planting situation.** Well, um, as far as the labour that I do, I spend most of my work preparing for sermons. I would say 50 % of my week is occupied in sermon preparation because of that belief that it is the word of God that produces faith, as well as, cause that faith to grow. That is also what is expected of our labours here. I also believe that it is going to be the word of God that helps believers become excited in their own heart about the work and the labour of the gospel. I think Jesus said it best when he he looked at the fields the were white with harvest. He said, “Pray for labourers to be raised up – pray to the Lord of the harvest that labourers will be raised up.” And I believe that my calling is first and foremost as a preacher of the word. My pasturing works flows from that preaching, that work and that labour that I do every week. So, um, its....

**B.**

**1. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts? TT, LTV, SLL** Oh yes, having been here for 7 years I can see the maturing of people’s faith (stronger) but I also see, perhaps my situation is a little unique in that when I came here to do the mission developing work, the people that formed the core group were expecting this basic labour of the minister, to bring forth the word of God and to preach faithfully the word of God each week. And so it was easy to satisfy them, in that respect, but I can also see in their own lives that growth has come. So I can tell you there has been great positive response from these people. **2. Have they integrated them into their own lives?**

**C. Current Theological emphases: 1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? TT** In other words “why did we start a reform Presbyterian church?” And, Oh, some of that came because the core group wanted a decidedly reformed church that emphasized, very much, biblical values and had a very strong adherence to the word of God. They, these families, left a church where that decline had happened. And of course reform principles extend to more than just the idea of sovereign grace and election. There is the whole issue about the place of the church in the life of the family and the place of preaching in our life and covenant. Those sort of issues really form a framework of what reform

theology is all about, and so the whole issue of being a reformed congregation really played a big part in our congregation forming.

2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister? I don't know if I understand your question? Jim: O.k. Ah if I were going to say there is a concept from being in Canaan I would say its that God has blessed the valley greater Than any other part of the earth...I mean it's a theological bias people have whether it's true or not.

OK. Um, I would say there is a basis in our area but we do not identify with that bias. We are not a contemporary church, we are not liberal, we are not many things. I guess I do not like to define ourselves by what we are not but in being who we are ...we stand against many things in our area.

Jim: Such as contemporary... **TT**

Such as Contemporary worship and but its not so much standing against it but is standing against some of the underlying principles by which churches conduct themselves; Ah, we would be classed as a hyper conservative church in many people's eyes, and in that respect we do stand not in relation to but in distinction to much in our area.

Jim: So you really just answered my next question, which is: "How have your theological emphasis complemented or contradicted these concepts?" 3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts? **CD**

Well, it's not hard to see how our emphasis contradicts, however, I think we also complement the are too, although, because we know there are many people who are tired of this light and fluffy religion. And we also know that there are others who want a different style of worship than what we offer. In both ways we contradict and complement this style. We stand outmost unique in our area as a reformed and conservative congregation and people love it. And some look at us and hold us at arms length because they don't know what to make of us. We have both reactions.

Jim: But you know who you are and what you are doing. **VS**

We know who we are and what we are striving to do and we respect the fact that some people will come into our midst and not appreciate all that we do or be confused by what we do. And some of that is, by definition, by their own understanding, ah, you know, trying to figure out what churches all about. And that's a hard thing for people to do today. I think people today are

really confused about what a church of Christ is about. I can honestly say that some of our emphasis, as well, too is that we have not joined in with a lot of modern program movements that have come out in the last decade. And it's not that we want to dispute this impact. It is not that we want to stand against what they're promoting or teaching. It's we believe in a very simple, uncultured work of the church. And, Oh that is what we are trying to emphasize.

#### 4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability?

Well, on church growth, our position, has caused us to grow slowly of course. People have difficulty understanding who we are and what we're all about. But those who've come into our midst have found a warmth and the fellowship and communion of the saints that has really kept them here. We have not had too many that have come and gone that sort of thing. We also have a very stable congregation. **SG CD** We still have, after 7 years, most of our core group. And those who have left because of \_\_\_\_\_ needs. But our theology emphasizes attracts certain type of Christianity. But it also, I think, makes the work of the gospel of profit. The work of the gospel is a very difficult work in our day, and especially in our geographical area. **SG** I believe we live in an area where most people are inoculated spiritually. Reaching people here with the gospel, getting people off the street and into the church, it's a long work. We don't look at just a quick fix work or something that is going to happen in the snap of a finger. We realize that the work is long and drawn out. But we're patient with that because we respect, very much, the Holy Spirit's work. Ah, in relation to whatever is being preached and proclaimed. We do get, what I call, some lateral growth, with people coming in from other churches. But that is very nominal. We have a policy of looking at anyone who has come into our church from another congregation nearby, of asking very stringently, "Why have you left?" and "Why are you here?" We kind of have a policy that we want to assess whether they are lost sheep or runaways. Lost sheep we welcome. Runaways we will send home. The way that we determine that is by characteristics of bitterness. A runaway is usually bitter about where they've come from. Really standing against the leadership, for whatever reasons. Lost sheep coming to us from other congregations usually come because they are hungry, or they're lonely or there is something. You don't hear the bitterness against leadership or the spitefulness against the former church and those sort of things. So it's a very different character of the person who's coming to you. So that's how we generally, Um, sit down and assess those from other congregations and then of

course we have the growth from within and our people are pretty prolific at having lots of children...(laughter) The average family in our church has four children.

#### D. Vision:

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement? No, we don't Jim: Reason? It is because we think our vision statement is to be the church with the leadership we have, faithfully proclaiming God's word, if you want to call that a vision statement. **PFV, SLL** Uh, just being the church and recognizing that being the church your going to encounter all the joys and blessings or difficulties and trials of the people you are ministering to. Um, and faithfulness to the gospel, other than...maybe I should reiterate this...We do have the vision of Matthew 28: 18-20 of course, the great commission. **MDE** We see that fulfilled in every labour of the church. I always look at a vision statement as something that is attached to the modern church growth movement ideology, and saying they have a purpose statement and a vision statement and everybody comes up with a neat little cliché statement about who they are and what they're doing. We simply say, "Look the Bible says this. This is who we are going to strive to be to the best of our ability. Jim: So we are able to skip quite a few of the next questions and I'm ok with that but you are the first pastor I interviewed who has said no the vision statement...of course I've only interviewed 6. But I was glad to hear it because it gives a different perspective. The French Baptist Fellowship, I would say, has shared similar answers to some of these questions.
2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? Under whose initiative was the statement formed? b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?
3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry?
4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision?
5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement?
6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church - planting situation?

#### Section II: Structural Issues.

A. Church Political Structures: 1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures. **AS** Well, we are Presbyterian, which means we are ruled by an eldership. We have 3 levels: The first is the local church level we call the Sessions. Those are elders that are deemed



worthy of the office and have been duly elected by the congregation. The minister in the session is on parity with the ruling elders. We have what's called the teaching elder which is the minister of the word and sacraments. And we have ruling elders which are men elected by the congregation to shepherd them. So now we cannot be a formal local congregation or what we call a particular congregation unless we have a minimum of 3 elders. That would be the bare minimum, which is what we have. That's not a Biblical principle it's simply a standard of our denomination. **AS** We have a 2nd level and that is what we call Presbytery. And Presbytery is a geographical grouping of particular congregations. And they would include all ruling and teaching elders of those congregations. And then we have the Synod which is all of our churches together.

2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all?

Closely **AS**

3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation?

Well, the way our denomination does it, I should say, the way our Presbytery does it when it come to church planting, we call them mission workers. A congregation comes to us, not a congregation, I'm sorry, it can be a group of people or a congregation. But church people usually begins with a group of people who desire to be part of our denomination and our Presbytery sends in a committee to check them out and to see if there is mutual compatibility. **TT AS, LTV** If they do not have leadership that we can ordain and install to watch over them in a mission work, the Presbytery will provide ruling elders and a teaching elder to care for that congregation until such time that they are able to organize. So what we do is the Presbytery comes in to structure the congregation until the congregation is able to structure itself.

Jim: That's nice. That's one of the things that I'm trying to find out. Even with some of the more contemporary churches this kind of government is becoming more commonplace. **LTV, AS**

Well, that is what it's all for, stability of the church. Especially when you factor in that most new churches are beginning because of prior issues. I don't know of anywhere in Canada where we are going to do a church plant simply because there is no church there. It's usually going to begin because a group of people have realized we can no longer be here because of decline,

spiritual decline and so they're going to be forming a new congregation for some reason. I look in Nova Scotia, you might be able to pick a country area and say, "well there has not been a church presence here for a generation, and say, " Let's try and start one. It's going to be hard work." But today most people can travel to be at a church, for whatever reason, they are not. And so that kind of stability that you need for a new church plant has to come as much from the outside as it does from within, because people are coming together with issues. **AS** That oversight of our Presbytery is there to help deal with some of those past issues and also to lead them into a general relationship with the rest of the Presbytery. So it's very helpful, I would say.

4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

None

5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need? **AS**

Ah, as far as church polity no. Ah, our structure is eldership rule and the elders are the ones who look at people when they come in and are there to help them. But we don't change the structures of the church as people come along.

Jim: O.K. What about the structures of programs? **SI**

Well, that's on an individual church basis. Our congregation we have in place what is called children's catechism and youth group and mid-week prayer and Bible study. We do not have a Sunday School because Sunday School doesn't entail a great deal of resources from a church both financial and people wise and especially where you're beginning a church plant, to have a number of people in place who can adequately teach other people is very limited. We will, for e.g., if we look at certain programs, we have a number of young ladies now, and in the Fall they are going to begin a ladies group. But it is being led by a couple of ladies who have the ability to teach other ladies. It's not just a get together for the sake of getting together. If people want to have that kind of fellowship, they can have that any time that they want. **SPL, SLL** Anything, that comes under the auspices of the church goes through our session. The session approves or guides and directs them, looks at what they are going to be teaching and gives assent to those sorts of things. Just to be sure that the people are being guided in a good sound logical way and gospel way too. We want to maintain that. We look at our people too and through our eldership visits we really try to take care of our people's needs, through the elderships visits, not so much through programs. So that's a big part of our ministry. I visit my members at least every 4

months, and they have their elders that visit them once or twice a year, as well. We see that as the means by which we are ministering to and meeting the needs of our congregation.

6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past? **SFS**

Yes, as a Presbytery we have in place funding for new mission churches. You make application each year. We have received the equivalent over the 6 years of almost \$100,000.00 to supplement the needs of the church. In fact last year was the first year that we did not need any help. Our Synod also has a program. It's called Outreach North America and they have funding to help new mission works. You have to make application of course. They work on a 3 year program and it's in descending amounts for 5 years. **LBE** Usually around \$80,000.00 Cdn. in total.

Jim: That's good you've just answered the next question.

7. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place? 8. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability? **LBE, AS**

Well, the denomination has a 3 year program working through the Presbytery. So I'm going to explain that because the denomination actually hands over the responsibility for the missions work to the Presbyteries. In fact we don't have a mission work apart from our Presbyteries. And the Presbytery monitors every mission congregation on a 6 month basis, both to its progress and to its needs. **SFS, LBE** We don't have a set in stone expectations, as far as, how long a church is going to be a mission congregation with adequate leadership, but I know financially, they do have their cut off points, and usually that's anywhere from 3-5 years, and it's always in financial difficulties I've seen it where they have made an appeal to the Presbytery and the Presbytery has granted support on as a needed basis too. So our congregation are not left "hung out to dry" you know. They are very much cared for in that way.

9. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

Yeah, well we did have goals. My goal, when I came as mission developer, I was working on behalf of the Presbytery to establish a congregation, and that included the examining and training of men to take on eldership duties, that I began my 2nd year here. As the congregation was very new it took that time to see who could assume, you're looking for these gifts in men. It took that period of time to see the gifts developing in a couple of our men. So I began to train these men for this. **LBE** And it took 3 yrs before they felt comfortable and the Presbytery affirmed and the

congregation affirmed Their calling. And so they were installed in 3 years. Self-sufficiency- We are at the mercy of all that the Lord bring into our midst and we petition our Presbytery for help as we saw the need each year. And our Presbytery always responded. They never declined to help us. It wasn't until or 6th year that we said, as a session, "we think we can go it our own. We looked at what we brought in the year before and said it's time to step out on faith and encourage our congregation. **SE** And we have very faithful tithers. And that is one thing, within our congregation group, and anyone who becomes a member of our congregation is brought about tithing and the need of supporting the church, primarily and principally in their offerings. And so those are things that we've done.

10. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective?

I believe that our church is going to be around for awhile for a few reasons: 1) There is a high emphasis to the place of the word of God in the church and in the people's lives. We have stability from a leadership perspective in the congregation. **SLL** When the ministry leaves the elders are still there to help out. **AS** And we have the stability from a Presbytery perspective, in that, when need arise in the congregation the Presbytery is there to assist financially and leadership wise. Whenever a congregation becomes vacant the Presbytery appoints and then the minister to take over the \_\_\_\_\_needs of the congregation. So the work load is shared. So , as far as viability, and long term viability, our congregation is growing and I see the Lord blessing the word, So I think it will be around for awhile.

#### B. Leadership Issues:

1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders? **SLL**

The official leaders are the elders. Jim: The unofficial The elders Jim: I knew you were going to say that (Laughter) Well. We are a unique situation in that we are only 7 years old. So those who formed the core group; a couple of those men have become the elders. So in both ways there is that leadership. But there is also, I have to say this, though, there is a great respect in our congregation for the elders leadership. It's one of our memberships vows, and, oh, that is something that is nurtured in our peoples lives. So...I don't want to sound too pious when I say that either. But it is the case in this situation. Jim: Well what I want is what is going on. You see the thing that I'm looking for is what's working and I haven't talked to a pastor yet of a church planting situation that is doing well, that doesn't have a strong pastoral and leadership team. Setting aside denomination..I am analyzing that data as I go. I will just add very quickly, though,

our Presbytery has a couple of churches that have had problems. So we are not immune to those things.

Jim: Well church is imperfect and I'm sure you've dealt with your share of issues. Oh yes. Jim: But I think what I'm looking for is what kind of system brings stability. I think you're telling me and I like that..

2. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability? **SLL, LTV, SE** Well I think that is the crunch of it. You can have a strong core group, but if your leadership is not strong... I have 3 standards for leadership; gentle, compassionate, strong. And that's something to consider in the men that are going to be leading your congregation. Those 3 aspects of their character come into play when they're dealing with people and helping the church to move beyond even its core group. So you're warm and inviting to those who come in and patient and gentle with those who aren't where others are at spiritually, theologically, morally, you know... So the leadership is very, very important,' I think its foundational. **SLL**

3. How does a person become a leader in your church? **SLL, AS**

Well they first must be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, must be a Christian. They also have to be, Um,.. not youthful, not that age is important, but wise in worldly living and they also have to have a firm grasp of our doctrine which is the Westminster Confession of Faith. In fact our elders have to subscribe to it. Just as another addition, we also have the office deacons, but our congregation doesn't have any yet. But our deacons are a subordinate office to the elders to help them out in the work. Once they have been led and trained in some of these things. You're looking at men who have some of the quality characteristics that 1 Timothy 3 speaks of, and then some training given to them and watching how they would handle certain situations. I personally have taken them through a couple of books. One is, With A Shepherd's Heart and the other is The Office of Elders. And they set forth different scenarios that may happen in churches, so you set these things before them to see how you would deal with these circumstances. So there is that kind of training aspect that is done. Then the elders,ah, the men are presented to the congregation and the congregation votes on them. Or the congregation can also submit a person who they believe would be a good elder and that man comes before the Session and is examined and searched in those areas and, Uh, can then be set forth before the congregation for approval. So there is kind of a 3 fold witness that we look at: the minister's calling, the Session's assent and the congregation election.

4. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation? **AS** First the leaders are accountable to one another, the Session, then they are accountable to the congregation and the Presbytery. Teaching elders, ministers are accountable to the Session and Presbytery but not, in the sense, the congregation cannot throw out a minister or bring one in on a whim. The teaching elder is not a member of our congregation. He is a member of the Presbytery. Jim: So you're not a member of the congregation here... **AS** No, my family is but I am not.. That is because I've been ordained by the Presbytery not the congregation.

5. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place?

Formal

6. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability?

I think for leadership it is key. Very important. Again it is, Uh, your leadership is not on its own. They are responsible to people and there are things in place to keep them responsible to people. That will progress your congregation. That's a general statement I know, but its hard to get into without looking at all of our form of government.

Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

A. Cultural Issues: 1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry? **RI**

Yes, as far as the secular end of it goes, I would say that Atlantic Canada would be a little more laid back and somewhat cliquy in the rural setting. There is a friendliness and reservedness in people's reception of you. **CD** You will be able to walk down the street and stop and have a conversation with a perfect stranger, but ah, when it comes to actually being more intimate in your discussions with them, there tends to be a reservedness that comes to play.

**CD** Culturally, I have always thought of Atlantic Canada as being 10 years behind the rest of the world in some of its technological advances. But I think it's all starting to catch up a little more. O don't think we have a diversity of culture, in the sense of international groups, yet, but we do have a diversity of cultures from community to community, with some of the Acadian groups. Here in Nova Scotia especially, Cape Breton would be a culture on its own, Prince Edward Island would be a culture to its own. There is some of that Island mentality. **SC** So, yeah, there is lots. Here, where I am, it's a farming culture and it's a culture that is hard to break into the busyness of people's lives. And like I said, I think people there are generally laid back in their expectations. **SE**

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?

Answered above

3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability?

Well, Um, on preaching ministry I've found that, maybe this is always the way it's been for ministers, but keep it simple stupid. Not to say that the people are stupid it's just that they appreciate, very much, simplicity, and they need a lot of definitions to even Biblical terms that are not commonly used. So in your preaching ministry, you really have to explain things a lot and make it really down to earth.

In pastoral needs I find our homes are spread out. Getting together for fellowship is challenging during the week and you are trying to maintain a level of contact with your congregants that require a fair amount of travelling, so you have to bring that in. But as far as people's lives go, there's not that much unique happening in people's homes. I mean, we don't have to deal with it, but culturally speaking you're going to have the issues of sin that you're going to have to deal with, and the issues of depression, emotional, marital, they're all there. And in that respect culturally, not much has changed, or is different.

4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

Oh, I don't think so, what I've looked at and seen, what has gone on in the rest of the world finds its place here. If not, it only takes a few years to come along. I use to think that our area, here, was conservative but I've come to realize that politically and spiritually, this area is as liberal as other areas are. The things that we struggle with in evangelism and ministry, I have talked to other ministers from other areas and found that they are struggling with the same things. I just came back from a conference down in Pennsylvania and I met men from all over the USA and Canada and I came back rejuvenated that I don't have as many problems as they do, but the general ministry we all have the same comments. It's a hard ministry, trying to share the gospel, trying to deal with issues in people's homes. It's the same, so I don't think there are any differences.

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

B. Geographical issues:

1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant?

Well for us, yes, there has been a bit in the way of geographical and regional. From the perspective of where our families are located. **TT, RI** For e.g., being a reformed congregation, when people of reformed tradition move into our area, because of work related reasons, they will seek out our church and are willing to drive quite a distance to come to our church. We have 3 families that come from Greenwood, which is over a 30 minute on the highway. They are military families. But it is because of being a reformed church. That geographical issue has an impact on us, as far as ministry that we do. But being the only reformed congregation with a conservative view, we attract a larger geographical area of people. I sat and looked at it. Most of our people spend over 20 minutes driving to our services. **RI** Which is significant when you look at the area. We're not talking about city driving, we're talking about rural driving. That means we take in quite a geographical area because of who we are and how we're defined.

2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

None, Right now we don't have a building, and the only thing that we try to do is have our mid week meeting in a fairly central location. And that has worked out fairly well. But as far as it goes to erecting our church building we're planning on keeping it in Kentville and having the country people drive to the town.

3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada?

None

4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered? \*\*No Answer

5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?

Well we did an assessment of the area, a demographic study of the area and, Uh, there was only a couple of considerations that we have to take in mind when we're starting a church plant. 1) Are there any fraternal denominations in the area. We are part of what is called NAPARIC, which is a group of 4 denominations that have an agreement that we will strive not to build on another man's work. The Romans 15 principle. Here we basically looked at, are



there any Reformed Presbyterian congregation here that we would be conflicting with. And the answer is, “No, there aren’t.” And so we were able to move along with that.

It’s important, I would have to say, if we were to go to Halifax, for example, if we were to start another congregation Halifax is big enough to start another congregation. But there are other denominations that have sister relationships with, that we notify them and let them know where we are planting and if it’s alright with them. WE have that kind of agreement. Jim: O.k. and your 2nd part was?

What we did was we did a demographic study of what churches were here and how we would relate to them. And we found out that, other than the Presbyterian Church of Canada, which is not reformed, we would be very unique. There were 44 Baptist Churches and a total of 65 Protestant Churches in total in the area that we were going to plant in and we assessed whether or not we would be in conflict with them and we determined that we would not. That means conflicting with them theologically and evangelically, although I don’t see too much difference between the two- but others would.

## Interview 7

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### Section 1 Theological Issues;

##### A. Key Biblical concepts:

1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter?

Umm give me, give me some specific direction on your question what you are looking for.

Pastor Rhyno – are there, are there concepts, uhm biblical concepts that are, I guess, are intrinsic to your view of ministry which have shaped your ministry as a church planter.

Pastor Crabtree – oh yeah you're, you're not talking your basic Arminian anybody can be saved?

Pastor Rhyno – no, just, not that kind of thing. Well if that is key to your church planting that would be fine. But I guess I'm talking concepts that have shaped what you do in your church planting situations, so if that is one of them, that is fine. **MDE**

Crabtree – ah, ok, ah well we do operate on the on the understanding that the gospel is a universal application, ah anybody can be saved ah and they can accept an invitation to believe it, ah that God calls and convicts. We do believe the gospel is for everyone that Jesus died for everyone. So that's the drive, because we uh we present the gospel to anyone. As far, as uh why we do it, the drive to do it, of course is the great commission, uh the ability to do it is Acts 1:8, the empowered by the Holy Spirit ah we expect and try to emphasize to all believers that there is a mutual responsibility, it is not just something for leadership, laity,

dichotomy it's not something that we think is to affect witness you can't delegate your responsibility to witness to someone so. I emphasize those that has that has meant more people have uh shared their faith, but I'm not sure you know how many how many I couldn't give you any kind of numbers like that or percentages as far as our congregation. But those would be the key things that would be a part of our work here.

**2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation.**

Well uh there again we pray actively for people and by name anybody uh and in our witnessing as well we don't hesitate to say to people you can and you should get right with the Lord, you can and you should accept the gospel uh so these uh these are part of it now uh the plan of salvation probably is part of this as well we understand that salvation is grace through faith, and so salvation by faith puts the responsibility on man to accept the gift offered by God, initiated by God, but non the less man is responsible for his acceptance or rejection of that. Salvation includes repentance uh submission to the Lordship of Christ and trust in Him. So those three things are key ingredients uh uh probably a bit of reactionary uh stance there because I've met people, not just here, but have here, who have made decisions as children but their adult life does not at all mirror the image of Christ so I'm of the opinion they have made a faith statement but there has not been any repentance there, and so that has, that has affected our outreach because I believe many people will say yes to faith before they say yes to repentance, uh and even my preaching and my invitations alter calls which we do have at the end of each of our Sunday morning services uh where we invite the people to accept Christ uh when I when I challenge people to repent there there is a resistance to that because it requires an admission of guilt. And then my opinion is many people go to church out of church context they are not being challenged to repent, they are not being told you have to repent its just you have to believe, well a lot of people believe, and the devil believes. So so our, I honest believe, in fact I've been told now I see this is number three uh about people responding to these concepts there is resistance to that. There have been people who have visited us and and have said they could not go to church here because because they felt convicted or they they felt uh it was just too close, the requirement was too close uh which I don't know what to do about that, because if the gospel requires that, I can't change it. ???? so that so in that sense that has affected the response of people. Some have repentance some have made made their profession of faith, but others have not they have recoiled from that. And and in the context of what we are doing now in our church we have plateaued and and we are trying to see what we need to do to to move on and this is one of the things we are running into, people come and they stay just a short time and leave. And we will have someone ask them uh why and it's like it's too hard the requirement is more than what they want to submit

too and it goes back to, and they may not articulate this way it goes back to the repentance issue. Uh so yes that's one concept that has probably uh has affected as much as anything our situation. We also ran into when we first started we did a lot door to door ?????????????????? and we ran into several people uh who had been baptized as an infant uh in some of the area churches and they believed because of that they they where in the kingdom and when we tried to explain what we understood the bible teaches about salvation by grace through faith uh there was resistance there as well and so I don't know if I ever had any one accept the message who said I was baptized as a baby no I don't think we ever had anyone come back make full circle on that.

*Pastor Rhyno* There certainly are like certainly are people who are coming from that background to Christ in the area but that others that I have interview have said similar the denominational backgrounds even though there may not be a lot of commitment to it denominational backgrounds are important in Atlantic Canada. **TT**

*Crabtree* You are dealing with family heritage, parents, grandparents and you know so when someone says I was baptized is such and such a church that is where their family has always gone, that's where they are married where they have a funeral. And of course the church doctrine is in those cases sometime the church actually saves. Uh salvation is in the church, you enter the kingdom through the church. Well we would say uh the church doesn't save the church is made up of saved people and that gives us you know as polar opposites almost, not quite we are not into sin and righteousness, but at least as far as how to be saved. There there is a real difference in our understanding of salvation and plan of salvation. Yeah.

*Rhyno* Thank you I think you really answered three and four there and that's good, and that happens quite often because the two go together. So I am going to move on to current theological emphases and you have touched on some of this already but I might revisit it some. And I am going to look at it two ways. Theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation planting here first of all and then theological concepts that may not necessarily correct but are common to the area and that people have and people have a theology of God, and things you encounter and perhaps you have touched on that already some, but the first are...

2. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts?
  - a. Have they integrated them into their own lives?
3. Current Theological emphases:
  - a. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? **TT**

Well the first would be the freewill aspect that is in our name uh we are uh Freewill Baptist which means we understand God created us with a will that is part of the image of God and man we have the ability to decide the ????? aspect uh and that makes us responsible as his creatures uh for what decision we make that has a strong bearing on how we present the gospel uh salvation is of God that it is a gift offered we believe, and people are responsible to accept or reject ah that and so that's a major emphasis for us uh Baptist being of course congregational rule and baptism by immersion uh priesthood to the individual believer. Those things that are important for us to because we don't have a church hierarchy uh in a sense that people have to go through a spiritual head or leader to approach God uh we emphasis that people go to God direct. So that is the individual the priesthood individual believer uh the Baptist government side of it is again the sense the congregation has a lot of input be through committees or boards or by whole vote and even though we are mission work and we have an organized uh in a sense we don't have a congregation yet we do we do periodically have meetings and get feed back from the people and get their input and we do have boards and we have committees and they have input. **SE, SG** The baptism by immersion we have a baptistery we do baptize full immersion and we do not recognize uh sprinkling or pouring and if someone says I have been sprinkled you know we will say you need to be baptized you know so that is our church position and I don't know we have had a lot of trouble with that uh with that much resistance, we have had some uh if I can jump over question two some of the theological concepts common in in the ah area of baptism, two that I have already mentioned but I will mention again. One is infant baptism ah some people believe their in the kingdom because they where baptized as children and first theologically ah I don't buy into that at all uh salvation is something a person must accept on their own. But what I have also encountered and here that I have not encountered in other places is ah ah these adults that have been saved for years and never been baptized. I just couldn't believe it the number of people ah and and so some even today who attend here who have been in church for years that they just don't see it as important and I think my personal opinion is, ministers over the years have accidentally instilled that mindset in these people ah by saying baptism is not a part of salvation. We have said to them it is not important. And it's like saying to an amputee you don't need that limb that has been taken from you ah well we all know better you are no less a person but you are not a full healthy ah person like you would be and and baptism is one of those areas of our faith that it's not the basis of our salvation and it's not the means of our salvation but it is ah an act of obedience and if we are going to be a healthy believer we have to be baptized. And I do emphasize that same as ??????????????. One other one other area that I should have mentioned ah one of the earlier questions I have also encountered is

ah my emphasis on male leadership in church ah I, I'm of the opinion the understanding that the bible emphasizes men are to be, men are the spiritual leaders and according to 1 Cor. Ah and of course the passage in 1 Tim. Now that, that has been challenged on occasion to ah how that has impacted our own particular ministry uh basically ah I try to get women to teach and be involved in every level except pulpit ministry. Ah they can teach in the class room and I try to get that leadership roles in the church. Ah but I don't have ah women on the leadership team right now, ah my leadership counsel I call it ah I just have men there for my own particular reason I'm I'm picking men to sure up certain weaknesses in my own leadership, trying trying to do that. Probably one day one of the churches organized it will have women. I have had them before in one of the previous church contacts I have had women sit on the board. Ah so I do not have a problem with that but I do not ah encourage or provide opportunity for women to minister direct from the church pulpit. I don't believe in women pastors and so I want to say I don't believe in it, what I is I believe men are responsible for that. So that has affected the face of the church as well. We haven't encountered opposition to it we have encountered a question or two along the way. Because it seems the area is more open to women ministries in some areas of the convention.

*Rhyno* Yeah, yeah it has grown in our convention.

*Crabtree* In Nova Scotia there where a lot more than there are here. At one time they said it was ok there, but not here. (laugh) Not sure how that works but.. (Rhyno – it was interesting, laughing). I have had that as well, ah because I, but I just, I just understand scripture to say that and ah I know that is opposite of a lot of what some church teach as well.

- b. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister?
- c. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts?
- d. What impact has that had on church growth and stability? **SG, TT**

Ahh, I don't think, I don't think it's ah affected us that much, the repentance aspect may have. I'm sure there are people who have said they are not here because the walk is too tight and the preaching is to ah, what is the word they use, ah strong, I don't know something like that. Ah the idea of being able to to casually acknowledge a doctrine is viewed as being a saving faith, I strongly disagree with that. I think a person who accepts Jesus as Saviour first acknowledges Him as God as Lord then they acknowledge their own sinfulness. And then they they believe He will forgive them of their sin, and for somebody to just say "Well I believe Jesus is God", and think they are saved is a real serious misunderstanding. And so when they come and actually hear me at the end of the sermon give a short presentation of the gospel during invitation time, I think it's, I

think the light comes on for people, and suddenly they are uncomfortable and people expect to go to church and be comforted, encouraged, in some sense entertained, make them feel good. The music pumps them up and they want to leave that service on a high, they want that preacher to make them feel good and when all instead at the end he says uhm if you are not saved you are not going to heaven. In fact I did have a women here, three months ago at the most, ah who came one time and everything was fine up until the invitation, and she said I made her feel like ah she didn't belong. That's what, she didn't tell me but she told some other people that. And I said I'm sorry about that, however, if she didn't belong then she shouldn't be made to feel, like I can't tell her she is right when she is not, but she refused to return because I made her feel like she didn't belong. And if I remember right that morning I I just quoted John 3:17, He that believeth is not condemned ..... I just showed that clear distinction between believers and non believers and where they stand before God, and she took that right straight up in the face and felt it was a personnel front and you know she was pushed outside of the circle and so I'm sure that has affected her return and since if she became a part of the church, I wish she had, you know I'm not going to lower that standard just to bring people, I just can't do that. **SG, TT** So, so that has impacted us uh, the baptism, no I don't think it has impacted us, people still can do it that has not been baptized and I and the grace through faith uh we continue to preach that, that's what we understand, salvation conversion take place, so I don't think those have affected us but the stronger black and white uh I think that has yes.

4. Vision:

- a. Does your church have a formal vision statement?

No, no we have kicked one around a few times but uh we do not.

- b. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement?  
Under whose initiative was the statement formed?

- b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?

What type of vision (laughing). The vision statement initially was to plant a Freewill Baptist church in this area and ah now that we are at this point we are we are revisiting our vision we are trying to test a new vision. So you caught me right in the middle of our three month review. **TT** That is part of what we are doing with this MacIntosh ??????, we are looking at where we are, where we need and ah I was looking at our attendance, I can track our past attendance to when we completed the bulk of our building and actually got into the sanctuary. **TT** The year we got into the sanctuary three or four months later our attendance began to decline, that was two years ago and its clear besides from everything else that happened that one of the things that happened was that the church had no further

goal. When we came into the building we finished the interior in phases, where we sit right now is where we had our first service. There where no walls this was just open and I had the lectern over here people where sitting over there and we ah this was our first area. And then we went to the back on this half of the building and finished a room and we moved back there for our sanctuary and this half of the building we set sized for 80 people. And so while we were back there we where running in the 60's and then we finished the other side which is now our sanctuary and it's supposed to seat 150. But when we made the transition, of course with the building basically being done, then the drive was gone. And within a year attendance began to decline, and it's trackable I wrote it down last night as a matter of fact working on something for myself. And there were some other ah signs of unrest at the same time as well, but from an administrative leadership perspective the thing that happened at the time was that we reached our goal and they could do what they want. **PFV** So, so probably ah ah, I'm wrestling with one right now as far as the vision statement. And I could throw one out at you but to be honest with you it wouldn't be one that the church has adopted because they won't see it, you know so formally no.

**Jim:** Wow

**Pastor:** But they did take offerings and they paid the minister with what he cold stuff in his pocket, there was no paid salary. And they were against an educated, trained ministry, as well. So that has been a chain around the neck of the group for a long time. So we've been trying to get this in and that's part of what we're doing, planting a church and having some kind of institution but that has materialized, mainly because there has been some opposition to it.

c. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry?

d. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision?

**PFV** Well that would be me. I really believe that God sent me here. You've got place for a testimony?

**Jim:** Yeah, sure.

**Pastor:** When I was 16 years old my pastor at that time, I was raised in Ohio, came through NB and NS on vacation and came back talking about all the churches that were closed or going to close because they couldn't get a pastor. I believe God called me to the ministry at 15 and at 16 when I answered what I considered a call to the mission field. But I knew this was where I was supposed to be, so I went to school and trained so I could come here, so this has been my vision for a long time and this is where it is now. The other side of that was not only planting a church but having some kind of a Bible Institute. We just did not realize that yet. That's the other side of the vision and it has not materialized. I didn't realize that there was so much here. But I believed



when I came that I would... We have a training session 4 times a year in our conference and we use ETA. Have you ever heard of that?

Jim: No

Pastor: Well it's out of Chicago and it's a non-denominational program. It's just short introductory courses and we're supposed to take 12 hours of a class and you get credit for it, take a test at the end... this particular association of churches, when it was founded, it started in the mid-1800's or 1700's didn't believe in tithing, missions, paid ministry or Sunday School.

- e. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement?  
Without a vision statement?

Well, we had one at the start with, so you know with a vision statement keeping on track you know exactly where you're going and doing. Without a vision statement you have to say, "Which direction do I go now? Are we just going to have church each week, or that's really something that, ah, unique or special that our church is supposed to do?" And a rallying point is what the church needs, and ah, I think people are task oriented, so it's really weighing on me, because I know we need a new rallying point. Our people have not decided yet, it's been a matter of prayer for a long time. But I think it really is a crucial thing for us. So I think it is important.

- f. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church -  
planting situation? **VS**

Well, it gave us a sense of accomplishment, ah, and in the long term it kept us on track for the years that it took to reach it. The first few years is when we were meeting in rented facilities, we knew where we were going, so there was a reason to raise finances. It was a reason to keep going, to look for land, to grow. It was a reason all this came under the heading of mission statement, you know, what we're going to do. So it gave us a reason, in the long term, for doing what we did here. The sense now is. "We've accomplished that so we have to come up with a new plan.

Jim: Ok, great, thank you. Church political structures and I guess the reason that this is part of the study is, ah, I'm looking to see if there are particular structures or structural issues that succeed. When I say succeed I'm talking about a viable ministry, one that is self-supporting, looking after itself in the long term.

Pastor: Well our church is baptistic, the challenge being, in mission work, we do not have membership until we fully organize as a church. For us to fully organize means the church is able to pay all its' bills including a full time salary pastor. **SFS** We are not at that point. We are fairly close so I'm not permitted the church to fully organize with membership, having the right to vote and make decisions. **AS** The reason for that is because our denomination, over the years, has permitted works to organize prematurely and lost their works. Once they organize the congregation may decide to become another type of Baptist or another type of church and all of these hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been pumped into that place to buy land and buildings are gone. Because we are, by definition, the local church is the highest form of authority in the New Testament in Baptist theology. So we do not have denominational hierarchy. Churches voluntarily associate together and they can voluntarily withdraw. There is

no real connection. And that goes back to the early merges in 1913 in the States, 1905 here, well in the States it was 1913. And the Freewill Baptists rejoined with the Northern Baptists and the churches, the only churches that didn't join were those who's deed declared their separation, their autonomous government, and when we re-organized in 1935, when the churches that didn't join in that merger, it was put in our treatise that the local church was autonomous, ah, fully self-governing, separate from any association. **AS** So that has, that is ingrained in our people because they know that. And they'll say, "Can we do this?" And I'll say, "Yeah." Because no one can tell us what to do. And once the church goes full time self-supporting the church can still do what it wants to do. It can vote to become anything it wants to. The only condition we have now on this is we've put in our deed, that if it ever ceases to be a Freewill Baptist Church that whoever picks it up has to repay all the money.....

## Section II: Structural Issues.

### A. Church Political Structures:

11. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures.

12. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all? **TT, AS**

I follow them closely. I follow them closely. Yes we are loyal to the denominational structures. And for us that means Congregational rule, voluntary association and quarterly meetings. We have an annual meeting. We are associated with the National Freewill Baptists in the States. So we have an annual meeting.

13. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church-planting situation? **AS**

Well we have a treatise. We have a doctrinal statement that include in it the practice of Freewill Baptists, historically. And so we, when I was hired, though I wanted to come here first, I came as a missionary under the Freewill Baptist Home Missions. Of course the contract says I will plant a Freewill Baptist Church....

14. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

Yeah, that's been a challenge. When we first started, ah, part of my philosophy, early on, was I did not want to pull from other churches. And I probably should have answered that, first in one of the earlier questions. But, nonetheless, we avoided and carefully stepped was from people who wanted to come here from other churches.... **MDE** we felt we were sent here to reach people who were lost, not just become a transplant church. The end result was people have come from other churches and we have not courted them. I can tell you honestly, ...now, having said that, they do come and yes they bring their own traditions with them. People bring what they know, and sometimes it's a help, it's refreshing to have someone who has already experienced something we're going through and taking a short cut...there are other times when traditions can kill you. If somebody wants to come here because their church has turned sour, they want to come here and they want it done their way and that can become a very uncomfortable situation, as well. **AS, TT**

15. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need? **TT, SE**

No, we're not really flexible in the sense that we don't change on a whim, on a dime. We would ask why. You know what the reaction is going to be and we have people of all ages in our congregation, but mainly adults whose children have been gone for a while, so they tend to be very traditional people, which is kind of unusual for a new church. And we attract that age bracket and that has caused us to have to be flexible to a certain extent but I don't know on a scale of 1-10 probably about 8.

16. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past?

We do. We have since the day we started, ah and that's been since 1996...So we're still on their support. The church here sends back a portion of our offering to underwrite our expenses, so we're still probably ...15 or 20% away from being full time, so we are still receiving support but not at the level that we were before. **SFS,SG, SE**

Jim: so that's after about 14 years.

It is.

Jim: Why I ask that question is, ah I'm not trying to cast aspersions, um I've noticed that many of the church plants in this area sometimes can be up to 20 years. And that doesn't fit the three year model of church development. **LBE**

Pastor: I was asked for a 6 or 7 year term around when I came and started the church, build a church without a church building. **CD** And our director at the time wanted me to follow Rick Warren's model of the Purpose Driven Church and I wasn't here very long 'til I realized it just wasn't going to work. This area is traditional. By traditional I mean that there is a resistance to change. **TT** Tradition for one person may not be tradition for another, but people change more slowly here than in some parts of the States. And not only that, the church here, is identified, to a large part, with a building. I'm thinking Catholic churches, Anglican churches, a large Baptist church downtown. Fredericton is an old city. The community here recognizes church almost as a landmark church. The church buildings become part of the city's features. So for us to say, "We're starting a church in our home, come." There were a few people who just said, "No, we will not come." There were others who wouldn't say no, they would say, "when are you going to get a building?"

So then we moved to a conference room in a local hotel and we're there for 8 months. We were only in our home for 2 or 3 months because parking became an issue. Then we went to a conference room at the \_\_\_\_\_ Inn. And that worked out until the snow came and they weren't cleaning off the steps and it was dangerous, so we rented a building outside of town in \_\_\_\_\_suburb. I don't know if you know it but it's ten kilometers out of town. T's a Catholic building that was purchased and remodeled and so we were renting that from a guy. In fact they were actually attending and still are. And then we started the building here...

17. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place? **LBE, SG, SE** It was just so much slower because we couldn't do everything in a 6-7 year term, as we were asked to because the building was required. In fact, at one point, I started to buy property and leadership in the States would not allow that because our attendance wasn't high enough. I explained to them that we were not going to get any higher until we got a building.

And finally, after a year or two, new leadership can in and said “Build.” So we were given the green light and we were able to put this building up and immediately our attendance went up. We couldn’t over the 20’s in a rented facility and just as soon as we got into the building, it wasn’t by leaps and bounds, but just 2 or 3 people coming or 4 or 5. We started running in the 30’s and then the 40’s and it just slowly climbed. So that has caused the work to be as long term as we can go in because with a building it would really make the work go faster in this area because the church is so identified by the community as being a building. But we know better...

18. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability?

19. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

We are, yeah, we do budgets, long-term and short-term budgets. We do projections of needs. I’m talking about building needs, equipment needs, those type of things to wean the church off. We’re trying to preach on tithes and offerings, that sort of thing, to get people to step up and take responsibility. And they’re doing a good job of that. So our strategy just points to growth, to reach people. That’s the answer to this. More people to attend, no four people now attending have to give more necessarily. The answer is being able to reach more people. We need another 10 or 12 families to put us over the top.

20. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective? **LTV, LBE**

Well, just from a financial standpoint, it would have to be all your bills being paid, the salary of the leadership, but ah, you won’t put people in leadership as well. They will provide worship ministry, outreach ministry, care ministry, ah, those 3 things are essential in terms of ministry. Children’s ministry, as well, is essential...the church is built on volunteer workers, and with both husbands and wives working it really puts us in serious jeopardy, as far as volunteering goes. It is hard...women use to do everything. MacIntosh mentions that years ago men worked outside the home and women worked in the home and they took up most of the volunteer spots in the church. But now that women are working as well outside the home, there’s no one who has the time to give volunteer hours. And that has certainly hurt the ability of the church to have all these volunteer ministries. And I’m talking children’s programs, Christmas and Easter programs. People use to volunteer. we just don’t have the people to do it anymore. They don’t have the time. By the time you get home from work and get the kids something to eat and do their homework with them, it’s time to sit down.

## B. Leadership Issues:

1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders? **AS**

The official leaders, as far as our denomination is concerned and with the government, is a three person Board. 2 of the leaders inside this church, myself and one other man and then the Director of our Home Missions department in the States is the third person. We have him on there just so, as a protection, so some church can’t do anything with its property without him being aware of it. You’ve got to keep within the confines of a congregation of 30 to 40. When you start to run 60 or 70 and the needs start being a little different...and so the way we’re doing leadership now with our teams, it give us the opportunity to bring in new people.

And if a ministry out grows someone then we can replace him. These are all by appointment right now. I appoint these people. So if I run into problems, though I don't like to, I'm not a confrontational person, I can release somebody and replace them with somebody else.

6. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability?

7. How does a person become a leader in your church? **SLL**

We present a need and they either come to me or I ask them. I try to watch for people that I think would make good leadership material and after praying about it and seeing if I can get peace in that direction, then I will approach a person to see if they want to serve in a particular capacity. I don't force anybody. I ask them to pray about it and I ask for a year. I ask for a commitment of a year. Ah, and if they want out that's fine, but I ask them to give me notice. And if someone just drops a bomb on me and says, "I quit," And then comes back later and says, "I want back in," I'll let them come back once. But if they do it again it's not happening. And I've had some kick back from that because I've had some people who are, they seem to use that as a type of manipulation, "You need me. I'll show you." If a church is to grow no one person can do everything. So what I've said is when I give a ministry to someone I say, "That's yours'. You tell me what you're doing, but it's yours'. And what I do then is I don't go fishing. I start another ministry. I sink my time into something else. If someone comes back and says, "I quit." And I have had them do this, I say, "You take that and go with it..."

8. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation?

Me. That's it. I'm accountable to my Board in the States and the church leadership is all accountable to me, at this point. Now we're in a time of transition. Once the church organizes it will be accountable to another set up. We'll set it up at that time to a leadership council. And of course the congregation as a whole, being baptistic, will come under the entire umbrella of the congregation.

9. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place?

I have both. I have some formal accountability in the sense that people report to me on a regular basis. We have regular meetings so in that sense, formal. I have some informal, as well, where people just do the job and I leave them alone. I don't have to give them oversight. There are some people that are responsible and they are confident enough in what they're doing that if they say, "such and such a time," You don't have to worry about that. Course that's what you hoe for in the church. In those cases a phone call, a casual meeting somewhere and sit down every once in a while, informally, and everything will be just fine.

10. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability? **AS**

Probably on a scale of 1-10, 8. Now we're tempted to say, "People don't do what you expect, they do what you inspect." In that sense accountability is an absolute essential. Make a 9 out of that. Because if you let things go too long without some accountability people get lax. So there has to be some oversight. People resist it. "Nobody's going to tell me what to do." Especially in the church, volunteer organizations.

### Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

## A. Cultural Issues:

### 11. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry? **GD**

Well cultural, there's some cultural factors that are tied into the climate. I'm convinced of that. I'm talking now about the desire not to get out at night in the cold weather. I'm talking about the desire to just disappear in the summertime because summers are so short. And people want to get out in the sun. They want to travel and so I think that affects church ministry. There again, I'm looking at our attendance record for the last few years and there was one winter, 2 years ago, ...when we were just slammed. There were 3 months and the attendance was down. Average attendance was down for 3 months and we never picked it back up. You know we were months coming around. So that is a major, you know people, after 3 Sundays you lose them. That is a major cultural factor.

You know the Catholic and Anglican mind-set is here. And that is the idea that the church is a building, even the Baptists, the church door being the key to entrance into the kingdom of God. Those are all cultural factors. And again the idea that, of tradition. It's a slower way of life than the major metropolitan areas that I've been around. and that slowness, that traditional, the desire to hang onto the past is a characteristic of this area. **SE, SG**

### 12. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?

I'd say all those that I mentioned....

### 13. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability? **GD**

It impacts your ministry because in the winter months there are a lot of people that are unable to go out if there's snow and ice on the road. So you have to allow for a good possibility that a good number will not be in church. It's just a given. Even if people get out to work every day, they won't drive to church in the same stuff they drive to work in....

### 14. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North

American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

Well again we're back to the traditional. I don't know enough about this really to say a lot. the French overlay is part of this, the French culture. **TT** The European mind-set is more pronounced here than it would be in the States. In my view you have those types of things. The idea of how to do church. Like a lot of the church government in Baptist churches in the States reflect the democracy, you know, everybody has a right to speak. But we have some loyalty to it here. Again, the slower lifestyle, seasons. When I first moved here our denomination would have a big day every Easter and call it Roll Call Sunday. And on that Sunday you would count those that stood, and send in the figure. And, theoretically they can track where the denomination is going because on that given Sunday everybody turned in their attendance. Well, what it turned out to be was the growth day for many of your large mega churches. And in church context the interesting thing was there were 2 or 3 years when we couldn't have church on those dates. So I would be calling in and they would say, "What was your attendance?" "Zip." On one year our attendance was real low. We hadn't had church for 2 weeks, which meant, really, we hadn't

seen people for 3 weeks. But I just said, “It’s hard to imagine but the weather is controlling what we can do. So that is a big difference.

15. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

B. Geographical issues:

16. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant? **GD**

Weather, Temperature dips, short summers. I find a lot more depression here than I have found anywhere else. Whether it’s Sun deprivation, vitamin C, D deficiency, probably as much as anything, but I do find that and that does affect the ministry.....

17. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

I ask people to commit for a year. I give our teachers and the workers the summers off. If someone says to me, “I’m tired.” I give them a break without a question. I tell people, “If you’re getting tired or sense burnout you tell me. Don’t change churches or switch churches thinking that’s the only way you can get out of a job. Just tell me what you need and we’ll give you the time off.”

18. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada?

19. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered?

20. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?

## Interview 8

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### Section I: Theological Issues.

A. Key Biblical concepts: 1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter? **MDE**

I guess, looking at the scripture where it tells us to go into all the world and preach the gospel. So that's kind of been and I felt that people take that as a great suggestion. I believe it's the great commission of Christ that we try to, Um, duplicate ourselves in the world and in different areas, and I guess that's my biggest principle that I find from the word of the Lord that was the intention of Christ to populate the world with the truth of God's word. I guess that's the key thing that influenced me.

2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation.

I guess, how we fulfilled that statement was by trying to get people to engage in community and that's what I feel the Church should do and should continue to do is to make the church relevant through things they do in their lives and not just take church as something they do Sunday morning but try to get to get involved in the community and show Christ everyday through their living, jobs and through their lives, even through their entertainment.

3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts?

Usually, fairly well, they usually, because of a Christian background they respond. It's hard to get people to volunteer, because we try to get people to volunteer and show Christ in hockey or in baseball or wherever. And sometimes it's hard to do to get people to accept that responsibility of showing Christ. Be the salt of the earth or the light of the world. Sometimes to get them to do that or to show that can be a little bit tough.

4. Have they integrated them into their own lives?

Somewhat, I believe somewhat they have. I guess people that I've worked with before have done some volunteer things because we/



that's what my life is all about is trying to influence your community not just to influence your church and I've seen somewhat people have done that as a result of what we live our life as...to try to help someone out each day, almost. And somewhat we've seen people do that.

#### B. Current Theological emphases:

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation? **MDE**

Well, still the commission of Christ, to love people and to show the love of Christ and to be the salt of the earth. And what that means to be the salt of the earth is to bring flavor to the world and that's what Christ said to go to all the earth and should be bringing savor to our communities, we should be effecting them by being the salt. And being the Light of the world, because we live in a dark world, Um, to share the light of the gospel. We are to make a difference in our community.

2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister? **MDE**

Well, I guess in every community you are in you hope the people will feel like, for instance, Jesus when He was in a fisher, a place where they fished He talked about fishing, if He was at a farm...so I see how the people relate in the communities they are and how they relate the gospel through their own way and, Um, we've seen some of that, like people...you know it's not much good for people to talk about potato farming if they're living in a fishing village. So I've seen people try to share Christ through their everyday lives through their geographical area there is ways...so if you're in \_\_\_\_\_ county you'll talk about sewing seed, right...I've seen the principles of Christ in doing that.

3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts?

Um, I guess to, sometimes, people I guess don't see the benefit of seeing people through the eyes of Christ where he did try to make religion more about, not even just Christianity but more about meeting people at their level and I've seen people not understand that how that they can relate to people not just on a theological level but on a physical level as far as what they do for a living and I've seen that kind of people not seeing the benefit and some of that is the reason why that church didn't maybe succeed, the way it should...they didn't understand. **TT, SC** I find the church today, the church there in \_\_\_\_\_, how to relate to people's need if they weren't like us or as like maybe they had crime in their lives or maybe they had issues in their lives...I found people kind of wrote those people off. That's contradictory to me because I believe that Christ loves everybody and He can make a difference in people's lives. So I guess that's where I have controversy sometimes relating what to what we feel Christianity should be about and what are theological things should be about---is about reaching people no matter what state they're in or who they are or what kind of money status they have and I find that's a real conflict within the church to get people to understand that everybody counts, I guess.

4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability?

#### C. Vision:

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement? **VS**

Yeah we did. We adapted, believing, belonging and becoming. That was kind of our whole mission statement, and a shorter version of what we said. We believe through worship, we become through relationship with God, we become through discipleship, sorry about that. And we belong through relationship. And that's kind of the statement that we made that was our Mission statement. Believing, belonging, becoming....and that's kind of what our whole mission was. The first principle was that we had to believe in Christ, that was the first principle. And that's what our church was . We wanted them to belong and if they belonged they would become. 2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? Under whose initiative was the statement formed? That was kind of my, that was my vision statement. I just felt that they are very important things, that we belong and become. And we did do that because most of the people believed in Christ and that was never an issue. Where we struggled was belonging, having a relationship with Christ and belief. But we had some becoming, What Christ wanted us to be sometimes was challenge. We never had any problem with believing and belonging but when it came to becoming, through believing in Christ and belonging to Christ, that's probably...And how we got that going was through preaching and teaching. Wednesday night teaching and helping people to understand the need to believe belong and become.

b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?

3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry?

4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision? **PFV**

Probably, we had an associate pastor, \_\_\_\_\_ during that time, he and his family and I think he was pretty good relating that as well. He kind of ...Of course, as a pastor, often you are the one trying to get that going. But once in a while we've had some good people come along, like him, who say, "This is the vision of the Church, so let's appreciate the Pastor and support the pastor, his vision and helping us go forward with that. Using other people, we had a Sunday School superintendent, as well, so we used them to help get the theology out.

5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement? **SC**

I guess the biggest challenge is to get people to buy into that and live that in their lives because you can have a mission statement as long as you want or as short as you want but if people don't buy into it and helping them to do that every day of life is.. I guess that's the biggest, not connecting with the vision. You connect the vision with the people and the people are interested, what you are saying is the vision statement I guess.

6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church - planting situation? **SC, TT**

Well, I guess it continued while we were there and I guess what happened was that vision statement kind of got lost and that's why we don't have that church right now. In the community, I believe there was a need in the community for the kind of church we were planting. Like it had viability in the community. One, we were very up to date on our worship. We had a good worship team. We had all the components to make a good church there and there was a need for the church there. But I guess because I was the guy who was mainly putting the

vision out there and when we decided to move on we tried to ah get the associate pastor and other people to continue. What I seen is that it failed to get into their daily lives, the vision that we were trying to get them to so that when we left, if we did leave, it would continue. Kind of with church plants you make a decision if you're going to stay in that position, situation and I could see that what we did and what we tried to do didn't really affect, because they allowed it to close and unfortunately because they didn't keep, I was the person to put up the chairs, I was the person who set the sound system up, land when I stopped and decided to move on, we were even going to try to keep the church going then. But when we moved on to a full time pastorate there were a lot of people who were not interested in continuing because they knew that it would change because they would have to become the people who put the chairs up and I guess that's where the whole thing failed because they didn't have the same mind-set that I had to win the lost at any cost and to be there early to put chairs up and put the sound system up and that's where it failed. Even in the two and half years that we did it we tried to show the need of the church there and tried to show how it would happen and tried to show the light of the world of believe and belong and become.

## Section II: Structural Issues.

### A. Church Political Structures:

#### 1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures. **AS, SPL**

We were an interfaith. We welcomed all faiths .We did have a Board of elders. We had a Senior Pastor at Sunset Church. He was a leader we looked to. I had him to look to for advice. He was kind of our leadership that we looked t because we didn't have a denomination. He helped us financially and even the political part of churches we all know are there. We did have our Board and I was the Chairman of our Board and we had four Board members and we had him to look to for advice. we made him our advisor. We did have kind of a way of answering to somebody and he was our advisor to our church. It was pretty simple. We did have a name that we registered with the government and a bank account. We never had a vote because we didn't set it up like that. I was a church planter. There was no vote on me. I was there and I was the guy who founded it so there was nothing like that every year. Never had a vote on myself. We did have a secretary, as well, as secretary treasurer and pretty well her position was, no one else really wanted to do it so she had the position as long as she wanted it.

#### 2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all?

With our set up we don't have principles from an organization. We had a pastor and followed his principles. We did try to follow them as close as we could.

#### 3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church- planting situation? **CD, LBE**

We were following what was successful with our advisor. But we were in a different area geographically with a different size congregation and he had a building, which we didn't.

#### 4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?

There really wasn't a lot of tradition. We were pretty easy going. Our music was sometimes traditional. They were pretty free thinking people. When you are planting a church tradition goes to the side. We were starting something new. **TT** But there were a few older people and they like the hymns, so we had some of those from time to time and we tried to keep everybody happy. But it wasn't really a traditional church, it was pretty free thinking. But we did have structure but they were pretty acceptable to everything.

5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need?

Yeah, we were very flexible because umm, we rented a building and we had to be flexible because sometimes there was certain areas of the building that they wouldn't allow us to use and it would change. So we had to be very flexible. They had a day care so we were always having to change what we were doing and even our type of services had to change. We had to be flexible with that. Sometimes we would have a sound system sometimes we wouldn't. Because of the building structure we had to be quite flexible because of the building that we didn't own...one week we would be in the kitchen having church, one week we would be in the hall.

6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past? **AS, SI**

Not really. We did, ah, not a lot of support, other than we did have our advisor and pastor that did give us a portion of funds to go towards a sound system. But we didn't have any support and I think that one of the reasons that it didn't succeed so successful was that we didn't have that denominational support and we didn't have finances and support, as in you know you know you can draw a strength from a denomination and we didn't have no financial support from any place so we didn't have a group that could be more financial and even the way to go buddy support that you receive if you're in an organization. So that was one of the big downfalls and one of the reasons that I believe the church is not still going today, because if we did have that support and structure of an organization then we probably could have you know branched out from that and got someone to take that church over or financially we could have been more viable and we could have had a building, which today if we had had a building and all these structures probably would still be there today. So that is one of the things that was missed in that whole picture.

7. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place?

8. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability? **SI**

There was really no requirement upon us, no longevity, therefore, we were on our own, with our own identity, our own Board. The individuals that were there were our only accountability, sort of.

9. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?

Yeah, we did keep goals with the people to continue. When we first started we said well we need 40 people just to be viable. To be able to support the ministry that we had there and we had that goal of 40 which we met and then we continued to teach important things, especially where we live in an area where it's a viable cult kind of where that church plant was and people didn't want to come because when there was churches with pews and carpeting and sound systems, I found that was the biggest drawback to that group and to our group was that we met in a hall and

it was fairly comfortable, but I have found that if you have a church plant and you want it to stay there, yeah you can rent for a while you need a place but the community knows you are there to stay, because when you are meeting in a hall or meeting in a hotel, lions club the people don't get a sense of longevity from you and that's the problem right there. When you have a place that you can see we're we have an address we are not leaving and even if you don't have that in the beginning to have a place where you can set up and felt like the safety of every week we're going to meet her. **TT, LTV** We met on Sunday's only. In Atlantic Canada.. if you want to have longevity you really need a building or at least something you can set up and people can go in there or even if you rented a building but it was your building and that's what I find with Atlantic Canada . even it would probably work better than what we did. We rented a building and you could only go in there on Sunday's and Wednesdays. Even if you could rent a building and say, "It's our building and have a sense of ownership..."

10. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective?

## B. Leadership Issues:

1. Who are the official leaders of your church?

We had our Board, several men and the pastors. I was the chairman. We had a secretary treasurer.

Who are the unofficial leaders?

We had a couple of pastors who helped us lead. We had our overseer. We made him our overseer. If we had issues or problems he would come in to play there. **AS**

2. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability? **SC**

I think they play a big role cause that's where, kind of where we fell apart. Because our leadership as a Board didn't really, when I was leaving and actually wanted to give somebody else, the leadership, they didn't have the same vision I had for the church in the community. They seen it as a temporary way of getting a need fixed and they didn't have that long-term goal. If they would have had that long-term goal when I moved on, and I was going to continue to help the church and support the church, I was even willing to come and speak some for them and find somebody for them, umm because of the leadership they didn't have the goal of longevity. Now that we were moving o they just felt like well let's go to these churches that are established. That's where the whole break down was, was in our leadership. It met the need for the time, we ministered to a group of people that had had some real church issues, organizational church issues where their pastor was fired and that's kind of how the church got started. We came I to try and help them. There was 15 Or 20 people, and unfortunately because we were kind of a band aid for that situation at the time they kind of looked at the church as temporary.

3. How does a person become a leader in your church?

Basically we picked people who were business minded. It went through me. Most didn't have church leadership experience.

4. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation?

Accountability was mainly to me and to the people. We had an annual business meeting. There was no real, no denomination. If there was an issue we had someone to be accountable to, our pastor/supervisor. **AS, SI**

5. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place?

Probably informal, not as formal as other churches. We did have Board Meetings and annual meetings. Between informal and formal I guess. **AS**

7. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability?

I think that's probably the issue. Because we were not accountable to a denomination. I think that would have been more successful. If I did it over again, I am doing it, we are accountable to \_\_\_\_\_church. We solely rely upon church funding for ministry but we report to the church, the mother church, I guess.

### Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:

#### A. Cultural Issues:

1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry? **CD**

Atlantic Canada are more working type of people. We are laid back and do stuff around the kitchen table, whereas other areas would have formal Board meetings. We're around the table. We like to work one on one with our culture.

2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves? **CD**

They were a farming community in the oldest town in the province. There was a lot of culture and history. It was hard to get to know people, meeting one on one. If you had come from the area you had better success than someone moving into a small town.

4. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability? **TT**

Again, going back to the building. You really had to show that you were part of the community and make an investment in the community. If you weren't grounded and had a foundation they didn't know what to do with you.

4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?

I really believe that there is a big gap there. Conferences here are often geared more towards American culture. We need information on getting a church going with more relevance for this area. They are more relevant to the city. There's a big difference in getting information in those areas. Most are not relevant to Atlantic Canada.

5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life? **LBE, CD**

With the stuff available currently we have to take the meat and throw away the bones. We have to take the best out of what we receive. Atlantic Canada is different and has its own way. Programs like Alpha are great but providing a meal every week for a while is very difficult for a small church. Making that happen is not easy. It is not really helpful to Atlantic Canada.

B. Geographical issues:

1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant? **GD**

Yeah, geographically. Years ago people didn't travel much further than ten miles from their home. Now people don't mind traveling. With the larger centers it's harder to interest people. They don't mind driving to larger city structures. That's kind of hard on Atlantic Canada for smaller areas. "Is it worthwhile? Should we go to areas that are larger?"

2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

Trying to find what is unique and capitalize on that. For example seniors. We had senior's meetings for seniors that are alone a lot. That's what you have to do to overcome those things. Growing community is important and the family, encouraging the family is important.

3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada?

4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered?

We went in the middle of town and centred on \_\_\_\_\_ Road. We felt that we would have more success in the heartbeat of town, that's why we picked the geographical area. It has the shopping, restaurants, civic centre and was the growth area.

5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?

Basically we didn't get into a lot of studying. We did look at how the town was growing, the growth of the community was important. We thought we might have an opportunity because of the new growth. In talking to business people and others in the town they felt there was a need for something new with a modern contemporary style.

## **Appendix B Research Instrument:**

### Research Tool for Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations In the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics

#### **Section I: Theological Issues.**

- A. Key Biblical concepts: 1. Can you identify any key Biblical concepts which have shaped your ministry as a church planter?
2. Describe the importance of these concepts in the daily/weekly ministry of your church planting situation.
3. How have the people to whom you minister responded to these concepts? 4. Have they integrated them into their own lives?

#### **B. Current Theological emphases:**

1. What are several theological emphases central to the establishment of your church planting situation?
2. Are you able to identify theological concepts which are common to the geographical area in which you minister?
3. How have your theological emphases complemented/contradicted these concepts?
4. What impact has that had on church growth and stability?

#### **C. Vision:**

1. Does your church have a formal vision statement?
2. a. If you answered yes to question 1, how did you arrive at that statement? Under whose initiative was the statement formed?
- b. If you answered no to question 1 is there a particular reason that you do not have a vision statement?
3. In what practical ways does your vision statement guide the course of the church's ministry?
4. Who was/is the lead proponent of your vision?
5. What are the challenges of planting a church with a vision statement? Without a vision statement?
6. How has your vision impacted the long-term viability of the church - planting situation?



## **Section II: Structural Issues.**

### **A. Church Political Structures:**

1. Describe your church and/or denominational political structures.
2. Do you follow the traditional structures of your denomination closely? In principle? Not at all?
3. How did you/do you determine which structures to incorporate in the church- planting situation?
4. What level of tradition is expected by individuals new to your congregation?
5. How flexible are your structures? Do you make changes according to need?
6. Do you receive any denominational or missions support? Have you received any in the past?
7. Can you describe the support program? How long do you expect it to be in place?
8. What expectations does your denomination have for long-term stability?
9. Do you have strategies and/or goals to reach viability and self-sufficiency?
10. How would you describe long-term viability for your church, from your perspective?

### **B. Leadership Issues:**

1. Who are the official leaders of your church? Who are the unofficial leaders?
2. In what ways does leadership contribute to long-term stability?
3. How does a person become a leader in your church?
4. To whom are leaders accountable? Board? Denomination? Congregation?
5. Do you have informal or formal accountability structures in place?
6. How important are accountability structures to your church's long-term stability?

## **Section III. Cultural and Geographical Issues:**

### **A. Cultural Issues:**

1. Are you aware of cultural factors unique to Atlantic Canada which have a direct impact on your ministry?
2. Are there identifiable cultural characteristics specific to the area in which your church plant serves?
3. How do these characteristics impact on ministry and church viability?
4. Do cultural patterns in Atlantic Canada differ significantly from North American cultural patterns reflected in current literature in the area of Church planting?
5. If yes, in what ways do these differences affect the way in which you organize ministry and church life?

### **B. Geographical issues:**

1. Are there geographical/ regional issues which you believe have an impact upon stability and viability for your church plant?
2. What strategies do you use to deal with identifiable geographical issues?

3. What support do you receive from your denomination to account for regional challenges which you may face in Atlantic Canada?
4. What factors were considered important in selecting the geographical region in which your church planting ministry would be centered?
5. Previous to launching the church plant were any considerations given to the possible responsiveness of the region to a new church plant? How was the data gathered? How important was this in determining location?