TOWARD A HOLISTIC AND POSTMODERNAL THEORY OF CHANGE:
The Four-forces Model of Change
As Reflected in Church Growth Movement Literature

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Introduction

Change that permits and even promotes efficacious evangelism would seem to be at the heart of the strategic intentions of the Church Growth Movement. However, in spite of its theoretical centrality, a review of Church Growth Movement literature reveals that change, while persistent in the literature, is far from central and/or holistically addressed. And though the complex interplay of multiple generative mechanisms that drive and channel change is acknowledged in Church Growth literature, due to a narrow focus in many Church Growth tomes, what organization theorist Mary Jo Hatch describes as a more holistic and efficacious "collage" approach to change (Hatch 1997:54) is missing.

The purpose of this present study is to form a background from Church Growth Movement literature against which might emerge a contemporary epistemology and model for theories of change and changing. And, since the cultural predilections of postmodernity heavily influence future strategizing, postmodern theoretical understandings will be sought.

As such, a holistic collage approach becomes requisite. Hatch's analysis of postmodern organization theories leads her to believe they rely heavily upon a collage approach. She describes a collage as "an art form in which objects and pieces of objects (often including reproductions of other works of art…) are arranged together to form something new – an art object in its own right. When you use collage as a metaphor for

organization theory you are recognized the value of holding multiple perspectives and using parts of theories to form a new work… they (postmodern leaders) use bits of old theories along with the knowledge and experience they have collected in their lifetimes to create a new theory worthy of use in particular circumstances" (ibid.).

This author has elsewhere described his ethnographic study of 12 postmodernal ecclesial organizations, and how this leadership collage is evident in many, if not most, of their scenarios (Whitesel 2006:124-134). Therefore, for the present discussion it will be assumed that healthy and effective emerging postmodernal congregations are utilizing holistic and multifaceted approaches to managing change.

But this elicits the question, is this collage approach, born out of innovative reactions to indigenous cultures, reflected in church Growth literature? And if so, to what degree? If it is, then in Church Growth Movement literature there lies helpful and even strategic understandings that can help postmodernal theorists and/or ecclesial leaders manage change. If it is not found, then additional research and publication is required on this important topic. Such questions, that can elicit grounded theory research, are what this article seeks to uncover and evaluate.

<u>Four Forces Approach To Change</u>

Theories of Change and Theories of Changing

We begin with a brief review of pertinent aspects of organization theory of change and changing. Within organization theory there is an innovative and influential perspective that change arises and is controlled by one or more generative mechanisms or forces. These mechanisms control the development and evolution of change processes, and as such require varying mechanisms and strategies for their management.

A brief discussion of organization theory's delineations between theories of change and theories of changing (Bennis 1996) will assist the reader in comprehending the nuances of this author's analysis. *Theories of change*, are those theoretical and practical constructs that explain how organizations change and factors that bring about that change. *Theories of changing* deal with how change can be manipulated and managed to elicit ultimate organizational performance.

The author's current research is in grounded theory development that can elicit theories of change in postmodernal ecclesial organizations. As such, the exploration of the mechanics and generative mechanisms of change will dominate this discussion. In addition, since the purpose of this study is to encourage my graduate students at Indiana Wesleyan University to develop theories of changing (i.e. how change can be managed), I will also discuss (though because of space constraints to a lesser degree) how Church Growth Movement literature employs prescriptive mechanisms to elicit the management of changing.

A Collage of Four Forces

Organization change theorists Van de Ven and Poole have posited an influential model for change that considers the interplay of four types of change forces, with resultant yet varying prescriptive mechanisms for controlling and managing each (Van de Ven and Poole 1995). These four types or "forces" involve different generative mechanisms or motors, proceed through different process models and are managed by varying prescriptive strategies.

Though some change may involve just one of these typologies, many more change processes will involve two or more of these underlying forces (Van de Ven and

Poole 1995:8). Therefore, the key for developing theories of ecclesial changing among future researchers and students, will be to understand and identify the interplay of these change forces, with a resultant indigenous collage from a grounded theory of change.

To begin our quest, an understanding of the four forces involved in this interplay will be required.

The Life Cycle Model

Theories of Change. This model views change as progressing through a lock-step process "that is prescribed and regulated by an institutional, natural, or logical program prefigured at the beginning of the cycle" (Van de Ven and Poole 1995:7). In the ecclesial realm this might be a church that was founded to reach a certain generational, social and/or ethic culture. The manner in which this organization develops has been embedded into the organization's DNA at conception and/or renewal. Change is thus an outgrowth of the organizational life-cycle and its inauguration. Change will usually not be introduced from the outside as much as it will emerge from a developing cycle, that has been *apriori* programmed into the organization's inception. In this view, a church is not in the empiricist metaphor *tabula rasa*, but rather prescribed and regulated by *apriori* forces that elicit certain responses.

Here an ecclesial example might be a church which has split off from a Boomer church to reach out to Generations X and Y. The style, ambiance, joie de vivre and even ethos of such an organization may be so heavily influenced by its cultural reaction to its progenitor's culture (e.g. in our example a Gen. X/Y reaction to Boomers). A resultant cultural codification may become rigid, inflexible and time-resistant, resulting in a solidifying in contemporary time of an outmoded style. A Boomer church that worships

in a gymnasium and sings songs written in the 1980s and 1990s with musical styling reminiscent of previous decades would be an example of the power of life-cycle forces. Or a Builder-generation church (that generation born before 1945) that worships in a stately and stained-glass sanctuary, with hymns from the previous five centuries, would be another illustration.

Theories of Changing. In such milieus, change takes place in a slow and developmental manner (much to the chagrin of younger and more impatient generational cultures). Thus, the theories of changing in organizations controlled by predominately life-cycle models often involve restart or renewal models (Whitesel and Hunter 2001:44-49). Prescriptive mechanisms for managing change in organizations influenced predominately by life-cycle forces, rely heavily on the following epistemological process:

1. Cognitive realignment within the organization (i.e. change their thinking)

2. Strategic realignment in congruence with the cognitive realignment (i.e. change their actions).

An example would be an aging Builder-generation church that undergoes a restart process like that utilized by the American Baptist Church denomination. In this process the current board is dissolved, a new board of younger generations is put in place, the church ceases to meet for 6 months, the church reopens in the same location with a new name, a new board, a new pastor and a new focus (c.f. Whitesel and Hunter 2000: 44-46). As can be seen, this strategy often results in an organization that has again been "prefigured at the beginning of the cycle" (Van de Ven and Poole 1995:7) to succumb to life-cycle forces and resolutions that estrange founding generations.

The Evolutionary Model

Theories of Change. In this model change is seen as "a repetitive sequence of variation, selection and retention events" (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:7). Here experimentation, improvisation and creativity lead to change. Often, this is the model most prevalent at the inauguration of a ecclesial movement and/or trend.

Innovative approaches of Augustine, Luther, Wesley, the Boomer-led Jesus Movement of the 1970s, and more recently the Emerging Organic Church (Whitesel 2006:xxiv-xxviii) can be ascribed to innovations and forces customary in the evolutionary model.

Theories of Changing. Managing change within the evolutionary model on the surface might seem easy to achieve, since change is widespread. But in such environments, improvisational change often becomes codified, especially if it is efficacious (Whitesel 2006:xix, 133-135). The result is a situation in which "energy will be used up in defending yesterday" (David 2003:301).

And thus, prescriptive mechanisms for managing change in evolutionary environments are to foster innovation and to prevent improvisation from becoming codified. The improvisational process is inherently uncomfortable, for it requires risk-taking and creative intuition (Pagitt and Community 2004:137-139).

And, though embraced initially, improvisation becomes difficult to sustain over time (Whitesel 2004:85-95). Thus, a resultant strategy is often the "franchising" of an innovation. The innovation, often generated out of external environmental scans, is often lauded as a remedy for what ails other churches. The seeker-sensitive approach, the cell-church model, the Alpha-group assimilation process are innovations that readily lend themselves to franchisment. A result is that ecclesial organizations unaccustomed with a

model of evolutionary change, can appropriate these innovations in generic form, sometimes successfully but other times ineffectively, resulting in change prescriptions not based upon an organization's external and internal environments (Whitesel 2006).

Subsequently evolutionary change often relies upon the following process:

1. Ongoing variation

2. Selection

3. Retention

or

1. Cognitive realignment with the latest or new "paradigm" (e.g. franchising),

2. Deployment of the new paradigm (e.g. franchisment).

The Dialectic Model

Theories of Change. The dialectic model relies heavily upon negotiation, concession, compromise and conciliation to elicit change. Here change takes place out of the tension and synergies emerging out of "entities espousing an opposing thesis and antithesis that collide to produce a synthesis, which in time becomes the thesis of the next cycle of a dialectical progression" (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:7). Confrontation and conflict are often not viewed as negative traits, but rather as dialectical processes for brining about change through differences, dialogue, cooperate and reconciliation.

Examples abound of congregations that have sought mediation, either externally or internally facilitated, to reach consensus. Field research has led me to believe the dialectic model is more prevalent in mainline denominations, where denominated forces often encourage and embrace synthesis in both methodology (Roozen 2005:588-624) and theology (Nieman 2005:625-653).

Not surprisingly, dialectic models are often less evident in conservative ecclesial settings, perhaps due to two rationales exemplified in the illustration above. The first is a perception that ecclesial organizations must, for the most part, be free of dissention. Thus, in ecclesial efforts to root out dissention change is at least ignored, and often dissuaded. The second rationale is that conservative ecclesial networks may equate negotiation, concession and compromise with incipient practices that could lead to compromises in theology.

Theories of Changing that arise out of dialectic forces customarily employ conflict resolution and negotiation mechanisms. Here managing change may follow the following process:

1. Seeking to understand oppositional perspectives (i.e. an exploration of theses and antitheses).

2. Negotiation

3. Concession and compromise

4. Conciliation.

The Teleological Model

Theories of Change. A teleological model (from the Greek word *telos*: "purpose, design") focuses primarily on the goals that are to be met, and the process model that emerges for attaining and then repeating this cycle in an efficacious manner. The teleological model is a "cycle of goal formation, implementation, evaluation, and modification of actions or goals based upon what was learned or intended by the organization. This sequence emerges through purposeful enactment or social

construction of an envisioned end state …" (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:7). In short, the ends can dictate the means.

An example here might be a congregation that sets yearly attendance goals based upon parallel growth in the external community. Another example might be a pastor who preaches passionately about reaching unchurched individuals in hopes of motivating his or her congregation to become more effective at the evangelistic mandate. This pastor might encourage the tracking of conversions or baptisms and adjust strategy to ensure optimum results.

The reader should note here an emerging caveat to a "uni-force" teleological approach, for when teleological forces alone are considered the change process can become too result-orientated, squandering, as in Taylor's scientific management approach (Taylor 1967), human capital in the name of progress.

Theories of Changing. The tools and mechanisms that manage theological change evolve around an epistemology of effective goal setting, critical evaluation and resultant modification. In literature that aligns with this model, significant emphasis is placed upon having the "right goals," analyzing internal and external environments (e.g. via a SWOT analysis, TOWS matrix, Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix, etc.) and rigorous evaluation with resultant adjustment.

In this process change often takes place via the following process model:

1. Research and investigate potential goals (i.e. search / interact)

2. Envision the right goals

3. Set the right goal

4. Implement the right goals

5. Evaluation of goals (due to temporal dissatisfaction)

6. Revision and reorientation of goals, leading to a cyclical process of the above.

A Four Forces Model for Change

Theories for Change. As noted earlier, Poole and Van de Ven's analysis of over a dozen popular modernist and postmodernist theories of change and changing, leads them to view most change as a collage (Hatch's term, 1997:54) of "interaction effects" which result from the independent operation of two or more of these models (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:8). And, in their exhaustive *Handbook on Change and Innovation* (2004), Poole and Van de Ven place 16 widely held theories of organizational change into one of more of these four categories noting the "interplay" of forces that results (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:9).

A complementary understanding of this complex interplay between forces that generate, control and manage change must be developed for ecclesial change. Change in religious organizations is no less complex than change in secular organizations (Finke and Iannaccone 1993). And, though not all secular organization theories are transferable to the ecclesial context (due to the latter's non-fiscal goal-orientation), writers like Michigan State's Kent Miller have argued persuasively and effectively for a hermeneutic that fosters the transference of management understandings to the ecclesial milieus (Miller 2006).

Theories of Changing. Though Poole and Van de Ven prefer to employ the terminology of generative mechanisms and motors, the present author has found it is more helpful for his students, especially when explaining theories of changing, to utilize the terminology of a "Four-forces Model." Here the interplay of the four forces and their

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resultant affect upon the organization, require a theory of changing that takes into consideration a collage of forces, tools, processes and management strategies.

In addition, these forces are not temporal-bound, for they may arise in any order and at almost any time. Thus, the serious student of change and changing theories will want to become familiar with the Four-forces Model if he or she seeks to become proficient in understanding and managing change processes.

Theories of Change and Changing in Church Growth Literature

The Number of Forces Present

The hope would be that a retrospective analysis of Church Growth literature would reveal a holistic collage of strategic intentions that take into consideration the interplay of a Four-forces Model. Yet, space does not permit an inclusive review of all Church Growth Movement literature of this genre. Thus, this present inquiry will seek to investigate representative tomes that address change forces as delineated within various Church Growth Movement "prongs, viewpoints and perspectives" (McIntosh 2004:18-25). This exercise will seek to elicit a foundational literature review that will inform future research in the pervasiveness of multiple change forces and their place within theories of change and changing in Church Growth understandings.

In the following literature analysis a valid criticism might be that elements of more than the specified forces can be found in certain books. This the author acknowledges. Still, the author has attempted to tender possible categorizations of the following volumes, based upon the prevalent forces and tones of each. To be sure, remnants and/or artifacts of other forces might be unearthed with fastidious investigation.

However, the author feels this would obscure the importance of understanding the Four-forces Model. The purpose of initiating an epistemology for the typology of change forces, is to demonstrate which force or forces each volume effectively tackles, and how use of multiple volumes or tactically appropriate volumes, can enhance theory development in change and changing.

Thus, no offense if intended, and it is hoped will not be taken when authors and/or their adherents find a particular tome in a certain category. The purpose of this exercise is to build a foundational understanding regarding how multiple forces are described, analyzed and deployed in strategic Church Growth Movement writings and if for maximum effect, some modification in our approaches and/or utilization is warranted.

<p align="center">Four-force Models of Change and Changing</p>

Perhaps most conspicuously, multiple-force models appear within the two-prongs (McIntosh's terms, 2004:19) of classical church growth writings: International Missiology and North American Missiology. A delimitation of this present discussion will be North American Missiology, however McGavran's writings on international missiology reveal a significant understanding of tri-force theories and sometimes quad-force theories.

In *Understanding Church Growth* (1970), McGavran touches routinely on the four-force model. Beginning with a life-cycle rationale for the discussion of church growth (ibid.: v-xi), he looks at these life-cycle forces in greater detail in his discussion of people movements and their care (ibid.: 333-372). In addition, in the section titled, "Social Structure and Church Growth (ibid.: 207 – 265) McGavran discusses dialectic forces, urging a strategic engagement and understanding of oppositional perspectives that

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are rooted in cultural rather than theological differences. Yet, the arena in which McGavran shines is in his syllogistic arguments for teleological goal-setting. McGavran emphasizes the "universal fog" of knowledge (ibid.: 76-78), that must be pierced by facts and strategic verifiability (ibid.: 93-102). Finally, the tome's epilogue tenders a skillful capsulation of a theme that runs almost imperceptibly through this volume: the evolutionary nature of the Church Growth Movement. McGavran concludes that in light of his forgoing discussions and based upon the import of with the Great Commission, that the church must adopt an evolutionary stance. He suggests that the church by its very DNA was created to be a life-changing force, and that we "lay down that defeatist attitude which keeps us convinced that the Church is not only at a standstill but in retreat…. Let us brush aside the cobwebs of opinion which obstruct our vision…" (ibid.: 458). Though McGavran's strength is his teleological insights that take into consideration life-cycle and dialectic tools, his final chapter encapsulates a battle cry that many subsequent authors would appropriate: that evolutionary forces of the Church Growth Movement are divinely intended.

As we shall see in analyses of his later books, McGavran's focus became more narrow and precise. However, another early tome written with close colleague Win Arn (McGavran and Arn 1977) touches on all four forces involved in change. Strongly teleological in nature, the central emphasis of the book is a step-by-step process, whereby churches grow as they follow 10 principles (ibid.: 15-115). However, life-cycle forces are considered in sections on assimilation of newcomers (ibid.: 80-91) and ecclesial reproduction (ibid.: 92-101). Dialectic strategies then surface in the illustrations of "rightly discerning the Body (of Christ)" (ibid.: 67-73) with a resultant plea by McGavran

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and Arn that "… the *key* (italics authors) to the turnaround was a thought-through, prayed-through, God-inspired decision by pastor and key leaders" (ibid.: 121). Yet, evolutionary forces also emerge as the "risk" of following or not following Church Growth understandings is discussed (ibid.: 117-125). Though slim, this volume demonstrates that a multi-forces model can be penned with lucidity as well as succinctness.

A magnum opus akin to McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth*, is Eddid Gibbs' contribution to the *I Believe In…* series for Eerdmans (Gibbs 1981). This book, titled *I Believe in Church Growth*, is an exhaustive expansion of change mechanisms and prescriptions from an early volume (Gibbs 1979) that will be discussed under the Three-forces Models. However, *I Believe In Church Growth* expands into a four force strategy, addressing life-cycle dynamics (Gibbs 1981:17-48, 364-366), with various well-conceived teleological entailments (ibid.: 131-186, 275-312, 392-431). In addition, dialectic forces, have a significant role in Gibb's writing (ibid.:17-24, 133-138, 195-198, 315-319, 406-411, 416-427, 423-429). Readily embracing dialectic mechanisms he states, "…the church, like many other institutions, has to find ways of adapting to remain in contact with its potential members, while at the same time avoiding alienating its long-term members" (ibid.: 427). It was this and other similar dialectic statements that gave rise to my interest in and development of a multi-generational ecclesial change strategy (Whitesel and Hunter 2001). Gibb's dialectic emphasis can also be seen in his admonition that change must be evolutionary (thought he uses this term differently than organization theorists and this author), stating "…(for) it (evolution) stresses continuity with the past and thinks in terms of what we have inherited to meet the demand of today

and tomorrow" (ibid.: 364). His stance on innovation and change also belies dialectic considerations, as he states, "…the innovative leader does not destroy all that he has inherited as an essential prerequisite for a successful investment in the future" (ibid.:365). Finally, in a similar fashion as McGavran in *Understanding Church Growth*, Gibbs imbues his book with an evolutionary timbre (which on the surface seems opposed to his dialectic emphases) that "… (church growth) is also the most potentially traumatic (strategy) as it entails a complete rejection of the past and overthrow of the established order" (ibid.:365). Though this latter approach is divisive, he cautions that at some junctures it is warranted (ibid.). Thus Gibbs, more so than even McGavran, paints for us the dynamic tension that exists in a multi-forces model, especially between dialectic and evolutionary forces.

     Leadership Next by Gibbs (Gibbs 2005) follows this four-forces approach more so than its earlier companion volume *Church Next* (Gibbs 2000). *Leadership Next*, perhaps because it is directed at offering to church leaders a holistic strategy for change, commences with the inevitability of life-cycle forces (ibid.:47-68, 193-195), accompanied by teleological goals that are Biblically authentic and pragmatically efficacious (ibid.:69-89, 179-181, 186-188). To this Gibbs adds dialectic considerations (ibid.:182-186) though in somewhat briefer fashion that the previous forces or as in *I Believe in Church Growth*. Finally in an effective section titled "Leadership Emergence and Development," Gibb's suggests evolutionary strategies as a response to the ascension of postmodernity over its progenitor: modernity (ibid.:196-216). All-in-all, this is a remarkably helpful volume for leaders struggling with the multi-faceted aspects of

change. And though not one of Gibb's most recognizable tomes, it may be one of his most strategic works on describing the Four-force Model of change and changing.

Little wonder that Gibbs would join with colleague Ryan Bolger to become two of the most proficient commentators on postmodernal church growth and its embrace of a multiple model of change forces (Gibbs and Bolger 2005). Utilizing case-studies, a tactic which customarily elicits an evolutionary emphasis as the authors do here (see especially, ibid: 239-328), Gibbs and Bolger also emphasize the dialectic/communal nature of postmodernal change (ibid.:89-172). The teleological sections of the book are probably the most compelling, adding a quantitative aspect to a experiential postmodernal dialectic (ibid.:191-238). Finally, not surprising the organic and interdependent nature of emerging postmodernal congregations give Gibbs and Bolger an opportunity to address life-cycle forces, both in the Boomer progenitors of Gen. X (ibid.: 17-26) and in institutional change (ibid.:97-104). For postmodernal understandings regarding the multiple forces of change, this may be the most comprehensive and exhaustive volume available.

Lyle Schaller has contributed significantly to Church Growth Movement literature customarily, as we shall see, in the area of teleological understandings. However, his early book *Hey That's Our Church* (Schaller 1975) touches significantly on all four forces for change. Placing churches into approximate life-cycle categories, he also helps congregants perceive the varying life-cycle roles they sometimes unknowingly embrace (e.g. pioneers or homesteaders, ibid.:93-96). He then explores dialectic tools of compromise and finding common ground (ibid.:119-125), and echoes the evolutionary clarion call of McGavran and others as he suggests that new models must and will

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replace outmoded ecclesial structures (ibid.:66-68, 73). Finally, teleological forces are prevalent, for this is an arena where Schaller, a former city-planner, shines (ibid.:97-104, 107-110, 137-141, 184-187).

George G. Hunter III is another prolific and foundational writer in the Church Growth Movement, whose tomes focus on a variety of change forces. However, no where is the four-forces model more evident that in his relatively recent book, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Hunter 2000). Here Hunter sees teleological forces at play in the motivation and persistence of Saint Patrick's mission (ibid.:13-23), which result in new indigenized goals that connect a Romanized epistemological culture with a Celtic aesthetic one (ibid.:27-35, 53-54, 56-75). Yet, life-cycle and evolutionary forces are acknowledged and utilized by Patrick as he demonstrates that Celtic culture must allow for the rise of a Roman-controlled world (ibid.:41-44, 95-97). And dialectic forces are seen in Patrick's synthesis of Celtic culture and Christianity into a new synthesis of aesthetic and epistemological spirituality (ibid.:77-86). Hunter argues that if modernal churches are to reach postmodernal minds, the strategies of Patrick must be rediscovered. And, the embrace by both Patrick (ibid.) and postmodernal churches of quad-force models (Gibbs and Bolger 2005), would seem to strongly bear out his thesis.

Three books by Gary McIntosh also demonstrate a holistic approach to change mechanisms. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* with Samuel Rima (McIntosh and Rima 1997), though primarily a book about leadership character, does shed light upon the four forces model as the authors describe varying personality types found in pastors. McIntosh and Rima point out that teleological forces factor highly in passive-aggressive pastors who fear goals and planning (ibid.:131), that compulsive leaders in an effort to

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maintain control often rely on evolutionary strategies (ibid.:89), and that codependent pastors often seek, though fail, in utilizing dialectic tools and processes (ibid.:99-100). Subsequently, narcissistic pastors often embrace life-cycle forces to either attempt change or on which to blame its failure (ibid.:109-110). Thus, in looking at multiple personality types, McIntosh and Riva have helped describe the multiple-forces models of change that accompany each.

Biblical Church Growth (McIntosh 2003) has at its heart a strategically teleological process for inculcating Church Growth principles in the local church (e.g. Chapter 10: "The Right Plan: Target Focused," 135-150). Yet in almost every chapter, McIntosh employs an engaging narrative style to underscore the life-cycle forces that require teleological strategies. Then, the chapter on "The Right Process" heralds an evolutionary tone (ibid.:61-77), and yet the book concludes with a strong dialectic admonition to "mix it right" (ibid.: 164-180).

Evaluating the Church Growth Movement (McIntosh 2004) by its very scope and edited nature, offers a well-conceived four-forces understanding of change mechanisms and processes. Though teleological treatises dominate this edited volume (e.g. Van Engen's chapter, 121-147), Howard Snyder emphasizes dialectic forces that, if one reads between the lines, indicates Snyder's belief that they are too often neglected in Church Growth Movement literature (ibid.:207-231). In fact, some of the tension between the Renewal Viewpoint and the Centrist View can be attributed in part to a Centrist emphasis on teleological forces and the Renewal emphasis upon dialectic forces. Still, the Renewal and Gospel and Our Culture viewpoints add an appreciation for life-cycle generative mechanisms (ibid.:75-102, 148-150). Finally, perhaps most robustly, the Reformist

perspective brings forth an evolutionary rallying call (ibid.:167-189). Thus, this volume serves as an insightful glimpse in the varying perspectives that emerge when multiple forces bear upon Church Growth. Questions for future research might include to what degree does a denomination or movement's historical longevity contribute to a thinker's perspective on generative and/or sustaining forces.

<div align="center">Three-Forces Models of Change and Changing</div>

Books promoting Three-forces Models make up an interesting category. Neither expansive enough to embrace a holistic four-force model, they are also neither narrow enough to focus on a few forces. This category, often by authors who have written elsewhere more holistic four-forces books, seems attributable to a slight, but never the less unswerving move toward specificity.

An illustrative example would be Donald McGavran and George Hunter's book, *Church Growth Strategies That Work* (McGavran and Hunter 1980). Here Hunter contributes an initial emphasis upon teleological forces by emphasizing measurable and realistic goals that can motivate "local church people for church growth" (ibid.:42-45). He also emphasizes the importance of evolutionary forces with a coherent examination of the shortcomings in several prevalent motivators for change (guilt, duty and external reward, ibid.:45-46). McGavran, in his contributions, builds upon Hunter's teleological/evolutionary base with an emphasis upon the life-cycle forces prevalent in the decline of the North American Church (ibid.:59-65). McGavran stresses a distinctive prescriptive model for life-cycle change that begins with cognitive realignment of laity with the Great Commission (Ibid.: 65-77), and then continues to teleological suppositions of goal-setting (ibid.:68-77). The result is a helpful cyclical volume from two early

leaders in the Church Growth Movement, that though it overlooks dialectic dynamics, none-the-less emphasizes a clear Three-forces Model.

In similar fashion and at about the same time, Peter Wagner offered up a series of popular books that were widely read. *Your Church Can Grow* (Wagner 1976) was one of these and it embraced the same three forces as McGavran and Hunter. Wagner, in his typical clarion timbre, commences with an evolutionary call to consider the query: "to grow or not to grow?" (ibid.:22-23). His response is to ask "why, why, why?" which he answers with four case studies (ibid:22-24) and regional examples (ibid:24-27). The result in the creation of an organization theory for change that results in evolutionary examples of leadership requirements (ibid:30-33), along with teleological and quantitative initiatives (ibid:34-44). Yet, within his change theory, life-cycle forces also play a significant role, as Wagner argues that churches which are dying numerically (ibid:26-27) and spiritually (ibid:45-54) require cognitive realignment. Finally, Wagner tenders two classic chapters on organizational behavior ,wherein he describes a simple formula of "celebration + congregation + cell = church" (ibid:97-109) and the dynamics of the Homogeneous Unit Principle (ibid:110-123). Though the Homogeneous Unit Principle was more exhaustively considered in a later volume (Wagner 1979), these theoretical chapters serve as an outstanding introduction to Wagner's teleological emphasis. Like McGavran and Hunter, Wagner concludes with what will become a perhaps unwelcome trademark of the Church Growth Movement: a evolutionary postscript.

Not long afterward, Wagner would pen a similarly influential volume titled *Leading Your Church to Growth: The Secret to Pastor/People Partnership in Dynamic*

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Church Growth (Wagner 1984). In this book Wagner describes a Three-forces Model of change, but replaces one of these forces with an unexpected substitution. Management theorists Poole and Van de Ven have stated that "competition for scarce environmental resources between entities inhabiting a population" is the basis for change (Poole and Van de Ven 2004). Whether Wagner is aware of their process model or not, he follows its thesis by commencing his arguments with a very evolutionary warning that evangelicalism is competing with liberal churches for an increasingly scarce environmental human resource (ibid:31-34). Upon this evolutionary call for a change in paradigms, Wagner constructs three teleological goals of equipping leaders (ibid:73-105), establishing growth-orientated organizational structures (ibid:167-190) and followed by "pragmatic" evaluation (ibid:193-218). To this point Wagner has mirrored his early volume (Wagner 1976). However, at this juncture he digresses to consider dialectical factors in the skills required to untangle synthesis and thesis tensions (ibid:200-201, 209-212). Perhaps due to some of the criticisms assigned to the Church Growth Movement's evolutionary emphasis, Wagner counsels, "If you intend to lead your church to growth, you should plan consider portion of your time for trouble-shooting and problem solving" (ibid:200). Upon this admonition he concludes with a look at Lyle Schaller's dialectic model of the pioneer-homesteader debate (ibid.:209-212). Thus, this book provides a helpful appendage to *Your Church Can Grow* and together they form a holistic change theory, though in two volumes.

Many regarded Eddie Gibbs as Wagner's successor, and though early writings might seem to indicate this, when the entire writing career of both is taken into consideration, early parallels eventually diverge. Wagner would eventually address

numinous and governing aspects of the Church Growth Movement (e.g. Wagner 1973 later released under varying titles; 1978, 1986, 1999, 2005), while Gibbs addressed missiological implications of social cultures (e.g. Gibbs 2000, 2005). However, a slim, but remarkably helpful and appropriately titled volume, *Body Building Exercises for the Local Church* (Gibbs 1979), was released in England and mirrored the three-forces model of early Wagner (Wagner 1976). Gibbs expanded Wagner's life-cycle typology with formulas such as the "man … movement … machine … monument axis" (ibid:24). He then issued a call for the English Church to put church growth "on the agenda" (ibid:13-19) framing the discussion in an evolutionary tenor. Gibbs soon moves into his typical lucid and succinct teleological approach, with accompanying quantitative rationale (ibid.:72-80). This rationale is no where better stated than in his analysis of the Great Commission, where he states, "Here, then, is the first basic lesson in planning for growth: *we must have a clear objective and have an effective strategy for reaching it*." (ibid:75, italics Gibbs). Few statements so well sum up an underpinning of teleological forces.

As noted earlier, Gibbs often embraced a Four-forces Model, and it was not until the early part of the new century did Gibbs offer again a representative paired-down and three forces analysis. The example would be *Church Next* (Gibbs 2000), where Gibb's strong teleological emphasis will dominate. Here he emphasizes goal reformation based upon an understanding of the present-day transitions occurring between modernity and postmodernity (ibid:36-239). Yet, his first chapter begins with consideration of life-cycle forces resident in the enthuses of generations involved in cultural transition (ibid:13-18), followed by an evolutionary call for a "new paradigm" (ibid:17) that represents a "cultural shift of seismic proportions" (ibid:19-27). Gibbs' use of evolutionary

terminology (e.g. terminology describing forces that cannot be evaded, such as "seismic") underscore the evolutionary foundation from which his teleological arguments emerge.

George Hunter also mirrors this Three-forces Model in his *Church for the Unchurched* (Hunter 1996). Hunter, along with Gibbs, is one of the most holistic successors to McGavran, and this volume represents a vigorous three-forces approach to change. Hunter, viewing the bigger picture, frames life-cycle forces in terms of the life-cycle of historical Christianity (ibid:19-33) as well as personal development and change cycles (ibid:35-54). To this he appends missional and teleological strategies (c.f. "A Case for the Culturally Relevant Congregation, ibid.:55-80). He concludes with a decidedly evolutionary flair, explaining how the inevitability of generationally endued cultural dynamics require a renewal of missional ecclesial culture. As such this book begs a dialectic component to make it a fully holistic tome. And thus, perhaps pairing it with a book by someone from the Renewal perspective (e.g. Richard Foster) could result in a classic treatise on the subject of change.

Again, a similar Three-forces Model may be seen in the writings of Orlando Costas, who purports to offer "A Holistic Concept of Church Growth" in a volume edited by Wilber Shenk (Shenk 1983). Costas sees a foundational life-cycle mechanism at play as he states, "the decline in membership and attendance during the last two decades … has had a four-fold effect in North American Protestant Christianity" (Costas 1983:95). Upon these life-cycle forces he builds a teleological emphasis noting the "avalanche of church growth studies" (ibid.), and then follows with an analysis that evolutionary emphases have lead to a non-altruistic franchisement of Church Growth methodology and "a renewed effort on the part for certain groups to re-Christianize (or at least re-

religionize) North American society and culture" (ibid.). Costas strikes a chord that resonates throughout this edited volume as well as similar tomes, and that is that life-cycle forces are pushing the church toward change, which is sometimes handled with an ineffective uni-force evolutionary or teleological approach.

Gary McIntosh offers several volumes that consistently embrace a three forces approach. One written with Glen Martin (Martin and McIntosh 1997) is one of the most well thought-out and concise books on developing a church's infrastructure through small groups. As such, it deals to a degree with life-cycle forces (ibid:59-98), before delving into teleological forces and a resultant process model (ibid:101-114). The "straight-talk" section handles the logic and rationale for goal setting (ibid:115-161), but this book none-the-less includes a welcomed dialectic emphasis whereby community (ibid:47-67, 101-105) is created by conciliation (i.e. dialectic processes) rather than franchisement (i.e. evolutionary strategies).

McIntosh tenders another Three-forces Model in *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing Out the Best in Nay Size Church* (McIntosh 1999). This book takes a precise and readily functional approach toward teleological Church Growth strategies (ibid:25-57, 127-140). Yet, McIntosh also embarks upon multiple forays into the life-cycle dynamics that influence the process (ibid:49-57, 113-125, 163-171). Finally, this book builds upon life-cycle and teleological forces with an evolutionary component (ibid:141-162). McIntosh may have here offered the best syllogistic process to substantiate evolutionary forces, building them upon a base of life-cycle and teleological rationales.

In *Church That Works: Your One-Stop Resource for Effective Ministry* (McIntosh 2004), McIntosh presents one of his most exhaustive and pragmatic works. Here he

includes a multiple-force model that induces teleological forces (ibid.:106-110, 161-165, 187-192, 198-205), dialectic forces (ibid.:112-119, 206-208), and life-cycle influences (ibid.:10-12, 26-48, 166-169, 243-245). Though still somewhat secondary to life-cycle and teleological considerations, dialectic forces come more into play in his volume than in much of his former work . This is a welcomed, though not a causally evident inclination. With the addition of a section on evolutionary forces, this volume might rival anything McGavran, Hunter or Gibbs have penned in holism.

Lyle Schaller, who brings a strong teleological emphasis, still manages to balance his quantitative leanings with a three-forces approach, in his instructional guide to Church Growth Movement facilitators titled *The Interventionist* (Schaller 1997). In this book targeted at both internal and external change facilitators, Schaller emphasizes the importance of understanding organizational culture as a product of life-cycle mechanisms (ibid.:36-46, 87-88, 105-111). Equally impressive, though not unexpected from Schaller, are his segments on teleological forces (ibid.:81-86, 88-89, 134-137). But two sizable sections on dialectical forces round out this book nicely (ibid.:111-125, 139-149), and as such continue Schaller's emphasis on a multiple forces approach, even though his professional training lends itself to teleological quantitative analysis.

A recent book that has embraced a somewhat comprehensive perspective on change and how it relates to the cultural divide between modernity and postmodernity, is Gerard Kelly's book *RetroFuture: Rediscovering Our Roots, Recharting Our Routes* (Kelly 1999). Here Kelly's tactic is to employ life-cycle rationale (ibid.:43-48, 66-122, 162-179) for teleological considerations (ibid.:52-65, 123-161, 180-194). Upon this foundation, he builds an evolutionary prescription with "six-steps in the management of

personal and corporate change" (ibid.:198). And, in keeping with evolutionary conclusions, few evaluation tools are offered. Reading between the lines the reader is left with the impression that Kelly, and perhaps many Xers, believe that survival is qualification enough for an efficacious strategy. Thus, Kelly's tact may reflect an emerging Church Growth Movement line of thinking that evolutionary strategies are the requisite resolution for ecclesial lethargy.

This current author's books might here provide a fitting transition from Three-forces Models to Two-forces and One-force Models of change and changing. It was due to the influence of many of the above three and four forces books, that I joined with Kent R. Hunter in penning my first extended treatise on ecclesial organization theory, *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church* (Whitesel and Hunter 2001). Borrowing from the fields of strategic management and organizational behavior, we posited a model of organizational change in the church's management structure that allowed the growth of multiple and age-orientated sub-congregations. Dubbing this the "Multi-generational Church" (ibid.:28), we begin to describe a three-force model where life-cycle forces that result in a clash between generations (ibid.:31-81), could create a evolutionary process that might replace previous uni-generational models (ibid.:82-102), and that would be accomplished through a teleological seven-step process model (ibid.:105-237).

The warm reception of this volume brought with it the invitation to pen a second book for the publisher, and it was in this book that I sought to introduce the missing element in *A House Divided*: the dialectic component. In my consulting practice I had seen the need to address dialectic forces as the Achilles heel of my seven-step strategy.

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In addition, conciliation and synthesis did not lend itself well to simply another step in the process, for it ran throughout the process. Thus, I wrote *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change and What You Can Do About It* (Whitesel 2003). This book applied a six-stage and five-trigger process model to almost two dozen clients, to elicit longitudinal case-studies that would illustrate the dialectic mechanism required to synthesize thesis and antithesis during church change. Though this volume garnered less initial reader interest than the previous volume, its practical and strategic nature have resulted in strong continued sales. The publisher agreed to designate this book a companion volume to the first book, and begin a three-book series. It was my hope that the omission of dialectic forces in my first book with Kent Hunter would now be corrected and the two books together would offer the Four-forces Model.

Having learned a lesson from the above exercise, I sought in my next book titled *Growth By Accident Death By Planning: How NOT to Kill a Growing Congregation* (Whitesel 2004) to include as many of the four forces as feasible. However, due to an increasingly uncomfortableness with evolutionary forces in that they can become manipulative and/or a franchisement in nature, I sought to guard against this by utilizing 22 case-studies to demonstrate a holistic Three-forces Model of life-cycle influences (ibid.:17-29, 85-96, 109-120, 121-131), teleological strategies (ibid.:31-41, 55-71, 73-83), and dialectical influences (ibid.:43-53, 97-107, 133-151). The apparent holism and applicability of this book has resulted in a popularity that elicited another volume.

The next volume investigated postmodern ecclesial growth and was titled, *Inside the Organic Church: Learning From 12 Emerging Congregations* (Whitesel 2006). It followed the Three-forces Model of my previous book by eliminating the

discussion of the evolutionary forces due to the use of 12 divergent case-studies. A former professor, Eddie Gibbs, tendered one of the kindest, yet most intuitive endorsements, when he wrote on the back cover "The rich variety Whitesel presents will safeguard leaders from attempting to clone any one model" (ibid.: back cover). In my mind no better summation for excluding evolutionary forces and resultant franchisement could be posited. Subsequently, I considered in this book life-cycle factors (ibid.:38-41, 49-50, 62-65, 83-87, 94-96), dialectic forces (ibid.:10-12, 19-20, 28-30, 55-57, 65-67, 82-83, 103-107) and teleological mechanisms (ibid.:19, 47-49, 72-75, 81-82, 96-97, 102-103, 117-123). And, unlike some similar Boomer case-studies (Hybels and Hybels 1995), evolutionary forces were not evident, even in some of largest congregations (e.g. Mar's Hill and St. Thomas' of Sheffield, ibid:21-30, 1-12).

<div align="center">Signposts To Be Considered</div>

Space and disposition necessitates that two- and one-force models be afforded less consideration. Their strength comes in the fact that they pinpoint (and often scrutinize) one or two change factors at length (while remaining concise enough to please publishers). The caveat is that they do not yield a broader view of change forces that could lead to greater generalizability. However, if a congregation is facing only a few forces of change, these models can be beneficial. However, case-studies culled from my consultative practice have led me to believe that in most circumstances multiple forces are present (Whitesel and Hunter 2001; Whitesel 2004, 2006, 2006). Thus, models with fewer forces have their place and their applicability, but for generalizablity multiple-force models may be requisite. Thus, the following discussion is germane, but will be abbreviate due to relevance.

As can be seen from the above discussion of this writer's volumes, books may be penned with a focus on One- or Two-forces models when convergence, succinctness and/or delimitation is warranted. Therefore the following books have significant insights to offer and are in no way secondary. Rather they usually have a narrow focus because of their thesis and/or intent.

At this juncture, this author will invite the reader to induce from a comparison between the forgoing and the following literature reviews that their remains a potential that the popularity of such narrowly focused tomes, along with their simple description of the mechanics and processes involved, may have given ecclesial readers a false sense of the simplicity of church change. The following discussion is offered, to demonstrate that many of the authors previously mentioned have a holistic and Three or Four-forces Model at the center of their understanding of change. However, their more accessible tomes (in length, writing style and purchase price) are usually limited in the number of change forces discussed, eliciting an impression to a mass market that simplistic One- or Two-forces Models of change are holistically efficacious.

<div align="center">Two-force Models of Change and Changing</div>

Here again there is increasing saturation, as brevity and reader-accessibility make addressing Two-forces Models of change advantageous and readily digestible.

Donald McGavran's *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (McGavran 1988) is one of those books that fits nicely in this category. Written perhaps to blunt some of the critics who view the Church Growth Movement as too numerically focused, this book explores the appellation that Dr. McGavran preferred to church growth: effective evangelism. As such this book has a strong dialectical emphasis as McGavran

nimbly tackles ideological (ibid.:102-106), theological (ibid.:106-109) and socio-cultural concerns (ibid.:110-116). In this last section McGavran recounts an enlightening conversation with future Surgeon General C. Everett Koop (ibid.:113-114). The story describes how overlooked sub-cultures can be engaged by dialectic processes. Though this book's latter half is dialectic in nature, the first half embraces a teleological perspective, wherein God's goals are not only church growth (ibid.:13-23, 34-36), but also that they are to be reflected in ecclesial efforts and enthuses (ibid.:24-33).

A slim but influential book by McGavran is *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy Of Mission* (McGavran 1955). Though highly influential, its somewhat paired down foci result in an effective, yet concise discussion of two-forces of change and changing: dialectic and teleological. Here McGavran turns around his customary progression of reasoning (McGavran 1970; McGavran and Hunter 1980), beginning with teleological forces such as Biblical goals and Great Commission sensibilities (ibid.:7-35); and then moving to life-cycle forces resident within both corporate Christianity and personal spiritual development (ibid.:36-67). Here McGavran reminds us that there are multiple forces of change and changing involved, and that often teleological forces define the goals, which are then quantified by a consideration of life-cycle forces.

Another book with colleague Win Arn (McGavran and Arn 1973), one that precedes the volume earlier discussed (McGavran and Arn 1977), is more dialectical in tone and content; probably because of the conversational style employed. Titled *How to Grow A Church: Conversations About Church Growth*, it begins by acknowledging "road blocks" (i.e. thesis – antithesis tensions) to which McGavran appropriates a missiological metaphor to suggest "building bridges" to "outsiders" (ibid.:5). Quickly this concise

book returns to teleological considerations as McGavran and Arn urge the importance of "growth thinking" (ibid.:9) with cognitive realignment toward "reasons for growth" (ibid.:19), followed by measurement (ibid.:57-69) and growth goals (ibid.:99). Yet the authors tender a very well written and illustrated chapter titled "Divide and Grow" (ibid.:37ff) where dialectical forces are given due consideration as McGavran reminds us the early church experienced great unity and great friction. To this Arn queries, "Churches can grow despite friction. Right?" McGavran responds, "One of the standard ways churches multiply is to divide and grow … Christians should strive for as much unity as possible, but realize growth can go on despite disunity and friction" (ibid.:37). Though the authors do not "advocate spits as a way to grow a church" (ibid.), they are largely silent on prescriptive dialectic mechanisms. Thus, though dialectic processes are acknowledged, their management is not addressed comprehensively.

As can be seen from the books analyzed above under four- and three-force models, life-cycle forces factor greatly into McGavran's perspectives. In a representative lecture given to Manhattan Christian College in 1981 (McGavran 1981) he again commences with a life-cycle emphasis (ibid.:44-53) that leads to teleological verification of church growth (ibid.:55-57). McGavran spends the lion's share of this lecture building a case for cognitive realignment (characteristic of the life-cycle prescription) followed by teleological principles as gleaned from generative change mechanisms in the Disciples of Christ (ibid.:44-45), United Methodists (ibid.:45-46), Church of the Nazarene (ibid.:46-48), Christian Churches / Churches of Christ (ibid.:48) and Southern and American Baptists (ibid.:48-49). Upon largely life-cycle narratives, McGavran develops his

argument for teleological results of biblical church growth (ibid.:54-55) and effective evangelism (ibid.:55).

C. Peter Wagner penned a comprehensive dialogue on strategy in *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* (Wagner 1971). Though one might hope such an inclusive title would yield a three- or four-force model, this book largely tackles teleological and dialectic forces in change and changing. Echoing McGavran, Wagner emphasizes teleological strategies stating, "strategy cannot be accurately planned or effective evaluated without measurable goals" (ibid.:132). However, at this time in the Church Growth Movement criticism was beginning to arise among some who felt that the Movement overemphasized numerical goals (see Thom Rainer's excellent overview, Rainer 1998:35, 44-48, 58-59). Perhaps as a result, Wagner tenders a very persuasive dialectical section on change, stating "change of course is not intrinsically good. Nothing should be changed just of the sake of change. But on the other hand, the temptation to resist change should be conquered. Openness to changes, large and small, will keep a mission program from becoming irrelevant and passé in our rapidly changing world. While fear of change is common, obedience to Christ is as far stronger motivation…" (ibid.:30). This is Wagner's most succinct synthesis of the thesis-antithesis tensions resident in the change proponent-status quo debate.

In a similar vein, *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America* (Wagner 1979) was penned largely as an apologetic for the Homogeneous Unit Principle. However, in it an emerging evolutionary voice can be ascertained, for example, as Wagner argues for a change in paradigms from a "melting-pot" culture to a "stew-pot" mosaic (ibid.:51). This evolutionary shift, resident in the DNA of cultural

predilections, colors much of this book. However, Wagner includes many of his teleological prescriptive solutions, as he suggests that the Homogeneous Unit Principle is theologically valid (ibid.:99-136), pragmatically viable (ibid.:137-163) and church growth focused (ibid.:34-57).

On the Crest of the Wave: Becoming a World Christian (Wagner 1983) further propelled Wagner into the forefront of practical apologeticists for the Church Growth Movement. Similar in strategy to McGavran, life-cycle forces commence the volume (ibid.:21-34), upon which Wagner constructs a foundation for a teleological understanding of spiritual gifts (ibid.:55-69), as well as structures of missional organizations (ibid.:70-85, e.g. the sodality / modality axis:75). And though begun with consideration for life-cycle forces, the book's primary emphasis quickly becomes the teleological basis of mission strategy as reflected in Wagner's four strategic intentions: the right goals (ibid.:107-111), the right place (ibid.:111-117), the right methods (ibid.:117-120) and the right messengers (ibid.:120-121).

As noted earlier, Wager's later books would focus on numinous and governmental influences upon Church Growth, and as such *Church Quake: How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It* (Wagner 1999) is a representative two-force example. Here an increasingly evolutionary focus emerges as Wagner argues for a new and obligatory paradigm of management structure (ibid.:81-154). In management terms this is a sole-proprietorship model (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson 2001:445-447) and Wagner embraces an evolutionary stance regarding its adoption (ibid.:55-80). Yet, never neglecting his coherent teleological emphasis, Wagner again

returns to Biblical standards and engaging worship as goals to be attained via an apostolic administrative structure (ibid.:155-240).

More recent books by Wagner including *Revival! It Can Transform Your City!* (Wagner 1999) and *Apostles of the City: How to Mobilize Territorial Apostles for City Transformation* (Wagner 2000) have continued to emphasize evolutionary and teleological generative and sustentative mechanisms. Wagner suggests goal-orientated and teleological processes (1999:13-17) that are created by five evolutionary and requisite attitudes (ibid.:19-63). In *Apostles in the City* (2000) he analyzes four teleological assumptions (ibid.:1-4) which he juxtapositions to the evolutionary forces resident in effective leadership models (ibid.:39-50). These and other more recent volumes by Wagner generally follow an evolutionary tact, supported by teleological rationale. This is interesting in light of his early work which addressed more dialectic and life-cycle forces.

George Hunter offers a book that falls into the evolutionary and teleological two-force model paralleling Wagner, but from a different perspective. While Wagner considers the evolutionary forces for change resident in the DNA of charismatic movements, Hunter considers these genetic markers in the Wesleyan Movement in *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Hunter 1987). Hunter describes John Wesley's biblical and more efficacious model in terms of evolutionary forces created by God and corroborated in practice (ibid.:19-62). Upon this evolutionary base, he builds his teleological arguments for receptivity (ibid.:63-89), erecting bridges of God (ibid.:91-108), establishing small groups (ibid.:109-129), meeting felt and real needs (ibid.:131-15) and doing so via an indigenous process (ibid.:151-181). Here Hunter has

provided a strategically helpful and broadly applicable look at the Church Growth

Movement as historically and empirically relevant.

Though not specifically about change, Lyle Schaller's *The Multiple Staff and the*

Larger Church (Schaller 1980) does touch on the topic of change at several important

junctures. From a life-cycle perspective, he points out that large churches are susceptible

to mismanaging the change process, noting, " the larger the congregation, the more

vulnerable that church is to unexpected change …. Large churches tend to be

comparatively fragile…" (ibid.:21). Adopting a life-cycle view early in this book, he

embraces the customary life-cycle prescription of cognitive realignment as he encourages

pastors to "prepare" congregants for the inevitability of change (ibid.:47-49). Upon this

underpinning he constructs skillful teleological arguments for a staff that can "steer

change" toward agreed upon goals (ibid.:91-98, 115).

How to Build a Magnetic Church (Miller 1987) has one of he most engaging titles

within Church Growth Movement literature. And, probably due to his work with many

mainline denominations, Herb Miller begins his analysis with life-cycle forces, stating

"…due to sociological, psychological , and theological shifts in American thinking …

(churches have) slipped into a mid-life crisis" (ibid.:22). To these life-cycle forces,

Miller responds with teleological prescriptions with a myriad of accompanying goal-

orientated checklists (ibid.:113-122).

McIntosh and Martin offer another helpful book focused on the two-force model.

An assimilation volume that deals significantly with change, it is titled, *Finding Them,*

Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church

(McIntosh and Martin 1992). At first glance one may wonder why a book on

assimilation would find its way into a treatise on change mechanisms. But McIntosh and Martin clearly describe how an external influx of new congregants requires internal changes in organizational structure. Toward this end, they sound a clarion and evolutionary call toward change, citing examples of churches and Biblical stories that are replete with examples of the inevitabilities of not considering changes that will bring about effective assimilation (ibid.:21-64). To this they add teleological charts and diagrams for goal formation and evaluation (ibid.:68-70, 141-142) to round out this volume nicely.

Staff Your Church for Growth (McIntosh 2000) weds McIntosh's teleological arguments with a useful dialectic emphasis. He highlights various management models, emphasizing dialectic atmospheres of leadership relationships from the "collaborative" (ibid.:94, 98), to the "collegial" (ibid.:99). McIntosh also brings to Church Growth Movement thinking important small group insights from group theory, including "group think" (ibid.:153-154) as well as the free-riding problem (ibid.:154). These are welcomed management and dialectical perspectives, whose veracity has elsewhere been demonstrated through case-study research (Whitesel 2003, 2004). To these dialectic forces McIntosh adds a secondary emphasis upon teleological mechanisms and goals that enhance mission transference (ibid.:122-124) and evaluation (ibid.:124-134).

In *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages In Your Church* (McIntosh 2002), McIntosh updates a previous book on intergenerational dynamics (McIntosh 1995). In his latest effort McIntosh considers the requisite life-cycle forces that give rise to generational predilections and cultures (ibid.:21-24). The majority of the book follows this tact. Yet, in his concluding chapters McIntosh proficiently

emphasizes teleological processes and goals (e.g. "Nine Steps for Blending Generational Ministry, ibid.:217-222).

Joining with Daniel Reeves, McIntosh mirrors this two-forces approach in a book titled *Thriving Churches in the Twenty-first Century: 10 Life-Giving Systems for Vibrant Ministry* (McIntosh and Reeves 2006). The title seems to belie a life-cycle perspective, and reader will not be disappointed as McIntosh and Reeves investigate the "societal quakes" (ibid.:24-25), "new audiences" (ibid.:25-27), "new identities" (ibid.:28-29) and new psychological reactions (ibid.:32-33) that the church must face. They sum up nicely the power of life-cycles stating "….restoring these basic life-giving systems to ultimate health means the difference between death and survival" (ibid.:45). Finally, the authors embark upon an evolutionary chapter titled "Thriving on Change" (ibid.:183-191), letting loose a clarion call for the church to address the inescapable paradigm shift upon her.

Elmer Towns and Warren Bird consider a two-force model of changing in *Into the Future: Turning Today's Trends Into Tomorrow's Opportunities* (Towns and Bird 2000). The book begins with a teleological goal-orientated approach to change (ibid.:35-77) with resultant expectations of change in organizational structure (ibid.:93-117). Yet, over a dozen case-studies give this volume an evolutionary tenor, as Towns and Bird conclude much like McIntosh and Reeves with a call upon the church to change or die (ibid.:217-223).

Kent Hunter penned a concise tome to help churches forge spiritual and developmental progress instead of regress, and titled it: *Move Your Church to Action* (Hunter 2000). Here Hunter begins with a sweeping overview of Christendom's life-cycle to make an argument for cognitive realignment (ibid.:19-29). Then his prescription

takes a largely teleological turn as he codifies characteristics of efficacious leadership (ibid.:59-106) and contextually-sensitive strategic goals (ibid.:149-160). Though brief, the brevity makes the two-forces model readily understandable and lucid.

Kent Hunter continues his sensitivity to life-cycle forces (perhaps due to affiliation with a very conservative and traditional denomination: The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod) in *Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast* with David Bahn (Hunter and Bahn 1997). The authors argue that life-cycle forces require that a tradition-generated strategy for change must be replaced with a more Reformation-orientated realignment (ibid.:49-57). Yet, the authors believe that upon this life-cycle foundation must be built a New Reformation, more goal-orientated and purpose focused (ibid.:59-89, 243-248).   And as with Schaller, cognitive realignment is cast in terms of practices and priorities (ibid.:239-242).

Charles Arn, son of Win Arn, has contributed several widely read books of which *How to Start a New Service: Your People Can Reach New People* (Arn 1997) may the most popular. The very title of this book belies its teleological process model focus, as exemplified in its "how to…" appellation. However, Arn emphasizes life-cycle forces in his analysis of internal and external environments (ibid.:23-39, 117-12) stating, "…without change the church becomes outdated, and in only a few short generations, irrelevant…" (ibid.:53). However, he quickly returns to teleological processes that induce strategically and pragmatically designed worship expressions (ibid.:91-116, 153-181). Finally, he concludes with evaluative elements (ibid.:207-214). This is a feature often overlooked in Church Growth Movement writings, but Arn none-the-less gives it its due prominence.

Arn's *White Unto Harvest: Evangelizing Today's Adults* (Arn 2003) follows a similar tact wedding life-cycle and teleological forces. In this book, Arn takes a careful look at personal life-cycle processes via a research questionnaire and identifies interpersonal (ibid.:32-51) and life-cycle forces (ibid.:52-68) at play in senior adults. His empirically-grounded theories are delineated in seven teleological steps for initiating efficacious senior adult ministry (ibid.:75-143). The research base for this book means that Arn undoubtedly delineated out some of the four-forces for the sake of exactitude in his research questions. Still, this book provides a helpful analysis of life-cycle and teleological forces that come to bear upon senior adults.

<p align="center">One-force Models of Change and Changing</p>

McGavran's colleague at Fuller Seminary, Arthur Glasser, wrote an apologetic and introduction to McGavran's thought in a book edited by Harvie Conn (Conn 1976). As a result, and perhaps due to brevity, Glasser's contribution emphasizes primarily McGavran's teleological systems of change (Glasser 1976:21-26). A tendency to omit life-cycle forces that we have seen McGavran widely embrace, may in part be attributable to the focus and/or non-controversial intent of this volume.

In 1979, Peter Wagner wrote a popular volume titled *Your Church Can Be Healthy* (Wagner 1979), in which he further developed his pathology of diseases that can attack an ecclesial organization. Here life-cycle forces inaugurate each section, with examples drawn from case-studies to underpin the life-cycles of congregations and the maladies that result. Wagner's customary teleological emphasis is largely overlooked, as he delves into the important arena of life-cycle forces upon change and changing.

Wagner wrote a skillful apologetic for Church Growth Movement theology and methodology in his book *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (Wagner 1981). And despite the holistic sound of this title, it was an exhaustive dialectic analysis. For example, Wagner finds synthesis in the Church Growth Movement (at least in theory if not in practice) between the cultural (ibid.:27-46) and evangelistic mandates (ibid.:50-64). The result is that in this volume, Wagner demonstrates how a book can be precisely focused in order to adequately, exhaustively and persuasively address one force.

In a similar genre to *Your Church Can Be Healthy* (Wagner 1979), Wagner penned *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Wagner 1984), in which the underlying forces largely embrace an evolutionary model. An example is Wagner insistence that the church leader embrace a Church Growth Movement perspective of gift acceptance and dogged commitment to the task (ibid.:105-109). Herein is an emerging evolutionary model found more forcefully in Wagner's later writings, where theoretical constructs are to be accepted if the desired results are to be elicited (e.g. see Wagner's "two assumptions" on this, ibid.:217). Wagner sums up his thesis that "I frankly hope that this book will help change the mind of many a reluctant pastor" (ibid.:217).

Around this same time Charles Arn and Win Arn wrote a very popular treatise titled *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples* (Arn and Arn 1982), borrowing nomenclature from Robert Coleman's successful *The Master Plan for Evangelism* (Coleman 1970). Win Arn, an early collaborator with McGavran now joins his son to produce a highly teleological and apologetic treatise. Its step-by-step approach to efficacious evangelism strategy and fostering disciples (ibid.:55-96, 142-159) is coupled with live and video presentations to enhance the message. The multi-media

accompaniment is welcomed, but due to succinctness required of multi-media efforts it may have required a focus on primarily a One-force Model. Perceptions of the Church Growth Movement as emphasizing teleological forces over other contributing forces may have been inadvertently sustained.

Lyle Schaller offered a similar book with a similar pervasive teleological emphasis. Titled, *Effective Church Planning* (Schaller 1979) this influential tome relies heavily upon goal adoption and ownership (ibid.:123-137) resulting in innovative goals rather than strictly allocative ones (ibid.:105-110).

Growing Plans: Strategies To Increase Your Church's Membership, also by Schaller (Schaller 1983), mirrors *Effective Church Planning* in teleological stance, the very title denoted its teleological bent. Utilizing different strategic goals for different size congregations, Schaller along with the Arns and others are perhaps inadvertently giving teleological aspects of Church Growth Movement writings a heightened emphasis.

Kennon Callahan produced a user-friendly approach to goal setting and teleological change in his book *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strategic Planning for Mission* (Callahan 1983). He begins his books with a very teleological Chapter 1 titled "Specific, Concrete Missional Objectives" (ibid.:1-10). His unfolding plan goes through 12 relational and functional characteristics for change that rely heavily upon cognitive realignment via performance that is goal-orientated (ibid.:117-127).

Another book co-authored by Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin demonstrates a focus and application that works well with a one-force model. *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends That Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success* (Martin and McIntosh 1993), is largely teleological in focus. Though there are some

elements of life-cycle forces (ibid.:8-11, 149-150, 167-168) , these appear to mainly serve the 12 teleological goals that McIntosh and Martin describe.

George Hunter contributes a volume that is purposely focused on one-force models. *The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth* (Hunter 1979) embraces a teleological emphasis evident in its emphasis upon goal-setting (ibid.:21-33) and idealized models (ibid.:35-79). Hunter draws from interdisciplinary fields (such as psychology and Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs) to suggest teleological steps that should lead to biblical and pragmatic goals (ibid.:130-151).

Kent Hunter continues his life-cycle emphasis in the book *Your Church Has Personality: Find Your Focus – Maximize Your Mission* (Hunter 1997), where he stresses the customary prescription for life-cycle forces: cognitive realignment (ibid.:26-31). His extensive work as a consultant for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod may factor into this reoccurring emphasis upon life-cycle forces.

In a similar life-cycle approach, Hunter wrote *Discover Your Windows: Lining Up with God's Vision* (Hunter 2002). Here again Hunter follows life-cycle generative mechanisms (ibid.:11-18) and counsels that "your past determines your future" (ibid.:85). Toward that end, Hunter encourages the customary life-cycle prescription of cognitive realignment, stating, "There are two constants in the world – and only two. Christ and change. The key is to have a finely-tuned biblical worldview that separates the essentials form the non-essentials" (ibid.:87).

Darrell Guder wrote an influential book in the mid-1980s that was to prefigure his later writings and thoughts within the Gospel and Our Culture Network. Titled *Be My Witnesses: The Church's Mission, Message, and Messengers* (Guder 1985), this book

follows a decidedly life-cycle track using the cyclical history of Christendom (ibid.:3-17, 55-71) as a basis for cognitive realignment that results in a corporate and personal "witness" (ibid.:75-177). This is followed by entailments that might be expected from changes in ecclesial organizational identity (ibid.:181-235).

Some years later Guder would edit and contribute an even more influential book titled, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Guder et al. 1998). Though an edited volume, the foci are similarly dialectic as these thinkers aligned with the Gospel and Our Culture Network seek to engage mainline denominations with elements of Church Growth Movement methodology. The synthesis that emerges from the interplay of thesis and antithesis, leads Guder to remark "…we do not expect that the structures of membership must be uniform. But we do look for structures and practices that will express the missional calling of the church …" (ibid.:245).

In Allan Roxburgh's contribution to this book (Roxburgh 1998), he notes a perceived teleological tension between the Gospel and Our Culture Viewpoint that he embraces (e.g. McIntosh 2004:73-109) and the Church Growth Movement when he observes, "the Church Growth Movement focuses on effectively reaching specific target groups of people … The nature of leadership is thus transformed in to the management of an organization shaped to meet the spiritual needs of consumer and maximize market penetration for numerical growth" (ibid.: 197-198). Herein is seen the perception that the Church Growth Movement is overly attached to acknowledging and addressing teleological forces. The Gospel and Our Culture Network's emphasis upon dialectic

forces may be a result. This bears further investigation, and as such leads us to our last section.

Inductions for Future Research

The following are six preliminary inductions for future research suggested by the forgoing Church Growth Movement literature review of theories of change and changing. It is this author's hope that these suppositions can initiate germane research questions for future academicians.

Is the dialectic model less prevalent in conservative ecclesial organizations (and subsequently some Church Growth Movement literature) because of an innate wariness within conservative theological organizations that synthesis in methodology may lead to conciliation in theology? Such perspectives have signs of what Niebuhr called the Christ Against Culture position (Niebuhr 1951:45-82), a position which Kraft has lucidly and successfully revealed the fallacies (Kraft 1979:105-106). Building upon Kraft, Gibbs offers a more rational, yet dynamic perspective where God judges some elements of a culture, affirms other elements, for the transformation of the whole (Gibbs 1981:120).

Is the teleological model more prevalent in Church Growth Movement literature, because clearing up the teleological "fog" (McGavran 1970:76-92) is a significant contribution of the Church Growth Movement? The Church Growth Movement emphasizes having accurate and biblically faithful goals, followed by evaluation and reorientation. In such cases, more emphasis is placed upon goal formation, with increasingly less foci on life-cycle, evolutionary and dialectic forces (perhaps in that order?). If so, this makes Church Growth Movement literature less effective, for holistic

analysis and tools are missing that could codify efficacious theories of change and especially theories of changing.

Another question that arises from the foregoing discussion is to what degree does a denomination or movement's historical longevity contribute to its thinkers perspectives on generative and sustentative forces? For example, are life-cycle forces more prevalent in aging churches, while teleological strategies more acceptable in historically empirical denominations (e.g. John Wesley's emphasis upon spiritual methods)? And do dialectic forces appeal to churches affiliated with the Gospel and Our Culture Network, Body-life and/or Cell Churches due to a heightened expectation for thesis and antithesis to result in synthesis?

Do shorter, more concise tomes often sacrifice multiple force considerations for brevity and/or economies of scale? Though not always the case (McGavran and Arn 1977), does brevity mean that multiple-forces are usually not scrutinized exhaustively in shorter books? And thus, do some authors who have embraced multiple-forces approaches in earlier and foundational tomes, choose to tackle difficult or complex forces in books focusing on fewer change forces?

A related query is if these shorter (and by inference less costly) volumes are more widely read? And subsequently, do they have a greater effect upon ecclesial leadership and as a result perceptions (note Roxburgh's perception, Roxburgh 1998:197-198)? The result may be, if the entailments from this literature review are true and valid, that church leaders receive a generally paired-down and non-holistic view of change in more focused volumes.

Finally, does a Four-forces Change Model have a place within Church Growth

Movement theories of change and changing? If the four-forces model bears out in

subsequent longitudinal case-studies and grounded theory research, then the Four-forces

Change Model deserves a place in Church Growth Movement understandings and

strategic intent.

(Whitesel 2004)   (Wagner 2005)

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