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### Canada and Koinonia: Contextualization of Koinonia for the Peoples of Modern Day Canada

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# **SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL**

This Honors thesis entitled

**“Canada and Koinonia: Contextualization of Koinonia for the Peoples of Modern Day Canada”**

written by

**Alex Gianelloni**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for completion of  
the Carl Goodson Honors Program  
meets the criteria for acceptance  
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

Dr. Ray Franklin, thesis director

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## **Introduction**

The objective of this thesis is to further my own understanding of the meaning and process of contextualization, as well as utilizing what I learn in an attempt to perform contextualization myself. The topic of Koinonia was chosen because of its degree of importance within the Christian faith, its ability to be applicable to many different cultures, and my own desire to study and implement the subject. In order to better contextualize the topic, I would need to spend a decent amount of time within the specific culture into which I was interpreting. As such, Canada was settle upon because I was able to stay for an extended period of time due to being assigned there through the Hands-On program of the International Mission Board.

## **Contextualization**

Contextualize, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is “to place in a context”. Within the scope of Christian Theology and Missional Methodology, however, this practice focuses around placing Biblical concepts into modern-day contexts. While it may seem rather straightforward, there are many intricacies to be dealt with when practicing contextualization. Both the original context of the Bible and the context to which a concept is being interpreted into must be taken into consideration. There must also be special care taken so that the original intention of a saying, teaching, or concept will not be misconstrued during interpretation. Which requires intimate knowledge of these sayings, teachings, or concepts to begin with.

In addition to these issues, there are many different opinions as to what contextualization actually is. Some would say it is merely what was originally taught as the application portion of

interpretation of Scripture. However, this limits contextualization to just our understanding and application of Scripture rather than showing Scripture's ability to be expressed through different cultures in different ways. Others would say it is "a missiological activity that involves the crosscultural communication of the gospel and various other functions of the Christian mission"<sup>1</sup>. This limits contextualization to human activity alone, without taking into consideration the deeper aspects that change people and culture provided through contextualization. Still others would write it off as the development of new local theologies. However, this idea would create further separation between different cultures, as each culture would have their own specialized theologies rather than following universal theologies established by the biblical writers.

The purpose of contextualization is not merely to bridge the contexts of the various cultures around the world and the context in which the Bible was written so that the theological principles presented in the Bible can be easily understood and practiced within the various cultures. It involves ways in which the Scriptures themselves can not only become a part of a culture but also change a culture. As Fleming would put it, "Contextualization has to do with how the gospel revealed in Scripture authentically comes to life in each new cultural, social, religious and historical setting."<sup>2</sup> As such, contextualization can be said to "refer to the dynamic and comprehensive process by which the gospel is incarnated within a concrete historical or cultural situation. This happens in such a way that the gospel both comes to authentic expression in the local context and at the same time prophetically transforms that context."<sup>3</sup> Although it

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<sup>1</sup> Dean E. Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament Patterns for Theology and Mission* (InterVarsity Press, 2005), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Fleming, 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Fleming, 19.

contains aspects of cross-cultural communication, theology formation, and scripture interpretation, contextualization cannot be reduced to these human actions. Contextualization includes Scripture's ability to not only conform to but to change the context into which it is being contextualized.

Although the actual practice of contextualization has probably been used for quite some time in the mission field, the actual term "contextualizing theology" was coined in 1972 by a Presbyterian pastor from Taiwan named Shoki Coe. Coe was raised in a Taiwan that was ruled by Imperial Japan just before World War II. This Japanese oppression led the Taiwanese to be treated as third class citizens within their own country. It was during this time, he "experienced the interplay of faith and oppression that would give him, and the church, a new perspective and vocabulary from which to assess mission."<sup>4</sup> Coe originally developed a more global perspective of Christianity through his various studies abroad at institutions such as Tokyo Imperial University, which he gained entrance to despite a system that vastly preferred Japanese over Taiwanese, and later Overdale College and Westminster College in England, which he was only able to attend because of the influence of a Japanese friend from university. Fortunately, due to his time studying abroad, he was able to avoid returning to Japan during World War II. He stayed in England, got a job teaching Japanese at an Oriental Studies school, and it in England where he met his wife, Winifred.

However, upon his return to Taiwan he was greeted with a radically changing nation that was calling for revolution. Coe first began to teach English and scripture at the boy's school he had attended. Then, the Presbyterian church decided to reopen the Tainan Theological College in 1948, and a year later they appointed Coe as the principal where he served for sixteen years.

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<sup>4</sup> Ray Wheeler, "The Legacy of Shoki Coe," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 26 (no. 2, 2002): 77–80.

During his time as principal he found that the college was teaching methods that “were inadequate to address the reality of the context in which Coe found himself and the church in Taiwan.”<sup>5</sup> The processes that were being taught were old and not tailored to a culture on the brink of revolution. How were the students going to be able to connect with the local community with these kinds of teachings? It was due to this lack of relevance to the changing society around him that began Coe down the path to developing the concept of contextualization.

Around this time, Coe began to be berated with many issues. The Taiwanese government did not recognize his marriage, a local pastor sought to bring Coe down in order to lift himself up, and his wife and children were forced to return to England. Eventually, he decided to also return to England despite his desire to stay among his people. While in England he was offered a job as the World Council of Churches Theological Education Fund secretary and he began to further develop the concept of contextualization. It was during this time that he presented this idea at a World Council of Churches consultation. Again, although this idea had probably been practiced for some time now, Coe not only identified and labeled it but was able to bring contextualization to the forefront of the entire theological field, including evangelical circle, where we have further scrutinized and learned more about this subject.

There are many different techniques and methods used in contextualization, and while all are useful in their own right, not all are useful for every context. Before these methods can be examined we must discuss the requirements for contextualization. To begin with one must have a good understanding of the context into which they are contextualizing. Which means that, first of all, you must understand and speak the language of that culture. It is also important to understand the major religion practiced in the region and to find similarities and questions that are not

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

adequately answered, so that distinctions can be made between this religion and Christianity, as well as, finding a common foundation you can build upon. In addition, an understanding of the culture is important too. It is important to understand what kind of goals and ideals the culture sets as best, as well as what kind of actions or language is taboo and how to make amends. This is important because if what is being contextualized is not important to the local context there is very little likelihood that they will pay any attention to it. In addition, it is important to avoid any taboos because what we say or do as individuals can drastically affect how what we contextualize is received. One important question is: "Who is considered an authority?" One way to further understand a culture is to appeal to the cultural authorities. This can be an important part of contextualization because these authorities hold great influence among the target culture and can they be the linchpin that holds the missionary together with the respondent culture. We must also take a look at how dependent upon one another they are, or do they value individuality. Where we are used to individual faith and we speak to individual salvation, the culture we are contextualizing into might emphasize corporate faith over individual belief.

Another requirement is to fully understand the concept, story, or lesson that you are trying to contextualize. In order to do this in a Biblical context, you must go through the entire interpretive journey thus bringing the concept, story, or lesson into your own context. First it is important to understand this concept within its own context. This is done through word studies, historical background, and contextual background found within that time period. Next, you must figure out the differences between that context and your own. In order to do this, you must carefully examine, compare, and contrast various values, issues, and ideals held between the two contexts. Then you must decipher within the concept universal principles that apply to both contexts. This should take into consideration both contexts' values, taboos, and goals. Next you

must make sure that the principles that you have found are in line with the rest of biblical teachings. Finally, you will have fully interpreted the universal principles that you have found into your own context, and hopefully have a better understanding of how the concept can be contextualized into other contexts.

Once we understand the culture and concept to an extent we will be able to speak into that culture through contextualization. We achieve this in many different ways. One way is to use certain metaphors, ideas, and concepts that are important to the targeted context, such as exorcism among more animistic peoples, then, among those concepts make connections to the scripture or concept. You can also find a local symbol or image that similarly can connect life today to the concept you are trying to convey, such as taking the Soreh tree which is used to cool hot situation such as murders, conflicts, and wars among the people of Cameroon which with successful contextualization can be transformed to understand how Jesus takes the place of the Soreh tree to cool conflicts. Just as well you can look at modern social, political, or economic issues and reactions and relate Biblical concepts and solutions to those issues. This may include things such as linking God's provisions for outsiders in Leviticus 19 with how we, as Christians, should react to immigration issues. "True contextualization in mission concerns the needs of people in society as well as in their relation to God." Social, political, or economic issues are a gateway to showing how people relate to God.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce J. Nicholls, *Contextualization: a Theology of Gospel and Culture* (Regent College Pub., 2003), 68.



## Canada

In order to prepare for contextualization, I will now take a closer look and try to gain a further understanding of Canada as a whole. From my personal experience, Canada is a wonderfully pleasant place. It can be rather cold as I found out, and they live up to their stereotype of being polite. Although, they have their problems just like every other nation and Christ's presence among the people feels lost in some areas.

Demographically, Canada is ranked 38 in the world in terms of population with a total of around 36.9 million people. Canada is the second-largest country by total area, with a large portion of that area being uninhabited. It is a very urban nation with its population mostly living within medium or large cities. Canada has a healthy growth rate, largely due to immigration. In fact, over 20% of Canadians identify as being an immigrant. This is greatly reflected within the larger cities such as Ottawa, Toronto, and Quebec. It was reflected within the church I attended which had many different kinds of people, and even the wonderful family that hosted (and put up with) me. Both of which were immigrants to Canada at a young age. Canada is mostly Christian and secular. In 2011, 67% of Canadians claimed to be Christian, with the second highest percentage being 24% of people who claimed that they had no religion.<sup>7</sup>

Canada's history began long before Europeans settled North America. The land had long since been settled by Aboriginal peoples such as the Huron-Wendat people, who were farmers and hunters near the Great Lakes, the Cree and Dene, who were found in the Northwest and

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<sup>7</sup> "Canada Population," *Worldpopulationreview.com* (February 8, 2018). Online: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/canada-population/>

we're hunter-gatherers, the Sioux, who were nomadic following the Bison herds, and the Inuit, who lived North in the Arctic regions of Canada.

The first non-natives to reach Canadian shores were the Vikings of Iceland who settled Greenland almost 1,000 years ago and also settled Labrador and Newfoundland. The first European to arrive was John Cabot, an Italian immigrant to England, in 1497. Then between 1534 and 1542 Jacques Cartier claimed the land in the name of King Francis the first of France. This is where he overheard two native guides speak the Iroquoian word *kanata*, which means "village", and soon Canada became the name of the region. The first French settlement in Canada was established by Pierre de Monts and Samuel de Champlain at Port-Royal in Acadia, now present-day Nova Scotia. After nearly a century of fighting with the aboriginal people located there, the French settlements and Iroquois made peace in 1701. After which they began a successful fur-trading economy based on beaver pelts sent back to Europe.

Eventually English-based colonies along the Atlantic, which were settled in the early 1600s, grew to become more numerous and powerful than that of the French colonies. Inevitably, England and France battled for control of North America in the 1700's. However, by 1759, at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham at Quebec City, the British defeated the French. Which led to the Catholic, French-speaking colonies to become territories of Protestant, English-speaking Great Britain. However, British Parliament made accommodations for the new province, which entailed giving Catholics religious freedom, as well as the ability to hold public office. The Quebec Act also restored French civil law while maintaining British criminal law.

During the American Revolution, some 40,000 people loyal to the Crown, left the 13 colonies and fled to the areas of Nova Scotia and Quebec. These were all kinds of people including Aboriginal, British, German, Protestant, Catholic, and black freedmen and slaves.

During the time of slavery in America, British Parliament had abolished slavery by 1833, and many slaves that escaped from the United States fled to settle in Canada through the Christian anti-slavery network known as the Underground Railroad.<sup>8</sup>

Now onto the Canadian society. Most likely because of their proximity to one another, similar origins, and similar geographies, Canada and the United States, especially the northern United States, are very similar in cultural aspects. According to Lanier's book *Foreign to Familiar*, Canada would be considered a cold-climate culture. Lanier's meaning is that cold-climate cultures are cultures that are typically very individualistic, task oriented, privacy oriented, straight-forward, and exact. Which describes the urban areas of Canada very well. Whereas the more rural areas within Canada, such as smaller towns, might be more considered hot-climate cultures, where emphasis is on co-dependence and favorable relationships in order to help one another survive.<sup>9</sup>

Although there are many different worldviews that exist within Canada as a whole, there are some tendencies or general patterns of certain views that can be identified. When it comes to the origin of the world most Canadians would relate to either the Christian creation story or the atheistic, naturalist, evolution view of creation. However, there are also those that hold to the aboriginal animistic worldview of creation and nature. When it comes to the goals and ideals of the society, Canadians as a whole tends to describe success as happiness, honesty, wealth, healthy children, or a good spouse. Canadians might define failure or find issue with inequality, their government, or being judgmental. Canadians might view famous people as authorities, family members, or still even clergy. Canadians love through hospitality, or personal affection.

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<sup>8</sup> "Discover Canada - Canada's History," *Canada.ca* (October 26, 2015). Online: [www.canada.ca/en/inmigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/inmigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html).

<sup>9</sup> Sarah A. Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar: a Guide to Understanding Hot- and Cold-Climate Cultures* (McDougal Publishing, 2010).

They show anger through activism and ostracism. They become insulted by criticisms or challenges to their core assumptions.<sup>10</sup>

This mostly came to be because of factors such as the Industrial Revolution in 1760 and the economic boom of the 1890s and early 1900s. During the time of the Industrial Revolution a great deal of English immigrants came to places such as Canada in search of new homes due to poor and crowded conditions within English cities. This influx of people began to urbanize Canada as more people came to work in factories within the cities. During the economic boom, Canada's economy grew and became more industrialized, and one million British and one million Americans immigrated to Canada. This focus on industry rather than agriculture typically forms these kind of individualistic cultures, due to the fact that larger populations do not need to rely on individuals as much as the group as a whole. So as the importance of co-dependence dwindles, the value of individualism increases. As the value of relationship between each other dwindles so does the importance of maintaining said relationship. This leads to being straightforward and efficient as the ideal rather than upholding relationships.<sup>11</sup>

Among the French Canadians, there is also the influence of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec. This is where more liberal leaders gained control of the government and began to secularize the government, especially health care and education which the Roman Catholic Church had gained control of through abuses of power and influence. Due to this time of anti-church sentiments, many *Québécois* still hold a resentment towards the church in general. Which is why many *Québécois* account for the large number of people without a religion. Because of this, there are many great churches that are slowly dying off within Canadian cities. Sadly, you

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<sup>10</sup> This information came from a general world-view interview of a Canadian.

<sup>11</sup> "Discover Canada - Canada's History," Canada.ca (October 26, 2015). Online: [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html).

can walk around downtown Ottawa, the capital of Canada, and see magnificent church buildings that are now coffee shops or dance clubs.

## Koinonia

Transliteration - <i>koinōnia</i>	
Definition - Close association and participation centered around common interests, spending time together, and sharing resources	
Total NT uses – 19	
Gospels	0
Acts	1
Paul's Letters	13
General Letters	5
Revelation	0

*Koinonia*, at its most basic is a commonality of community not only with the people around us but with the whole Body of Christ, with God, and with Christ himself. “It is sharing a common life with other believers – a life that, as John says, we share with God the Father and God the Son.”<sup>12</sup> *koinonia*, however, is not simply social activities or goals that we share, “Biblical community goes much deeper than sharing common goals, though it ultimately involves that. Biblical community is first of all the sharing of a common life in Christ. It is when we grasp this truth that we are in a position to begin to understand true community.”<sup>13</sup>

*Koinonia* can be broken down into two different groups of four distinct parts. These four parts consist of: community relationship, partnership, communion, and sharing material

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<sup>12</sup> Jerry Bridges, *True Fellowship: The Biblical Practice of Koinonia* (NavPress, 1985), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Bridges, 10.

possessions. “The first two are dimensions of *koinonia* as *sharing together*, the second two as *sharing with one another*.”<sup>14</sup> All these parts build off of and support one another, and without them true community and fellowship is rarely accomplished.

Much like any other family relationship, the community relationship is an objective fact and a subjective experience. “According to the New Testament, a person is saved *to* community. Salvation includes membership in God’s group.”<sup>15</sup> We are objectively related in that we share life in Christ, but the strength and goodness of this relationship depends on a subjective experience. These realities impact one another in that, “Only those who are *in* fellowship with one another (objective fact) can *have* fellowship with one another (subjective experience).”<sup>16</sup> (Good) However, before we can have this objective relationship with one another we must have an objective relationship with God through union with and abiding in him. We achieve this abiding in him by realizing that we need God’s help in every aspect of our lives. We come to the realization that we cannot do anything through our own efforts, or on the opposite end of the spectrum through completely giving up and asking God to do all of the work, or that we can, to an extent, do it ourselves until we need God to step in. Rather we come to see that we require God to enable us in everything that we do.

In addition to union with God, we must have communion with God. Communion with God is akin to the active component of our union with him. It is our communication together with him, our evidence that he is with us, and through it we receive the power from God that gives us the ability to do everything. Communion with God must be a constant event. It can be

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 130.

<sup>16</sup> Bridges, 16-17.

difficult to be in constant communion with God, but “the real issue is, what is the major thrust of my mind and heart?”<sup>17</sup> When we have a morning quiet time and constant communion throughout the day with small prayers and constant listening we are practicing our wonderful ability to *share something with God*. We have nothing that God requires, but through this constant communion we are able to give him obedience, glory, honor, and thanks.

The union and communion that we experience with God are the ultimate examples of how *koinonia* works among the body of Christ. Just as we experience union with God, so we experience the community relationship (objective fact) and just as we experience the communion with God, so we experience partnership (subjective relationship) within the body. In fact, we find that *koinonia* in some contexts better translates as partners. In Luke 5:10, Peter, James, and John are all partners in the fishing business, in Galatians 2:9 James, Cephas, and John accepted Barnabas and Paul as partners. We find that these contexts indicate a *working* relationship. Bridges claims that, “Whereas relationship describes believers in a community, partnership describes them as a community in action.”<sup>18</sup> These actions include physical support of one another, as a business partnership would do, and spiritual support through prayer. When it comes to the importance of these we can take a look at Philippians. Paul looked for the Philippians support through both prayer and gifts. In fact, “To Paul, their prayers were more important than their gifts.”<sup>19</sup> We were created with the objective to glorified God, and as such, “Biblical community, then, incorporates this idea of an active partnership in the promotion of the gospel

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 71.

and the building up of believers.”<sup>20</sup> In this way we are fulfilling both the communion with God and the partnership among the body of Christ.

Much like sharing together has two portions (relationship and partnership), sharing with one another has two portions: Communion with others and sharing material possessions. Communion with others, again, is a reflection of our communion with God. “Although we usually use the word *communion* as a term for the Lord’s Supper, it is here used to mean communicating intimately, or sharing with one another on a close personal and spiritual level.”<sup>21</sup> Unlike our communion with God we can’t be in communion with others at all times. Rather, this kind of communion is a sharing among believers that is focused on God, His Word and His works. “This is fellowship: sharing with one another what God is teaching through the Scriptures, and this is an important part of true community.”<sup>22</sup> This can include things such as sharing what God has been showing through scripture, encouragement to another believer, or helping a fellow believer through a tough time. Bridges claims that, “Sharing on a level that will enhance our spiritual relationships with one another and with God.”<sup>23</sup>

Sharing with one another also includes sharing material possessions. “Paul urges us to ‘share with God’s people who are in need’ (Romans 12:13). In 2 Corinthians 9:13, he speaks of ‘your generosity in sharing with [others].’ The writer of Hebrews urges us to ‘not forget to do good and to share with others’ (13:16). The word *share* in these passages is a translation of *koinonia* in either its noun or verb form.”<sup>24</sup> Just as we share in prayer and supported one another,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 13.



we also have the opportunity to share and our material possessions. We must remember that these material possessions are not our own, but gifts be allowed to us by God. We can do nothing without him and even the “hard-earned” materials that we have are only because God has allowed us to have them. With that in mind, we should be willing to relinquish the material possessions that he is giving us to whatever may help further the kingdom. Whether that be helping support a local ministry, a foreign missionary, or a church member in need, we are called to give up our material possessions in support of one another.

### **Contextualization of Koinonia for the Peoples of Canada**

Finally, we get to the actual contextualization of *koinonia*. However, before I look at the contextualization, I would like to look at some of the complications I ended up facing. As I began to study *koinonia* I realized that this was actually a practice for believers. I'm not saying that this is not a great virtue that everyone should practice, but I came to understand that the Bible does not call for everyone to practice this kind of community, it only calls for the body of Christ to practice this. So, a better title for this thesis would be “Contextualizing Koinonia for the *Believers* of Canada”. I also came across the problem that the Canadian and American societies and cultures were so similar. Which is not a problem in and of itself, in fact, to a degree it made the contextualization simpler. However, it made the contextualization between our two cultures seem very straightforward and almost non-existent. Which was helpful in order to make the contextualization easier, but in some ways, I didn't feel as challenged as I could have been. However, this is still an important issue that needs to be addressed among the Canadian churches, because there are a number of Canadian churches that are dying. I sadly was able to

experience this when I was there. These churches don't exemplify *koinonia*, and when one walks into such churches they cannot feel the same fellowship as they would when they enter a church that exemplifies *koinonia*. They do not seem to fellowship with one another, let alone with outsiders. I would like to point out that within my time in Canada I found multiple churches that greatly exemplified this sense of *koinonia*, and these churches were thriving and growing. Including the church with which I attended and worked, and a wonderful Chinese Baptist Church in Montreal. I believe this indicates that this issue is one of the issues, if not one of the *major* issues, that is causing their failure. So, I would like to change the subject of this paper from all Canadians to believers in Canada.

First, I have to take a look back at the Canadian culture as a whole and try to discern what aspects of Canadian culture these Canadian Christians seem to be holding on to. While definitely not all Canadian culture is counterintuitive to this concept of *koinonia*, I believe the sense of individualism that some Canadians hold onto can be a major hindrance to this sense of community. I also believe that, particularly among the *Québécois*, the sense of nationalism (which is a problem American's share) can be a hindrance to the sense of community we ought to have among the universal body of Christ.

Next, I will take look at what Canadians as a whole think of *koinonia*, in order to find out the general Canadian beliefs on these types of concepts. I did this through informal survey of 50 people which consisted of two definitions of *koinonia* and these four questions.

1. Are you familiar with the ancient Greek concept of *koinonia*? \_\_\_\_\_

Definition - Close association and participation centered around common interests, spending

time together, and sharing resources; a deep, personal connection within a community that is willing to sacrifice time and resources for the betterment of one another.

2. From that basic explanation, can you give me an example of how people today exemplify *koinonia*? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you believe that Canada as a whole exemplifies *koinonia*? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are ways that people here in Canada can practice better *koinonia*? \_\_\_\_\_

Most of the people I interviewed were college students that as far as I know were not Christians. So, the information I received is skewed toward this group. However, I believe they did a decent job of reflecting how Canada as a whole views *koinonia*.

For question one, most answers were no they had not heard of the concept of *koinonia*, although there were a couple that had, and they connected *koinonia* with religious organizations. I then had them read the two definitions provided.

For question two, most answers either consisted of volunteering, charity, religious organizations, or common interest clubs. There was one that emphasized friendships, and a few more that emphasized obscure ideas that do not seem to be connected to *koinonia* at all.

For question three, the answers were mostly down the middle with slightly more no's than yes's. Those that said that, yes, Canada as a whole exemplifies *koinonia* mostly either referenced the kindness of the Canadian people as a whole or governmental institutions that aid people such as universal healthcare or immigration policies. Those that said that, no, Canada does not exemplify *koinonia* as a whole mostly referenced the individualism among Canadians or gave the concession that there were individuals or specific communities that exemplified *koinonia*, but that Canada as a whole did not.

For question four, most answers consisted of emphasis on finding and addressing community needs or participating in more community activities. There were some that

emphasized recognition and reconciliation of certain people groups. Also, there were some that merely suggested to be a better person or care about someone else.

Next, I will take a look at how koinonia can apply to the Canadian culture. When it comes to finding symbols or metaphors I don't think that Canadian culture, just as the American culture, has many significant symbols or metaphors that can be applicable to koinonia. In addition, now that the focus is on Canadian Christians in particular, I think that issues faced among the church there would be more effective at conveying the importance of this idea. As such, I think the best technique would be to simply relate the dying churches found within Canada and the biblical mandate for koinonia.

Koinonia is one of the bases of our Christian belief. As Christians, we are all called to participate in fellowship with one another. This includes all those who are members of the body of Christ. Just as we depend on Christ to give us everything that we need and have, we must also learn to depend and serve one another. Our relationship and fellowship with one another reflects our relationship and fellowship with the Lord.

As such, we are called to share together and share with one another. As the body of Christ, we are a community that shares in life with Christ. None of us can do anything without him. He blesses us with everything that we have and everything that we are. Through him and we are related to one another and we must recognize that relationship has an objective fact. We are related to one another. However, we must actively pursue this relationship in order to fill our duty as the body of Christ. We are partners who share in suffering and success, and in prayers and actions. Through this we grow closer to one another and help one another where we fall. We are called to share what we learn from God, and to help one another grow in our understanding of Him. We grow through mutual help of one another. We become better Christians by sharing

what we learn and helping each other become better disciples of God. We are called to share through giving of material possessions. Sharing material possessions is the physical expression of our relationship that we have with one another. They are not our possessions in the first place, and through our fellowship we are called to help in any way we can.

Koinonia represents is a small fraction of the emphasis that God places on community. We come to Christ because of our own individual belief. However, when we become Christians we enter into the body of Christ. We become a part of the group. There is no room for individualism. We can do nothing without Christ, but we can do anything with him. Koinonia is fellowship together here on earth. It is a small representation of what our fellowship will be when we enter into eternity. When we are collectively worship the Lord forever. There is no place for only me. We will be together forever in the body of Christ.

Koinonia is one of the ways that we express our love of Christ. We reflect our love for him by loving one another, and we live as examples to those who do not believe. If we cannot even properly love and support one another on this earth with everything that God has given us, how are we truly expressing our love for Christ? This kind of fellowship that reflects our relationship with Christ is so vastly important that there are a number of churches that are slowly fading away because their expression of Christ's love does not shine through properly. Their love for Christ could be at the core of the issue, but it is their fellowship, their reflection of Christ's love that is causing them to perish.

Koinonia is not only a way we follow Christ, but it is also a way we reach out to others. When an unbeliever come to a service it is a way of expressing sincerity of belief and showing the change that Christ makes in our lives. If they come to our service and they do not see Christ reflected in us, in their eyes how are we any different from them? Through our fellowship we

reflect Christ's love for us and for all humanity. We outwardly express the inward relationship we have with Him. Through this expression of fellowship, we can be beacons of light, and we can bring Christ's truth to those around us.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has successfully taught *me* more about contextualization, its meaning, its history, its methods, and how to successfully practice it. Just as well I learned more about the concept of koinonia and how it plays its important role in the life and community of the body of Christ, in addition to learning and interacting with a great deal of Canada and wonderful Canadians. While I did need to change some of the aspects of the thesis, I believe that I successfully achieved contextualization of koinonia for the *believers* of Canada. This will definitely be a useful resource for myself as I continue in God's plan for me, and I hope that someday it will be of some use to someone else.

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