

Towards a strategy for promoting and multiplying effective, biblical church plants from  
Southlands Church, Orange County, California

By

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A 60-credit Mini-Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Theology in Integrated Theology

at South African Theological Seminary

Submitted in June 2017

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The opinions expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary or the Supervisor (s) of the research.

### **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Signed: Name: Alan Peter Frow

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017

## Dedication

Firstly, I dedicate this work to Jesus Christ, the only Shepherd who laid down his life for me as a Lamb. He has saved me by His grace, called me by His kindness and accompanied me through every shadowy valley with His comforting presence. I am profoundly grateful to be included in His glorious plan of making disciples by planting and strengthening churches.

Secondly, I dedicate this work to my father, Peter Frow, who passed on to me his great love for the Scriptures and the Church. Our conversations around the kitchen table in my formative years ignited a call to serve God by loving the Church with the Scriptures. Both my mother and father have tangibly demonstrated this love by being faithful members and leaders of one local church for forty-four years. At great cost to his own comfort and reputation, my father has preached the Word in and out of season, correcting, rebuking and encouraging with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:2). I am grateful to him for his legacy of a *long obedience in the same direction*.

Thirdly, I dedicate this work to my wife, Rynelle, and my children, Asher, Sophia and Levi, who have endured eight years of a Dad being tucked away in his office far more than he should be. They have demonstrated such grace and patience to me during this extended season of study, and I look forward to being more fully present. They are my greatest treasure here on earth and I am so thankful that the Spirit has kept together us in the bonds of His peace.

Finally, I dedicate this work to the people of Southlands Church. I am deeply thankful for the way in which you have embraced our family and have been willing to follow a foreigner even as he finds his way in a foreign land. God has put in the heart of this church a willingness to keep sending and going for the sake of the gospel, and while this has been costly, it has also been astounding to see what Jesus has done with this willingness. This work has been birthed out of our life together and I trust that it will infuse us with greater health and skill as we continue to plant and strengthen churches whose mission it is to glorify God in the power of the Spirit by proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **Abstract**

This thesis is based upon the realization that Southlands Church was found lacking in its operative theology with regards to the multiplication of churches. The primary objective of this study is to determine how to promote and multiply effective, biblical church plants from the Southlands Church, Orange County, California. The focus is on the role of the doctrines of the penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the planting and strengthening of these churches. The secondary objectives of this thesis are: 1) to interpret the operative theology of Southlands Church with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church; 2) to determine a biblically faithful operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church; and 3) to develop a strategic plan to strengthen the operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church. The research design and methodology employed in this study are based on Browning's strategic practical theology (1991:54-73). This holistic approach has four steps covered over three chapters with steps 2 and 3 in the same chapter. The thesis begins with the analysis and interpretation of empirical data from qualitative empirical research conducted with ten respondents from various churches planted from Southlands over the past twenty years (chapter 2). It proceeds in chapter 3 to consider what constitutes a biblically faithful church planting operative theology with special focus on penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and then a theological analysis of the empirical data culminating with the formulation and defence of an operative theology to guide the multiplication of churches from Southlands towards greater effectiveness. Chapter 3 ends with the formulation of appropriate solutions to embody the operative theological. The final chapter develops a strategy for promoting and multiplying effective, biblical church plants from the Southlands Church, Orange County, California (chapter 4). The following are the findings of the thesis. First, Southlands Church has had a historic tendency to prepare church planters to communicate a church model more skillfully than they communicate message of Christ, which has had an adverse effect on the growth and health of church plants. Second, Southlands must respond by providing church planters with a more thorough grounding in the message of Christ, with special reference to the doctrines of the penal substitutionary atonement and

empowerment of the Spirit. Third, while more recent churches planted from Southlands have been better prepared in communicating the message of Christ, more attention needs to be given to equip church planters towards missional effectiveness through evangelistic boldness and Spirit-empowered prayer.

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Objectives.....	4
1.3 Presuppositions and delimitations of study.....	4
1.3.1 Presuppositions.....	4
1.3.2 Delimitations of study.....	5
1.4 Definition of key terms.....	6
1.5 The Research design and methods.....	8
1.5.1 Research design.....	8
1.5.2 Research methods.....	11
CHAPTER 2: INTERPRETING THE CHURCH PLANTING OPERATIVE THEOLOGY AT SOUTHLANDS CHURCH .....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Background.....	14
2.2.1 Information on the official historic position of NCMI.....	15
2.2.2 Observation of church planting from Southlands.....	17
2.3 Design and methods of the Empirical Study.....	20
2.4 Results of the Empirical Study.....	23
2.4.1 Introduction.....	23
2.4.2 Preliminaries and background.....	23
2.4.3 Theological training prior to planting.....	24
2.4.4 Gospel Definition and church growth.....	26
2.4.5 Spirit-empowerment and church life.....	32
2.4.6 Doctrine, mission and multiplication.....	37

2.4.7 Post-script questions.....	40
2.4.8 Conclusion.....	41
2.5 Discussion of the results of the Empirical Study.....	41
2.5.1 Introduction.....	41
2.5.2 An over-realized Ecclesiology and an under-realized Christology hindered multiplication .....	42
2.5.3 Re-awaking to the gospel produced reaction to the Spirit.....	42
2.5.4 The key doctrines of Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA) and Empowerment of the Holy Spirit (ES) are vital for building healthy churches but do not necessarily ensure rapid conversion growth.....	43
2.5.5 ES must move beyond meetings into mission.....	44
2.5.6 A relational approach is vital but does not guarantee conversion growth.....	45
2.5.7 Preaching of PSA linked more to growth among de-churched than growth among un-churched.....	46
2.5.8 Relegation of spiritual gifts from Sunday gathering resulted in a stagnation of spiritual gifts from everyday life.....	46
2.5.9 Conclusion.....	47
2.6 Summary and conclusion.....	48
 CHAPTER 3: FORMULATING AND DEFENDING A BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL CHURCH PLANTING OPERATIVE THEOLOGY FOR SOUTHLANDS CHURCH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WHAT ROLE PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT (PSA) AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (ES) SHOULD PLAY .....	50
3.1 Introduction.....	50
3.2 Towards a biblically faithful operative theology regarding church planting	

with special focus on PSA and ES.....	52
3.2.1 Some literature perspectives.....	52
3.2.2 A biblical exegetical perspective.....	61
3.2.3 Other N.T. perspectives.....	63
3.2.4 Alternative views.....	67
3.2.5 A historical perspectives.....	71
3.2.6 Non-biblical perspectives.....	78
3.2.7 Conclusion.....	82
3.3 Conclusions concerning a biblically faithful church planting operative theology for Southlands.....	83
3.4 The extent to which Southlands is achieving a biblically faithful church planting operative theology.....	87
3.5 A defence of the church planting operative theology for Southlands.....	91
3.6 Conclusion.....	93

## CHAPTER 4: FORMULATING A THEOLOGICALLY INFORMED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR COMMUNICATING AND IMPLEMENTING A STRENGTHENED BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL CHURCH PLANTING OPERATIVE THEOLOGY AT SOUTHLANDS CHURCH.....

4.1 Introduction.....	95
4.2 Influence on Southlands by best practices in church multiplying.....	96
4.3 Communicative plan for gaining acceptance of the new church planting operative theology at Southlands.....	100
4.3.1 Communication of proposed new church planting operative theology to the elders, apprentices and deacons and working to consensus.....	101
4.3.2 Communication of the new church planting operative theology	



to the other church members and gaining their support.....	106
4.4 A Strategic Plan to implement the new church planting operative theology at Southlands.....	107
4.4.1 The Porterbrook Network; Alpha Course; and Beginners guide to the Spiritual Gifts Course.....	108
4.4.2 Book of Acts sermon series/Gospel Primer focused on mission.....	109
4.4.3 Pastor/Planter Apprentice Track with Assessment.....	110
4.4.4 Market Place Ministry Course for business people on planting Teams.....	113
4.4.5 Preacher's Training Course.....	116
4.4.6 Spirit-led Prayer Training Course.....	120
4.4.7 Love your city day of service .....	121
4.4.8 'Healing on the Streets' Training and Prayer Booth.....	122
4.4.9 Preparation of the church planting team for Chino.....	123
4.4 Conclusion.....	125
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	127
5.1 Review of objectives.....	127
5.2 Tracing the argument.....	128
5.3 Summary of findings and their significance.....	130
APPENDIX.....	135
WORKS CITED.....	147

# Chapter 1:

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Southlands Church began as First Christian Church of Montebello in 1967. It later moved to the East San Gabriel Valley in the early 1970's and changed its name to Christian Chapel of Walnut. The commencement of the church coincided with a well-documented spiritual awakening in Southern California called the Jesus People Movement (JPM). This movement witnessed many young converts embrace a vibrant form of Christian revivalism while maintaining their own culturally distinctive folk worship, hippie-style dress code, and commitment to communal living as described in the Book of Acts (Hunt 2008:3). Christian Chapel grew rapidly during the JPM, bearing close resemblance to its ethos of evangelistic zeal, vibrant youth ministry and informal worship style (cf. also Bustraan 2014).

Towards the end of the 1970's Christian Chapel became exposed to two emerging varieties of Pentecostalism, namely the Charismatic Renewal and the Third Wave Movement associated with the Vineyard Association of churches (Jackson 1999:334). The church began to experience and practise the spiritual gifts of prophecy, prayer for healing, glossolalia and interpretation. While a subsiding evangelistic zeal meant that the church did not grow as rapidly with new converts as in the previous decade, it experienced a season of internal spiritual renewal, becoming known in the community as a centre for prayer and inspirational worship under Jessie Mason's leadership tenure of fourteen years.

Christian Chapel changed its name to Southlands Church in 1996 when Mason handed over senior leadership to Chris Wienand, who chose the name *Southlands* because this was the commonly accepted geographical term for Southern California. Wienand was a prominent leader in what Black and Pepler refer to as the 'New Apostolic Reformation' in their article,

*“Retaining an Apostolic Approach to Church Life”* (2007:2). This movement emerged from the British and South African House Church Movement of the 1970’s. Southlands’ particular association with this movement was through its link with New Covenant Ministries International, which was established by Dudley Daniel in South Africa in the late 80’s (p. 43.) The church became known for its commitment to reproducing informal churches whose aim was to bear close resemblance to the description of the church in the Book of Acts.

Over the next fourteen years Southlands planted twelve churches and became known as a sending centre with a clear sense of mission through church multiplication. It also sought to recover a (Book of) Acts-type ecclesiology, governed by a presbytery around plurality and consensus, and where this leadership took place in two phases: the initial mature church planting team rapidly replaced by younger, less-experienced leaders who had been groomed by the former. Southlands achieved this by the initial planting team being composed of both experienced leaders and relatively inexperienced ones. While Southlands was prolific during these fourteen years in church multiplication, the absence of external denominational regulation of doctrine was a significant factor that led to a lack of theological consensus amongst the churches that were planted, that is, there was a drift towards theological polarization with the consequent lack of functional cohesion between the churches.

It seemed that a lack of grounding in the foundational doctrines of the gospel and the empowerment of the Spirit had a detrimental effect on the success of churches planted from Southlands during these fourteen years. They tended generally to struggle to see conversion growth because of a lack of contextual awareness and evangelistic boldness, or they lacked dynamism as they gathered to worship and proclaim the gospel, resulting in a dry orthodoxy devoid of spiritual life. A number of these churches are no longer in existence. Some however, did grow rapidly and gained very real traction in missions and spiritual life.

I have worked as a pastor at Southlands Church for approximately ten years, having served as senior pastor for the last seven years. I therefore inherited the leadership of a church with a significant church planting history, having planted twelve churches in fourteen years prior to my term of leadership. Since 2010 we have sought to continue in our God-given call to multiplication, but with an honest assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of our church

planting history. We analyzed the varying operative theologies that have contributed to the vastly differing conditions of these churches. We did this because as I had become concerned that Southlands Church in its church planting strategy had over-emphasized ecclesiology and under-emphasized Christology in its training of church planting teams. This, in my opinion, meant that church planters were more equipped to preach a model of church than the message of Christ, which in turn hindered the missional effectiveness of each church. I also felt that the church planters had over reacted to the stress at Southlands on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in their planting ministry once they discovered and embraced Reformed theology. To correct these perceived shortcomings we focused on a church planting strategy centered in the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Spirit, which I felt, were solidly biblical and central to church planting. Using this approach with strategic application we have planted two congregations in Southern California since 2010 and are preparing to plant a third in 2017. Thankfully both congregations have experienced significant numeric growth and spiritual life. We also planted a fourth church into Chiang Rai, Thailand in July 2016, which is already experiencing rapid growth. From the primary sending base of Southlands 200 adults have been sent to plant churches in the last three years. However, this position needed to be better tested and improved if necessary.

Thus, one issue this thesis attempts to address is more specifically the history of prolific church planting at Southlands Church since 1996 up until the present time with special reference to the role that the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (and the practical experience of them) have played or not played and the kind of church growth that stemmed from this. This objective automatically implied the need to explore the role that these doctrines and their experience played in the history of successful church planting during the New Testament period. Southlands Church's high view of Scripture and its evangelical beliefs required that any church planting praxis should to be justified from a critical biblical reflection on church planting in the New Testament period and the wider context of God's mission in the world centered in Jesus Christ. It was envisaged that from these two areas of study, a more faithful operative theology for church planting with reference to these doctrines would emerge. Finally it was foreseen that a communicative strategy to fully or more successfully implement the church planting ministry of Southlands Church would be necessary.

## 1.2. Objectives

### Primary objective

The primary objective is to determine how to promote and multiply effective, biblical church plants from the Southlands Church, Orange County, California. Such an objective will be referred to in this mini-thesis as achieving a biblically faithful operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church. The focus is largely on the role of penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in a church planting praxis because of their central place anticipated in Jesus' ministry and observed in New Testament church planting and in the recent history of Southlands Church's multiplication praxis.

### Secondary objectives

The primary objective was divided into three secondary objectives, each of which is achieved in a chapter of the mini-thesis. By achieving the secondary objectives, the primary objective would be attained.

The three secondary objectives are:

- (i) To interpret the operative theology of Southlands Church with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church
- (ii) To determine and defend a biblically faithful operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church with special reference to what role penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit should play.
- (iii) To develop a strategy for promoting and achieving a more biblically faithful operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church.

## 1.3. Presuppositions and delimits of the study

### 1.3.1 Presuppositions

This mini-thesis is based upon several presuppositions. First, it recognizes the Bible as God's inspired and authoritative revelation for all of life and doctrine. Second, it acknowledges Jesus as God's only way of salvation and the Church as his primary agent of gospel proclamation to the world. Third, it presupposes that the Church is commissioned by Jesus to make disciples and that disciples cannot be made apart from the local church. This is the presupposition that underpins Southlands Church's vision to be a multiplying church. Fourth, this mini-thesis acknowledges that the book of Acts is not merely a description of the mission of the early church, but that it also carries a prescriptive pattern for the model and mission of the church. Therefore, an operative theology of church planting should ask first what is biblically faithful and secondly what is optimally relevant to the church's context, rather than vice versa.

Fifth, since Southlands Church is not part of a denomination and does not generally send its planters for external formal training, the development of internal informal training forums for its church planters is of paramount importance. While Southlands Church has begun more recently to partner more closely with two external church planting institutions, it views these institutions as supplementary rather than substitutionary. It resists the idea of the complete outsourcing of training of its church planters, holding to the presupposition that the local church is the most effective 'greenhouse' for cultivating church planters and their teams.

### **1.3.2 Delimitations of the study**

This mini-thesis has several delimitations. First, it limits its study to the mission of Southlands Church with respect to church planting from 1996. It acknowledges that there are other vital aspects of mission in which the church should be involved, such as pursuing mercy and justice, equipping Christians to live out their faith in the work place, and supporting existing missionary organizations. However, it also acknowledges that if healthy, disciple-making churches are planted, these disciples will love mercy, act justly, live faithfully in the work place, and support relevant missions organizations.

Second, this mini-thesis is largely limited to the preparation of church planters and their teams. It acknowledges that churches should be involved in training their members in numerous other areas of discipleship beyond church planting. Southlands Church has courses that seek to equip its members to strengthen their marriages, families, finances, biblical knowledge and

devotional lives. However, the mission of the church as a multiplying church is rather unique and it is therefore of special interest to seek to explore how to strengthen this mission.

Third, the mini-thesis limits its study to the two primary doctrines that it views as central to the planting of healthy churches. It acknowledges that while these doctrines may be central, they are not sufficient by themselves to plant healthy churches. It accepts that church planters and their teams require training in areas such as biblical leadership, administration and financial stewardship, pastoral counseling, worship leading, and emotional and marital health. However, Southlands Church has tended to excel in these aspects of training while tending to neglect training as it pertains to theology and its mission.

## **1.4 Definition of key terms**

There are numerous terms that require definition in this thesis. First, when the thesis uses a capital 'C' for the word Church, it refers to the universal Body of Christ. The only exception is when the church is specifically named, in which case it refers to a local church, for example 'Southlands Church.' When the thesis uses a lower case 'c' for the word 'church,' it refers to any local body of believers who gather regularly around the sacraments, worship, biblical teaching by qualified leaders, prayer and fellowship (Acts 2:42-47).

Second, Southlands Church does not refer to a single congregation. At present it refers to the following communities that make up Southlands Church: the original church, which is called Southlands Brea and two plants – Southlands Fullerton and Southlands Whittier. Southlands Chino will shortly become the fourth community. The only church planted in the past four years that is not called Southlands is the one in Thailand. Although this church is autonomous, it enjoys high levels of inter-connectedness with Southlands. It is currently led by the lead pastor/elder and two external interim pastors from Southlands of which I am one. The objective is that this interim team will dissolve once the lead pastor has raised up another pastor from within. The church is supported financially by Southlands and we send ministry teams to strengthen and encourage the plant approximately three times per year. This mini-thesis will not include the church plant in Thailand when it refers to the communities that make up Southlands Church.

Third, the term ‘elder’ in the Southlands context is synonymous with the term ‘pastor’ with various ministry responsibilities like teaching, shepherding and leading, but also includes the exercise of governmental responsibility in the areas of doctrine, direction and discipline. This understanding flows from the three Greek verbs used for the term elder in Peter’s first epistle: “To the *elders* (Gk: *Presbuteros* – a governor) among you, as a fellow *elder* and witness of the sufferings of Christ, *shepherd* the flock of God (Gk. *poimeino* – to guard and guide) that is under your care, exercising *oversight* (Gk: *episkopos* – to oversee, to administrate), not under compulsion, but willingly” (1 Peter 5:1-2). PJ Smyth, in his work entitled, *The World needs more Elders*, emphasizes the multiple eldership roles of governing, shepherding and overseeing from the Scriptures, decrying the notion that the different eldership duties should be divided up into different groups of leaders. “The most striking aspect of the shepherd-sheep image is that the shepherd is simultaneously *over and amongst* his sheep. The shepherd is both *overseer* and *pastor*, both *high level* and *hands on*” (2017:67). Each of Southlands Church’s communities has an elder that is known as the community pastor and is devoted full-time to pastoral ministry and supported by Southlands Church.

Fourth, the term ‘lead pastor’ needs definition. The combined number of elders from the Southlands communities is twelve. ‘Lead pastor’ refers to a first-among-equals among these twelve elders, leading this team of elders in plurality and by consensus. The lead pastor serves as the chairman during meetings, with ‘tie-breaking’ authority should there be no consensus on a decision, except for major doctrinal, directional or financial decisions.

Fifth, the terms ‘churched,’ ‘un-churched’ and ‘de-churched’ are used and require definition. While some church growth experts simply distinguish between ‘converted’ and ‘unconverted,’ this is too simplistic a categorization for the researcher’s context in the U.S.A. This research acknowledges the complexity of church planting in a nation that predominantly identifies as ‘Christian,’ but whose definition of Christian is often nominal. In 2014 the Pew Research Center conducted extensive research on the state of religion in the U.S.A and reported that 70,4% of Americans self-identified as Christian (2014:9-23). However, Barna and Kinnaman in their work entitled *Churchless: Understanding today’s Unchurched and how to connect with them* stress that the percentage of Christians in the U.S.A. who regularly attend church has dropped significantly in the past decade. Their definitions are helpful in that they acknowledge



the broad range of attitudes towards the Church amongst those who identify as Christian, from nominal to devout. They define 'churched' as those with a Christian faith who attend church regularly. These are most likely nearly all converted. They define 'de-churched' as those with a Christian faith background who used to attend church regularly but have not attended at all for at least six months. Both churched and de-churched would identify as Christian, but the latter category would have a nominal or suspicious attitude towards Church and are therefore most likely to be unconverted. The authors define 'un-churched' as those who have not attended church at all for the past six months. Un-churched are likely to have little or no Christian faith background; however, they may identify as Christian because they attended a Christian school or were part of a Christian family. These too would most likely be unconverted (2016:10-15).

Sixth, the term 'missional,' which is used and explored extensively in this thesis, refers to the identity of every Christian as being sent into the world with the same mission and means with which Christ was sent into the world (John 20:21). The term 'missional' is intended to challenge the presupposition that the church can outsource its mission to professional missionaries in distant lands. It aims to reclaim the biblical identity of the Church as God's primary missionary agency, sending any who call themselves disciples of Jesus as missionaries into the world in which they live. Keller, in his work entitled *Center Church*, defines the five marks of a missional church as being *evangelistic, incarnational, contextual, communal and reciprocal* (2012b:256-258) (see below). Southlands has had some emphasis on all these aspects.

## **1.5 Research design and methods**

### **1.5.1 Research design**

The research design for this mini-thesis is Don Browning's four-step (see below) approach to practical theology which he calls strategic practical theology (1991:chap. 3). In his vision of theology, as in Smith's (2013) approach to integrative theology, strategic practical theology is the climactic final movement. Browning's approach has four movements (1983:8): (i) descriptive theology, which results from an interpretation of some practice and its embedded meanings (Smith 2011:38-39); (ii) historical theology, which involves taking the questions raised by an examination of our practices to our normative texts in order to determine how

those texts really imply to our practices (p. 39); and in this movement we have ‘the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, church history and the history of Christian thought’ (Browning 1991:49); (iii) systematic theology, which is ‘the fusion of horizons between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of normative Christian texts’ (p. 51); and (iv) strategic practical theology, which flows from and builds on the previous three movements (p. 9).

Browning’s ‘model’ (he does not claim this status) of strategic practical theology thus follows an in-depth theological analysis of a selected theme, and provides a framework for exploring the practical outworking of the theoretical research in a particular faith community. It entails answering the following four questions (1991:39-51):

- (i) How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act? (flows from the first movement)
- (ii) What should be our praxis in this concrete situation? (flows from the second movement and part of the third movement)
- (iii) How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation? (flows from part of the third movement)
- (iv) What means, strategies, and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation? (largely unique to the fourth movement, though still related strongly to the results of the other movements)

This comprehensive vision of how theology should be done mirrors the vision of integrated theology. Browning has clearly provided an excellent blueprint for using the fruits of intensive theological reflection to inform, reform, and transform a practice of a particular community of God’s people. Though this mini-thesis follows this four-step approach of Browning’s strategic practical theology, it treats the second and third steps together, resulting in three content chapters with each chapter achieving one of the three secondary objectives of the mini-thesis. The suitability of Browning’s ‘model’ for this mini-thesis is thus clear. This yields the following structure for the mini-thesis:

Chapter	Title	Notes
1.	Introduction	This chapter introduces the research by providing the background, objectives, research design and methods, and structure.
2.	Interpreting the church planting operative theology at Southlands Church.	This chapter covers Browning's first question, namely, describing Southlands Church's church planting vision and the modus. This chapter will also seek to discover if the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Holy Spirit and their related praxis have played any significant role and whether there is any link between these doctrines and the development of the church plants.
3.	Formulating and defending a biblically faithful church planting operative theology at Southlands Church with special reference to what role penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Holy Spirit should play.	This chapter covers Browning's second and third questions, namely, developing and defending a vision of what the ideal church multiplication theory of praxis with special reference to the role penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Holy Spirit should look at Southlands Church.
4.	Formulating a strategic plan for communicating and implementing a strength-	This chapter covers Browning's fourth question, namely, formulating a strategic plan to improve and strengthen the praxis of church multiplication at

	ened biblically faithful church planting operative theology at Southlands Church.	Southlands.
5.	Conclusion	The concluding chapter reviews the objectives, argument, and findings of the mini-thesis.

A further aspect of this thesis is that the second and third questions of Browning's strategic practical theology will be handled largely from an evangelical perspective (see section 1.3.1).

### **1.5.2 Research methods**

#### Chapter 2: Interpreting the church planting operative theology at Southlands

Firstly, I explore the church planting history of Southlands Church from my own knowledge gained during my nine years with the church and from my observations during this time. My interest is primarily to see what role penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit had played in the history of church planting at Southlands Church, especially since 1996 when the church entered a prolific stage of church multiplication. Under my leadership these two doctrines have occupied central positions in our church planting.

An empirical study was conducted among church planters from Southlands Church. The ethical guidelines of SATS were followed in this study, including the maintaining of anonymity of the interviewees, as well as the granting of permission by each interviewee for the publishing of their results. The method used for this study is mostly a qualitative one. This enabled me to ascertain (i) the nature of the preparation of the church planters before embarking on the church plant, with particular reference to the role penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Spirit would play in the church planting, and (ii) the impact of their preparation or lack thereof on their church planting.

### Chapter 3: Formulating and defending a biblically faithful church planting operative theology for Southlands Church with special reference to what role penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Holy Spirit should play

The hypothesis that has guided Southlands Church in its church planting operative theology in recent years has been that the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit should be inseparable in the life and mission of the church. Chapter 3 essentially tests this position. This chapter is taken up with a search for a biblically faithful church planting operative theology for Southlands Church. I firstly employ a literature review with special reference to the 'Reformed-Charismatic' theological vision. Then this is followed by biblical exegesis of John 1:29 and 1:31 and a systematic theology study based on five clusters of OT and NT passages that are synthesized into five theological statements: (i) Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:17-22; (ii) John 12:32-33 and John 14:15–16:18; (iii) Acts 1:3 and John 20:21-23; (iv) Acts 1:4-5, 1:8 and 2:4; and (v) Acts 4:31, 4:8, 9:17, 10: 44-45, and 19:6. The systematic theology study tests my hypothesis concerning the central place of penal substitutionary and empowerment of the Spirit in church planting. The systematic study also considers historical theology and extra-biblical disciplines.

A biblically faithful operative theology with reference to church planting for Southlands Church with special reference to the place of the doctrines of atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is then deduced by critically synthesizing all these perspectives. In the light of the findings in chapter 2 the faithfulness and the shortcomings of Southlands Church's planting ministry are noted. The church planting operative theology formulated in chapter 3 is also defended.

### Chapter 4 Formulating a strategic plan for communicating and implementing a strengthened biblically faithful church planting operative theology at Southlands

This chapter presents a strategic plan to gain acceptance of and implementation of a truly biblically faithful church planting praxis from Southlands Church. The implementation plan covers seven strategic steps focused on three groups: the leaders, congregation, and most intensively the church planting team that is being trained to plant a church in Chino in the Inland Empire of Southern California.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Interpreting the church planting operative theology at Southlands Church**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the first step in Browning's strategic practical theology by answering the question, "How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?" (1991:55). The concrete situation in this mini-thesis is the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church. In answering this question the first of the three secondary objectives of the study is achieved, namely interpreting the current operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants. This is the first step toward the fulfillment of the primary objective of this study, which is to formulate a strategic plan to implement a biblically sound and effective operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church.

The chapter firstly presents the official position of the church planting network to which Southlands was historically connected – New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI). This network is not an official denomination. Numerous secondary sources were formational in the shaping of the network's approach to the planting of churches. This connection highly influenced Southland's approach to church multiplication. This official position of Southlands concerning church planting is also gleaned from observations (ii) during my time of its operation and church planters who left Southlands to start new churches or transition existing ones, and (ii) from a twenty-minute DVD documentary on the fifty-year history of Southlands compiled from numerous informal interviews (<http://southlands.net/our-story/>). A concrete understanding of the present situation with regards to church planting practice therefore required a fresh look at this historical connection or background.

In addition to this network's influence, the concrete situation with regards to church planting at Southlands was further clarified by a qualitative study conducted with the leaders who have been involved in church planting throughout recent decades of Southland's multiplication history. Thus, secondly, the chapter records the results of this qualitative study and a discussion and interpretation of them. This study provides a situational analysis of the multiplication praxis implicit amongst those from Southlands involved with church planting. This analysis of the beliefs and actions of these church planters is important because "actions reflect beliefs and beliefs inform actions" (Smith 2014:13).

The qualitative study is not only intended to clarify Southlands' operative theology with respect to church planting since 1999. More specifically, it seeks to determine how the doctrines of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the Empowerment of the Spirit have influenced the numerical growth and the spiritual and functional health of the churches planted from Southlands Church in the past eighteen years.

From this point on in the mini-thesis, Southlands Church will be referred to as Southlands. Further, the penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit will be referred to as PSA and ES respectively.

## **2.2 Background**

The background to Southlands comprises two parts. The first part is the official historic position of NCMI towards theological training of its church planters. NCMI was the church planting network with which Southlands was previously a partner church. The second part of this background section is comprised of my observations of the actual church planters who left Southlands to start new churches or transition existing ones and a DVD on the fifty-year history of Southlands. I compare the two parts (2.2.1 and 2.2.2) to show whether there is a correlation between the official position of the network and the beliefs and practices of Southlands' church planters.

### 2.2.1 Information on the official historic position of NCMI

While Southlands has never been an official part of a denomination, it has not operated as an independent church. From 1996 until 2008 it functioned as an autonomous local church in formal partnership with the church-planting network NCMI. The vision, values, and ecclesiology of this network largely fashioned the way in which Southlands planted churches during this period. The network's approach was reflected in various books and training manuals written by the leaders of the network (<https://www.ncmi.net>). Some attention is given to the sources below as they are clearly important in ascertaining accurate background information. Generally, though, formal theological training was conspicuous by its absence. On the one hand, this enabled Southlands to plant churches more rapidly than other churches that required their planters to attend Bible College or Seminary before planting. This rapid pipeline of young, willing planters has been remarkable and remains strength within the church to this day. On the other hand, the lack of theological preparation and maturity has produced something of a *stained-glass ceiling* on the growth and stature of these churches.

While NCMI was broadly Evangelical and Charismatic in ethos, its emphasis was on what was referred to as a *New Testament Pattern*. This was an ecclesiological vision for how a church should be planted, rather than an explicitly Christological one. Dudley Daniel, the Founder of NCMI, is quoted as saying, "The only way we will get New Testament results is by adopting a *New Testament pattern*. The New Reformation that is presently under way has once again released apostles and prophets to build the church that will touch the world" (McKellar 2001:2). This ecclesiological vision for a New Testament Pattern meant that NCMI was more prescriptive about the present-day reality of apostles and prophets and building Biblical leadership structures within the local church than it was about how to faithfully interpret Scripture, proclaim the message of the gospel or make disciples of Jesus. For instance, in his training manual entitled *The Leadership Model*, which can still be found on the NCMI website ([www.ncmi.net](http://www.ncmi.net)), Daniel states that, "In order for us to get on with the great privilege of church planting and bringing the saints to maturity, we need to see a great crop of leaders come forth. It would seem that one of God's major solutions to the churches' problems today is a leader who will commit themselves radically and whole-heartedly to build according to the Biblical pattern" (Honiball and Daniel 2001:2). Thus the emphasis of their writing and training was



more on a leadership model, which was in their minds, *the* leadership model, than it was on becoming skillful gospel practitioners.

Furthermore, the absence of any accredited theological seminary associated with NCMI meant that most church planters went into the field with insufficient (i) theological training in the interpretation and proclamation of Scripture, (ii) culturally relevant apologetics, or (iii) defence of sound doctrine in the face of current doctrinal heresy. NCMI did at one stage have a non-accredited theological correspondence training course with no formal written examinations called ITCC (International Theological Correspondence Course) which ceased to exist in 2010. While there are some theological resources on their current website, the clear majority of resources are of a practical leadership nature. The one-year church planters training course which was at one stage hosted by Southlands itself, was an informal practical course that emphasized hands-on learning from leaders in various churches. Dudley Daniel's materials – "The Leadership Model" and "Apostolic Strategy" – were the only prescribed materials for the course. Church planters were free to discover their own theological vision, which meant that they were more easily influenced by contemporary theological trends and emphases, and tended to lean towards extreme theologies such as *Hyper-Grace*, *Kingdom Now* and the *Prosperity Gospel*. The absence of sufficient theological mooring meant that church planters were often, "*tossed to and fro by every wind and wave of doctrine*" (Ephesians 4:11).

Moreover, while NCMI was Charismatic in ethos the clear majority of its training emphasized what was referred to as a Biblical *wineskin* that would effectively hold the *wine* of the Spirit. This was a reference to Jesus' teaching in Matthew's gospel (Matt 9:17) and was understood to refer to the Biblical structures that made for the healthy functioning of the spiritual gifts. Daniel refers to this in the book entitled *Apostolic Strategy: A Biblical Pattern for Discipling the Nations*: "God has a specific agenda with His church and the heart of this is not merely the restoration of the manifestations of the Spirit [*new wine*]. Each local church should ensure that its *wineskin* [vision, values, leadership structure, model], its mandate and mission are Apostolic/Prophetic in nature" (Hunkin 2006:40).

Tyrone Daniel, the son of founder Dudley Daniel and current leader of NCMI, admitted in an interview in 2015 that the movement had recently experienced a much-needed recovery of the

centrality of Christ in everything they did. “If you look around the world I think you can see that God has brought a central focus on Jesus back. But I think there was a time when guys began to blow the trumpet of every other theme and focus and I wouldn’t say their hearts were wrong — ours wasn’t either — but they began to get involved in a lot of the doing at the expense of the most important ingredient, that being Christ” (2015). While this is heartening, it verifies the perception that the historic lack of explicit doctrinal equipping produced an over-developed ecclesiology and an under-developed Christology amongst most of church planters in our movement. This in turn had an adverse effect on the missional productiveness of the churches we planted.

## **2.2.2. Observation of church planting from Southlands**

### *a. Organic leadership development produced entrepreneurial church planters*

The unique strength of leadership development within Southlands meant that it was like a church planting *greenhouse* from 1996 to 2007. Chris Wienand, the lead pastor during this era, had a philosophy of ‘*every believer a leader*.’ Leadership training was the most marked ministry of the church. While Southlands was not opposed to formal seminary qualification, its emphasis was more on internal, organic leadership development, which resulted in the ordination of elders and deacons as leaders in the church. Elders fulfilled active pastoral roles as well as the more traditional executive roles associated with the term. They were measured against the 1 Timothy 3 Biblical qualifications of an elder rather than by formal seminary qualification. Those who possessed these qualities, as well as a recognized call to lead, were appointed as elders and encouraged to consider planting a church in the future. While Wienand would have stopped short of stating ‘*every elder a church planter*,’ the ratio of ordained elders at Southlands who subsequently planted churches was unusually high – as high as 70% at one time. Historically, this organic process of leadership development had its benefits because it created a rapid pool of leaders and those with natural, entrepreneurial gifts thrived.

### *b. Lack of a suitable assessment process for church planters*

The strong impetus towards church planting meant that some people were sent out who were not particularly suited to the pioneering call of church planting. Some have admitted in retrospect that they felt a subtle pressure to plant a church because this seemed to be the definition of progress and significance in the kingdom. There was no formal, rigorous assessment process for church planters. This meant that those who were sent out were not sufficiently clear on their areas of strength and deficiency. It also meant that some who were sent out should never have been sent out, because they were much better suited to remaining at Southlands as part of a broader leadership team.

*c. Church planters under-equipped in theological and ministry skills*

While church planters from Southlands were historically well equipped in leadership and administrative skills, with a strong emphasis on building godly character, marriages and family, none of them received formal theological training before being sent out to plant a new church. They therefore lacked vital skills in Biblical exegesis, expository preaching, contextualizing the gospel, pastoral counseling, spiritual formation, and leading people to experience and express a Spirit-empowered life. This lack of in-depth training appears to have produced a *stained-glass ceiling* on most church plants. In 2010, renowned theologian Michael Eaton, made the comment in a sermon at Southlands that our churches possessed an *over-realized Ecclesiology* and an *under-realized Christology* and that this would hinder the progress of multiplication (recorded in elders' meeting minutes).

*d. An inability to articulate a clear theological vision on their website*

Generally the church planters are able to articulate their values around leadership, community, prayer and worship. However, when it comes to an articulated theology or mission to their city, they tend to be vague, enlisting over-used and cliché phrases such as, "We exist to love God and love people," "For the King and His Kingdom," or "To Know Jesus and make Him Known," rather than carefully articulated statements of faith and vision.

*e. A lack of definition of Mission and alignment of members around Mission*

None of the churches planted before 2007 have managed to grow beyond 350 adults, and most churches have slow or static numeric growth. In other words, Southlands has historically

planted small churches. While small does not always equal unhealthy, most churches have experienced more transfer growth than conversion growth and this points to an absence of skilled gospel fluency and contextual exegesis. My assessment is that the generally high relational values of Southlands, and the generally low value upon preaching to seekers as well as Christians, has meant that churches have grown by providing a warmer inviting community than the church down the road.

My observation is that this lack of true *missional* definition and engagement is due to a vision amongst church planters to *plant a meeting before a mission*. Whereas historically, every believer was considered a leader, the shift needs to be towards *every believer a missionary*. The important *missional* conversations of the past 10 years by leaders such as Alan Hirsch (cf. Hirsch and Ford, 2011), Ed Stetzer and more historically, Leslie Newberrin and David Bosch, are generally absent amongst these churches. In their book entitled book, '*What is the Mission of the Church?*' De Young and Gilbert refer to the need for churches to define their core mission and to align every member of the church towards this mission: "We believe the church is sent into the world to witness to Jesus by proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of all nations. This is our task. This is our unique and central calling" (2011:26). I believe that healthy Biblical disciple making (evangelism leading to conversion and then establishing in the faith) is the key to multiplication. Multiplication is the fruit of disciple making which is the primary mission of every church and must be repeatedly and clearly articulated.

f. *An inability to articulate a clear philosophy of Spirit-empowered ministry*

My observation and reading is that churches, including church plants from Southlands, have failed to recognize the great variety of Spirit-empowered approaches within the USA – from Hyper-Faith Charismatic to Pentecostal to 'New Wave' – and have generally failed to address the high degree of suspicion towards Charismatic Christianity in general. Their inability to articulate their values around this polarizing aspect of Christianity means that they have either become overly mystical in their approach to spiritual gifts, or they have become overly conservative in their approach. Neither approach is helpful in the growth of vibrant, Spirit-empowered communities. There is therefore a great need to articulate both a wise Biblical theology of the Spirit as well as a sane working model in this regard.

## 2.3 Design and methods of the Empirical Study

The preceding section has provided background data that helped to provide an initial, but superficial, picture of the church's operative theology regarding multiplication. Therefore, an empirical study was necessary for a more in-depth grasp of the operative theology from the church planters' perspectives and the state of their church plants. This section describes this research.

The essence of the empirical study design was one that mostly facilitated qualitative research. With reference to any type of empirical research, the mnemonic IMRAD (which stands for Introduction, Methods, Materials, Results and Discussion) provides a useful orderly way to organize and present a research project (Vyhmeister 2008:150). It was therefore used in presenting my qualitative study and a narrowly focused quantitative study. The introduction outlines the research question and its significance for the topic being discussed. This has effectively been covered in chapter 1 and the introduction to chapter 2. The major method of qualitative study (used in this mini-thesis) is the interview as this method enables issues being researched to be explored in suitable depth. It provides the interviewees the opportunity not only to provide external details captured in quantitative research, but also their own experiences and views and deep reflections. Nancy Vyhmeister, in her guide to writing quality research papers, describes the purpose of descriptive research (which includes quantitative and qualitative research) as "making reality known" (2008:151), which in my case was the church planting process at Southlands, the results, and likely reasons for the latter. The choice of interviewees requires careful selection to ensure that the results are either representative of the population being studied or, as in my case, that the persons with the relevant knowledge and experience were chosen.

The tool/material used in an interview is normally a prepared, but open-ended, list of questions to ensure that the information being sought is gained. The design of questions is a challenging and demanding task as they must be relevant, probing and broad enough for gaining the information required. The construction of the questionnaire that I used was around four main areas for more effective organization and analysis of the results. The interviewee and interviewer play key roles in the interview. The data/results gleaned from the interviews needs

to be accurately recorded and summarized if the research results are to have any scientific value. Then the results are discussed to establish their significance – in my case for the overall purpose of the mini-thesis. This final discussion stage of an empirical research (however limited) is also crucial to ensure that the results are interpreted perceptively, especially their relevance to the topic, which in my case to the overall objective of the mini-thesis. Ethical norms for qualitative research need to be followed, which were adhered to in my research, including regarding the final report appearing in this mini-thesis and the promise of confidentiality of the interviewees' information.

My systematic sampling method was based on a sample size of ten church planters from nine different faith communities that Southlands has planted within the last twenty or so years. I made initial contact with them via email requesting permission to interview them after explaining the purpose of my research. In one case, it was not the senior/lead pastor so I first requested permission from the lead pastor. They all signed a document of consent to be interviewed for my study. The interviewees comprised both male and female members. My interview was preceded by an emailed copy of the open-ended questionnaire, which gave the respondents some time to reflect on the questions. Each interview was conducted verbally by phone or face to face and privately. During the sessions I took meticulous notes, confirming the interviewees' responses, which were transcribed onto a spreadsheet document. I gave the interviewees the opportunity to read the report for accuracy before being included in this mini-thesis report. Several interviewees were from ethnic minorities, showing the fact that Southlands has had significant success in planting amongst these groups.

Whilst some attention was given towards quantitative elements such as age of church, size of church, rate of growth per year, and estimated transfer versus conversion growth, I was particularly interested in the correlation between the understanding and outworking of two major doctrines (PSA and ES) and the life, growth and health of each church. My focus was to seek the reality concerning the connection between the operative theology and the growth path and condition of each church. The reason for my interest in the place given in Southlands' church planting to PSA and ES was my theological hypothesis that these key doctrines played a central role in church planting in the New Testament period. If correct, they would need to do so today.

I arranged the church plants according to the date when they were started. The interviewee of the oldest plant I called respondent 1. The interviewee of the second oldest plant I have labeled respondent 2. Following this system respondent ten is from the youngest church plant. Respondents 3 and 4 come from the same church (they are the lead pastor and an elder's wife). The respondents were prepared to have their churches and names identified in the final report, but I decided on an anonymous approach.

The interviews enabled me to identify the following with reference to the nine church plants:

- a. How well or poorly they felt they were prepared theologically prior to planting the church. Also, how important they felt this theological training was to the success of their church plant.
- b. The respondents' understanding and convictions about the doctrines of PSA and ES. For instance, did they see them as Biblical doctrines? Could they distinguish Penal Substitutionary Atonement from Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. Could they describe the difference between a Continuationist approach and a Pentecostal approach to the Spirit?
- c. The importance of these doctrines in the life of each church. This would be revealed for instance by how often they refer to them in preaching, discipleship groups or specific courses, or whether they were central or peripheral to the teachings of the church.
- d. How the doctrine of PSA was applied practically to equipping individuals for evangelism and discipleship and how this has impacted upon conversion and spiritual growth in the church.
- e. How regularly prayer was offered to people initially for the baptism in the Holy Spirit) for people who had not yet experienced this, and then thereafter for regular equipping for members in the operation of the spiritual gifts, especially within the church.
- f. How careful were the leaders of the church to explain the operation of spiritual gifts in Sunday gatherings to newcomers and outsiders?

- g. What evidence was there for a *missional* culture within the church rather than mere gathering for meetings? Is there a possible correlation between the answer to this question and the place of PSA and ES in the church?

This information was obtained by dividing the questionnaire into four major sections to the interview, the first being the preliminaries and background of the respondents and their respective churches. The second section sought to establish the respondents' levels of theological training prior to church planting. The third section was aimed at establishing how the respondents' definitions of the gospel impacted on the growth of the community, with particular reference to the doctrine of PSA. The fourth section similarly explored the churches' approach to the doctrine of SE and its effect on the churches' numerical growth and spiritual vitality.

This section has described the methods used in my small-scale social research. The next section presents the results.

## **2.4. Results of the empirical study**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended questionnaire that was used. Each question is listed with a summary of how the interviewees answered it.

### **2.4.2 Preliminaries and background**

Questions one to thirteen (see Appendix, Annexure A, Section A, page 131) cover age and gender of the interviewees and roles in their churches. It also covers age, place, congregation size, membership size and staff size of the church they planted. All the churches are led by a team of pastors, also called elders. In other words, the term pastor and elder are used synonymously.

The range of church size, age, as well as the age of the interviewees, was significant. The oldest church was planted in 1999 and the newest church was planted in 2016, thus the church plants ranged in age from 1 to 17 years. The smallest church was the one most



recently planted in 2016, which had an average attendance of 60 people. The largest church had an average attendance of 1293 and was planted in 2009. The oldest church leader interviewed was 63 and the youngest was 35. The youngest interviewee who lived in the smallest town led the largest church. The average age of the interviewees was 39 years old. The smallest church had 1 elder and a staff of 1. The smallest population in which a church was planted was a town of approximately 10 000 people and the largest population was a city of 2.16 million people. Two of the interviewees were leaders of Southlands multi-site communities, which are not fully autonomous churches, but function with high levels of autonomy with their own congregations and eldership teams. Eight of the interviewees planted churches in the USA, one interviewee planted in Perth, Australia and one planted in Chiang Rai, Thailand. The largest church had the largest team of elders at 13 and the largest paid (some full-time and others part-time) staff at 21.

Some pastors were employed by the church. Others were 'market place elders' not employed by the church, but serving in active ministry rather than merely as governing board members. The respondents were asked for a comparison of the size of their leadership teams and church membership with the average attendance as this is an indicator of church health. While the 8th, 9th and 10th respondents led the youngest church plants, they possessed the highest ratio of leaders and members to attendance size.

### **2.4.3 Theological training prior to planting**

The aim of this section of questions (see Appendix, Annexure A, Section B, page 132) was to establish the degree to which Southlands has prepared churches planters theologically prior to planting.

Question fourteen was: *What formal or informal theological training, if any, did you complete prior to planting?* Only the 6<sup>th</sup> respondent had completed a formal theological degree prior to church planting. The 1st respondent completed 12 units of Bible at university, and the second respondent had completed a diploma in theology at Bible College 25 years before he planted a church. Three respondents had all studied through ITCC (International Theological Correspondence Course), which was a non-accredited course provided by New Covenant Ministries International, but all said it was more practical and ecclesiological than theological.

The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent had no theological training, either formal or informal prior to planting a church. The 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents all did 2-years of theological training through The Porterbrook Institute which was conducted internally by Southlands.

Question fifteen was the following: *As an estimate, what percentage of this training took place externally, what took place internally at Southlands, and what took place through self-study?* Most of the respondents felt that their internal training was approximately 25%, except the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents who said 65% and 70% respectively. However, when asked what form it took they replied that it was mainly ecclesiological training. The 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents who studied Porterbrook at Southlands all said that their internal theological training at Southlands comprised 60% or more of their theological training.

Question sixteen asked: *What percentage of Southlands' theological training that you received was Christological (message) and what was Ecclesiological (method)?* The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent saw an even balance of 50/50. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respondents said 20/80, the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent said 25/75, and the 5<sup>th</sup> respondent said 5/95 all in favor of Ecclesiology. The 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents were all fairly even, 60/40, 40/60 and 40/40 respectively. So, except for four respondents, the majority viewed Southlands' theological preparation as heavily weighted towards Ecclesiology.

Question seventeen asked: *With regards preaching, how did Southlands train you in Biblical interpretation, exposition and preaching the gospel in your own context, and did you feel this training was sufficient?* All respondents except for the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> said they felt very underprepared as preachers, with most preparation coming informally from observation. Except for respondents 1, 3, 5, and 8, respondents had preached publicly less than 5 times before they left to plant and felt that they had inadequate opportunity to grow as preachers. Respondents 9 and 10 spoke of the benefit of being on a preaching team that prepared together as well as presenting and being given constructive feedback during their Porterbrook course.

Question eighteen asked: *What course or courses, which you did not study during your church planter's training, do you now wish you had taken?* All respondents said they wished they had taken more formal theological training except for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents. The 9<sup>th</sup>

respondent said that he felt well prepared but could have done more Biblical theology. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respondents all wished they had taken hermeneutics, systematic theology and expository preaching or missiology. The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent wished she had taken a course on 'gospel foundations.' The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent wished he had taken more systematic theology and spiritual formation/self-leadership. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent wished he could have taken more on cross-cultural ministry seeing as he planted a church in Thailand.

#### **2.4.4 Gospel definition and church growth**

Questions 19 to 27 cover the relationship between Gospel definition and church growth (see Appendix, Annexure A, Section C, page 132).

*Question 19 asked the respondents to describe the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement in no more than 50 words, and provide a Biblical basis for why they support or oppose this doctrine.* All the respondents were unequivocal in their support of PSA. The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent was unable to articulate it sufficiently or provide scriptures to support it, but spoke of Christ's dying on the cross in our place. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents provided very clear and comprehensive definitions with supporting scriptures. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents were also clear on Christ dying as a substitute to pay the penalty of humanity's sin, but neglected to articulate atonement that resulted in the gift of righteousness. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent articulated PSA well with supporting scriptures, but admitted that he had to look it up to understand what it meant.

*Question 20 asked: How significantly did Southlands shape your view of the gospel? Has your view changed since planting a church and if so, what factors were influential in changing that view?* The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respondents all said that Southlands played no significant role in shaping their understanding of the gospel, and was far more influential in shaping their understanding of the church. They all spoke of their journey of discovering the centrality of the gospel after leaving Southlands, and attributed this discovery to authors like John Piper, Tim Keller, Mark Driscoll, and Jeff van der Stelt. The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent said that although his view of the gospel was not significantly shaped by Southlands, he grew up in a Baptist church that gave him an understanding of the gospel. He has since learned to articulate it more effectively. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent said that he began to learn about the gospel at Southlands in the last few

months before he left to plant a church, but had to learn most of it himself through writers like Berkhof, Murray, Owen and Calvin. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents claimed that Southlands fundamentally shaped their understanding of the gospel in the 7 years before they planted a church. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent said that Southlands added substance to the understanding he already had of the gospel, but since planting a church in Thailand, he has become even more convinced about the need for the centrality of the gospel because of the proliferation of legalism and the prosperity gospel in Thai churches.

The twenty-first question was: *How have you equipped your church to understand and bear witness to Jesus' claim to have died in the place of sinful humanity, absorbing God's righteous judgment of sin, rescuing us from eternal wrath and in so doing, purchasing for us the gift of eternal life with God?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents spoke of their churches teaching expositionally through books of the Bible and showing the theme of God's redemption through Christ as foundational throughout these books, including the Old Testament. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents intentionally brought back weekly communion to their services to discipline preachers to focus every message on PSA. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent has intentionally helped his congregation to recognize the 5 Solas of the Reformation in Scripture – *Scripture alone is the standard, justification is by grace alone, through faith alone and in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone*. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent did not intentionally teach his congregation the doctrine of PSA, but focused on the centrality of Jesus in scripture at the beginning of his church plant. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents began their church plants with a small-group course called The Gospel Primer, which helped every member to grasp and share the gospel. The 8<sup>th</sup> respondent also spoke of working with his worship leaders to make sure they were singing songs that clarified the person and work of Jesus. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent took his whole team through a year of Porterbrook, a gospel-centered course on mission before they planted a church in Thailand. He continually brings the centrality of the gospel into his team training and his Sunday preaching. Except for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respondents, there appears to have been a real gospel resurgence in all the churches in the past 5 years.

The twenty-second question was: *How have you helped your church distinguish between the Biblical gospel, the Prosperity gospel, the Social gospel and Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents did not implicitly try to oppose false gospels, but

suggested that by teaching the authentic gospel explicitly on Sundays and in training, counterfeit gospels were exposed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent suggested that exegetical teaching affirmed the Biblical gospel and that reading books like *Generous Justice* by Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gospels* by Trevin Wax and *Preaching Christ in all Scripture* by Ed Clowney, had helped him in this regard. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent also took all his leaders through an introductory class on the gospel and hosted Porterbrook year one, which helped expose false gospels. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent explicitly and repeatedly teaches the differences between what he regards as true and false gospels, using Al Mohler's teaching "8 trajectories towards an adjusted gospel." The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent did not have a real grasp on these terms and had not tried to expose counterfeit gospels, but said that teaching the Bible as opposed to church values was helpful in rooting his congregation in truth. The 8<sup>th</sup> respondent occasionally gave examples of what false gospels produce in his sermons. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent helped his people to exegete their new culture in Thailand, and has pointed out the religious bents in the churches around them, calling for his people to be faithful to the gospel.

The twenty-third question was: *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being inactive and 10 being active, how active are the members of your congregation in sharing the gospel with friends, neighbors, colleagues and family?*

1<sup>st</sup> respondent: 7

2<sup>nd</sup> respondent: 5

3<sup>rd</sup> respondent: 5

4<sup>th</sup> respondent: 3

5<sup>th</sup> respondent: 8

6<sup>th</sup> respondent: 7

7<sup>th</sup> respondent: 5

8<sup>th</sup> respondent: 2

9<sup>th</sup> respondent: 6

10<sup>th</sup> respondent: 3

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respondents qualified their low scores by saying that their people would score much higher in terms of serving and engaging relationally with unbelievers, but score low on

articulating the gospel with words to unbelieving friends and colleagues. The average score was 5. Of particular interest, was whether there was any correlation between those churches with a high score in personal evangelism and a high score in conversion growth. This was certainly the case with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respondents, who both scored 7 and 8 respectively in personal evangelism and reported the highest two rates of conversion growth.

The twenty-fourth question was a multiple-choice question: *How would you describe the numeric growth of your church since its inception?* The first option was declining, the second option was static, the third option was irregular growth, the fourth option was steady growth of 3-10% per year, and the 5<sup>th</sup> option was rapid growth of 10% or more per year. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents charted steady growth. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents charted rapid growth. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent charted initial irregular growth but more recent steady growth. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent charted irregular growth.

The twenty-fifth question asked: *How many believers do you baptize per year on average in your church?* All churches held a *credo baptism position* as opposed to a *paedo-baptism position*. Therefore, while the question did not specify that every water baptism was from conversion, water baptism is a good indicator of conversion growth. While some children growing up in the church reach an age of understanding and are baptized as believers, it is assumed that the majority of those baptized are those who are new to the faith.

The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent estimated between 20 and 25, the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent estimated between 6 and 10, the third respondent said 28, the fourth respondent estimated between 15 and 25, the 5<sup>th</sup> respondent said 35, the 6<sup>th</sup> respondent said between 1 and 2, the 7<sup>th</sup> respondent said 5, the 8<sup>th</sup> respondent said 3, the 9<sup>th</sup> respondent estimated between 3 and 5, the 10<sup>th</sup> respondent said 0 as they had only been going for 4 months.

None of the churches practised infant baptism, although some children were baptized as they reached an age of understanding the gospel. Nevertheless, the number of baptisms compared to size of church does provide some indication of conversion growth in the church. The highest ratio of number baptized compared to number in attendance was the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent at 1 in 19, followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respondent, which was 1 in 20. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent had the most baptisms, but in terms of congregation size the ratio was 1 in 34. Of particular interest was the

fact that larger churches with most rapid numeric growth did not necessarily have the highest ratio of baptisms to attendance. It does point to the reality of transfer growth in larger churches, and the possibility that smaller churches are often more fruitful in engaging the un-churched because they may be less intimidating.

The twenty-sixth question asked: *What percentage of the growth of your church is from conversion growth (new believers), de-churched (people with a Christian background but who were not attended church for six months prior to joining), and transfer growth (people who came from other churches)?* Of most interest was the rate of conversion growth as an indicator of how the gospel is impacting those who are not Christians. In terms of conversion growth, the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent reported the highest rate of conversion growth at 20%. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 15% conversion growth. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents reported 10% conversion growth. The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent, who attends the same church as the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent reported 2% conversion growth so there is a discrepancy. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents reported 5% conversion growth. The 8<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 1% and the 10<sup>th</sup> reported 0% having just planted 4 months prior to being interviewed. The average rate of conversion growth per church was 7.8%. The range of conversion growth is significant from 0 to 20%, although the church reporting no conversion rate is very new and has experienced rapid transfer growth. Of interest is the fact that the oldest church reported the highest conversion rate and has experienced steady growth.

Growth from de-churched was generally high across the churches. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent reported the highest growth from this category at 70%, the 8<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 64%, and the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent was similarly high at 60%. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondent both reported 45%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent reported 40%. The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 18% growth from this category. Again, there was significant discrepancy between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents' estimation of the percentage of growth from de-churched in the same church. This may point to the perceptions of congregants being more realistic than those of lead pastors. The implication of this for interpreting the results of the qualitative research is dealt with at the beginning of section 2.5 that discusses the results from the interviews. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 30% growth from de-churched. The 9<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 30% and the 10<sup>th</sup> reported 20%.

The lowest report in the category of transfer growth was from the 5<sup>th</sup> respondent at 15%, followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent at 20%. The highest rate of transfer growth was reported by the 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents at 80%, followed by the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents, who both estimated 65% transfer growth. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent reported 50%. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents both reported 45% transfer growth. The 8<sup>th</sup> respondent reported 35%. Not surprisingly, the two churches reporting the highest rate of conversion growth also reported the lowest rate of transfer growth.

The twenty-seventh question was as follows: *How has your preaching of the gospel shaped the missional rhythms of your church?* The term ‘missional rhythms’ refers to the intentional habits of Christians to build a meaningful and repeated connection with the people around them in the hopes of making a lasting gospel impact. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents said they have not sought to develop missional rhythms per se, but have encouraged their congregation to engage people in their sphere of influence organically. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent has focused his congregation on missional rhythms in serving the poor and foreigners with a thrift store, tutoring children and through adoption initiatives. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents from the same church spoke of living out the gospel together in community by inviting friends into their relational sphere as the most effective missional rhythm. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent spoke of ‘invading every sub-culture in their town intentionally and repeatedly.’ This includes the surfing, hunting, fishing, military and music community. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent described connect groups in his church that focused on outsiders with common hobbies such as hiking, biking and knitting. The 8<sup>th</sup> respondent had the most developed missional rhythms with respect to the cultural rhythms of his city, which included a weekly gathering at a local brewery, a monthly BBQ for the residents of an apartment complex, a photo booth at Halloween, service in an upliftment project for their city, a Super Bowl party and a backyard home brewery of beer for neighbors. The 9<sup>th</sup> respondent regularly calls his congregation to ‘live, work, play in and bless their city’ for the sake of the gospel. They express that by frequenting a local coffee shop and the same eateries, buy serving in local schools and by working with the homeless community in their city. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent has called his church to serve in their local school, invite friends to recreational activities, serve in an organization that combats human trafficking, and is now starting up a food truck in their city.



### 2.4.5 Spirit-empowerment and church life

Questions 28 to 40 cover the Spirit-empowerment and church life (see Appendix, Annexure A, Section D, page 133).

The twenty-eighth question asked: *In no more than 50 words, describe what it means from your perspective to be Spirit-empowered as a follower of Jesus.* All the interviewees, except for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respondents, referred to the Acts 1:8 promise to the disciples of ES be bold witnesses to Christ in their definitions. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respondents also referred to the spiritual gifts from 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Romans 12 as an integral part of being Spirit empowered. The 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respondents also referred the power of the Holy Spirit in forming Christ-like character from Galatians 5 as part of being Spirit-empowered. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent referred to an awareness of the presence of the Spirit as part of the definition. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent referred to the baptism of the Spirit as an integral part of being Spirit-empowered. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents referred to the regeneration of the Spirit at salvation as the beginning of empowerment. The 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents referred to the need for the ongoing infilling of the Spirit to walk as followers of Jesus.

The twenty-ninth question stated: *Briefly explain the Cessationist view, the Pentecostal view and the Continuationist view of the Baptism of the Spirit.* There are three primary views of the baptism of the Spirit in the church today. The Cessationist view is that the Baptism of the Spirit takes place simultaneously at regeneration. The Pentecostal view is that the Baptism of the Spirit is definitely subsequent to salvation and is always evidenced by speaking in tongues. The Continuationist sees the baptism of the Spirit as a distinct occurrence which may take place around the same time as regeneration or subsequent to regeneration, but will be evident in various ways.

Simply put, Southlands' position is that all believers are indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit from the point of conversion, and that the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit can in fact happen then. However, Southlands is convinced that there is evidence that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is usually a subsequent event and that we therefore cannot ignore this and should pray for it. Southlands' position therefore is that there are four main ways in which the Holy Spirit interacts with us as believers: the initial deposit guaranteeing eternal life (2 Cor 5:6), the baptism of the

Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), subsequent powerful infillings during our Christian lives, and the constant fellowship of the Spirit as the believer learns to keep in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25). We should not shy away from the word “baptism” as Jesus himself uses the words baptize in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). However many other words are used to describe the interaction between the Holy Spirit and humans. Filled, baptized, empowered, come upon, overwhelmed, and clothed are such examples.

The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent did not understand these terms, but simply said that his view of the Baptism of the Spirit is that he is “Charismatic with a seat belt on but that the seatbelt should not be on the Holy Spirit.” The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents identified as Continuationist, explaining that they believed the Baptism of the Spirit could be simultaneous or subsequent to salvation, believed that it was necessary for believers to be filled continually by the Spirit, but did not insist that this infilling was always evidenced by speaking in tongues.

The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent stated that while they were theologically Continuationist as a church, in practice they were more Cessationist. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent admitted that while he was Continuationist, he had not yet decided about whether Baptism of the Spirit is simultaneous or subsequent to salvation. The thirtieth and thirty-first questions asked: *How significantly did Southlands shape your view of this doctrine and its outworking in the church you planted*, and *How significantly has your view changed since planting?* The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent planted a church in 1999, and said that the church had taught him most of what he knew about the Holy Spirit, but that it had historically been part of the ‘Latter Day Rain Renewal’ which was a highly experiential expression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as singing in tongues and extended invitations to receive the Baptism of the Spirit. He explained that when planting his church, he had to shift from this focus and provide a more holistic picture of Spirit-empowerment that was connected to church mission and health. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents explained that Southlands had significantly shaped their view of this doctrine and its outworking and that they had not shifted at all since planting a church. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents explained that Southlands had shaped them strongly with a ‘soft Pentecostal view’ of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, in that speaking in tongues was not essential but highly encouraged. They both spoke of a subtle shift over the past ten years to a Continuationist view that sought the empowering of

the Spirit but placed less emphasis on phenomena. The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent said that she had seen this doctrine taught and modeled at Southlands but that she had personally grown in her desire to see the gifts of the Spirit in the 10 years since leaving Southlands. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent described his experience at Southlands as 'Hyper Charismatic' and had to spend years after leaving trying to find a more missional approach to the Holy Spirit without drifting into apathy. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent was also greatly shaped by Southlands in this doctrine, but admitted to praying much less for people to receive the Spirit, and being more passive in desiring the gifts of the Spirit since planting his church.

Six out of ten planters, while being shaped by Southlands in this doctrine, found themselves responding to a perceived over-emphasis on experientialism connected to the doctrine. This has produced a de-emphasis on this doctrine in their churches. The thirty-second and thirty-third questions were the following: *How does your church intentionally equip people to discover and operate in the gifts of the Spirit, both in the church's gatherings and in their daily lives, and Which gifts are practiced in which contexts?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents said that the gifts of the Spirit were less likely to be practised in Sunday gatherings and were more encouraged in small groups, monthly prayer meetings and in people's daily lives. The only gifts evident were teaching, leadership, mercy and exhortation on a Sunday. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent has recently done a Sunday series on the gifts, which has resulted in more prayer for healing and prophecy on a Sunday. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent said that although he preaches and trains on the gifts, they are only practised in prayer meetings. Only the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> respondents regularly encourage, make room for, practise and explain the gifts within a Sunday meeting. The main gifts practised are healing, prophecy, word of knowledge and faith. Of these, prophecy tends to be reserved more for prayer meetings than Sunday meetings. There is a real emphasis on the bold use of the gifts in people's daily lives amongst these churches.

The thirty-fourth question asked: *How many times per year, on average, do you make a specific call for prayer for the Empowering of the Spirit (baptism and subsequent powerful infillings)?* This is an indication of whether the churches have a working model for their theology of the Baptism of the Spirit. The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent was the highest with 10 times per year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respondents said 4-6 times, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents said

2-3 times per year, although the 4<sup>th</sup> respondent from the same church as the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent said none. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents said none. Interestingly, the church with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of conversion growth and the highest number of baptisms never makes a clear call for the infilling of the Spirit.

The thirty-fifth question asked was worded as follows: *How have you sought to develop a Philosophy of "Spirit-empowered ministry" within your church that seeks to address prescribed excesses and errors within Charismatic/Pentecostal culture without over-reacting to them?*

Most churches do training around a philosophy of practising the gifts in partnership classes or small groups, in which they address excesses. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent said that on occasion they have brought some loving correction publicly on a Sunday if there has been a violation of their values. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent said that he teaches his church to purposely avoid hype and manipulation. The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent was not sure that they had developed a healthy philosophy. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent said that he does not confront other models, but just tries to uphold a healthy ministry philosophy. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respondents emphasized actively pursuing the gifts in a biblical, sane and safe manner as a way of countering unhealthy models. The 9<sup>th</sup> respondent said that being part of a broader leadership team with people who were stronger than him in the knowledge and operation of the gifts was a safety against misuse. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent said that while they make space for gifts, they are inclined to allow more trusted people to operate in the gifts always have an elder in place to test and facilitate the communication of prophecy and words or encouragement from the congregation.

Question 36 asked stated: *What evidence is there in your church beyond pulpit preaching that the empowerment of the Spirit is enabling your church to see people come to Christ?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents spoke of the evidence of people boldly sharing their faith within their sphere of influence. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents spoke of the high rate of service and engagement in their congregations towards people outside of the church. The 4<sup>th</sup> respondent pointed to people praying for their unsaved friends and the Lord answering those prayers. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent admitted that there was almost no evidence of this happening. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondent pointed to words of knowledge and healing taking place amongst unsaved people as their congregations step out in boldness.

Question 37 asked was as follows: *On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being highly unpredictable and 10 being completely predictable, how has your view of the empowerment of the Spirit affected the planning and predictability of your Sunday gatherings?* The 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents scored 9, the 3<sup>rd</sup> scored 10, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> scored 8, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> scored 5, and the 8<sup>th</sup> scored 6. The average was 7.6, which points to a high degree of predictability in meetings. Most respondents pointed to the conviction that the Holy Spirit led them in their planning beforehand. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent spoke of the need to plan well but hold his plans lightly. He also spoke of the fact that he had shortened the length of his meetings from 2 hours to 75 minutes. Only three respondents scored 6 or lower with respect to being more flexible with what took place within meetings.

Question 38 asked: *How intentional are you about explaining and demystifying a Spirit-empowered approach to visitors, people from more conservative church backgrounds, and seekers who come to your church?* All respondents said that they were very aware of visitors, explaining anything that may be out of the ordinary, except for the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent, who admitted that they could be better at explaining a Spirit-empowered approach. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents from the same church suggested that they may be better at explaining a Spirit-empowered approach than they are at practising it, admitting that they could be bolder in prophecy and prayer during their gatherings. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent admitted that there was so much foreign to visitors in an un-churched Australian environment, that they even have to explain the predictable elements of the meeting like preaching and singing. This puts a limit on how much explaining they can do about the unpredictable elements.

Question thirty-nine asked: *How have you sought to develop a culture of dependence on the Spirit through personal and corporate prayer?* The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent said that he has maintained from the beginning that the church will be devoted to prayer as described in Acts 2:42 and that the church will not go anywhere without strong personal and corporate prayer. This sentiment was echoed by the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent placed an emphasis on personal prayer in his church more than corporate prayer, especially through prayer journaling. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent has cultivated prayer through training on 'praying in the Spirit.' The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent admitted that personal and corporate prayer was not a yet a strength of his church. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents also highlighted the value of devotion to prayer, but were

more direct in calling their congregations to pre-service prayer on Sundays as well as a monthly day of prayer and fasting. Attending prayer meetings was a requirement for leaders. The 10th respondent also has a monthly prayer meeting, but they are constantly praying to be filled with the Spirit to be bold witnesses of Jesus as they plant their new church.

Question forty stated: *When looking at corporate worship through a Trinitarian lens, what percentage of your worship songs and hymns are directed primarily towards the Father, the Son and the Spirit?* Although I was interested about songs to the Father and the Son, the main purpose of this question was to ascertain as to whether they ever sung about the Holy Spirit, which is quite rare in churches. The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent estimated that they sang about the Spirit 33% of the time. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent estimated they sang about the Spirit 35 % of the time. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> respondents both estimated 10% of songs were directed toward the Spirit. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents estimated that 25%, and the 10<sup>th</sup> respondent estimated 20% of the songs were directed towards the Spirit. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent estimated that only 2% of songs were directed towards the Spirit. Except for of the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent, the clear majority of songs were directed toward the Son and the vast minority of songs were directed towards the Spirit.

#### **2.4.6 Doctrine, mission and multiplication**

Questions 41 to 46 cover doctrine, mission and multiplication (see Appendix, Annexure A, Section E, page 135).

Question forty-one asked: *From your perspective, what is the primary reason that Christians join your church?* This was a multiple-choice question with 8 options. Interviewees could respond with more than one option. The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent believed the reasons were engaging preaching, inspiring worship, warm community, powerful Charismatic life and a vibrant sense of mission. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents believed that Christians joined their churches primarily because of warm community. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent believed that Christians joined because of engaging preaching, inspiring worship and warm community. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent stated that engaging preaching, compelling vision and leadership and a vibrant sense of mission caused people to join his church. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent listed engaging preaching and warm community as the reasons Christians joined his church. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents both named engaging preaching, warm community, compelling vision and leadership, and powerful

Charismatic life as the primary reasons Christians join their congregations. Warm community is by far the most common single factor for Christians joining churches, followed by engaging preaching. Only 3 churches listed powerful Charismatic life as the primary reason why people join their churches and only 2 listed inspiring worship.

Question forty-two stated: *From your perspective, what is the primary reason that seekers are being saved and added to your church, or making a meaningful relational connection with your church?* The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent listed relatable preaching and communal warmth as the primary factors in this category. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respondents listed community warmth and openness as the primary factor in this category. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent listed relatable preaching, communal warmth and openness, and a transcendent atmosphere in prayer and worship. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent listed relatable preaching and congregational engagement in the community as the primary factors in this category. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent listed congregational engagement in the community as the primary factor in this category. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents both listed communal warmth and openness and congregational engagement in the community as the primary factors in this category. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent did not list any factor as their church is rather new and have not yet seen people saved.

Question forty-three asked: *How do the doctrines of Penal substitutionary atonement and Empowerment of the Spirit impact the growth and strength of your church?* Most respondents saw these doctrines as impacting health more than growth. In fact, the 6<sup>th</sup> respondent saw both doctrines as 'shrinking the door of his church,' because they were so unpopular although he claimed that PSA was more offensive than SE. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent stated that they made his church both humble and confident but had not grown the church at this stage. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents claimed that they were the most foundational doctrines in their church, claiming that the two doctrines working together are what ultimately strengthen the church to grow in health. The 7<sup>th</sup> respondent saw SE as having a greater impact on his church than PSA. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent admitted that it was hard to say how much the two doctrines had impacted the church at this early stage, but that people were joining the church because of the gospel-centrality and the prayer and prophetic life in worship.

Question forty-four asked: *Which of these two doctrines most require strengthening in your church and how would you go about strengthening it?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents all believed that Empowerment of the Spirit was the doctrine that most needed strengthening, and that it should be strengthened through teaching, prayer and work-shops in small groups. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents said both doctrines needed strengthening through two separate teaching series. By far the greatest need was for the strengthening of the doctrine of SE, but respondents suggested that what was needed was a working model for equipping the congregation to apply the doctrine of SE.

Question 45 asked: *From your perspective, how would the strengthening of these doctrines in the ministry and life of the church in turn strengthen the effectiveness of your church's mission?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents, all of whom viewed the Empowerment of the Spirit as the doctrine that needs most strengthening as evangelistic boldness would be its hopeful outcome. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respondents also hoped that those who had a more formal knowledge of the theology would encounter Christ in a more personal manner, as the Spirit gave illumination. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents felt that church gatherings would be less predictable and more impactful as congregants would begin to view themselves as active ministers of the Spirit's gifts. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents all indicated that the intended outcome of strengthening both doctrines would be a greater theological balance in their churches which in turn would result in a confidence amongst congregants in the theological truth and spiritual power of the gospel.

Question forty-six stated: *How do you go about equipping leaders theologically for future church plants, especially with reference to PSA and Empowerment of the Spirit?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respondents did not feel that formal theological training was necessary and that church planters could be prepared through informal assimilation rather than through a formal training structure. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respondents started a two-year leadership cohort with two other churches that is preparing leaders theologically with a view to church planting. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents had a defined elders training track that was very doctrinally focused and suggested they would continue with this. Both 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respondents suggested more formal theological training from which they benefited, such as Porterbrook, preacher's training, Eldership apprenticeship and small group book studies. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent said that he had



not yet begun to think of multiplication but wanted to begin to equip leaders theologically through preaching and training from the start.

#### **2.4.7 Post-script questions**

Questions 47 to 48 cover postscript questions (see Appendix, Annexure A, Section E, page 137).

Questions forty-seven and forty-eight form the final post-script of the interviews. They asked the respondents to read relevant passages from the Book of Acts and deduce their relevance to the doctrines of PSA and ES.

Question forty-seven presents Acts 2:23, 36-39, 3:12-20, 10:36-44 and asks the following: *In your view, what do these passages tell us about the relevance of the doctrines of PSA in the planting of New Testament Churches, and therefore, this doctrine's relevance to church planting today?* The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents viewed these passages as clear evidence that PSA was preached as a foundational doctrine in the planting of New Testament churches, and was therefore foundational and crucial in planting churches today. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent acknowledged that the verses did refer to Christ's substitutionary sacrifice for sin, but did not speak sufficiently to the penalty that he bore in our place. However, all the respondents were convinced of the foundational nature of this doctrine.

Question forty-eight presents Acts 2:3-4, 4:8-12, 4:31, 10:44-47, 13:9, 19:6 to show that Jesus' promise to His disciples in Acts 1:8 that they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit was fulfilled repeatedly through the Book of Acts. The question then was: *In your view, how foundational was this doctrine in the planting of New Testament churches and how foundational is it in the planting of churches today?*

The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respondents all acknowledged the foundational nature of this doctrine in the planting of New Testament churches, and therefore the foundational nature of the doctrine in planting churches today. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respondents found the verses personally convicting as they realized how foundational the Baptism of the Spirit was in the building of the early church, concluding that they had more work to be done in applying this doctrine. The 5<sup>th</sup> respondent acknowledged the doctrine as foundational but

pointed out that a Charismatic cultural lens has reduced it to 'raising hands and dancing' rather than clothing with power from above. The 6<sup>th</sup> respondent admitted to a degree of passivity in forging a Spirit-empower model of ministry, preferring the mystery of personal dependence upon the Holy Spirit rather than a model of Spirit-empowered ministry. The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent was the strongest on the crucial nature of this doctrine, insisting that the work of planting churches could not happen without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

#### **2.4.8 Conclusion**

The results of the empirical research were intended to clarify Southlands' operative theology with respect to church planting since 1999. More specifically, it sought to determine how the doctrines of PSA and the ES have influenced the growth and spiritual and functional health of the churches planted from Southlands in the past 18 years. In the following section these results are discussed, seeking to trace trends in them that lead to reasonable conclusions about the operative theology of church planting and its effectiveness.

### **2.5 Discussion of the results of the Empirical Study**

#### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Results from empirical research provide essentially raw data. For this information to prove valuable it needs analysis to discern any surprising aspects in the results and any patterns that would help isolate factors that have proved influential in producing the results. The discussion of the results of the empirical research section helps gain a better understanding of the operative theology (actual beliefs and practices) of Southlands in relation to church multiplication. It will be shown that seven features emerged that can tentatively be used to recommend improvements in the church planting strategy from Southlands.

In one of the questions to the interviewees, respondent 3 (the lead pastor) gave a more optimistic account than respondent 4 (an elder's wife) in the same church. This could suggest that the lead pastors generally could have exaggerated the situation to give a more favorable picture to me. If this was so, it would mean the research would have less scientific value. It could be argued that the only way to have lessened this tendency was to have broadened the

interviewees to at least also include one person per church plant who was not an elder/pastor. But many of the questions required numerical answers where exact numbers were possible and required. Further, it was the lead pastors who best understand the journey the church plants have travelled and it is their preparation and role in the church plant that was the focus of the research. The range of the questions and my engagement with the interviewees during the interviews and their spiritual caliber would have largely prevented any major skewing of the results.

### **2.5.2 An over-realized Ecclesiology and an under-realized Christology hindered multiplication**

With one exception, the respondents agreed that better training in understanding, articulating and applying Christology was more important than training in Ecclesiology. All respondents believed that the doctrines of PSA and ES were of foundational significance in the planting of churches and should be emphasized more than the doctrines of the church and New Testament patterns of church governance. All respondents, except for the last three, felt that their church planting endeavours had been hindered because of an over-emphasis upon the latter doctrines and an under-emphasis on the former doctrines. The last three respondents planted their congregations after 2012. By this time, Southlands had made significant changes to its training of church planters to prepare them more thoroughly in PSA and ES. It is an encouraging sign that the last three planters did not feel hindered by an over-emphasis on Ecclesiology.

### **2.5.3 Re-awaking to the gospel produced a reaction to the Spirit**

Except for the last three respondents, all respondents described a re-awakening to the centrality of the gospel after they had planted churches. This points to the fact that Southlands has been historically weak in equipping planters to understand and communicate the gospel in its fullness. For most of the church planters, gospel re-awakening focused around the doctrine of PSA as well as a re-discovery of Reformed theology. Respondents admitted that this re-awakening to the gospel resulted in a reaction to, or at best stagnation in, SE. This was in part due to a perceived *experientialism* in Southlands' approach to Baptism of the Spirit which did not appear to produce conversion growth. Thus, while all respondents affirmed the centrality of

the doctrine of SE, they admitted to a degree of reluctance when it came to the application of Charismatic theology into Charismatic practice. Some went as far as admitting that while they were theological Continuationists, their churches were functionally Cessationist. It was heartening to find that the last three respondents who planted churches after Southlands had begun to work hard at maintaining a healthy tension between PSA and SE, had experienced a reaction to the Spirit as they had experienced a re-awakening to the gospel. However, they all admitted that while the doctrines of PSA and ES were clearly both foundational in the planting of healthy churches, maintaining a tension between them is a difficult quest.

#### **2.5.4 The key doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement (PSA) and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (ES) are vital for building healthy churches but do not necessarily ensure rapid conversion growth**

While the last three respondents who planted churches from Southlands after 2012 were exemplary in terms of establishing their churches upon the doctrines of PSA and SE, this has not yet resulted in rapid conversion growth. It is notable that respondents 8, 9 and 10 all reported the most rigorous training in the doctrines of PSA and SE. All three congregations boasted steady growth, a high ratio of members to attendance as well as a high ratio of leaders to members, all of which are indicators of church health. However, all three congregations indicated a relatively low conversion growth. This suggests that while the laying of the foundational doctrines of PSA and SE are vital for building healthy churches, they do not necessarily ensure rapid conversion growth.

To support this perception, the churches that reported the highest rate of conversion were respondents 1 and 5. Respondent 1 could not articulate the doctrine of PSA and did not know the difference between Pentecostalism and Continuationism, although he said he preached the gospel every time he preached. Respondent 5 was highly articulate and focused on the doctrine of PSA, but admitted to having toned down his approach to SE. Both churches had a rate of conversion growth of 15% or higher. Of interest, was the fact that they were in the smallest towns of all the respondents. Both churches were in towns with an approximate population of 10,000. Both churches were very involved in serving their towns and building relationships with citizens of the town. Both respondents viewed the reason for their high

conversion growth as relatable preaching and boldness among their congregants to share their faith. It would seem that the relational dynamic of a small-town aids in spreading the gospel from person to person.

While it is not yet apparent that laying foundational doctrines of PSA and ES in the last three respondents' churches has yet produced rapid conversion growth, they do seem to have experienced steady to rapid numeric growth and early signs of health. This is apparent from the fact that they possess the highest ratio of leaders and members to average attendance, amongst all ten respondents.

### **2.5.5 ES must move beyond meetings into mission**

One might assume that more opportunities for believers to receive the Baptism of the Spirit, would automatically produce powerful witnesses of Jesus and that this would result in more converts indicated by number of water baptisms of new believers. This was not the case. There was no discernable connection between baptism in the Spirit of believers and baptism in water of new believers.

While all respondents affirmed the doctrine of SE, there was no direct link between those churches that made regular calls for the Baptism in the Spirit during their services and the number of water baptisms in a year. The church that had the most water baptisms made no calls for baptism of the Spirit during a year. While the number of water baptisms does not necessarily all apply to converts through the church plants' ministry, respondents confirmed that most people who are baptized are those deciding to follow Jesus for the first time. Although the churches with the second and third highest number of baptisms per year did make opportunity for the Baptism of the Spirit on average 3 times per year, it was not a significant feature of their Sunday services. The significant factors leading to an increased number of baptisms were leaders who made it their aim to call their congregants to personal responsibility and boldness to share their faith within their spheres of influence. While engaging, Biblical preaching was also a factor in conversion growth and the number of water baptisms, personal boldness in evangelism was the most significant factor. This factor challenges the notion that a church will see conversion growth if the meetings are powerful enough. Churches that trained their congregants to understand that the Spirit's power

remained with them as they left the church building, and thus encouraging them to pray for their friends outside the church, were also seeing a significant number of baptisms.

Instead of retreating from moments of prayer for the Baptism of the Spirit, leaders should take responsibility to describe the Baptism of the Spirit less as a moment in a meeting and more as an empowering for mission.

### **2.5.6 A relational approach is vital but does not guarantee conversion growth**

Of interest was the number of churches who stated that the primary reason for believers, and unbelievers who are converted through attending services, joining their church was a *warm community*. One of the marks of Southlands ethos is that it is known to be a multicultural and multi-generational community. It is noteworthy that interesting that 5 of the 10 interviewees are either from minority cultures in the USA or are immigrants to the USA. Southlands' ability to welcome people into a relational approach to discipleship is a strength that remains a mark of most of its churches plants. However, warm community alone does not appear sufficient to ensure that a church is growing.

For instance, two of the churches that mentioned *warm community* as the only factor responsible for people joining their church, had either erratic or static growth. Both churches had a conversion rate of 5% or less.

These and other churches whose conversion growth was 5% or less were far less intentional with *missional rhythms*. The philosophy behind *missional rhythms* is if churches can build a strong enough relational bridge with people outside the church, they will gradually see them step over into the Christian faith. It is built on the philosophy that *people need to belong before they believe*. However, Evangelical churches understand that the work of the Holy Spirit is crucial to genuine conversions taking place.

While relational warmth is clearly a strong feature of most of the churches planted from Southlands, it is shown to be insufficient in growing a church, whether from un-churched, de-churched or church people (see definition in section 2.4.2). Churches growing rapidly with church and un-churched people generally had a *warm community* as one of their strengths, but they possessed other strengths such as evangelistic boldness, relatable preaching, strong

leadership and vision. A warm community is significant, but insufficient on its own to grow a strong church.

### **2.5.7 Preaching of PSA linked more to growth among de-churched than growth among un-churched**

Except for one respondent, churches that explicitly helped their congregation to distinguish between the biblical gospel and false gospels such as the *Prosperity Gospel*, *Social Gospel* and *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*, were seeing more growth amongst church and the de-churched than the un-churched. This may be because of a tendency among those who have experienced a gospel re-awakening to become overly intellectual and their witness and teaching become out of reach for those without a church background. Obviously there is great merit in helping Christians to re-discover the truth and beauty of the gospel because there are so many who are bound by moralism, legalism who are set free by God's grace. This also may be why some of these churches are reporting high rates of water baptism and low rates growth from the un-churched. In regions where cultural Christianity is strong, the church is a mission field in and of itself. Many who thought they were Christians within the church are awakened to grace and are subsequently baptized in water.

However, while the intentional preaching of PSA is foundational in every context, preachers must beware of a theologically dense approach to preaching, growing in their understanding of their surrounding culture, and learning the skill of preaching to both church seeker and saved, if they are to experience growth among the un-churched.

### **2.5.8 Relegation of spiritual gifts from Sunday gatherings resulted in a stagnation of spiritual gifts from everyday life**

The debate about the appropriate place for Continuationist churches to operate in the spiritual gifts is an ongoing one, with the predominant approach being that they are better practiced in smaller forums such as community groups and prayer meetings. This arises from the perception that un-churched and more conservative Christians are uncomfortable with the unpredictable, which may hurt growth and mission.

However, the survey revealed that those churches who have relegated the operation of spiritual gifts like prayer for healing, prophecy, words of knowledge, tongues and interpretation to forums that are less visible, sends out the signal that these gifts are less than central to the life of the church and its mission. This results in the believers' stagnation in the operation of these spiritual gifts in their everyday life. Thus, even if congregants are bold in sharing their faith, they are not generally growing in the power of the Spirit as it pertains to sharing of the faith.

The solution then would be that church leaders discern how to re-introduce spiritual gifts such as healing prayer and prophecy back so that they become an integral part of worship and mission without falling into the trap of sensationalism. As always, the question is not just how to see un-churched make a step into Christian faith, but what kind of Christian faith un-churched people are stepping into. Our hope is that it is a faith full of truth and power.

### **2.5.9 Conclusion**

The fact that Southlands has sent so many leaders to plant churches over the past two decades is a testament to the grace of God, the power of His gospel, and the sacrifice of His people. One of the enduring characteristics of the church has been the willingness of its people to respond readily to the Great Commission to "Go into all the world and make disciples of Jesus" (Matt 28:18). Southlands' multiplying movement has not been unnecessarily stunted by insisting upon formal theological training as a pre-requisite for church planters. In fact, this organic and catalytic approach to leadership training and commissioning church planters has been a remarkable strength, with some of the most effective church planters being young and unschooled.

However, while this approach has produced an impressive rate of church planting, the lack of intentional theological training has led to a deficiency in the long-term growth and vitality of churches. Most of the churches whose leaders have not been trained theologically, either formally or informally, are experiencing either low rates of conversion growth or static growth or are in decline. Church planters who had previously experienced an over-emphasis on Charismatic *experientialism*, reacted against it as they discovered Reformed theology. Having intentionally laid the foundation of PSA at the heart of their churches, they now realize the



need for SE that will include a more mission-focused approach to practising the Charismatic gifts.

## **2.6 Summary and conclusion**

The design for this mini-thesis is Browning's strategic practical theology. This chapter dealt with its first step by answering the question, "How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?" (1991:55). The chapter sought to accurately describe the concrete situation of the multiplication of churches from Southlands. Section 2.2 presented the background of the church with regards to church planting. The approach used was formed largely by the official position of the church network (NCMI) of which they were a part. Section 2.3 described the methods of the empirical research to better understand Southlands' strategy for church planting from Southlands. Section 2.4 presented a synthesis of the results of the empirical research. Section 2.5 discussed the results, concluding with seven summarizing statements about the concrete situation with regards to church planting from Southlands.

The focus of the research, whose results are presented in this chapter, was the role played by the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the doctrine of Spirit Empowerment in the church plants launched from Southlands. My expectation about these two doctrines in a church planting milieu is captured in the following illustration. A church plant is like a ship charting its course across the ocean. The doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement is like the rudder of the ship and the doctrine of SE is like wind in the sails of that ship. One keeps the ship on course while the other keeps it moving. The results of my small-scale research seem to support this. My hypothesis then, is that if Southlands can add to its robust church planting culture sound theological equipping of church planters in these doctrines without neglecting other doctrines of the Christian faith, the result would be more churches with greater fidelity, greater maturity, greater dynamism, and ultimately, greater gospel fruit.

Now the mini-thesis turns to the task of further testing this hypothesis by turning to the normative sources for church planting. The main source for an evangelical on church planting strategy is the New Testament record of the early church. Chapter 3 attempts therefore to establish an operative theology of church planting, especially with reference to PSA and ES,

that is a biblically faithful one. This covers the next phase in Browning's approach to strategic practical theology in which he seeks to discover what should be done in some church context.

## **Chapter 3:**

# **Formulating and defending a biblically faithful church planting operative theology for Southlands Church with special reference to what role Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA) and Empowerment of the Holy Spirit (ES) should play**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This mini-thesis is a practical theology work. Practical theology is directed at evaluating some area of church praxis, especially if it is causing some concern, to propose an improved praxis in the light of the church's traditions and the current context and how to achieve it. In this mini-thesis the area of focus is the church planting strategy of Southlands and how to ensure a more biblical and effective strategy. The Introduction chapter explained how this practical theology project could be achieved, namely Browning's strategic practical theology which involves answering four key questions.

Chapter 2 answered the first question: How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act? Chapter 3 will answer the next two questions: What should be our praxis in this concrete situation? How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation? My specific concern is to specifically explore the role of Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA) and Empowerment of the Holy Spirit (ES) in the multiplication of New Testament churches and therefore what role they should play in Southlands church planting ministry. This is because my hypothesis is that these two matters were crucial and central to church planting in the early church. They have played a major role in Southlands church planting in recent years. If my hypothesis can be substantiated and further clarified, then the

biblically basic normative church planting strategy for Southlands would be established and Browning's second question answered.

To better appreciate what the aim of this chapter is it will be helpful to reflect on Smith's views on theology and practical theology. In his work entitled, *Integrated Theology: Discerning God's word in our World*, he defines theology in terms of interpreting, systematising, and contextualising the teachings of scripture (2013:18). This process also includes understanding how people in "the past and present interpreted and applied God's word to their contexts" (p. 20). This view of theology harmonises with Browning's position that all theology is fundamental practical theology (1991:3-6). Practical theology builds on this view of theology. In practical theology "We examine Christian practices to understand the extent to which they are faithful to God's nature and purposes, with a desire to transform them so that they may be more faithful to God and more relevant to people" (Smith 2013:21). Chapter 2 of this mini-thesis focused on examining the Christian practices of church planting at Southlands through its history, with special reference to PSA and ES (Browning, we noted, requires this in his first step). Chapter 3 must now formulate the normative position on church planting for Southlands. It will also consider church planting in Southlands' history and the context in which Southlands will plant churches (Browning, as noted in chapter 1, requires this in his second step with the additional third step of defending the new praxis). Chapter 4 will focus on achieving the second aspect of practical theology, namely transforming the current concrete situation (again, as was noted, this is covered in Browning's fourth step).

Southlands has for many years positioned itself in the Reformed-Charismatic camp. Therefore, the first stage in this chapter will involve a review of the material that has significantly influenced Southlands' church planting to see what insights this brings to the topic of church planting especially regarding PSA and ES. In my quest for a faithful church planting praxis at Southlands with respect to the PSA and ES, I conduct an exegetical study of two key verses (John 1: 29,33) and a more general study of other verses that illustrate New Testament church planting with special focus on PSA and ES. This is followed by some consideration of how these two doctrines have been accommodated in church history in church planting and discipleship. These lines of research are then brought together to formulate a biblically faithful

operative theology at Southlands Church with reference to the role PSA and ES should play in the multiplication of churches.

Then, in the light of this position, shortcomings of the Southland Church's church planting ministry will be noted. Finally, an operative theology regarding church planting for Southlands with special reference to PSA and ES will be deduced and defended, where the defence also considers extra-biblical material. Chapter 4 will be concerned with providing a strategy for Southlands to consider helping to achieve this more biblically faithful operative theology.

### **3.2 Towards a biblically faithful operative theology regarding church planting with special focus on PSA and ES**

This section essentially follows a systematic theology study. It includes a literature review, biblical exegetical study, a survey of other relevant biblical passages, dissenting voices to the position arrived at after the first three stages, historical perspectives, and finally non-biblical perspectives. All these are considered to arrive at an operative theology regarding church planting with special focus on penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

#### **3.2.1 Some literature perspectives on linking of PSA and ES in church planting**

This section conducts a review on current academic literature that references the doctrines of PSA and ES with reference to the emergence of churches with a 'Reformed Charismatic' theological vision. The value of noting these works for this mini-thesis is twofold: (i) they have significantly impacted the more recent church planting vision at Southlands, and (ii) they provide some serious theological defence of the combination of sound doctrine (especially with reference to PSA and ES) and the outworking of these doctrines in planting and maturing churches. They will contribute to developing a systematic theology for church planting with special reference to PSA and ES, especially if they confirm the biblical strategy to church planting that will emerge more clearly from sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

### 3.2.1.1 *The Quest for the Radical Middle* by Bill Jackson (1999)

In response to the polarization where all the focus in church planting was on correct church structures and Spirit power to the neglect of doctrine (like PSA), Bill Jackson wrote *The Quest for the Radical Middle*. This book documented the polarization of churches birthed from the Jesus People Movement, but encouraged a convergence of these two theological extremes. Educated with a Master's in Divinity from Gordon-Conwell and a Doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary, Jackson straddled two worlds as the head of church planting for the Vineyard Association of Churches. His vision was for churches that held together a high view of Scripture with a hunger for the Spirit's power. This is what Jackson referred to as 'The Radical Middle.' In this sense, he was a dissenting voice against the afore-mentioned polarization, arguing that every church needed to be, "Armed with an Evangelical Theology and a Pentecostal experience" (1999:14; cf. also Nathan 2009).

He further qualifies this statement by recommending a less prescriptive approach to Pentecostalism, which encourages an ongoing empowering of the Spirit without over-defining the Baptism of the Spirit. He refers to this as the Third Wave Approach to the Spirit. He recommends not only a sound evangelical theology, but also one that considers the sovereignty of God to avoid what he viewed as a cause-and-effect approach to revival. Of concern to Jackson was Mike Bickle's International House of Prayer Movement, which taught that a movement of prayer and fasting would ensure "An unprecedented harvest of souls and a victorious end-time church" (1999:337). Jackson notes Bickle's strong Arminian theology as a reason for the split between IHOP and John Wimber's Vineyard Association of Churches. "Their more Arminian presuppositions never melded with Wimber's Reformed assumptions" (p. 335).

While Jackson's book is more historical than theological, it provides a theological framework for the convergence of Reformed and Charismatic theology in churches. He contends for the need in the Church in North America generally, but in California specifically, for Conservatives to encounter the Spirit and for Charismatics to be anchored by Reformed theology. This book serves as a helpful theological framework for churches with a vision to multiply within Southern California while swimming upstream against the currents of historic polarization.

### 3.2.1.2 *Convergence: Spiritual Journeys of a Charismatic Calvinist* by Sam Storms (2005)

From my perspective, Storm's personal, theological and practical work provides as effective a framework for multiplying churches built on Penal substitutionary atonement and Spirit Empowerment as any. Storm's approach typifies that of a *thinking practitioner*. After he obtained a Doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary, he served as the Dean of the Bible College at Mike Bickle's Kansas Metro Fellowship during the days of the controversial *Kansas City Prophets*. Jackson refers to them in 'Quest for the Radical Middle' as a group of men based at Bickle's church who claimed to have divinely inspired dreams and visions predicting world events with a reputation for remarkable accuracy and significant signs and wonders (1999:204). After leaving Bickle's church, Storms taught theology at Wheaton College and now pastors the Bridge Church in Oklahoma City.

Storms qualifies the term "Calvinist" in his book, which he feels may be problematic to some readers, "not so much for its emphasis on the sovereignty of God in salvation as for its elevation of the centrality of Scripture and the life of the mind" (2005:22). He goes on to explain that if Calvinism has elevated the Word and the mind, Charismatics have given pride of place to Spirit and heart (p. 22).

The first section of his book deals with Storms' personal journey from Reformed Presbyterian skepticism of the charismatic, to a discovery of the power of the Spirit. He documents his encounters with physical healing, dreams, visions and the Baptism of the Spirit, which propelled his ministry towards greater dynamism, without any loss of passion for teaching the truth of Scripture. In fact, he argues that his encounter with the Spirit, who inspires the Scripture, gave him a greater hunger to understand and teach the Scripture.

In the second section of his book, Storms provides a reasonable defence for what he refers to as *the Wedding of Word and Spirit* (2005:97). He argues for a new unity between those churches built around a tradition of biblical orthodoxy and those churches built around a tradition of spiritual dynamism. "In practice, Word and Spirit are perhaps easier to reconcile than the polarization of the debate might suggest. There are excellent reasons for hoping that the next generation of Evangelicals may see an increasing maturity in both camps" (p. 98).

Storms refers to respected Reformed theologian D.A. Carson, whose book, *Showing the Spirit*, provides a Biblical exegesis for a Reformed-Charismatic approach to 1 Corinthians 12-14. Carson cites suspicion between the Charismatics and Cessationists that give rise to neat stereotypes, as the primary reason for a lack of unity between the two camps. "As judged by the charismatics, non-charismatics tend to be stodgy traditionalists who do not really believe the Bible and who are not really hungry for the Lord. The non-charismatics think the charismatics have succumbed to the modern love of experience, even at the expense of truth" (1987: 12).

In the final section (*He is here and he is not silent*) of his book, Storms gives practical insight into leading churches that believe God speaks primarily through the Bible but also by the Spirit, just as he did in Bible days. Finally, Storms draws upon the writing of Jonathan Edwards to support the idea that churches ought to have an experiential faith that affects people at an emotional level, not merely a theological faith that affects people at an intellectual level.

By drawing from the writings of Reformed icons such as Edwards and Carson who are in support of the wedding of Word and Spirit, as well as his personal experience with the Vineyard and the Kansas City Prophets, Storms provides a reasonable and steady bridge between two historically divergent camps, as well as a compelling motivation for a convergent theological vision in the hope that they would walk towards one another.

### 3.2.1.3 *Charismatic Calvinism: A fresh blend of doctrine and practice* by James D. Steinbach (2010)

Steinbach's paper makes an affirming observation about the recent convergence of the Reformed and Charismatic traditions. He observes that traditionally most Charismatics have been Arminian and most Calvinists have been Cessations. However, he argues that over the last 20 years an unlikely theological hybrid has developed which he calls 'Charismatic Calvinism.' His hypothesis is that the cause of Charismatic Calvinism has been furthered by the work of a pastor, a network and a theologian. He is referring to John Piper, Sovereign Grace Ministries and Wayne Grudem's "Systematic Theology." Steinbach argues that Piper has single handedly brought about Calvinist resurgence amongst young people, and that his unique blend of conservative doctrine and radical spirit has ignited a new generation of



Calvinists. Steinbach believes that Piper's Calvinism informs his Charismaticism, holding to view that God sovereignly elects sinners to salvation and sovereignly gives gifts by His Spirit. Steinbach proposes that Sovereign Grace Ministries' Joshua Harris has led a move towards deeper Reformed roots amongst young Charismatics with books on doctrine like *Dug Down Deep: Building my Life on Truths that Last* that make theological orthodoxy more accessible and appealing in his contemporary style. "Our faith is not just a state of mind, a mystical experience or concepts on a page. Theology, doctrine and orthodoxy matter because God is real, and he has acted on our world, and his actions have meaning today and for eternity" (Harris 2011:15).

Sovereign Grace Ministries has also made a helpful distinction between Continuationism and Charismaticism. Continuationism is the belief that the spiritual gifts continue unchanged after the conclusion of the Canon of scripture. It also believes that the Biblical offer of multiple infillings by the Spirit is still available to believers today, but regards that baptism of the Spirit as a simultaneous occurrence with conversion. It does not teach on Baptism as a subsequent experience to conversion. This view has been popularized by theologians like Sam Storms and Wayne Grudem, as well as Vineyard Movement founder John Wimber, who coined the phrase "Third Wave" to distinguish this view from Pentecostalism and Charismaticism. Charismaticism holds the view that the present operation of the spiritual gifts is available to the church today and that the Baptism of the Spirit is to be sought as a subsequent experience to conversion. Charismaticism does not emphasize speaking in tongues as the only evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, but does hold the view that Baptism in the Spirit is a conscious, subsequent experience. (Grudem, 1996:1055)

Steinbach argues that Continuationism seems to provide a wider, more welcoming door through which Conservatives can enter the Charismatic world. His article is both articulate and insightful in that it tracks pastoral, theological and movement influences in what he views as a seismic shift from extreme views towards a centre. His summary of Grudem's theology of Continuationism reveals a significant contrast with that of Poythress, who maintains in his article, *Modern Spiritual Gifts as Analogous to Apostolic Gifts*, that the modern spiritual gifts are analogous to, but not identical with, the gifts exercised by the apostles. Poythress argues that the Apostles exercising of those gifts was divinely authoritative. He maintains that there is

a middle way between “blanket approval and blanket rejection of modern charismatic gifts” (1996:72). Grudem points out that since non-apostles performed miraculous signs during the apostolic age, then the miraculous was not reserved for apostles alone, and is therefore meant to extend beyond the first century (1996: 1054).

Steinbach could not have known of the ensuing split between CJ Mahaney, the founder of SGM and Joshua Harris, which took place a year later, after legal and moral accusations towards Mahaney. In some ways, the recent SGM testimony may have done the Charismatic Calvinist cause some harm. However, in the meantime, other traditionally Reformed networks such as Acts 29 have embraced Continuationism more publicly. Steinbach’s concluding comments speak of the importance of the doctrine of God’s sovereignty, both in salvation and in spiritual gifts. This is what provides Charismatics with comfort during times of absence of the sign gifts, and courage to eagerly desire the spiritual gifts.

*3.2.1.4 Can Charismatics be Calvinists? New trends within Charismatic circles with special reference to the situation in South Africa by Jacques Theron (2013)*

Theron reports on a qualitative research project performed in South Africa, indicating a new trend in which more and more people consider themselves to be both Reformed and Charismatic. He details the problematic nature of Reformed theology being seen in South Africa to be partly responsible for the formulation of Apartheid. He also tracks the dissenting voices from within the Reformed theological tradition from as early as 1830 when Edward Irving, a Scottish Calvinist challenged Calvin’s Cessationism. This meant that Continuationism could not be blamed upon Arminian Theology, and a Calvinist was now bringing down Calvinist’s theories on its own terms. God was busy combining the pure teachings of the Reformed faith with the warmth of the Pentecostal movement.

Theron proposes that Reformed Cessationism caused the decline of Protestantism in Northern Europe. He claims that it produced a ghost-like faith because of the lack of support from any analogous experience. Theron’s research is perhaps more helpful than his historical analysis, which seems to leap to conclusions in places. His question, “Can Charismatics be Calvinists?” is rhetorical, because his research bears out that they certainly can, and in fact, are. However, it is helpful to include research from a developing country, which is far more familiar with

spiritual phenomena in African traditional religions and far less impressed with dry academic orthodoxy. It is easy in the West to think that accommodating the Charismatic is a humble and magnanimous leap into the mysterious world of the Spirit. For developing countries though, with a non-materialist worldview, Christianity divorced from the spirit realm is equally mysterious. In fact, it is a complete anomaly. Little wonder then, that a country like South Africa seems to hold the Calvinist Charismatic tension with relative ease.

### 3.2.1.5 *Bridging the Gap: John McKay, Presbyterians and the Charismatic Movement* by R.R. Curlee (1994)

Curlee's study involves the emergence of a group of Presbyterian pastors in the U.S.A in 1967 who began to experience Pentecostal phenomena in their church planting movement. Their concern about the consequences of their new experiences and teaching resulted in a meeting with John McKay, the Moderator of the PCUSA (Presbyterian Church of the United States of America). They were under the impression that their experience and teaching was at odds with their Reformed Cessationist denomination, and might lead to their expulsion as Presbyterian ministers. Curlee describes how McKay's ministry tenure in South America, and friendship with renowned Pentecostal, David Du Plessis, had caused him to consider and encourage Pentecostal, or, as he prefers to call it, Charismatic experience. In a meeting in Austin in 1967, Mackay assured the Charismatic Presbyterians that what they had was 'of God,' cautioned them against absolutizing tongues speaking, and to patiently find a way to express their new experience in Reformed terms within their denomination. His promised support towards these pastors encouraged them to stay in the denomination.

Curlee further notes that by 1970 they and others had formed the Presbyterian Charismatic Union, legitimized primarily by the work of Presbyterian Charismatic theologian J. Rodman Williams, chairman of the Permanent Theological Committee of the PCUSA. It is now known as Presbyterian Reformed Renewal Ministries. They invited Mackay to become an honorary member, but since he had not personally received the gift of tongues, he felt he could not join.

The importance of Curlee's article is three-fold. Firstly, it reveals a trend in the Charismatic movement, in which many people stayed within their denominations after a new Pentecostal experience, as distinct from the Pentecostal movement, in which most people left their

denominations. Secondly, it also resisted the absolutizing of tongues speaking, and was in fact nurtured by Mackay who did not speak in tongues. This less dogmatic approach, and the thorough theological study by men like Williams, gave the renewal movement greater credibility. Rodman-Williams' "Renewal Theology" has also become a widely accepted work for Reformed-Charismatics.

If the systematic theology study in this chapter confirms the importance and even centrality of PSA (and other key doctrines) and ES in the planting and spiritual growth of New Testament churches, then these works will prove very helpful for Southlands church planting strategy. This research is important because it provides a historic example of a church planting movement that experienced Charismatic renewal whilst remaining both anchored to Reformed theology and cohesive in fellowship. This example of cohesion within renewal bucks the trend of movements who split around seemingly polarizing theological convictions. It shows the importance of courageous leadership and wise theological counsel for movements to maintain Biblical faithfulness and relational cohesion while enjoying spiritual renewal.

#### *3.2.1.6 The Discernment of Signs: Jonathan Edwards and the Toronto Blessing by Phil Roberts (1996)*

Roberts presented this paper to the Evangelical Theological Society at the height of the Toronto Blessing, which began on Father's Day at the Toronto Airport Vineyard in 1995 and which was claimed to be a revival by many of its proponents. It was characterized by manifestations like laughing, shaking, fainting and people making animal sounds such as roaring like a lion, which of course drew much criticism from large sectors of the church. It is significant to know that it caused a great polarization, even in the Vineyard Church where it started, which resulted in John Arnot who led the Vineyard Church where it started, leaving the Vineyard Church.

Roberts makes a connection between the manifestations documented during the Great Awakening in the 1700's and those common in the Toronto blessing. He also refers to the writings of the New England Puritan, Jonathan Edwards, who was an ardent supporter of the revivals that sparked the Great Awakening, even though they were characterized by similar physical manifestations. Edwards was one of America's foremost Christian thinkers and

became the president of Princeton College a few years before his death in 1758. Because he so vigorously pursued, preached about, prayed for and reflected on the Awakening, his insights are generally considered authoritative. He resisted the idea that religion had to be morbid or subdued, claiming that true religion, in great part, consisted of holy affections, even though he admitted that spiritual affections could generate emotion-physical phenomena which required careful discernment. However, he was an advocate of the possibility of physical phenomena when people encountered God's presence. Roberts quotes Jonathan Edwards: "'Tis no wonder that when the thoughts are so fixed, and the affections so strong, and the whole soul so engaged and ravished . . . that all other parts of the body are so affected as to be deprived of their strength, and the whole frame ready to dissolve."

He concludes his paper with a recommendation that the proponents and opponents of the Toronto Blessing take heed to Edwards' 'Distinguishing Marks of the Work of God's Spirit':

*(i) Distinguish between the essential and secondary work of the Spirit*

The essential work is love of Christ, Obedience to the Scripture, holiness and love of God and neighbour. The secondary work may include physical manifestations but these are not essential.

*(ii) Link cause with effect in the display of emotions*

What has caused the effect? Is it the joy of salvation or restored fellowship, sorrow over the conviction of sin? If there is no cause and effect then extreme caution should be taken and constraint showed, understanding that the devil can cause manifestations. Bizarre and gross behavior should be inhibited, and eccentricities that hinder evangelism or create disorder should be restrained with sensitivity.

*(iii) Revival should be sought*

Revival should be sought as it will result in the salvation of the lost and the awakening of God's people.

This paper by Roberts is important, not so much for connecting the Toronto Blessing back to Edwards, but for giving us a helpful lens through which to view revival in general. The

tendency amongst conservatives is to over-discerning any abnormal manifestations as not being of God, and the tendency among Charismatics is to be under-discerning. Edwards' *Marks* provide a fuller road map for navigating through revival rather than steering clear of it, and Roberts, though not fully endorsing of the Toronto Blessing, presents a less reactionary approach to it. It serves as a vital touchstone for a church planting movement wishing to pursue the power and presence of the Spirit while remaining anchored to the truth of Scripture and a quest for mission.

Section 3.2.1 has looked at several books and papers/articles that have effectively focused on the relationship of sound doctrine and the work of the Holy Spirit. The concern is for a truly biblical understanding of what empowerment of the Holy Spirit is appropriate for mission work – specifically church planting. As noted at the beginning of this section, these book and papers will contribute to formulating a systematic theology for church planting with special reference to PSA and ES.

### **3.2.2 A biblical exegetical perspective on linking of PSA and ES in church planting**

This section shows that the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the doctrine of the Empowerment of the Spirit are inseparable in the life and mission of Christ. This should mean therefore that they are to be inseparable in the life and mission of the Church. This position is achieved from an exegesis of John 1:29 and 1:31.

Evangelical Theology regards the first-order source of Systematic Theology as the Bible. I will begin with a brief exegetical analysis of the central supporting passage of my formulation, after which I will synthesize this Biblical data into 5 timeless truths with reference to other supporting Biblical passages.

In John the Baptist's prophetic recognition of Jesus as Messiah, he described Jesus' primary two-fold ministry as the *removal of sin*, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), and *baptism with the Spirit*. "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit"(John 1:31).

The statement, '*the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*,' refers to the commonly understood Jewish practice of atoning for sin by the killing of a sacrificial lamb or

bull, first practised in the Passover (Ex 14: 11), and later by Aaron the high priest (Ex 17:1). John the Baptist, employing Jewish Passover and Atonement metaphors, identifies Jesus as God's sacrificial lamb who would die as a substitute, bearing the punishment and penalty of sinful humanity. Matthew Henry, in his commentary on this verse explains that this marked the conclusion of John's message of repentance, recognizing that Jesus was the One for whom he was preparing, who would ultimately pardon sin (1992:1920). "I myself did not know him, but for this reason I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel" (John 1:32).

John's announcement of Jesus as the substitutionary Lamb, who would atone, not just for Israel's sin, but also for the sins of the whole world, was the climax of all the law and the prophets. The Messiah had come not as a warring king, but as a sacrificial Lamb, to save the world through death. This idea is commonly known as the doctrine of *Penal Substitutionary Atonement*. Grudem, in his seminal work entitled, *Systematic Theology*, explains that Christ's death was *penal* in that he bore a penalty when he died, and that his death was *substitutionary* in that he died *vicariously* in the place of humanity. The word *atonement* means to *make amends for wrongdoing* (1994:721). Grudem maintains that penal substitution is the orthodox understanding of the atonement held by evangelical theologians, in contrast to other views that attempt to eradicate the concepts of the wrath of God and payment for the penalty for sin from the gospel (1994:722).

After Jesus' baptism in water, John's Gospel describes the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and remaining upon Jesus. John the Baptist declared that Jesus, on whom the Spirit descended and remained, would baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:31). According to John the Baptist then, the identity of Christ was two-fold: He was the Lamb of God, and the One on whom the Spirit would descend and remain. Both identities referred to Jesus' sinless nature. John emphasized his conviction that Jesus was sinless by attempting to prevent him from being baptized with a baptism of repentance. "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matt 3:14) However, Jesus insisted, not on a baptism of repentance, but on a baptism for righteousness' sake, at which point John consented (Matt 3:15).

However, John's description of Jesus as a 'spotless Lamb' upon whom the Spirit could descend and remain did not merely refer to Jesus' sinless identity, but also to His ministry.

Whittaker, in the IVP New Testament commentary on John, refers to the Spirit descending and remaining on Jesus as the beginning of Jesus' modeling of Spirit-empowered mission. "This 'remaining' *GK. menon*, (present tense) implies that all of Jesus' ministry, must be understood as accomplished in communion with the Spirit of God" (1999:178). In other words, Jesus was modelling the necessity for Spirit-empowered mission, and would baptize those whom He had redeemed with this same Spirit, empowering them for His mission even as He himself was empowered. It would seem clear then, from John's words, that these two ministries are primary and inextricably linked within the identity and ministry of Christ.

Martin Lloyd-Jones, British scholar and preacher, argued for a converging of these two ministries in his seminal work, *The Sovereign Spirit* (1985), insisting that John's prophecy was a precursor to Jesus' instruction to his disciples that they should wait for Spirit-empowerment before bearing witness to Him (Acts 1:8). In other words, Lloyd-Jones reasoned that the first disciples' effective proclamation of the message of Jesus' Penal-Substitutionary Atonement was dependent upon a subsequent empowering of the Baptism of the Spirit. "I am trying to show that *this*, (the baptism of the Spirit) is what enables us as Christian people to represent our blessed Lord and Savior in this world of sin and shame. The whole purpose of the Baptism of the Spirit is to make us bold witnesses in an age that has forgot the message of the cross" (p. 15).

The two key verses considered in this section certainly would suggest that the dynamic link of doctrine and Spirit empowerment in Jesus' ministry would in some way carry over to the church. Certainly Jesus' experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit did not stop there as he is the one who will baptize in the Spirit.

### **3.2.3 Other N.T. perspectives on the linking of PSA and ES in church planting**

My hypothesis has been that doctrines of PSA and the ES should be inseparable in the life and mission of every church. This would seem to be supported by their powerful link in the life and mission of Jesus. Certainly the books reviewed have argued for this position. How does this claim hold up against biblical texts? I will attempt to argue that this claim is affirmed by at least five other clusters of texts in the Scriptures and I will synthesize these five clusters into five timeless truths.



*3.2.3.1 The Prophet Joel announced the coming of the Messiah who would suffer to redeem God's people and restore God's presence to His people by the Spirit. This was fulfilled in John's description of Christ as the Lamb of God and Baptizer of the Spirit.*

Joel speaks of the coming of the Messiah during a day of trouble and calamity, and calls for Israel to return to the Lord in fasting and repentance, promising that, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 2:32). This was contradictory to Israel's view of righteousness through observing the law, and was a foreshadowing of Christ's atoning work by grace. However, in the same chapter, Joel prophesies about an outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh, which speaks of God's restored presence with his people (Joel 2:29). This was the same passage quoted by the Apostle Peter when he preached the gospel and explained the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-22). Grudem's esteemed work entitled, *Systematic Theology*, maintains that John the Baptist heightened people's expectation of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy when he announced that One was coming after him who would save them from sin and baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (1998:1017).

*3.2.3.2 Jesus' final teaching to his disciples after the triumphal entry and before his arrest, focused on his atoning work on the cross and the disciples' need for the Holy Spirit after his departure.*

Although Jesus' final teaching also included instruction on the disciples' need for humility and unity, His emphasis was on the significance of the cross, as well as the necessity of receiving the Spirit to be bold witnesses of his death and resurrection. "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me. He said this to show by what death he was going to die" (John 12:32-33). "And I will ask the Father and He give you another helper, to be with you forever, even the Holy Spirit. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you" (John 14:15-18). All of the Synoptic Gospels record Jesus' teaching on the significance of the cross at the Last Supper. While it is only the Gospel of John that gives the account of Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit, it is an extensive teaching, covering two chapters (Jn 14:15-16:15), on the same night of the Last Supper (McGarvey and Pendleton, 1918: 354). One can safely assume that Jesus' final teaching on the night before His crucifixion consisted primarily of the purpose

of the cross and the coming of the Spirit, which would empower the disciples to be witnesses of the cross.

McGarvey and Pendleton (1918), in their harmony of the Gospels entitled, *The Four-fold Gospel*, describes the impact of the Spirit upon the gospel-effectiveness of the disciples, fulfilling Jesus' promise that they would do even greater works than He (Jn 14:12). For example, he estimates that at his death, Jesus converted about five hundred disciples, whereas at Pentecost the disciples converted three thousand in one day. According to them, Jesus' Last Supper discourse about the Holy Spirit was the promise of a spiritual manifestation of Himself to his disciples in which he would energize them with his very own life (p. 356).

*3.2.3.3 In Jesus' first appearance to his disciples after the resurrection, His commission to them maintained continuity between His mission and theirs, both in message and in power.*

In Luke's description of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to the disciples, he stated that Jesus appeared on numerous occasions over forty days, teaching about the kingdom and giving convincing proof that he was alive (Acts 1:3). John's Gospel provides a brief description of the first of these occasions when the disciples were gathered together. On this occasion, besides showing them his wounds, he stated that their mission would be to bring a message about forgiveness of sins and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. He insisted on continuity between His ministry and theirs, both in message and in power. "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld'" (John 20:21-23).

While there has been historic disagreement around the exact meaning of the disciples forgiving people of their sins, Whittaker, in the IVP Commentary on John maintains that the ancient church viewed this forgiveness and non-forgiveness as referring to admission to baptism (Brown 1970:1042). There is far more historic consensus around the explicit connection between the empowering of the Spirit and the preaching of the gospel. Whittaker explains that the disciples were to bear witness to Jesus, not just by preaching the message of His substitutionary atonement, but also by being the presence of Jesus through the Spirit" (1999:350).

*3.2.3.4 Before Jesus' ascension, His commission to his disciples to be witnesses of his death and resurrection was contingent upon the empowering of the Holy Spirit, for which they were commanded to wait.*

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus affirmed John the Baptist’s description of Him as the baptizer of the Spirit and applied its meaning primarily to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. “Wait for the promise of the Father which he said you heard from me. For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:4-5). John’s prediction that Jesus would ‘baptize with the Spirit and fire’ was plainly fulfilled at Pentecost when tongues of fire appeared to descend and rest upon the disciples, as they were filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4).

*3.2.3.5 While the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost was momentous, it was not an isolated occurrence in the early church, but re-occurred in different ways and on numerous occasions, always in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel.*

Some commentators do make a connection between John’s prophecy and Jesus’ baptism of the disciples with the Spirit at Pentecost. However, they view it as an isolated and temporary incident, which was never to be repeated. For instance, Strauss, in his article for the Philadelphia Bible Institute on *The Pentecostal Experience*, insists that the phenomena of tongues at Pentecost was not permanently instituted, but was given as a temporary sign for the benefit of the unbelieving Jews (1960:6). While Pentecost was unique in that it marked the birth of the church and the reversal of the scattered confusion of Babel, the Book of Acts reveals that the outpouring of the Spirit was not an isolated occurrence, limited to Pentecost. It provides multiple descriptions of the ongoing empowering and infilling of the Spirit in the early church.

For instance, the disciples were all filled with the Spirit as they prayed for Peter and John, who were imprisoned for proclaiming the gospel (Acts 4:31). We can assume that many of the disciples who were first baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost were in this prayer meeting and were again filled with the Spirit. The Apostle Peter was filled with the Spirit as he stood up to

make his defence before the Jewish Council (Acts 4:8). The Apostle Paul was filled with the Spirit and healed of blindness after his conversion as Ananias laid his hands upon him (Acts 9:17). The Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles in Cornelius's house as Peter preached the gospel to them (Acts 10:44-45). The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Ephesus after they had heard the gospel, when Paul had laid his hands upon them (Acts 19:6).

Therefore, the term 'Baptism with the Spirit,' while having an explicit connection to John the Baptist's prophecy about Jesus, should not be too narrowly defined. As can be seen in the above examples in Acts, it does not always occur through the laying on of hands, nor is it always accompanied by speaking in tongues or prophecy. It is described on one occasion in the Book of Acts as the Holy Spirit coming upon the believers (Acts 19:6), and on another as the Spirit falling upon the believers (Acts 10: 44). While it may refer to an initial infilling simultaneous or subsequent to conversion, it seems normal that a believer would experience multiple 'infillings.' The Acts 4 incident of the infilling of believers who had been baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost, is a case in point. Thus, the Baptism of the Spirit might be defined more broadly as the doctrine of the Empowerment of the Spirit, which maintains that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, particularly prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing, continue after the Apostolic age (Ruthven 2011: 1).

Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 together have provided clear biblical guidelines for a normative approach to church planting and possibly section 3.2.1. After considering dissenting voices to the conclusions resulting from these three sections (3.2.4 to 3.2.6), including church history perspectives and non-biblical perspectives, final conclusions about a normative church planting model will be presented in section 3.2.7.

### **3.2.4 Alternative views on linking of PSA and ES in church planting**

It appears that the main resistance towards a convergence of PSA and ES is disagreement around the meaning of the Baptism of the Spirit amongst those who embrace the doctrine of Penal Substitution. Here are some reasons and my responses which convince me that PSA and ES in church planting today can still argued as biblical.

#### ***3.2.4.1 Baptism of Fire refers only to Christ's second coming***

The most common alternate perspective on this passage maintains that John's statement: '*He will baptize with the Spirit,*' does not actually refer to Pentecost or any other outpourings of the Spirit in the book of Acts. They argue from the point of view of other Synoptic Gospels, which add, "The One on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit *and fire*" (Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16). For instance, Wiersbe in his *Bible Exposition Commentary* interprets '*baptize with the Spirit and fire,*' as referring to the fiery persecution that would be experienced by the early church in AD 70 and to Jesus' fiery judgment upon his return (2001:288). Wiersbe motivates his view by referencing the following verse, "His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Luke 3:17). While this verse does appear to point to Christ's return and judgment, Wiersbe seems to neglect the possibility that John the Baptist was referring firstly to Christ's empowering of the disciples and secondly to His returning judgment.

Jesus, himself, appeared to have a far plainer interpretation of John's prophecy about Him, making reference to it when he ordered His disciples to wait until they have received power from the Spirit before they are sent as His witnesses. "And while staying with them He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'" (Acts 1: 4-5). Erickson, in his work entitled *Christian Theology*, understands the phrase, 'He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire,' to mean that John makes no claim to have the Spirit or to be able to give the Spirit, but announces that Jesus has the Spirit and is able to give the Spirit. "He attributes to the coming Messiah the giving of the Spirit" (1998:886).

Moreover, the early disciples also viewed Christ's experience of the Spirit at his baptism as analogous with the way in which He would baptize them with the Spirit. For example, the Apostle Peter, on reporting back to the church in Jerusalem about the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles at their conversion, referred to the contrast between John, who baptized people in water, and Jesus, who would baptize people in the Spirit. "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:15-16). In

other words, the early disciples had as literal interpretation of John's words about Jesus as the one who would baptize them with the Spirit. In fact, they traced their experience of Spirit baptism back to these very words. Therefore, to assume that Jesus' ministry of 'baptism with the Spirit and fire,' is simply about fiery trials for believers and judgment for unbelievers, is to make a leap of conjecture over what is plainly taught and acted out in the Gospels and the book of Acts. It is to strain a proverbial gnat and swallow a camel! John's prophecy may also indeed refer to Jesus' second coming, but it most certainly refers to His coming to the church in power by the Spirit.

#### *3.2.4.2 Baptism of the Spirit is unconscious and simultaneous with conversion*

Other commentators maintain that the Baptism of the Spirit simply refers to the unconscious regeneration of the Spirit occurring for all believers at conversion because of faith in Christ's penal substitutionary atonement. While these scholars would not disagree about the Church's need for the empowering of the Spirit for effective witness, there is much debate about the technical nuances of John's statement, 'The One on whom the Spirit descends and remains will baptize with the Spirit' (John 1:31). For instance, Grudem in his *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* argues that this baptism in the Spirit happens automatically and simultaneously at conversion (1994: 768). While he accepts that there are six occasions in the book of Acts where a subsequent baptism of the Spirit takes place in the early church, he uses a seventh instance as an exception, wherein the Apostle Paul writes that the Christians in Corinth were 'all baptized into one body by One Spirit' (1 Cor 12:13). Grudem concludes from this verse that, from the Apostle Paul's perspective, baptism in the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion, with numerous subsequent infillings thereafter (1996:768). Carson supports this view in his book *Showing the Spirit*. The view, most commonly known as the *Integrative approach*, maintains that all Christians have been baptized by one Spirit into one body but are instructed to be filled with the Spirit continuously (1987:47). This Integrative approach is like the position of the Third Wave Movement, which began in the 1980's, placing greater emphasis on the gifts of healing, spiritual discernment and 'power evangelism' than baptism in the Spirit, and later took institutional form in a network of churches referred to as "The Vineyard" (Erickson 1998:873).

Lloyd Jones, in contrast to the Integrative view, maintains in *The Sovereign Spirit*, that the subsequent baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2 was both a fulfillment of John's prophecy about Jesus and a model for all Christians to follow (1985:17). J. Rodman-Williams verifies this view in his work, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic perspective*, contending that Jesus' baptism in the Spirit at the Jordan was as much a model for the church to follow as his baptism in water, for the effectiveness of mission (1996:143). He refers to Peter's sermon to the Gentiles at Caesarea, wherein he describes how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power and how he went around doing good and healing all those who were under the power of the devil (Acts 10:38). Rodman-Williams insists that in the same way in which Jesus was anointed by the power of the Spirit for his ministry, so the early church was likewise anointed with power for its ministry in Acts 2 (1992:144).

On the one hand, a dogmatic approach to the definition of the term, '*Baptism with the Spirit*,' would seem contradictory to the diversity of the Biblical terms used around this experience. The Bible does not technically say that that Jesus was *baptized in the Spirit*. Rather, the Spirit descended and remained upon Him, after which he was described as being *full of the Spirit* (Luke 4:1). Peter, in his sermon to the Gentiles, describes Christ's experience at his baptism as being *anointed by the Spirit* (Acts 10:38). As previously discussed, the experiences of the disciples in the Book of Acts includes diverse descriptions of such 'filled with the Spirit' (Acts 2:4, 4:32), 'full of the Spirit' (Acts 7:56) and 'the Spirit fell upon them,' (Acts 10:44) and 'receive the Spirit' (Acts 19:2). The diversity of the descriptions of the Spirit's work, both in Jesus' life and in the life of the disciples, would indicate that too narrow a definition of '*baptism with the Spirit*' is unhelpful.

What is clear, however, is that the normal experience of the believer should be analogous with the experience of Jesus, that is, a conscious infilling and empowering of the Spirit, and cannot refer only to Christ baptizing the believer into the Body by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).

Lloyd-Jones (1985:29) on this issue, argues that baptism in the Spirit may be both simultaneous or subsequent, occurring with a great diversity of manifestations, but that it is a conscious experience, or else the Apostle Paul would not have asked the Ephesians, 'Did you receive the Spirit when you first believed?' In conclusion then, if it is true that a vital part of

Jesus' ministry was to baptize in the Spirit those who had believed in his atoning message, then the church should take seriously Jesus' instruction to *ask for the Spirit* (Luke 11:19) while avoiding over-classification of how and when this takes place.

Even if section 3.2.4 does not solve all of the controversies raging around the meaning baptism in the Spirit, sections 3.2.2 and 2.3.3 demonstrate the close linking of the PSA and Spirit empowerment in mission in church planting in the New Testament period.

### **3.2.5 Historical perspectives on linking of PSA and ES in church planting**

While the connection between the doctrines of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the Empowerment of the Spirit appear to be explicitly in the life and ministry of Christ and in the early church, in church history they have seldom been connected or outworked simultaneously in the Church. It appears that three primary social and theological forces have been at work to maintain this divorce, with only a few notable historic exceptions. I will refer to these forces as Liberal Protestantism, Cessationism and Pentecostalism.

#### *3.2.5.1 Liberal Protestantism*

Theological liberalism, which came to the fore during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century through Faustus and Socinus, developed a teaching that rejected the idea of vicarious satisfaction in the atonement. It affirmed the Pelagian view of the human condition as capable of fulfilling God's moral and spiritual obligations, and rejected the view of God as a God of retributive justice (Erickson 1983:801). Thus, Christ's death became a supreme example of love for God and mankind, rather than a vicarious absorption of the wrath of God upon sinful humanity.

McGrath, in his seminal work entitled, *Historical Theology*, maintains that the liberalism of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century gave rise to Liberal Protestantism in Germany during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with the development of Darwin's theory of evolution. Under theologians like Schleiermacher and Bultmann, Liberal Protestantism was committed to bridging the gap between Christian faith and modern knowledge, and this ultimately caused an erosion of the Church's traditional interpretation of Scripture. (1998:232.)



Liberal Protestantism, most commonly held among Mainline Protestant denominations in the West, stands in opposition to the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement. For instance, the more liberal sector of the Presbyterian Church (USA), was recently reported to have removed the hymn “In Christ Alone,” from their hymnal, because it contained the lyrics, “And on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied” (Stocker 2013:12). A 2015 Pew Research article on the *Changing face of America's Religious Landscape* (Lipka 2015) estimated that the largest denominations comprising this sector of the church were the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Unitarian Church. These denominations have experienced a significant decline between 2007 and 2014 (p. 3).

Not surprisingly, Liberal Protestantism also embraces Cessationism, because of the assertion that Biblical miracles cannot be explained scientifically, denying any role of the Spirit in either revelation or mission (McGrath 1998:303). Perhaps the most dramatic example of this is the origin of the Jefferson Bible. In 1820 President Thomas Jefferson with a pair of scissors set about creating his own version of the Bible by cutting out those passages that included inexplicable miracles, and pasting together the remaining portions in chronological order; he named his own version, ‘The Life and Morals of the Jesus Christ of Nazareth’ (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/jefferson/3.html>). Not surprisingly, Liberal Protestantism’s rejection of both the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit, has led to a general decline of any sense of Spirit-empowered Gospel mission in its ranks. For Liberal Protestants then, Christ is neither the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, nor the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.

### 3.2.5.2 Cessationism within the Reformed tradition

While Protestant Liberalism tends towards Cessationism, it does so because of a low view of the authority of Scripture (McGrath, 1998:303). However, historically, the major proponents of Cessationism have done so because of a high view of Scripture. Fowler-White, in his article *The comparison between Cessationsim and Non-Cessationsim*, argues that Cessationists have opposed the practice of gifts such as prophecy, tongues and interpretation for fear that they will serve to diminish biblical faithfulness and gospel fidelity (1992:174). On the other

hand, Continuationists believe in the authority and inspiration of scripture, and claim that they are simply obeying the Scriptures, which command that believers should 'eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy' (Grudem 1994:1017). Therefore, though generally divided, both Continuationists and Cessationists believe that they are taking their stand in submission to the authority of Scripture, as opposed to Liberal Protestantism's critique of Scripture.

Therefore, a historic divide typically exists most visibly between those churches that place a high value upon the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement, and those churches that place a high value on the doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit. This divide tends to be heightened in highly churching nations like the United States, where their own seminaries theologically shape large denominations, thus intensifying their theological presuppositions and reducing the possibility of theological cross-pollination. Typically, the Reformed tradition, spanning primarily Baptist, Presbyterian and Lutheran denominations, would exemplify those churches which place a high value on the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement. Historically, this tradition has been theologically Cessationist, believing that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit such as tongues, prophecy and healing evidenced by the early church, ceased after the conclusion of the Canon of Scripture. They maintain that these miracles were given to verify the Apostolic authority of those who preached, and therefore, once what they had preached was verified as Scripture, there was no longer a need for the miraculous (Fowler-White 1992:178).

McDougal, in his article on Cessationism, builds his doctrine around Paul's phrase, "When the perfect comes the imperfect will pass away" (1 Cor 13: 8). He understands the word, *perfect* (**teleon**), to mean *maturity* rather than *perfection*, which indicates that there would be a time of the maturation of the church in which the revelatory process would cease to exist and the revelatory gifts therefore be ended. Therefore, for Cessationists the conclusion of the Canon of Scripture marks the conclusion of the gifts of the Spirit in the early church (2003:178).

The doctrine of Cessationism first emerged during the Patristic era through the teaching of John Chrysostom, Bishop of Carthage in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Talking about the gift of tongues in his *Homilies on 1 Corinthians 12*, he remarked, "This whole place is very obscure; but the

obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place” (Schaff 1888b:340). Augustine affirmed this view in his *Homily on 1 John* in 340 A.D., stating that speaking in tongues was a miracle commonly found in the early church, but that it was no longer in evidence in his time (Schaff 1888a:854). Cessationism was re-affirmed during the Reformation era by both John Calvin, who maintained that extra-biblical prophecy undermined the doctrines of *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Christo*, devaluing the authority of Scripture and of Christ Himself as God’s final fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians 12, he was disparaging about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. “This, however, remains certain: the perfect doctrine he has brought has made an end to all prophecies. All those, then, who, not content with the gospel, patch it with something extraneous to it, detract from Christ’s authority” (Schaff 1888b:269).

Jonathan Edwards, president of Princeton University and renowned Reformed preacher, was viewed by many as the most influential Christian academic and leader around the time of the American Great Awakening in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Surprisingly, although he was witness to many dramatic physical manifestations as thousands of people repented during his preaching, he espoused the views of Cessationism. In an essay entitled *Charity and its Fruits*, Edwards critiqued the claims of the spiritual gift of prophecy, tongues and interpretation, arguing that since the Canon of the Scripture had been completed and the Church had been fully established, that these miraculous gifts had effectively ceased (cited in T Edwards [ed] 1969:29).

While Cessationism exists amongst churches beyond the Reformed tradition, it has tended to be most prevalent within the ranks of those who have the highest view of Scripture, because the claim to current revelation seems an affront to the finality of God’s final revelation. Its most ardent contemporary proponent is the Reformed pastor and teacher, John MacArthur, whose books, “Charismatic Chaos” and “Strange Fire,” serve as a polemic against the seeming errors and excesses of the Charismatic /Pentecostal movement. With such a strident tradition of Cessationism, it is little wonder that Reformed theologians have tended to highlight the ministry of Christ as the ‘*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,*’ while negating or neglecting the ministry of Christ as the ‘*Baptizer of the Spirit.*’

### 3.2.5.3 *Pentecostalism*

The humble beginnings of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906 was led by Willie J. Seymour, an illiterate son of former slaves. It was characterized by miraculous gifts of the Spirit such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and physical healing. By the 1950's the revival spread to Catholic, Episcopalian and Lutheran churches that also experienced the phenomenon of *glossolalia* (Erickson, 1998:871). The neo-Pentecostal movement, according to Richard Niebuhr's classifications, had become its own 'church', which has since become a powerful force in the United States, Scandinavia, South America and other Third World countries (Erickson, 1998:872). The Assemblies of God is now one of the largest Pentecostal denominations, with reportedly 64 million adherents (Barick 2010:1). However, while their zeal for mission and the power of God is exemplary, their insistence that the Baptism of the Spirit must be evidenced by speaking in tongues, has in my opinion, done damage to the broader cause of Continuationism. This insistence might be defined as *Pentecostalism*, which takes a dogmatic stance towards what constitutes Spirit baptism, rather than an appeal for the Church at large to experience spiritual renewal in a variety of forms. Professor James K.A. Smith, a Pentecostal who teaches at a Reformed seminary in Toronto called Calvin College, motivates for a less dogmatic approach to speaking in tongues as the singular evidence of Baptism in the Spirit amongst the Pentecostal community, for the sake of spreading the essence of the Pentecostal experience. He entreats his denomination to become 'pentecostal with a lower-case p,' in his book entitled, *Thinking in Tongues* (2008:42).

However, this evolution from *Pentecostalism* to *pentecostal with a lower-case p*, seems unlikely after a recent article in which Audrey Barick of the *Christian Post* interviewed Assemblies of God Superintendent George O. Wood, who re-affirmed his commitment to a classic Pentecostalism. "Just as the initial physical evidence of being baptized in water is that you are wet, the initial physical evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues" (*Superintendent of AG denies that speaking in tongues is in decline*, 2010). Notwithstanding, despite maintaining a classic Pentecostal stance on Baptism in the Spirit, Superintendent Wood did concede that the erosion of gospel fidelity in the face of the so-called 'prosperity gospel,' was a very real threat to the denominations health and mission. "If the money that has been wasted by Christians on these people who live the lifestyle of kings and

queens and do little to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ had been spent instead on mission and on Christian higher education and upon this generation, we would be a lot further down the road than we are and these people are going to answer to God” (*Superintendent of AG denies that speaking in tongues is in decline*, 2010).

I submit then, that this lack of fidelity to the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement because of a focus on prosperity, confirms the suspicions of those in the Reformed tradition, which see the pursuit of spiritual power and financial prosperity as a journey away from gospel faithfulness. Moreover, the adherence to a narrow definition of the baptism of the Spirit, results in a kind of ‘Pentecostalism’ that is off-putting to many thoughtful Evangelicals, who may otherwise be open to a greater experience of the Spirit’s power. I concur with James K.A. Smith that ‘pentecostal with a lower-case-p,’ may result in a greater openness among Cessationists to the doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit. It would seem then, that Pentecostalism, while fervently embracing Jesus as the *Baptizer of the Spirit*, has not always held to the fidelity of Jesus as the *Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29).

#### 3.2.5.4 The Recent Emergence of Reformed Continuationists

While the historic forces of Liberal Protestantism, Cessationism and Pentecostalism have caused polarization within the church around the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and Baptism in the Spirit, there does appear to have been a recent marriage of these doctrines through the emergence of certain respected theologians and leaders within the Reformed tradition. These theologians have identified themselves as Continuationists. Continuationism, according to Ruthven, in his work entitled *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, is the belief that the Spirit continues to give His miraculous gifts to His people for as long as the Church exists on this earth (2011:13).

Perhaps most notable among the Reformed Continuationists is John Piper, the Baptist pastor, author and co-founder of the Gospel Coalition. As recently as 2013, Piper, traditionally viewed as an ally of John MacArthur, publicly distanced himself from the latter pastor’s book, ‘Strange Fire,’ which was a polemic against the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. In his article, *Addressing Strange Fire and Charismatic Chaos*, Piper responded to MacArthur’s’ accusation

that he had become open to gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy with a bold admission of his Continuationist position. “I am not open to gifts like prophecy. I advocate full obedience to Paul’s command to eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy, and to forbid not speaking in tongues” (Piper, Episode 43, *Addressing Strange fire and Charismatic Chaos*, 2013; cf. also Hyatt, 2013).

Reformed Theologian Wayne Grudem, who has written widely accepted theological works like, *Systematic Theology* and *Are miraculous gifts for today? Four Views*, has also provided great theological credibility to the Reformed Continuationist position. Renown Canadian theologian and co-founder of the Gospel Coalition, D.A. Carson, has also provided compelling exegetical support for this position in his book, *Showing the Spirit: An exegesis of 1 Cor 12-14*, as has Sam Storms, Vice President of the Evangelical Theological Society, in his theological and biographical work, *Convergence: Spiritual journeys of a Charismatic Calvinist*.

These theologians take an *Integrative* approach to the Baptism of the Spirit, rather than a classic Pentecostal approach. This means that they hold to the belief that Baptism in the Spirit occurs simultaneously at conversion, with many subsequent infillings. Grudem critiques the Charismatic/Pentecostal view that Baptism in the Spirit is a subsequent experience. He maintains that believers are baptized into Christ’s body by the Spirit at conversion (1 Cor 3:12) but experience multiple subsequent infillings (1994:1017). While the *Integrative Continuationist* approach is closer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave Charismatic view of the Vineyard, the existence of the above respected theologians who argue for the present-day infilling and empowering of the Spirit in a theological camp that has been traditionally Cessationist, is significant. It has greatly narrowed the divide between two traditions that have tended to cluster around one or the other doctrine.

Section 3.2.5 has demonstrated that the controversial point about agreeing on Spirit empowerment for mission is the baptism in the Holy Spirit and how it relates to subsequent empowerment for missions. Is the baptism in the Spirit something to be sought requiring usually prayer with the laying on of hands? And does it empower the Christian for the rest of his Christian life for powerful mission? Certainly in Acts there is some support for answering the first question in the affirmative and the second one in the negative. My conclusion is that

church planting needs the dynamic empowerment of the Spirit and that this is supported by Scripture. Therefore Southlands and its church plants not only acknowledge this but also have times of special prayer for empowerment (the actual name given to these experiences is more a matter of semantics as Acts shows). Ultimately all evangelicals would argue that the more of the Spirit's enabling power we experience, the better for witness and spiritual growth. Southlands does not want to get trapped in the mire of an endless and unprofitable debate that effectively prevents serious looking to the Holy Spirit's power.

For those who believe the baptism in the Spirit takes place at conversion without any significant dynamic or discernible experience, they cannot deny the powerful experience on the Day of Pentecost and later by those who had been present on the this day. This should provide sufficient support for praying for these kinds of empowerments, as Southlands does, that clearly enhance missions without getting bogged down in correct terminology. All evangelicals agree in the need for Spirit empowerment for effective missions.

Ephesians 5:18 (ISV) states that Christians must "Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but keep on being filled with the Spirit." Though this verse might refer to being controlled by the Spirit through meditation in the Scriptures (cp. Eph 5:18-20 with Col 3:16) rather than special empowerment for missions, it does not prohibit special times of prayer for the kinds of powerful Holy Spirit experiences recorded in Acts for more effective missions.

### **3.2.6 Non-biblical perspectives indirectly relevant to linking PSA and ES in church planting**

Before proceeding with the outline of chapter 3, the role of extra-biblical knowledge in practical theology needs to be noted. The position taken by evangelicals is well stated by Smith, in his work entitled *Integrated Theology: Discerning God's work in our World* (2013:33). It is also implied in Browning's approach to determining the normative position and defending it.

The Bible is God's revelation of reality. Therefore, it is the primary textbook for theology. We base our beliefs first and foremost on what God has revealed to us, as it is preserved in scripture. However, although the Bible always teaches the truth, it does not teach all the truth. The word of God only teaches us the things God most

wanted us to know; it does not teach us everything we want to know. Through science and research, we know many things that are not revealed in the Bible. Scientists study God's world, and through careful observation and theory formation they contribute towards our understanding of reality. In this way, science contributes towards complete and accurate understanding of what is real and what is right (Smith, 2013:33).

At the heart of other sources of legitimate knowledge is the wise use of human reason. Browning (1991:2) is strong on the need for practical reason and practical wisdom in practical theology that also engages with non-biblical spheres of knowledge. In practical theology, there is should be "critical reflection on the church's dialogue with Christian sources *and other communities of experience and interpretation* with the aim of guiding its actions toward special and individual transformation" (italics added; p. 36).

The Wesleyan quadrilateral includes reason as one of the four components of formulating a good operative theology. Osborne's Hermeneutic Spiral seems to emphasize this much less than someone like Erickson, who encourages the theologian to look for confirmation of their conclusions from non-biblical disciplines like philosophy, social science and biology. Comparison with non-biblical sciences proves helpful, with particular reference to reason, the sociology of movements and the psychology of objective and subjective reality.

#### 3.2.5.1 Reason: *The need for Orthodoxy and Innovation in church planting*

A large motivation for managing the tensions between the afore-mentioned doctrines is the necessity for the Church as a movement to embrace both the objective work of the cross as well as the subjective, experiential dynamic of the Spirit. Brett McCracken, in his work entitled *Uncomfortable: The Awkward and Essential Challenge of Christian Community*, explores the dynamic tensions in the non-biblical sciences that can inform the way we see the church, claiming any movement that neglects the orthodoxy that formed it in the first place begins to lose a sense of its mission, while any movement that neglects innovation in favour of historic orthodoxy, loses a sense of the immediacy of its mission. McCracken (2017:76) argues that the themes of orthodoxy and innovation extend to many extra-biblical sciences and correspond with conventional human reason. For instance, political science comprises conservatives, who



tend towards conserving traditional principles, and progressives, who tend towards innovating with current ideologies. Within the sphere of the Arts, classical music is anchored in orthodoxy, while jazz improvises with orthodoxy. The same could apply to literature, with prose leaning towards orthodoxy while poetry leans towards innovation. Even personality types bear out this corollary, with left-brain versus right brain thinking.

### 3.2.5.2 *The Sociology of Movements*

Max Weber was a contemporary of Karl Marx, who was interested particularly with the Sociology of movements. In his thesis (1947), he developed a concept called *The Routinization of Charisma*, which dealt with charismatic authority in any religious movement. Weber's definition of charisma was not so much about spiritual empowerment as it was about a gifted, influential movement founder who led with *charismatic authority*. From Weber's perspective, charismatic authority must, of necessity, move in one of three directions: towards dissolution, towards traditional authority, or towards rational-legal authority within religion (1947:358). Charisma, according to Weber, faces this dilemma: that to survive it must change, but in changing it must give up its essentially charismatic qualities. In other words, according to Weber, the bureaucrat usually replaces the enthusiast. His study focused on the partnership of a founder and a successor in many movements. He gave examples like Joseph Smith and Brigham-Young, Lenin and Stalin, and Jesus and Peter (p. 362). He suggested that for a movement to resist routinization, the founder and successor must possess *double charisma*. This meant that the successor, while not needing to possess the same charisma as the founder, had to possess a similar faithfulness to the founding principles of the movement, as well as a similar enthusiasm for propagating these founding principles. Without this double charisma, the movement would either implode or institutionalize (p. 370).

Weber's theory of double charisma applies not only to Jesus and Peter, but also to Jesus and His disciples and ultimately his whole church. Double charisma might be considered as faithfulness to the founding principles of *Penal Substitutionary Atonement*, and enthusiasm for the propagation of these principles through the *Empowerment of the Spirit*. This will prevent the movement of the Church from implosion or institutionalization.

### 3.2.5.3 *The Psychology of objective and subjective reality*

Psychology as a discipline deals with the science of the mind. One of the basic tenets of psychology is the contrast between objective and subjective reality. Objective reality refers to any physical construct that consists of a force or matter. Subjective reality, on the other hand, is experienced through our senses, which often contains limits, flaws and imperfections. These senses cannot be proven which brings into question our reality. The subjectivity of perception of reality implies that concepts, and truths in the universe differ between individuals, as every individual interprets reality through the agency of their experience and worldview. Subjectivity refers to a person's perspective or opinion, feelings, beliefs, and desires. Subjectivity is often used to refer to unsubstantiated personal opinions, in contrast to objectivity, which refers to knowledge and fact-based beliefs. Rollo May, prominent 20<sup>th</sup> Century existentialist, in his work entitled *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, maintained that humans who were psychologically healthy were both objects and subjects of experience (1958:13).

Andrew Aberdeen, in his psychological article on *Argumentation*, states that while an over-emphasis on subjectivity can be detrimental to psychologically healthy discourse, individuals who judge subjectively are said to possess *epistemic virtue*, using intuition and personal feeling rather than relying on reason and logic. A psychologically healthy individual uses both subjective intuition and objective reason to reach affective decisions and build effective discourse (2010:2).

The formulation that links the doctrines of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the Baptism of the Spirit, seeks to marry objective reality with subjective reality from a psychological point of view. While the former exists in the realm of reasonable, historic fact, the latter exists in the realm of intuition, indicating not only theological balance, but also psychological virtue.

Therefore, while there is a clear biblical basis for the synthesis of the afore-mentioned doctrines, non-biblical examples that support the synthesis of similar ideas abound. In fact, they provide support for the need for successful growth of the church to involve both orthodoxy and charisma. The difference with the church is that the dynamic charismatic and visionary elements are further empowered by the Holy Spirit.

### 3.2.7 Conclusion

Section 3.2 has dealt with the matter of what constitutes a biblically faithful church planting praxis with special reference to the linking of PSA and ES. Though some churches in both church history and today have failed to give one or both of these doctrines attention or substantial focus, sections 3.2.2. and 3.2.3 have provided a strong case for linking them in church planting. There I have argued that churches planted around the confluence of the doctrines of PSA and ES are faithful to the church planting model or strategy envisaged by Jesus and used in the life and ministry of the early Church. Both Christ and his Apostles serve as a significant model for the marriage of these doctrines in present day church planting even though they have tended to polarize the Church historically.

I conclude that the convergence of these doctrines is optimally relevant to church planting because of the combination of doctrinal truth with spiritual life. It is my conviction that the objective, historic doctrine of PSA keeps the church *true* to its mission, while the more subjective, experiential doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit or the empowerment of the Spirit (a less controversial term that stresses the need for repeated endowments of power for mission) keeps the church *alive* to its mission. Jesus as the Lamb of God represents Christ's ministry of PSA, as well as the church's responsibility to preach this message with conviction in the face of Liberalism, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism and the Prosperity Gospel.

Jesus the Baptizer in the Spirit and fire did not merely refer to Christ's returning judgment, but primarily to his empowerment of every disciple to preach the gospel. John's double-edged description of Christ advocates that the effective mission of the church requires a courageous proclamation of the message of the gospel (including and centrally PSA) and a tangible demonstration of the Spirit's power (described by baptism in the Spirit or other equivalent terms). When the latter doctrine is neglected in favour of the former, the mission of the church tends to lack dynamism. Conversely, when a church neglects the former doctrine in favour of the latter, the mission suffers from a pre-occupation with spiritual encounter and the church can become a mystical, insular enclave and open to unbiblical emphases and even doctrines.

So, I conclude that the normative operative theology for church planting for any church is centered in a combination of preaching and teaching PSA and experiencing the empowerment

of the Holy Spirit for bold and unashamed proclamation of the gospel and building sound churches that produce daughter churches.

### **3.3 Conclusions concerning a biblically faithful church planting operative theology for Southlands Church**

A Biblically faithful operative theology of church planting seeks to plant churches that are faithful to Scripture and optimally relevant to their current context. This chapter has demonstrated and thus confirms that Scripture calls for a church planting approach that is rooted in the doctrines of PSA and ES. This section of the chapter therefore attempts to bring together the results of chapters 3 and 2 to achieve this. Though Southlands has produced an impressive rate of church planting, the research revealed the lack of intentional theological training and an over-reaction against excesses in the Charismatic and related movements, with the results of a deficiency in the long-term growth and spiritual vitality of the church plants. Chapter 3 has pointed to the need for leaders to be better equipped in the doctrines of PSA and ES so that they might impact both their mission boldness and discipleship and similarly of the members of churches they planted.

In the light of both Southlands history of church planting and the biblically faithful operative theology for church planting presented in this chapter, the following dimensions of an operative theology suited for Southlands that reflects the convergence of PSA and ES should include the following:

#### **3.3.1 Church planters and their teams should be strong in their understanding and bold in their proclamation of the gospel**

Church planting teams need to be trained in the role of PSA and ES in church planting and the spiritual and numerical growth of the new plants. This mini-thesis is an attempt to help achieve this. Southlands church planting teams need to soundly and repeatedly preach and teach the doctrine of PSA so that members are (i) equipped to distinguish between the biblical gospel and false gospels, and (ii) activated to share the gospel winsomely yet without apology, explaining gospel terms such as atonement, sin, wrath, penalty, repentance, forgiveness,

redemption, substitution, heaven and hell. This is unique in a region and church context where the preaching of either a 'prosperity gospel,' or moralistic therapeutic deism is more common.

All planting team members need to be trained to be able to communicate the grand Biblical metanarrative of Creation, The Fall, Redemption and Restoration, and to tell their own life story within that framework. They need to be equipped to facilitate conversations with others' stories in the using the biblical narrative, listening for elements of God's creation, and The Fall and applying the gospel skillfully in redemptive ways.

### **3.3.2 Church Planters and their teams should be sent with a biblical theology and clear philosophy of Spirit-empowered prayer**

A primary ingredient for successful church planting is that the new baby church be devoted to both devotional and corporate prayer, aware that bold proclamation of the gospel necessitates the empowerment of the Spirit which is only possible through prayer. A cursory look at the book of Acts shows that the disciples experienced ongoing empowering and direction for mission as they gathered together to pray (Acts 4:32; 13:1). An implication of this operative theology is that people not only ask for prayer through the laying on of hands, but also pray together for God to embolden and direct the church corporately as a missionary people.

Prayer with a gospel lens helps avoid an overly therapeutic approach to the ministry of the Spirit. While most Charismatic/Pentecostal churches practise regular prayer for the Baptism of the Spirit (empowerment of the Spirit), this typically takes place within a more therapeutic framework. A missional framework emphasizes the infilling of the Spirit as intended not only for the believer's personal holiness, emotional health and comfort, but for empowerment to proclaim the gospel. While the former should not be neglected, the latter should be emphasized as a more biblical reason for infilling of the Spirit (Acts 1:8).

A philosophy of Spirit-empowered prayer should also include the ability to discern and communicate spiritual gifts such as prophecy and words of knowledge, weighing them biblically and communicating them wisely (1 Corinthians 12-14). Prayer for physical healing, while being a primary task of elders (James 5:14), should not be their sole responsibility in these churches. The *priesthood of all believers* should mean every church planter and the

members of the church planted should seek Spirit empowerment through fervent repeated prayer (Mark 16:18). This is practically facilitated through the training of prayer and ministry teams beyond the pastoral team, who are active in praying for individuals in the church.

### **3.3.3 Church planters should be equipped to preach the whole Bible faithfully in a spirit of grace through a Christological lens**

Much preparation should be given for the training of church planters in the faithful interpretation and exposition of the Bible through a Christological lens. Special focus needs to be devoted to the methods and the importance of preaching Christ through the Old Testament. Further, church planters should be equipped to preach a series of expository sermon through books of the Bible, rather than relying on topical preaching. In this way congregations will grow in in the whole counsel of God and their appreciation of the metanarrative of God's redeeming grace through Christ revealed in all Scripture. Peppler (cf. Smith 2013:109) argues that the Christocentric approach to hermeneutics should be applied to both Testaments. Christocentric preaching ensures that Christ is central in the life and ministry of the church, the only way to build a church that is truly part of the Body of Christ and a true witness to the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit for both godliness and service.

### **3.3.4 All church planting team members should view themselves as missionaries**

An understanding of the convergence of the gospel (the heart of which is PSA) and the Spirit should fuel mission. Not only should church planters and their teams be trained to exegete the Biblical text faithfully. They also need to be equipped to understand/exegete their new context and culture faithfully. This will include an appreciation of the history, demographics, pain, pride and community rhythms of their planting context. Every person on a church planting team needs to understand that s/he is a recipient of Jesus' Great Commission, sent on mission to live out the message of the gospel incarnationally by dwelling among the people of their new context (John 1:1). It is vital that the team members understand that they are going to plant a *"Mission with a Message before they plant a Meeting with a Model."* Church planters and their teams should be equipped to enter the cultural rhythms of their new context, serve its needs, celebrate its strengths, build relationships with its citizens and start conversations about faith boldly and winsomely.

### **3.3.5 Sunday gatherings should exhibit a ‘wedding of Word and Spirit’ and an intentional effort to welcome both the Christian and the spiritual seeker**

While church planting teams will understand that the scattered Church is vitally important to the mission of God, they should also appreciate that Sunday gatherings are equally important. Church planters and their teams need to intentionally ground their worship, preaching and prayer in the Scriptures, ensuring that the gospel is faithfully preached to both believer and seeker. Gospel centrality should also be uniquely stressed in gatherings in the sacraments of communion and baptism, which therefore need to be practised with regularity, reverence and awe.

Further, this Biblical-based approach should be intentionally wedded with a Spirit-led approach to worship, prayer, and preaching. Meetings need to be well-prepared, but led with a degree of spontaneity and inclusivity of the church body, who participate through prayer for one another, prophecy, words of encouragement and words of knowledge as led by the empowering Spirit (1 Cor 14:27). This should be done in an orderly manner under the leadership of the elders that avoids a one-man-ministry approach and highlights the priesthood of all believers.

Close attention to demystifying and explaining prayer, worship and the practice of the spiritual gifts is necessary for both those who are from more conservative Christian backgrounds and those who are still exploring the Christian faith. Church planting teams should be trained to “Pursue love and eagerly desire the spiritual gifts” (1 Cor 14:1). This training would instill the high values of showing hospitality towards outsiders and humility, biblical clarity on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and non-manipulative communication in promoting the desiring and operating of spiritual gifts.

### **3.3.6 Understanding that the marriage of these doctrines produces a healthy church culture of security and expectancy**

Churches founded upon the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement will exhibit a spiritual security in the redemptive work on the cross, which will be noted for joyful certainty of the love of God and the promise of his forgiveness as well as a resistance to works-based righteousness and legalism. This is vital for church planting teams who so easily fall into

striving, basing the joy upon the fickle progress of their church instead of on the unshakeable good news of the gospel.

Churches founded upon the doctrine of ES will manifest a culture of expectancy for the Kingdom of God to come in power, healing, salvation and justice. While congregants rest secure in the completed victorious work of Christ on the cross, they are catalyzed by the Spirit to move towards the unfinished work of the kingdom. The combination of gospel-security and Spirit-expectancy produces churches with a healthy culture of rest and action.

### **3.4 The extent to which Southlands Church is achieving a biblically faithful church planting operative theology**

By January 2018, Southlands will have fully planted churches four times in four years. The fourth church plant in Chino is already six months into the pre-launch training and can therefore be counted as one of the church plants. Three of the current four churches were planted as part of a *one-church-multiple communities model*, which affords each faith community high levels of autonomy with a commitment to inter-dependence. This means that while each church meets in a different location with its own team of elders and deacons, and with live preaching on a Sunday as opposed to satellite preaching, it does not operate in complete autonomy. Each community operates with a shared name, website, budget, administration, preaching plan and vision. A central team of elders governs the whole church with its four communities, all of which fall within a 50-mile radius of one another. One of the four church plants in the last four years was the result of sending a team of 17 people to Chiang Rai, Thailand. While Southlands maintains a significant financial and ministerial commitment to the church in Chiang Rai, it remains completely autonomous.

Three of the four church planters took part in the empirical survey. They included two of the most recent Southlands communities as well as the church plant in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Even though no church was older than three years, it became apparent in the empirical survey that the more recent church plants from Southlands bore significant resemblance to one another and were also significantly different to the prior seven church plants interviewed in the empirical survey.



Southlands' attention to preparing its more recent church planters and planting teams with a church planting approach largely reflects what was developed in this chapter has already begun to bear fruit in the following ways:

#### **3.4.1 More recent church planters have emphasized the message of Christ more than a model of church structure and operation**

While recent church planters acknowledged the importance of being trained in biblical Ecclesiology as it pertains to ordaining church leadership, hosting worship and prayer gatherings, running community groups and doing visitor follow-up, they appreciated the fact that more time was set aside for providing them with an operative theology for church planting. They made reference to the study and application of the Christological doctrines of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and Empowerment of the Spirit, which provided them with the '*why behind the what*' of church planting. According to these more recent church planters, they were prepared to plant *the message of Christ* before they planted a *church model*.

Except for the last three respondents, all previous respondents described a re-awakening to the importance of Christology after they planted churches because the emphasis of their training had been on ecclesiology. This points to the fact that Southlands has been historically weak in equipping church planters to understand and communicate the gospel in its fullness, but that it has improved significantly over the last three church plants.

#### **3.4.2 The more recent church plants avoided the swing from ES to gospel centrality**

While the previous seven church plants all admitted that their re-discovery of the doctrine of PSA produced a reaction to the doctrine of SE, the newer plants experienced no such swing because they were trained to maintain a healthy tension between the two. This meant that while they were intentional in establishing the centrality of the gospel in their churches through Christological preaching and sacramental worship, this was approached with an explicit dependence upon the empowerment of the Spirit. This included intentional training of their teams in prayer for healing and the practice of spiritual gifts such as prophecy, words of knowledge, tongues and interpretation. It also included an intensive training seminar to pray for those needing deliverance from demonic oppression and emotional healing.

### **3.4.3 More recent church plants were trained to plant a mission before a meeting**

Besides being strong in the doctrines of PSA and SE, all three newer plants were very strong on building missional rhythms in their cities as opposed to the previous church planters who had been trained more on how to run good church meetings. This emphasis on being the church scattered on mission from Monday to Saturday meant that church planters and their teams' choices about where they lived, studied, worked, shopped, ate and played were based on mission rather than on convenience.

Building relational bridges to share the gospel with people in their new context was a direct outworking of the doctrines of PSA and SE, which emphasize the relational nature of the Jesus who became flesh and dwelt among his people in grace, truth and power (John 1:1-10).

While the above aspects of Southlands' operative theology are effective in Southlands' newer church plants, there are other aspects that reveal a need for improvement. These aspects will inform our approach to future training, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

### **3.4.4 Church growth has not yet translated into conversion growth**

While the last three respondents who planted churches from Southlands after 2012 were exemplary in terms of establishing their churches upon the doctrines of PSA and SE, this has not yet resulted in rapid conversion growth. All three churches have grown steadily, and two have grown rapidly, but most growth is from de-churched and churchied demographics. All three churches have a rate of conversion growth below 5%, and this is borne out by the number of baptisms per capita, which is rather low. This may be attributed to their relatively young age as church plants, but may also point to the possibility that their focus has been more on explaining the gospel than on proclaiming it in the power of the Spirit. They also admitted that while their congregants were very good at building relationships with unbelievers, they lacked boldness to talk explicitly about matters of faith. This contrasts with those churches that have higher rates of conversion, whose congregants are less intentional about establishing *missional rhythms* but bolder in sharing their faith.

### **3.4.5 A disconnect between doctrine of ES on Sundays and during the rest of the week**

While all respondents in newer churches affirmed the doctrine of SE, and spoke of the regular practice of the spiritual gifts in Sunday gatherings, there were very few instances of this occurring in the context of community groups or in the context of evangelism. Churches that experienced a higher conversion rate were more willing to encourage their congregants to pray explicitly in smaller forums, especially for those they were evangelizing.

The newer churches experienced a disconnect between their powerful Sunday gatherings and their missional lives. Unfortunately, there was no direct link between these more recent churches that offered regular prayer for the empowerment of the Spirit in Sunday gatherings during their services and the number of water baptisms in a year (which points to conversion growth).

This is not the case in the sending church, Southlands, which has regular prayer times for the empowerment of the Spirit on Sundays, but also has regular stories of congregants praying for those in an evangelistic forum, as well as enjoying a conversion rate of over 5% per year. Training is needed in taking the empowerment of the Spirit out of a church context and into the market place.

### **3.4.6 Preachers better at explanation than proclamation of the gospel**

The thorough training in expository preaching through a Christological lens has meant that preaching teams are playing theological catch-up, and may over-complicate things for un-churched or un-educated demographics. It is interesting that the newer church plants have generally grown in the educated, middle class, churched demographics. While the intentional preaching of PSA is foundational in every church context, preachers must beware of a theologically dense approach to preaching, the need of growing in their understanding/exegesis of their surrounding culture, and learning the skill of preaching to both church seeker and saved, educated and uneducated, if they are to experience growth among the un-churched. More training needs to be done in this regard.

### 3.5 A defence of the church planting operative theology developed for Southlands Church

Luke begins his account of the early Church in the Book of Acts with the words, “In my former book, I wrote to you, my dear Theophilus about all that Jesus began to do and to teach” (Acts 1:1). Luke is referring to his gospel account of Jesus’ proclamation of the gospel and demonstration of the kingdom. Jesus’ ministry was one of both *doing* and *teaching*. The Book of Acts is the account of how the Church continued with Jesus command to continue what he began to do and to teach. In other words, the ministry of the Church is also to be one of both proclamation and demonstration. The Scriptures therefore reveal God’s intention that the message of Christ through the Body of Christ was to be communicated in both word and deed.

The evangelical conviction is that Scripture is trustworthy and authoritative for understanding God’s mission in the world and the Christian’s role in it. This means being as faithful as possible to the gospel and its vision for making disciples through church planting. For this to occur, it has been argued from the New Testament that churches are founded upon doctrines that produce confidence that Christ’s substitutionary atonement remains God’s only way of salvation, and that it must be faithfully proclaimed and demonstrated through empowerment by the Holy Spirit in every nation, city and town.

This chapter therefore argued that the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement is the most robust and holistic doctrine by which church planters will be motivated and equipped to be faithful in the proclamation of the message of Christ. It also made a strong case for the dynamic empowerment of the Spirit for this task and the building of new churches. The Spirit alone effectively equips church planters and their teams to demonstrate the kingdom, helping them to avoid the pitfalls of orthodoxy without action. The empowerment of the Spirit infuses new churches with spiritual dynamism as they live out the gospel with visible acts of mercy, justice, evangelism and prayer.

We have also found that the doctrine of the empowerment of the Spirit apart from the doctrine of penal substitutionary empowerment can become overly mystical and even reduced to a therapeutic endeavour. The former doctrine keeps the church true to its message and mission,

while the latter doctrine keeps the church dynamic in its mission. Thus, a convergence of these doctrines is vital for the continuation of Christ's ministry of proclamation and demonstration, as Southlands seeks to plant churches in cities and towns for human flourishing and for the glory of God.

Thus, Southlands as an evangelical church believes its position on church planting rooted in the doctrines of PSA and ES, is defensible. It is being faithful to its biblical roots and passion for God's kingdom to grow throughout the world through an empowered and witnessing church leading to changed lives reconciled to God, one another, and the geographical world, so important to sustaining human life.

Evangelicals are also convinced that a true understanding and experience of God's saving power through the gospel, a person's humanity reaches its greatest development, meaning, fulfilment, and concern for the wellbeing of others in the world and the physical world that is humanity's home. The gospel is rooted in God's love for his creation, especially the human race. Christians infused with this love are the greatest guarantee for a peaceful and flourishing world.

While based upon his African context, Vernon Light's work entitled *Transforming the Church in Africa: a new contextually-relevant discipleship model*, has universal relevance to the idea of church planting for the sake of human flourishing. He explores the evangelical conviction that the Bible provides an authoritative and comprehensive and convincing meta-narrative for understanding the history of humanity. This conviction upholds the dignity of every human being, created in the image of God, and it provides a diagnosis of the problems of the human condition through the Fall (2012: 20). He posits that the Bible provides a real solution for the problem of real guilt through the 'divine remedy' of the gospel of Christ, as well as a reasonable explanation for the problem of evil in the world and a redemptive solution (p. 21). He also argues that the Bible's absolute morals provide a stable, caring, safe and productive society, acting as a preserving agent against the corruption of moral autonomy so prevalent in post-modernity (p. 24). Finally, he suggests that the Bible's plot line offers hope to all, especially those who suffer in this world, because it promises a new heaven and a new earth at the consummation of all things (p. 27).

Light's work has bearing on this thesis. This is because he sees the potential for every church that is built upon the redemptive meta-narrative of the Bible to be a *gospel outpost* of hope and human flourishing in society. His vision of social transformation as a by-product of the gospel adds colour and texture to the existing conviction that the gospel transforms individuals' lives and thus society, adding further impetus for Southlands to plant *gospel-centered, Spirit empowered, communities on mission*. Clearly Southlands feels it is justified in saying that the church planting operative theology developed in this chapter can be soundly defended.

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the doctrines of Penal Substitutionary Atonement and the Empowerment of the Spirit (baptism and other infillings) were inseparable in the earthly life and mission of Jesus Christ, and should therefore be inseparable in the life and mission of his Church. Essentially, the converging of these two doctrines means that churches are equally committed to reformation (better understanding and proclamation of the gospel and spiritual growth) and revival (growth in vision and passion for mission).

Francis Schaeffer, the Christian academic and social commentator, in his final work before his death entitled, *No Little People*, declared that the restoration of the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century would require a simultaneous commitment towards reformation and revival. He defined Reformation as a restoration of pure doctrine, and Revival as a life brought into proper relationship to the Holy Spirit, insisting that the greatest moments in church history had come when these restorations occurred simultaneously (1971:74).

Finally, it is Schaeffer's compelling picture of a church committed to the marriage of reformation and revival, that should epitomize the church's planting vision and practice of Southlands. The Church should never divorce reformation from revival, for faithfulness to Christ requires a marriage between pure doctrine and a Spirit-filled life, which will ultimately produce the offspring of healthy churches.

This chapter has formulated a church planting model for Southlands based on the normative practice of church planting during the New Testament period. The next chapter will tackle a

strategy to better achieve this model at Southlands. This will answer Browning's fourth and last question in his strategic practical theology approach which is the design for this mini-thesis.

## Chapter 4:

# Formulating a strategic plan for communicating and implementing a strengthened biblically faithful church planting operative theology at Southlands Church

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a strategic plan to strengthen the praxis of the multiplication of churches from Southlands Church. It seeks to answer Browning's strategic practical theology's fourth question: *What means, strategies and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?* Chapter 3 answered Browning's second and third questions whose answers called for the formulation of a biblically faithful operative theology regarding church planting at Southlands and its defence. Chapter 4 answers his fourth question dealing with the strategic practical theology process by considering the best means of communicating and implementing the improved church planting operative theology at Southlands.

As discussed in chapter 3, for the last three years Southlands has been training church planters and their teams essentially according to the biblically faithful church planting operative theology developed in chapter 3. Several training forums are already producing effective results in line with this operative theology and should therefore be continued. These will include *Porterbrook Network*, our two-year course on *gospel-fueled mission*, our 6-week *Alpha* apologetics course (<http://www.apologeticsindex.org/a09.html>), and our *Beginners guide to the Spiritual Gifts* course by Sam Storms (2012). It is because of courses like these that the church planters in the newer church plants from Southlands have been better equipped.

However, the results of the empirical survey indicated that church planters and their teams require a strategic plan to strengthen our praxis of multiplying churches that apply PSA and ES



for the sake of mission. While our newer church plant teams exhibit theological understanding of the doctrines of PSA and ES and are applying these effectively in the gatherings of the church, they need to be strengthened in applying these doctrines outside of the gatherings of the church so that they produce the fruit of new conversion growth.

This chapter will propose a strategic communicative plan to appreciate the importance and need to strengthen the church planting operative theology developed in chapter 3 at Southlands. It will also present nine strategic steps for fully achieving the new church planting praxis. However, before doing this, some other church practices will be noted that have positively impacted Southlands' approach to church planting and therefore their influence will be retained.

## **4.2 Influence on Southlands Church by best practices in multiplying churches**

Tomberlin and Bird's work (2012:21) entitled *Better Together*, explores the best practices of multiplying churches with special reference to church mergers. His ideas have had a significant influence on Southlands' approach to church planting, particularly as the Chino plant involves the *re-planting* of an existing congregation. He provides four models for a church merger:

- (i) Rebirth Mergers, in which a dying church gets a second life by being restarted by a stronger church;
- (ii) Adoption mergers, in which a stable but static church is integrated in to a larger more dynamic church;
- (iii) Marriage mergers, in which two churches, both strong and growing, re-align under a new vision and leadership configuration; and
- (iv) Intensive Care Mergers, in which two churches that are both in trouble merge in the hope of survival.

Southlands has used the Re-birth approach (cf. also Patrick and Devine 2014). for the re-planting of a dying church in Chino, and are in the process of training a church planting team made up of Southlands congregants and the remnant of this congregation.

Peyton Jones' work entitled *Church Zero: Raising 1<sup>st</sup> Century Churches out of the Ashes of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*, provides further insight into the formation of Southlands' philosophy of multiplication. He posits that the primary reason for the lack of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church results in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church in the West, is the lack of a current understanding and application of the Ephesians 4 gifts of *apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher and evangelist* (v. 11). He points out that the ministry of apostles, in particular, has been outlawed by much of the Western Church. This is because of fear that an acknowledgment of their ministry may challenge the doctrinal authority of the original Apostles who wrote most of the New Testament Canon of Scripture. However, he argues that the Church has great need of the restoration of apostolic ministry with a lower-case 'a' if it is to recover its radical call to the Great Commission. "The New Testament term *apostle* is not exclusively used for the Twelve. Once Paul used apostle to describe his role, there were thirteen, but the Greek word *apostolos* is used for nine other individuals in the New Testament as well" (2013:8). Jones provides Biblical examples of James, the Lord's brother, Barnabas, Apollos, Andronicus, Junias, Epaphroditus, Timothy and Silas, all of whom are referred to as *apostolos* in Scripture. He explains that these lesser apostles did not meet the same criteria as the Twelve, but operated as church-planting missionaries, building up the church alongside pastors, teachers, prophets and evangelists. He proposes that they are still necessary for *building up the church* today (alongside the other gifts from Ephesians 4) and so that the saints may be *equipped for works of service* (Eph 4:11).

While Southlands has experienced a historic over-emphasis around the restoration of the ministry of the apostle, it still holds to the idea that pastors who plant churches should not do it in isolation, but should rather be supported and equipped by external complementary gifts, particularly apostolic gifts. These men do not impose their authority on the elders of a church plant, but are invited in (most often from the sending church) to strengthen and encourage the church and its leaders, especially in its infancy. The emphasis of this ministry is relational rather than institutional, and is invited rather than imposed.

I operate in a dual role in Southlands' multiplication journey. I lead as a community pastor in Southlands Brea, while having an apostolic role of sending, equipping and strengthening in the plants from Southlands.

Southlands has also studied the models of five other multiplying churches: Rock Harbor Church, Costa Mesa, California (<https://www.rockharbor.org/about/our-values/>); God First Church, Johannesburg, South Africa (<http://www.godfirstchurch.co.za/>); Common Ground Church, Cape Town, South Africa (<http://commonground.co.za/>); One Harbor Church, Morehead City, North Carolina (<http://www.oneharborchurch.com/>); and One Life Church, Houston, Texas (<https://www.onelife.tv/>). They have all influenced Southlands model of church.

Southlands has in the light of the above and its own experience developed a philosophy of what it means to be *One Church Multiple Communities*. This is spelt out in the next six points in this section.

#### **4.2.1 A High Commitment to a common DNA and a common mission**

This is the belief that Southlands' unique DNA is one worth sharing and that that we are 'better together than we are apart.' This exceeds the desire for complete visionary autonomy.

#### **4.2.2 A High value on pooled resources**

This is the realization that it is helpful to draw on shared resources such as administration, research, sermon series, legal documents and position papers, ministry team, website, and the credibility of a name. This sharing causes communities to remain together even after they have come to a place of financial and leadership health.

#### **4.2.3 High levels of autonomy within community**

A community pastor has autonomy to develop his own leadership team, approach to life groups, mission and gathering. Two elders at each campus are preferable. A community pastor submits to community by being willing to collaborate around sermon series (choice and preparation), having other preachers fill his pulpit, gathering weekly with the other pastors on staff in other communities, and co-operate with a common administration. This autonomy within community ensures pastors remain encouraged, enriched and focused on their calling.

#### **4.2.4 Clear leadership from a first-among-equals**

Although each community has high levels of autonomy, there is clear captaincy from a 'first among equals' whether he pastors one of the communities or not. This person leads the team of community pastors as a strategic team for the whole church (made up of different communities), gathers all the elders from the various churches from time to time for strengthening vision and further training, and calls all the communities together on occasion too for prayer celebration and a clearer and stronger vision.

#### **4.2.5 Planting a Mission before a Meeting**

The gradual, intentional gathering of a pre-launch team that is missionally united and incarnationally present is more important than getting a Sunday meeting up and running. Typically, the pre-launch phase of building a community on mission requires nine months, giving ample time to envision, enlist, and organize. Time allocated for enlisted people to gel as a team, and divest from one community to invest in the other, is also helpful.

#### **4.2.6 A High commitment to mission in both gathering and going**

Although incarnational mission in different communities is a high priority, the Sunday gatherings are also a priority and done with excellence – there is an intentionality in prayer, preaching, creativity, marketing and venue choice. This is all done to reach as many unbelievers as possible. There is thus a high confidence in people to invite their friends to meetings.

The current structure of Southlands Church is testimony to the influence of the above, gleaned from other missions-minded churches: it is 'One church, multiple communities.' As noted in chapter 1, the communities are as follows: the base church, which is called Southlands Brea and two plants – Southlands Fullerton and Southlands Whittier. Southlands Chino will become the fourth community. The only plant that is not called Southlands is the one in Thailand.

### **4.3 Communicative plan for gaining acceptance of the new church planting operative theology at Southlands**

The communicative plan outlined here is designed to persuade all the stakeholders at Southlands church of the need to strengthen our praxis in both the short-term and medium-term future of Southlands' multiplication process. Southlands leadership structure comprises a team of twelve elders who oversee and govern all three Southlands communities. Each elder works out his pastoral duties in one of the four communities. Our team operates in plurality by consensus with a lead pastor as *primus inter pares* (first among equals).

There is also a pastor apprenticeship programme comprising another eight couples that are being trained for eldership/pastoral leadership. The other stakeholders are the deacons of Southlands, comprising approximately one hundred men and women from four different communities who lead with delegated authority and responsibility from the elders. The third group of stakeholders comprises a group of approximately sixty people from the three Southlands communities who have volunteered to be part of the church planting team of Southlands fourth community in Chino in the Inland Empire of Los Angeles. They will be the first team to experience the strengthened praxis and clarified operative theology. The fourth group of stakeholders comprises the balance of the members of Southlands. Although the average attendance of Southlands (all communities included) is approximately 750 adults per Sunday, there are approximately 500 members who are active participants in the life and mission of the church. Clearly for the strengthened church planting strategy to be effectively applied, all the stakeholders will need to be fully persuaded of its need.

Since I am currently in the role of lead pastor, I am granted both the authority and opportunity to lead the eldership team, apprentice elders/pastors, deacons, church planting team and congregation towards a strengthened praxis of multiplication. I will thus have the authority and opportunity to communicate, defend and spearhead the implementation of this praxis. The communicative strategy for presenting and gaining full support from all the stakeholders for the strengthened praxis of church planting will have several sequential steps. These are now covered.

### **4.3.1 Communication of the proposed new church planting operative theology to the elders, apprentices and deacons and working to consensus**

The leadership structure in Southlands means the first group to engage with the church planting operative theology fine-tuned in chapter 3 should be the elders, apprentices and deacons. It needs to be remembered that the elders include the community pastors (one full-time elder per Southlands community is known as the pastor, the leader amongst equals). If these levels of leadership in Southlands do not own the praxis it will stand little or no chance of being successfully introduced. The following steps are recommended for the process of communicating the praxis to these respective leaders.

#### *4.3.1.1 Communication of the history of Southlands' Praxis Timeline*

A critical overview of Southlands' history of multiplication, with particular reference to Browning's theory of crisis in a church paving the way for a new praxis (1996:43), will be presented to the elders, apprentices and deacons. It reveals that the historical praxis of Southlands was informed more by its various ecclesiological contexts than by a consistent theological conviction. While every church must adapt to its evolving demographic and sociological context by necessity, Browning insists that praxis must first aim to be faithful to the Word of God, providing a consistent backbone to a faith community's flexible ministry practice (p. 57). It appears that Southlands during its approximately fifty years of existence reached a crisis of effectiveness approximately every fifteen years, which caused a re-consideration of its current praxis without serious consideration for a consistent theological vision (see fig. 4.1 below). The figure highlights how these times of crisis influenced the kinds of churches we have planted.

Its initial theological identity was shaped largely by the ethos of Calvary Chapel, the largest association of churches emerging from the Jesus People Movement. Eskridge (2013:14) in his seminal work on the Jesus People Movement entitled, "*God's forever family*", reflects on how its founder, Pastor Chuck Smith, together with Lonnie Frisbee, a young, hippie evangelist,

baptized thousands of new Christians at Pirate's Cove in Newport, Orange County. He soon found his suburban Baptist congregation inundated by young people who were spiritually zealous yet biblically illiterate. His remedy was to teach through the Bible verse-by-verse in an expository style and develop a more culturally contemporary approach to worship. His church, Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, grew very rapidly into what is now an association of over 1600 churches around the world.

Christian Chapel of Walnut, while not formally associated with Calvary Chapel, reflected much of its ethos of Bible teaching, evangelism, a vibrant youth ministry and a contemporary folk worship style during the 1970's (Thomas 2014:4). Calvary Chapel, while theologically open to the gifts of the Spirit, gradually became functionally conservative, eschewing such practices as the public practice of prophecy and glossolalia (Hunt 2008:29). This caused factions within the movement, which subsequently gave birth to the Vineyard Association of churches founded by John Wimber (Jackson 1999:235).

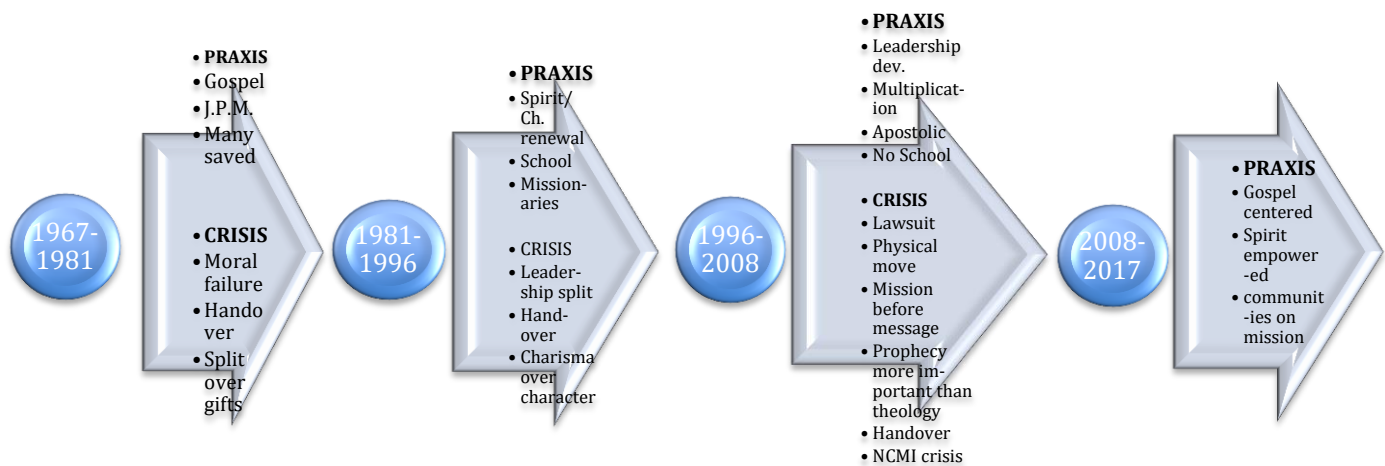
Wimber, a pastor from Yorba Linda Friends Church in North Orange County, began to experience the gifts of the Spirit such as speaking in tongues and prophecy in his home fellowship in 1976. As such, he was forced to leave Yorba Linda Friends because of its Cessationist stance towards present day existence of these gifts. Wimber began a new congregation in nearby Anaheim, which was initially associated with Calvary Chapel, but later becoming known as the Vineyard Church of Anaheim. He began to develop a more intimate worship style and a model of ministry distinct from that of Calvary Chapel that included prayer for healing and the spiritual gift of prophecy. The Vineyard now exists as a worldwide association of over 800 churches.

Jackson, in his history of the Vineyard entitled, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, explains how Wimber sought to distinguish the Vineyard Movement from Classic Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Renewal (1999:21). He was intent upon a less emotive ministry style, as well as a less prescriptive definition of the Baptism of the Spirit, which later became known as the Third Wave (1999:315). While Christian Chapel of Walnut was not formally associated with the Vineyard, its growth in charismatic practice and departure from evangelistic zeal coincided with

the emergence of the Vineyard ministry philosophy as distinct from Calvary Chapel in Southern California in the early 1980's.

The historic influence of the afore-mentioned church movements resulted in a significant polarization amongst churches in Southern California. Whilst churches birthed in the Jesus People Movement associated with Calvary Chapel are built around biblical fidelity and view the 'others' as biblically flippant, churches associated with the Vineyard are built around the presence and power of the Spirit and view the 'others' as spiritually dry. This polarization has not only been amongst churches, but also within them, the ecclesiological landscape being littered with the casualties of church splits around those who are pursuing biblical orthodoxy versus those who are pursuing spiritual awakening. Southlands itself experienced two such church splits around 1981 and around 1985.

Figure.4.1: Fifty-year timeline of Southlands' praxis



In the last few years there has been significant consensus among the elders and deacons at Southlands around the church planting operative theology fine-tuned in chapter 3. The agreed focus for the church is *Gospel-centred, Spirit-empowered communities on mission* (communities engaged in mission). This has included an appreciation of the centrality of the doctrines of PSA and ES, especially in church planting.

#### 4.3.1.2 Discussion of the results of the empirical survey



The time line discussion with the elders, apprentices and deacons will be followed by a discussion on the results of the empirical survey in chapter 2. The study revealed both the strengths and deficiencies of the current operative theology with regards to church multiplication. Of particular note was the finding that Southlands plants tended to be:

- a. stronger on community than on mission.
- b. stronger on communicating the gospel to Christians than seekers.
- c. stronger on growth from the church and de-churched than un-churched
- d. stronger on the practice of spiritual gifts in Sunday gatherings than in social and work settings.
- e. stronger at building relationships with outsiders than sharing their faith.

Though Southlands' last four church plants have had PSA and ES in the foreground, they have not achieved a significant growth rate among the un-churched through conversion and baptism. This clearly indicates that the full impact of these two central doctrines in New Testament church planting has not been consistently experienced. Bearing this in mind, the elders, apprentices and deacons will then be presented with a re-definition of the term *missional*.

#### *4.3.1.3 The need for a re-definition of the term 'Missional'*

The analysis of the results of the empirical survey has shown the need for critical reflection on the term *missional*. It has come to be defined as an *incarnational and contextual* approach towards those outside the Christian faith based upon the assumption that Western culture is post-Christian and therefore resistant to traditional modes of evangelism (Keller 2012a:256). Using Keller's more holistic definition of the marks of a missional church from his work entitled *Center Church*, I will propose the need for a re-envisioning of evangelism in the quest to be missional. Keller defines the five marks of a missional church as being *evangelistic, incarnational, contextual, communal and reciprocal* (pp. 256-258).

Critical reflection upon Southlands' approach to missional life reveals the presence of the incarnational and contextual (reflected in their dwelling among the people of the city with loving kindness mercy and embracing the cultural rhythms and expressions of the city). Being

communal speaks of the ability of the church community to be *porous* to those outside of the Christian faith, inviting them and welcoming them to belong in meaningful ways before they believe. Southlands has worked hard at this, for instance, by having a Crossfit gym on the church campus and running multiple non-threatening Alpha courses to explore faith and its relevance without any pressure to convert. However, Southlands could still improve at translating its beliefs and values to outsiders during its Sunday services.

Being reciprocal refers to the ability to work together with other churches in the city, resisting ecclesiastic competitiveness for the sake of the common good of the Church and the city. Southlands should continue to grow in this area, although relationships with pastors in the city are healthy.

However, my proposal will focus on the need to move from being merely incarnational and contextual to being incarnational, contextual and evangelistic (and thus appropriately emphasize all Keller's dimensions of a missional church). This will include the ability on the part of its members to boldly and skillfully initiate conversations about faith and a readiness to pray for those who are seeking spiritual help or any form of healing.

#### *4.3.1.4 The need for collaboration on finalizing the church planting operative theology for maximum support*

In the light of 4.3.1.1–4.3.1.3 the operative theology developed in chapter 3 of this mini-thesis needs to be finally discussed by the elders, apprentices and deacons so that a final consensus can be achieved. A divided leadership over something as important as the church planting operative theology will jeopardize the whole church moving forward in growing the kingdom of God. As the leader amongst equals of all the elders in Southlands, my leadership role in the discussion should be governed by the principles enumerated below. Similarly, all the leaders need to use these principles in gaining acceptance of the operative theology with all the other stakeholders.

In his practical theology section on *servant leadership* Osmer (2008:197) states, "Change initiatives are likely to remain on the margins of a congregation unless leaders convince others of the need for change and empower them to shape this process". In the light of this, as the

senior leader I will need to play a key leadership role in effectively motivating and managing the praxis change at Southlands at the leadership level, and they in turn at the wider congregational level. To achieve this, the leaders will need to understand and exhibit three important forms of *servant leadership* according to Osmer (pp. 176-178): task competence leadership, transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Osmer describes transactional leadership as the ability to lead change by influencing others through a process of trade-offs. This involves reciprocity and mutual exchange and can thus enable different coalitions in a congregation to negotiate and work together. Transforming leadership influences people by empowering them to shape the process of change.

Clearly Osmer provides some leadership insights to empower me to guide the process of achieving a consensus at the leadership for the more biblically faithful church planting model. He also notes that the process could involve leaders challenging some 'undiscussable assumptions' to arrive at a place of conviction regarding the new operative theology (2008:197).

#### **4.3.2 Communication of the new church planting operative theology to the other members and gaining their support**

The communicative process should aim at achieving acceptance of the praxis at all levels at Southlands. In other words, not only the elders and community pastors, apprentices and deacons of Southlands, but also the other members of church should own it. Even at these so-called lower levels in the membership, minor improvements should be allowed for through mutual dialogue in the communicative process. However, they would need, especially the new church planting team destined for Chino, to appreciate the prior work done by the levels of leaders. This final process in the journey to a fully agreed upon church planting operative theology would be facilitated in the different communities of Southlands under each community's leadership.

#### **4.4 A Strategic Plan to implement the new church planting operative theology at Southlands**

Once the communicative phase of the strategy is completed to gain finalization and full support of the more biblically faithful and effective church planting vision and model, this praxis needs to be brought into operational reality. This is where section 4.4 fits in. It is concerned to take the fruit of the research and conclusions of chapter 3 and develop a strategy that will realize this improved operative theology regarding church planting from Southlands.

Chapter 3 tested the church planting approach of Southlands in the more recent years centred in PSA and ES. It was found to be a biblically faithful operative theology. However, the empirical research revealed that there were areas in Southland's church planting ministry that needed improvement, like broadening the mission outreach of the team and all church members through more thoughtful and strategic personal evangelism. Keller's five dimensions of a church with a missions' vision was found helpful as it isolated distinct areas for attention that would increase mission effectiveness. A church like Southlands with a church planting identity thus would want to give serious attention to the five areas mentioned by Keller. It was noted that in some of them Southlands and its church plants have been doing well. But the areas where this is not the case will need specific treatment in the strategy to lead to an improved church planting operative theology.

A broad sweeping look at the strategic plan that is needed would indicate the following. There will be several parts to this plan. Firstly, it will entail the training of the current elders, apprentices and deacons' in the vision of a biblically faithful church planting ministry that will take place on a quarterly basis over twelve months. Secondly it would include specific steps and training to immerse the other church members in the new church planting vision and prepare them appropriately for their role in it through a more dynamic and extensive mission ministry. Thirdly, the plan provides a more detailed training (apprenticeship) programme for future elders (two years instead of one year). Finally, there is the more specific challenge to fully equip the new church planting team that will go to Chino with the necessary skills over the next twelve months.

The following nine sub-sections together cover the strategic plan to successfully achieve the implementation of the new church planting operative theology at Southlands in the short and long term.

#### **4.4.1 The Porterbrook Network Course; Alpha Course; and Beginners Guide to the Spiritual Gifts Course**

Southlands Church is the Orange County hosts of a two-year theology course called The Porterbrook Network (<http://porterbrooknetwork.org/content/common/home>). It equips people to understand and apply the gospel to business, mission, character, family and leadership. Students do mostly self-study, but meet in a cohort once a week and in a residential twice a year. At present, we have approximately 40 students enrolled. The results have been remarkable, especially among bi-vocational leaders in the church (see next paragraph) who have been strengthened in their understanding and application of the gospel, which includes appropriate stress on penal substitution atonement.

A typical church planting team comprises 50 adults. The composition of such a team ideally comprises two pastors (one who is employed by the church and one who is a lay-elder) and 10 deacons (all of whom would be lay leaders except for one part-time administrative employee). This means that approximately 35 people in the church planting team are not leaders in an official capacity, but still play a vital role in service, prayer, generosity, discipleship and evangelism. Porterbrook is the ideal training forum for these team members, because it places more emphasis on gospel-shaped mission than it does on leadership. A high percentage of our planting teams have gone through at least one year of Porterbrook. For instance, every member of the Thailand planting team did at least a year, and approximately 50% of the Whittier team did at least a year. It is not a pre-requisite but it is encouraged as a high value.

Alpha is an eight-week course that helps seekers to explore the validity of the claims of Christianity in a non-pressurized environment over a meal. Although there is a presenter, much of the evening takes place in discussion at various dinner tables. We have run Alpha for the last four years and have seen numerous people come to faith. It is an effective equipping tool for Southlands members to engage seekers in a relational context.

Sam Storms provides a theologically sound and practically wise exploration for Christians who are new to the operation of the spiritual gifts found in Romans 12 and 1Corinthians 12-14. His “The Beginners guide to the Spiritual gifts” (Storms 2012) is read, discussed and put into practice in all Southlands small groups, giving people an opportunity to explore Charismatic theology and the operation of the spiritual gifts in a safe, sane environment.

#### **4.4.2 Book of Acts sermon series and Gospel Primer focused on mission**

The strategic plan for strengthening our praxis of multiplication will begin with a sermon series on Sundays in all three Southlands communities in the book of Acts over three months. The series will focus on the call of Jesus’ church to continue the mission that he began in the power of the Spirit (cf. “In my former letter I wrote to you, my dear Theophilis, about all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach”, Acts 1:1, emphasis added). The ministry and teaching of Jesus in the Gospels was the beginning of his mission, which was and is to be carried on by his disciples through extending the kingdom of God through church planting by the empowerment of the Spirit to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

The sermon series will be supplemented by a work book on gospel-fueled mission called *The Gospel Primer: An 8-week guide to Transformation in Community* (<http://www.missionpublishing.com/the-gospel-primer/>), which will be discussed mid-week in 35 smaller community groups across the church. The Gospel Primer applies the history of the Book of Acts to living an everyday life of Spirit-empowered mission, encouraging church members to be bold in their gospel witness.

The Gospel Primer will also be conducted in the two community groups already meeting in Chino, which form part of the Southlands Chino planting team. These small groups comprise members of the planting team who already live in the Chino region. Although the planting team, comprising approximately 40 adults and 20 children, currently meet once a month on Sunday evenings for training and preparation for the plant, the small groups meet once a week in the evenings, building towards a gospel-shaped community on mission in Chino. The Gospel Primer is a strategic building block in this regard. Once the church opens its doors to the public by worshipping on Sunday mornings there will be more community groups, but this

pre-launch strategy helps to fulfil Southlands' philosophy of *planting a mission before a meeting*.

Caesar Kalinowski (2013:3), the author of the Gospel Primer, describes the objective of the course as gospel fluency: "The Gospel Primer is designed to help any group of people cultivate a practical understanding of the gospel and grow in gospel fluency – the ability to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel in absolutely every area of life".

#### **4.4.3 Pastor/Planter Apprentice Track with assessment**

Southlands has been entrusted with a wealth of leaders and potential ones and the stewarding of this trust has been an ongoing priority for the church. An elder/planter apprentice training over two years is proposed because of a recognition that the clear majority of our elders (including full-time ones, the pastors) and church planters do not have formal seminary training (only the pastor and lay-elder of a church planting team ideally needs to pass through this apprentice track [cf. 4.3.1]). And even if they do possess formal training, it is not necessarily sufficient to provide them with the theological knowledge as well as leadership skills needed to lead a church plant. The reason we refer to this track as the *elder/planter training track* rather than simply a *church planter's track*, is because not all elders trained in the programme go out to plant churches. Southlands Brea, which serves as the primary sending church, acts as the primary pipeline for church planters, which means we need new elders ordained who remain at the base as others go to plant churches. The elder/planter training track acts as a structured, in-house yet informal apprenticeship program that facilitates Southlands' multiplying vision.

An elder/planter apprenticeship affords us the opportunity to do 'in-house' training that is far more accessible and cost-effective for a mixed demographic of church planters. Up until now we have had an apprenticeship programme for pastors and church planters but it is of a more organic nature. My proposal will be for a more structured approach with a rigorous assessment of a two-year pastors/planter development track called E+. The apprentice track has already trained twelve couples and one single man, yielding three pastors and one church planter over

the past four years. We currently have ten couples on the track and are about to bring in another three.

The benefits of an in-house apprenticeship as opposed to an outside seminary will be three-fold.

#### *4.4.2.1 An invitation to come 'into' the team without coming 'onto' the team*

The couples, and in some cases single men, join the normal rhythms of our elders' meetings, thus getting a real look at how a leadership team of elders' functions and what it generally deals with. They see us collaborating around decisions, they pray with us, are let into certain pastoral, governmental and visionary matters and undergo training, without any promise of becoming an elder. They are encouraged to listen and learn as well as give their perspectives in these processes. Too often people have an unrealistic picture of the task of an elder. Coming into a team environment gives them an opportunity to view it more realistically and for the current eldership team to experience them in a team dynamic.

#### *4.4.2.2 It is a two-stage process with increasing intensity and intentionality*

The first year of E+ track is called is called E+ Explore. This is essentially an invitation to 'look under the hood' of the eldership team by attending two meetings per month, but with no guarantees of moving on to the next stage. The curriculum in the first year broadly covers pastoral skills, theology and missiology, as well as self-leadership. At the end of the first year there is a thorough assessment (see 4.3.2.3). This serves to clarify for the current eldership team whether the couple is ready to proceed to the next stage of the process, which is called E+ Apprenticeship. This second year is more intentionally designed to encourage necessary areas of development in each couple, which will have become apparent through the first year and the assessment process. The men on E+ apprenticeship also attend one more meeting per month and begin to carry more responsibility as they move more intentionally towards becoming an elder.

#### *4.4.2.3 A structured assessment process*

The assessment process has four phases:



- (i) Teaching on the “Seven Lenses of Leadership” from Acts 20.
- (ii) A self-evaluation via questionnaire (see below and Annexure B).
- (iii) A two-hour interview between the couple and their community pastors.
- (iv) A 30-minute panel interview with the whole eldership team.

While we understand Scripture’s description of an elder to be male, we also see that it places a high view upon a husband and wife functioning as a ministry team, both in the family and in the household of faith. This means that the assessment, while placing more weight upon the man regarding competence and content, must be for both husband and wife.

It is not uncommon for leaders to have some way of assessing potential and current elders within a church. I am not a huge fan of alliteration, but for this particular task, I have landed on seven C’s from Paul’s last words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38, that have proven helpful as lenses for assessment. So, the assessment process starts with teaching on Acts 20:17-38 (in Annexure B the study of this passage and related assessment questions for the apprentice to ponder can be found). The following questionnaire for the apprentices’ self-evaluation in the light of Acts 20:17-38 and the seven C’s is then filled in by the apprentices at the end of E+Explore:

#### E+ Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please score on a scale of 1-10:

10 = Excellent

5 = Satisfactory

1 = Needs Improvement

	Potential Elder	Wife
--	-----------------	------

Character		
Calling		
Competence		
Content		
Charisma		
Chemistry		
Culture		

After the assessment process, couples are given feedback about whether we sense the time is right to proceed onto E+ apprenticeship or not. This requires real pastoral wisdom and care, especially for those who are not proceeding. It is important that they understand why; and also, what we see for them going forward and not just what we do not see for them. For those who do proceed on to Elder Apprenticeship, we are clear about the 'lens' which we feel they need to develop. So, besides an increase of ministry weight, which comes with apprenticeship, we prescribe them a relevant book, which corresponds to their development, and ask them to write an assignment on the book after they have read it.

#### **4.4.4 Market Place Ministry Course for business people on planting teams**

The third strategic step in the implementation of an improved church planting operative theology is not for pastors of church plants, but for those who see themselves as playing a vital role in church planting as business people. Typically, church planting teams comprise

approximately fifty adults. Of these there will be a pastor (full-time elder) and a lay-elder and the others are generally deacons. This course is aimed at those who serve in a *lay-leadership capacity* in the church plant, while seeking to make an impact in society through their work. Our term for this is 'Market Place Minister' and the model for such a person or couple is Priscilla and Aquila in the Book of Acts (18:2,18,26; cf. also Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). They provide a dynamic example of work as ministry and calling. The course will consist of a four-part group study on Priscilla and Aquila.

#### *4.4.3.1 Primary objective*

The primary objective of the market place ministry course is to inspire and equip couples who are in the market place in church plants to lay hold of God's call upon them to be generous entrepreneurs in business, hospitable disciple makers in the local church, and global players in the Great Commission.

#### *4.4.3.2 Secondary objectives: recovering a sense of vocation*

Tim Keller (2012:19), in his work entitled, *Every Good Endeavor*, explores the importance of dismantling the historic *clergy/laity* divide within the Church and recovering a sense of work as calling for Christians.

To make a real difference, there would have to be a re-appropriation of the idea of vocation or calling, a return in a new way to the idea of work as a contribution to the good of all and not merely as a means to one's own advancement. The Latin word *vocare*—to call— is at the root of our common word "vocation." Today the word often means simply a job, but that was not the original sense. A job is a vocation only if someone else calls you to do it and you do it for them, rather than for yourself. And so our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests.

Priscilla and Aquila fled Rome during the Jewish persecution under Claudius, AD 49 or 50, and settled in Corinth. There they hosted Paul, also a tentmaker by trade, on his first visit to the town (Acts 18:1ff). He lived with them during their time at Corinth. A Christian church met in their house (1 Corinthians 16:19). They left Ephesus and returned to Rome where another

church met in their house (Romans 16:3-5). Probably because of the persecution of Nero, they soon left Rome and settled again at Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:19).

This couple provides a clear example of people who apparently continued in their tent-making career but used their financial leverage to support church planting. Similarly, with Paul who fell back on his trade when self-support was necessary, but continued in church planting (cf. Acts 18:1-4).

The secondary objectives of the study therefore would be achieved as follows:

(a) Challenging the traditional missionary model through an example, not only of not needing to raise support, but of going to provide support for others who are called to ministry as vocation. The assumption that Priscilla and Aquila provided either financial support or a way for Paul to earn a living through their tent-making business (Acts 18: 2-3) is affirmed in his greeting at the end of the Epistle to the Romans. "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Romans 16:3-4). This course aims to cultivate this kind of generous spirit. Paul's self-support when necessary and the example of the tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla facilitating church plants and using their home for a meeting place and hospitality call local churches to become self-sufficient rather than co-dependent on outside support.

(b) Breaking down the sacred/secular divide by showing that marriage, business, hospitality, mentoring and teaching are all 'ministry.' Priscilla and Aquila are a prime example of managing the tensions of hospitality, mentoring, marriage and business. They accompanied Paul to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19) where they instructed the eloquent and brilliant Alexandrian preacher, Apollos. He knew the Scriptures and preached Christ boldly to the crowds, but only knew the baptism of John, which was a baptism of repentance, rather than the baptism of Jesus, which was a baptism of righteousness (Acts 18:24-26). "When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:26).

Dinsdale T. Young (1901:53), in his book entitled, *Neglected People of the Bible*, upholds Priscilla and Aquila's life and marriage as a prime example of the way in which market place Christians can see their work as worship and ministry:

Life's best revelations flash upon us while we abide in the fields of duty. Keep to your daily breadwinning and amid your toils you shall receive great benedictions and see glad visions . . . the shop or office or warehouse may become as the house of God. Do thy work and do it diligently: In it, thou mayest find rare soul fellowships, as did Aquila and Priscilla.

#### **4.4.5 Preacher's Training Course**

Southlands places a high value on live preaching in its respective communities. There is either an expository or topical sermon series where typically three preachers preach on the same text or topic on a Sunday. Our philosophy of relational and team leadership means we resist the idea of one preacher being beamed into respective communities via satellite, although we recognize that this may be an efficient way in which to multiply. A team preaching approach entails providing the preachers with a common breakdown of the major themes of the text and there is significant interaction between them in their preparation and decision on the presentation of the sermon before Sunday between the preachers. Each community has a regular preaching team of three preachers, and an expanded team of another three preachers who preach occasionally.

The challenges with this approach involve a difference in experience and quality of preaching between preachers. While the other strengths of community warmth, dynamic worship and pastoral ministry mean that preaching quality does not significantly appear to affect transfer growth, it does appear to affect conversion growth. For instance, Southlands Brea, which is the largest and oldest community with the most experienced preachers, has a higher rate of conversion growth than the newer communities.

In view of the lack of formal training in Biblical exegesis, exposition and contextualization, I will propose a six-month preacher's training course for church planters and their preaching teams.

Typically, in a planting team comprising 50 adults, there will be one primary preaching pastor (normally the community pastor) and a team of approximately four other preachers who share the preaching load. These preachers would hold either the office of pastor or deacon in the church. So, all elders do not preach; only those who can do this important ministry.

The course will include the basic skills of interpreting the Biblical text through a Christological lens, breakdown of a book of the Bible for an expository sermon series, preparation of the outline of a sermon, and sermon delivery. Each candidate will prepare and deliver a sermon for the rest of the class. Each candidate will be evaluated on the sermon structure and delivery and receive a peer review from other candidates as well as the class leader (see evaluation form below). The proposed sermon evaluation form covers Bible reading, sermon breakdown, and interpretation, use of illustration, Christological clarity, practical application, and delivery.

#### Sermon evaluation form

Preacher \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture \_\_\_\_\_

Sermon title \_\_\_\_\_

In the scale from 1 to 6, 1 represents *poor* and 6 represents *excellent*.

#### I. SCRIPTURE READING

A. Read accurately	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Read with expression	1 2 3 4 5 6

#### II. INTRODUCTION

A. It got your attention	1 2 3 4 5 6
--------------------------	-------------

B. Laid foundation for sermon theme	1 2 3 4 5 6
C. Sermon theme was obvious	1 2 3 4 5 6
D. Knew where he wanted to go	1 2 3 4 5 6
E. It was relevant	1 2 3 4 5 6

### III. BODY OF SERMON

A. Biblical passage adequately explained	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Exegetically sound but not arrogant	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Illustrations/supportive materials were helpful	1 2 3 4 5 6
C. Structure was it obvious and helpful	1 2 3 4 5 6
D. Application was specific/pointed	1 2 3 4 5 6
E. The audience's context was taken into account	1 2 3 4 5 6

### IV.DELIVERY

A. Physical appearance and action helpful	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Avoiding fillers....mums, hams, amen	1 2 3 4 5 6

C. Eye contact	1 2 3 4 5 6
D. Appropriate passion, enthusiasm & conviction	1 2 3 4 5 6
E. Language was appropriate to the context	1 2 3 4 5 6
F. Showed appropriate pastoral sensitivity	1 2 3 4 5 6

## V CONCLUSION

A. Well-rounded wrap-up	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Theme of biblical passage restated	1 2 3 4 5 6
C. Purpose of sermon was obvious and achieved	1 2 3 4 5 6
D. There was a specific call to action	1 2 3 4 5 6

## VI. PREACHING CHRIST FROM ALL THE SCRIPTURES

A. Was the gospel (the person and work of Jesus) presented clearly and compellingly for unbelievers?	1 2 3 4 5 6
B. Was moralism avoided and grace elevated?	1 2 3 4 5 6
C. Was the gospel is presented so as to encourage and strengthen believers?	1 2 3 4 5 6



#### 4.4.6 Spirit-led Prayer Training Course

The fifth strategic step towards strengthening Southlands church planting praxis is the implementation of a Spirit-led prayer-training course for all deacons and prayer teams in communities, as well as for the whole planting team going to Chino. This training will take place over two mornings for approximately 150 people.

##### 4.4.5.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of the prayer training is to provide leaders and planting teams with a sound theological framework for prayer and a healthy philosophy of Spirit-empowered prayer, healing, prophecy and deliverance.

##### 4.4.5.2 Secondary objectives

(a) To provide a biblical basis for viewing Jesus as the Baptizer in the Spirit and to be able to pray for people to be baptized with the Spirit. The first promise is captured in Luke 3:16: “I baptize you with water but one who comes after me whose sandals I am unworthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” The second is seen taking place on certain occasions in Acts.

(b) To provide a theological framework of the kingdom *now* and *not yet* that informs prayer for healing. It will equip prayer teams to pray for healing and to see healing as normative but to have a theology that recognizes it does not always occur. J.P. Moreland’s (2007) work entitled, *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit’s Power*, underpins our philosophy of prayer. It warns against trying to force anything to happen through pressure or manipulation, encourages a gentle, humble approach towards people, yet calls for bold faith based on the faithfulness of Christ and the impulse of his Spirit.

(c) To provide a sound theological framework for, and a loving approach to, operating the spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues and interpretation, and words of knowledge. We want our teams to obey the biblical command to “Pursue love and eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy” (1 Corinthians 14:1).

(d) To equip people to understand spiritual warfare, and exercise the gift of discernment of spirits as they follow Jesus in setting captives free from bondage to emotional wounds and demonic powers (Ephesians 6:10-19).

#### **4.4.7 Love your city day of service**

Existing Southlands communities will co-ordinate and volunteer in a 'Love your City' day of service in a strategic effort to live out the gospel in deed and build partnerships with churches and civic organizations in the city. This initiative is an attempt to move members from a Sunday mentality of attending church on Sunday to a missional mentality of being the church every day of the week. It will take place in Brea, Fullerton and Whittier, which are the three cities into which Southlands last planted churches. The day of service will be coordinated by the church diaconate and will be preceded by training on gospel renewal from the Book of Jeremiah: "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. For if it prospers you will prosper" (Jeremiah 29:28).

Southlands church deacons will work with the city Mayor and Police Chief to find out the needs in the city. They will then set up service projects to meet these needs, publishing them on a website for other churches and organizations to sign up for service on the day (<http://lovebrea.org>). They will also approach businesses in the city to sponsor community upliftment projects. Projects will range from mowing the lawns of the elderly, to painting community bathroom facilities, to repairing children's climbing apparatus in community parks, etc. This will not be the first time Southlands has volunteered at such a serve day, but taking on responsibility to co-ordinate churches and liaise with city leaders will aim to engage more congregants in acts of kindness, living out the gospel in word and deed. Congregants will also be encouraged to engage those they serve, offering to pray for them if they have any needs and inviting them to church.

The Southlands Chino planting team will shadow the Love Brea coordinating team. This will be with a view to initiating a similar serve day in their city once they launch their community.

Tim Keller, in his work entitled *Center Church*, describes the fourth characteristic of the missional church as the ability to be *reciprocal*, working towards unity on common initiatives

with other churches for the common good of the city (2012:257). The serve day fulfils these criteria by coordinating other churches towards a common initiative, as well as challenging the pervasive cultural idols of individualism and competition by working together in a Christ-honouring spirit of reconciliation and service.

#### **4.4.8 ‘Healing on the Streets’ Training and Prayer Booth**

This initiative aims to move Southlanders from being contextual and incarnational to being empathetic and ministry-focused about sickness, both spiritual and physical and relational, in a Spirit-empowered manner. A prayer booth on the street is set up where prayers are offered for needy and willing passers-by. Although training of prayer teams will take place in a centralized format, each Southlands community will be encouraged to contextualize the actual prayer booth, synchronizing it with the rhythms of its city. For instance, one community might set up a prayer booth at a local farmer’s market, another might do it in a busy park or outside a local shopping mall.

The content of the ‘Healing on the streets’ training has similarities to the prayer team training, but it has distinct objectives. It is aimed at training people to pray for those outside of the church building or Sunday gatherings. Southlands has served in a prayer booth format in a local farmer’s market in the past, and my proposal is that we re-visit an external forum for prayer with new training and new contextualization. This training would be informed by the Acts 3 account in our sermon series, in which Peter and John heal the lame man begging at the temple Gate Beautiful. The primary objective would be to encourage congregants back out onto the streets of their city, ensuring that Southlands’ Spirit-empowered expression is not confined within the four walls of the church building.

In 2005 Mark Marx in Colerain, Northern Ireland, founded *Healing on the Streets*. He describes their approach as, “A gentle, non-confrontational way of connecting with people on the streets of our cities and introducing them to Jesus” (Marx 2005). Since 2005, Healing on the Streets claims that thousands of people have been physically healed and have put their faith in Christ. Their claim is that the simple act of going to a busy street, setting out chairs and offering for people to sit in them if they would like prayer, enables Christians to connect with their community every week, powerfully expressing God’s love towards those in the market place.

My strategic proposal for Healing in the Streets training will be based upon the fact that it is highly efficient and reproducible for new church plants. It is far more cost-effective than any other form of outreach and encourages congregants into a weekly rhythm of engaging their city. It also catalyzes congregants to step straight into faith conversations and prayer. This is a healthy counter-balance to the missional approach of building strong relationships before talking about faith. It also harnesses Southlands already strong prayer culture, cultivating towards those outside of the church.

#### **4.4.9 Preparation of the church planting team for the Chino plant**

It is vital after steps 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 that the improved praxis is then explained to, and affirmed with conviction by, all the other members of Southlands Chino church planting team. Then specific training will be required in all aspects of the new church planting praxis to ensure that they will be able to apply it effectively. What follows is an outline of the seven practical steps of Southlands church planting strategy. They are *inception*, *preparation*, *contextualization*, *incarnation*, *invitation*, *initiation* and *motivation*.

- (i) *Inception*: Southlands and its leaders pray for guidance on the choice of the next church planting location. This includes prayer walks through specific cities, as well as the assessment of areas that seem to lack the current presence of Gospel-centred, Spirit empowered, missional churches. There may also be a response to a *Macedonian Call* (Acts 16:6-10), in which Christians living in a particular city ask us to consider coming to partner with them in planting a new church.
- (ii) *Preparation*: Pre-launch preparation begins over a sixth-month period in one of the team members' homes in the area. Typically, from the planting team there are a few families already living in the new planting context, while other team members will move in gradually as the launch date for the church approaches. Pre-launch meetings would take place in one of the homes in the city, or otherwise in a small rented venue. This includes prayer, theology training, equipping for a missional lifestyle, building team culture and training in specific volunteer ministries. Training takes place on a bi-weekly basis.
- (iii) *Contextualization*: The area is surveyed for contextual exploration and special needs and problems and spiritual climate. A beginning is made to locate ministries that are already in

existence to meet these needs and to partner with them. For example, YMCA, homeless shelters, and single mother's clinics.

- (iv) *Incarnation*: The church planting Team begins to move into the area with intentionality to 'dwell in the city for its peace and prosperity' (Jer 29:28; cf. John 1:1-4). This includes renting and buying houses, moving children into schools, changing jobs, and changing social rhythms. Our mantra is to "Live, Work, and Play in our City." At this stage, the church planting team still meets on Sunday mornings at one of the other Southlands communities, but mid-week meetings are taking place in homes in their new church context.
- (v) *Invitation*: A venue for soft-launch meetings is chosen. A soft-launch meeting is distinct from a pre-launch meeting. While a pre-launch meeting is not open to the public and focuses on training the planting team, a soft-launch is open to the public and is more like a normal Sunday worship service. It aims to communicate the vision of the church and work out administrative details of gathering before the official launch of the church. These are essentially showcase events of a Sunday morning meeting and are advertised in the chosen venue. We usually do two soft-launch meetings before the actual launch of weekly meetings. The team starts developing relations with people and witnessing to them at work, among neighbours, and others they contact in the community and invite them to the Sunday service.
- (vi) *Initiation*: The church planting team is commissioned at a joint-Southlands service with all the communities present. Sunday services launch the following week on a weekly basis with community outreach, small groups, a sermon series that is relevant to the new context and thorough visitor follow-up. Attention is giving to the discipling of new converts and their integration into the full life of the church. Attention is also given to new member's classes that describe the DNA of the church.
- (i) *Motivation*: There is regularly motivation of the church, especially by example, to be missional from the start so that there is new conversion growth. Furthermore, the church is established with a vision for multiplication, setting their sights on a future church plant from its inception.

## 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter answered Browning's fourth question: *What means, strategies and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?* After having answered Browning's second and third questions in chapter 3, a clear picture emerged of what was required in Southlands' concrete situation of church planting to achieve a more biblically faithful praxis. In answering Browning's last question in his strategic practical theology, I concentrated on a strategy to gain acceptance and implementation of the church planting operative theology that would lead to greater effectiveness in the multiplication of churches from Southlands.

As the lead pastor/elder at Southlands, I am in a unique situation to present the operative theology resulting from the research in chapter 3 that is solidly rooted in the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement (PSA) and empowerment of the Spirit (ES). However, I argued for a consultative and reciprocal engagement with the other elders, apprentices and deacons, and later the rest of the congregation, to fine-tune if necessary the praxis and gain ownership and support of it by all the stakeholders in the three Southland communities.

Southlands church planting vision has flowed from its belief that a church should be *Gospel-centred* and *Spirit-empowered* and *mission-focused*. The work in chapter 3 and resulting church planting operative theology certainly justified such a vision and church characteristics. Though the more recent churches planted by Southlands have closely followed this operative theology, it was found that there is room for improvement. They have grown steadily and even rapidly. However, the empirical research recorded in chapter 2 revealed that the more recent churches needed strengthening, more specifically in *mission praxis*. More than just a mature understanding of PSA and ES, and even experience of the latter, is required. These doctrines should also lead to and facilitate more extensive personal and group/ecumenical mission (evangelism and displays of compassionate love for physical and social needs). A lack of such mission will stifle the growth of the new church plants (as well as the original Southlands community). For this mission praxis to occur, a re-definition of *being missional* was necessary that included more emphasis on being *evangelistic*, *communal* and *reciprocal* (cf. Keller above).

Therefore, to strengthen Southlands' praxis of multiplication of churches, seven strategic steps were formulated. One step is a more structured training and assessment of future church planters and elders/pastors. Another was a well-constructed preachers' training assessment. However, the weight of emphasis in the seven strategic steps is on strengthening of Southlands *missional muscle* to ensure that Southlands Spirit-empowered culture is expressed beyond its gatherings.

It is insufficient for Southlands to reduce mission to mere multiplication. Multiplication should result in conversion growth from un-churched demographics, rather than relying on growth from churchled or de-churched demographics. Therefore, the remaining seven steps of the strategy to implement a biblically faithful church planting operative theology are focused on achieving a more effective culture of personal evangelism within a more incarnational and ecumenical approach (Gospel Primer course; Spirit-led prayer training course; love your city day of service; and healing on the streets training and prayer for healing in prayer booths set up on some street or other public place). It is my conviction that the seven strategic steps will position Southlands to be a more healthy and effective multiplying church.

## Chapter 5:

## Conclusion

### 5.1 Review of objectives

The primary objective of my thesis was to formulate a theologically informed strategic plan to implement an operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church that is both faithful to God and optimally relevant to its ministry context. The main objective was achieved by dividing the thesis into three secondary objectives. A chapter was dedicated to each secondary objective. Browning's model for strategic practical theology was used as an optimal design for the thesis. The design is structured around the answering of four questions: *How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act? What should be our praxis in this concrete situation? How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation? What means, strategies and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?* The answer to the first question achieved the first secondary objective; the answers to the second and third questions achieved the second secondary objective; and the answer to the fourth question achieved the final secondary objective.

The first secondary objective, 'interpret the operative theology of Southlands Church with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church with special reference to the role of the penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit,' was met in chapter 2 by describing the background of Southlands Church from my knowledge and observations and through an empirical research utilizing an open-ended questionnaire conducted with ten respondents who had either led, or been a part of a church planting team from Southlands Church over the past twenty years.

In the third chapter the second secondary objective, 'determine and defend a biblically faithful operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church,'



was fulfilled through the formulation of a new praxis based on the doctrines of the penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This praxis was arrived at through a study of some relevant current literature, and from exegetical, systematic theology, historical and non-biblical perspectives. The praxis was defended (i) against other contradicting theological perspectives, and (ii) on the basis of the nature and achievements of the gospel, and thus being faithful to Southlands Church's theological foundations and its vision of positively impacting societies.

The third and final secondary objective, 'develop a strategic plan to strengthen the operative theology with respect to the multiplication of church plants from Southlands Church with special reference to the role of the penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit,' was achieved. This was through a strategic plan to (i) gain acceptance of the improved church planting praxis, and (ii) to achieve its implementation through seven steps. This was covered in chapter 4. This strategic plan was designed to be implemented over the next twelve months during which Southlands Church's next planning team will be trained and sent out to Chino, CA.

Fulfilling these three objectives means that the primary objective of the study was achieved. In the years that follow the introduction of this strategic plan, the appropriate training will take place to maintain at Southlands Church the new operative theology with reference to church planting.

## **5.2 Tracing the argument**

Browning's strategic practical theology of four questions is structured to achieve a typical practical theology project. In practical theology, in the words of Smith (2013:21), "We examine Christian practices to understand the extent to which they are faithful to God's nature and purposes, with a desire to transform them so that they may be more faithful to God and more relevant to people". The answering of Browning's four questions in order in this mini-thesis enabled me to work from the current situation at Southlands regarding church planting, to a more biblically faithful and contextual normative position that could be defended, and to a strategy to bring about the necessary transformation. These three needs determined the three sub-objectives of the mini-thesis that were each covered in a chapter (chapters 2-4).

To understand the church planting operative theology at Southlands Church it was necessary to reflect firstly on the history of the church to isolate those issues that impacted the church planting praxis. This was done through my own observations and recent numerous informal interviews on the 50-year history of the church that was turned into a twenty-minute video documentary on the history of the church, as well as through a literature review related to the church-planting network to which Southlands Church was connected for fifteen years. Some literature perspectives were also reviewed on the history of church planting in Southern California that influenced Southlands since the Jesus People Movement. This background helped explain much of the recent and current tradition, vision, theology and philosophy of Southlands Church, especially with reference to church planting.

The next step in the descriptive task was accurately establishing the operative theology and its effectiveness with respect to church planting at Southlands Church in the last two or so decades. This was done through a small-scale empirical study with ten respondents. These had either led or were part of a church plant from Southlands Church over the past twenty years. The primary means of research was the interview method. The data collected was organized and analyzed. Finally, it was interpreted under the following headings: theological training prior to planting; gospel definition and church growth; Spirit-empowerment and church life; doctrine, mission and multiplication. The discussion of this data concluded that Southlands Church's praxis of multiplication was lacking in aspects related to teaching about and experience of penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Spirit, especially as it pertained to evangelism. It was also postulated that this had restricted Southlands church planting ministry.

The next phase of the mini-thesis thus needed to test this hypothesis by conducting research into what would constitute a normative truly successful church planting operative theology for Southlands Church. Thus chapter 3 took up this task, namely achieving the second secondary objective of formulating and defending an operative theology that was both biblically faithful and optimally relevant to Southlands Church's context. This was attained by firstly a literature review with special reference to the 'Reformed-Charismatic' theological vision; then biblical exegesis of two key verses followed by a systematic theology study that considered relevant historical theology and extra-biblical disciplines. By critically synthesizing these streams of

study I could deduce a more biblically faithful church planting operative theology centered in the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Spirit.

The strength of this operative theology is that the two doctrines were explicitly linked in the life and ministry of Christ and in the life and ministry of the early Church. In other words, they played a key role in expanding the kingdom of God through the growth of the church worldwide. This operative theology was also defended against church planting not solidly linked to the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Spirit as dynamically displayed in ministry of Jesus and the New Testament church. The defense was also made in the light of the transforming and life-enriching power of the gospel for individuals and societies, which necessitates church planting and discipleship.

Chapter 4 dealt with the final phase of my practical theology study. This covered a strategy to (i) persuasively communicate the more biblically faithful church planting operative theology, allowing for fine-tuning of it through some collaboration with all stakeholders, and (ii) how to implement the new operative theology. This strategic plan contains a seven-step process over an initial period of twelve months. As lead pastor of Southlands Church, I will play a crucial role in applying the strategy. It will be implemented at different levels: the eldership team, elder apprentices and deacons; the congregation; the primary implementation will be with the church planting team being trained for Southlands Church's next church plant in Chino, California. All three levels' training will be completed by the end of twelve months. Once the official twelve-month launching of the new operative theology is completed, Southlands Church communities will through appropriate and timely repetition of the strategy keep to the more biblically defensible church planting ethos and vision in increasingly effective ways.

### **5.3 Summary of findings and their significance**

Several significant findings were brought to light in the research. First, it was revealed that Southlands Church's organic, informal and visionary approach to training church planters and planting churches had resulted in an unusually strong culture of multiplication and an abnormally high rate of church planting for a church of its size. This was recognized as a strength that should be maintained. Secondly, since the clear majority of its church planters did not have formal seminary training, clearly greater attention was required to training church

planters with a church planting operative theology that was both biblically sound and doctrinally grounded to eliminate some significant deficiencies in their preparation.

The weakness in theological training was specifically noted in the way that Southlands had emphasized ecclesiology over Christology in the training of its church planters. This meant that church planters were more skilled in preaching what they viewed as a biblical model of the church than they were at preaching the biblical message of Christ.

Another problem that came to light was the loss of theological balance most church planters experienced after a rediscovery of Reformed theology after leaving to plant a church. This meant they emphasized the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement but tended to neglect the doctrine of the empowerment of the Spirit. For the majority, this resulted in a reaction to their Charismatic heritage, with an admitted neglect of the regular practice of the spiritual gifts. This revelation pointed to the need for training that helped church planters to hold these doctrines in tension.

Furthermore, the research revealed that those church planters who managed the tension between these doctrines led growing churches with significant signs of health. However, their growth tended to be from church and de-church demographics rather than un-church demographics, showing a weakness in conversion growth. Thus, the survey revealed a need, not only for a more balanced doctrinal approach, but also for a more effective outworking of these doctrines for the sake of mission.

The findings of the empirical research can be summarized in several points. Southlands Church has had a prolific history of church planting, with more recent church plants remaining part of Southlands Church. Church planters and their teams have historically been trained to *preach a model of church before the message of Christ (and the latter not sufficiently) and this had stunted the mission of the church*. Related to the previous point, the penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the Spirit doctrines were not held in proper balance with sufficient emphasis on both. This too has held back conversion growth.

The normative study clearly supported a church planting operative theology based upon the convergence of the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and empowerment of the

Spirit, with also a practical outworking in dynamic mission. It was shown that the doctrines of penal substitutionary atonement and the empowerment of the Spirit were inseparable in the life and mission of Jesus Christ and the New Testament church, and should therefore be inseparable in the life and mission of his Church today.

Essentially, the converging of these doctrines would mean that churches planted from Southlands Church should be equally committed to *reformation* (a better understanding and proclamation of the gospel and spiritual growth) and *revival* (dynamism in vision and passion for mission). The thesis concluded that equipping church planters with a Christological vision for reformation and revival would result in the re-arranging of the priorities of church planters to *preach the redeeming message of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit as the primary mission of the church before preaching a model of church*. It was affirmed that church planters should be equipped to plant missional churches that were Christological, contextual and evangelistic.

The thesis was then able to present some of the best means of communicating and implementing the new praxis of multiplication of churches from Southlands Church. This new praxis involves a seven-step strategy to be implemented over twelve months and thereafter as required to maintain the new church planting operative theology. It posits programmes to facilitate all church members being better equipped for the application at a very basic level of the new praxis, namely through a sermon series through the Book of Acts and a linked cell group course entitled Gospel Primer. This will cover both the doctrinal aspect of penal substitutionary atonement and the role of the Holy Spirit in everyday contexts for evangelism and discipleship. Future church planters will best begin to emerge in this kind of atmosphere. Planters headed for the Chino church plant will complete their training in the next twelve months. Future church planters are to be formally prepared through a two-year apprenticeship programme, with the first year being a probationary one with only those suitable for church planting (including eldership) going through to the second year. This length of training is an improvement on the current shorter one that has tended to also be informal.

Then a preaching course is recommended that will benefit future church planters (and current and future elders with a gift for preaching). This will ensure a Spirit-empowered exposition and application of the gospel, so important for church plants to grow. The provision for more

experience of Spirit-empowerment in the church planters (and other leaders) will be provided by a Spirit-led prayer training course and a course on healing on the streets through Spirit-inspired prayer. Finally, much effort is to be expended on an annual, or more regular, love your city day of service where the focus is on acts of mercy through the love of Christ to meet the total needs of people. This practical expression of compassionate Christian love to somebody in great need also has the potential to open doors for evangelism. These initiatives are intended to strengthen Southlands' church planting praxis in demonstrable ways.

As much as Southlands Church is still in the process of strengthening its church planting praxis, nevertheless it currently carries a testimony of fruitfulness in this regard by the grace of God. This has resulted in an increase of its sphere of influence as a church that can equip other churches whose aim is to multiply in a healthy and sustainable manner. It is hoped that this mini-thesis will serve as an aid, not only to the Southlands Church family of churches, but also far beyond, in order that the gospel of Christ would be powerfully proclaimed and that disciples of Jesus would be made for the joy of the nations and the glory of God.

One of the limitations of this mini-thesis, and therefore suggesting an area for more research, is the depth of the interviews of the church planters from Southlands Church. A more in-depth qualitative study would enable a more accurate picture of the challenges of church planting and the technical and spiritual skills required. It would also reveal the peculiar challenges church planters face and thus be able to explore more effective ways of dealing with them, especially major disappointments. A future study would also need to study in greater detail the church planting vision and strategy of the New Testament church.

Another limitation of this study due to it being a mini-thesis was that it lacked research into a wider range of church planting strategies used by other churches who have taken church planting seriously. Further, the church planting field is complicated and would be largely governed by local traditions and conditions. This mini-thesis did not give much attention to how contextually relevant its church plants have been and this clearly calls for further study to see if Southlands Church has taken this dimension seriously enough. Because of Southlands Church's history of, and commitment to, church planting, it would be most advisable to

complement this study with a further one to cover this one's shortcomings due to time and length restraints.

## APPENDIX

### **Annexure A: A Small-Scale Empirical Study of Theological and Practical Training of Church Planters from Southlands Church**

You have been asked, and agreed, to undergo an interview based on an open-ended questionnaire relevant to my research towards a mini-thesis as part of my master's programme at the South African Theological Seminary. The quality and scientific value of my study is largely dependent on you providing accurate and carefully thought out answers to all the questions. I thank you in anticipation of your full cooperation in this empirical research designed to ultimately lead to a better biblical and contextual understanding of church planting for Southlands Church.

#### **A. Preliminaries and Background**

1. Interviewee: .....(Identity not included in the mini-thesis)
2. Gender: .....
3. Age: .....
4. Name of Church .....
5. Role in Church: .....
6. When was the church planted?.....
7. Who planted it?.....
8. How many were part of the initial planting team?.....
9. How long has interviewee been a member? .....
10. Where is the church located?.....
11. What is the approximate size of the church?.....  
     Average attendance.....Membership.....
12. Number of congregations/locations.....
13. Current size of leadership team:  
     Elders.....Deacons.....Pastoral Staff.....  
     Admin Staff Part -time.....Admin Staff Full-time .....



## **B. Theological Training Prior to Planting**

14. What formal or informal theological training, if any, did you complete prior to planting the church?

15. As an estimate, what percentage of this training took place internally at Southlands, what percentage took place at an external institution, and what percentage took place informally through self-study?

Internal training % .....

External training %.....

Self-study %.....

16. As an estimate, what percentage of Southlands' theological training of church planters was dedicated to Ecclesiology (the Model of the Church) and what percentage was dedicated to Christology (the Message of Christ)?

Ecclesiology%.....

Christology%.....

17. With regards to preaching, how did Southlands train you in Biblical interpretation, exposition and preaching, including preaching of the gospel in your particular context? Did you feel that this training was sufficient, and if not, in what ways have you sought to develop your preaching skills after the plant?

18. What course or courses, which you did not study during your church planters' training, do you now wish you could have taken?

## **C. Gospel Definition and Church Growth**

19. Describe the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement in no more than 50 words, and provide a Biblical basis for why you support or oppose this doctrine.

20. How significantly did Southlands shape your view of the gospel before church planting. Has your view changed since planting a church, and if so, what factors were influential in changing that view?

21. How have you equipped your church to understand and bear witness to Jesus' claim to have died in the place of sinful humanity, absorbing God's righteous judgment of sin, rescuing

us from eternal wrath and in so doing, purchase for us the gift of eternal reconciliation with God?

22. How have you helped your church to distinguish between the Biblical gospel and the Prosperity-Gospel, the Social Gospel, and Moralistic Therapeutic Deism?

23. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being inactive and 10 being extremely active, how active are the members of your congregation in sharing the gospel with their friends, neighbours, colleagues and family? .....

24. How would you describe the numeric growth of your church since its inception?

- a. Declining
- b. Static
- c. Irregular growth (grows one year declines the next)
- d. Steady growth (average of 3-10% per year)
- e. Rapid growth (average of 10+% per year)

25. How many new believers do you baptize per year on average in your church?

26. What percentage of the growth of your church is from conversion growth (new believers), prodigal growth (people with a church background who were far from God) and transfer growth? (arrived from other churches)?

Conversion growth %.....

Prodigal growth %.....

Transfer growth%.....

27. How has your understanding and preaching of the gospel shaped the missional rhythms of your church, and what missional rhythms have been most fruitful in engaging your city with the message of the Gospel?

#### **D. Spirit-empowerment and Church Life**

28. In no more than 50 words, describe what it means from your perspective to be Spirit-empowered as a follower of Jesus.

29. The doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit is a contentious one in the Church today. If you are able, briefly explain the Cessationist view, the Pentecostal view and the Continuationist view of the Baptism of the Spirit. Which view does your church hold? If you hold a view other than one of these views, describe it in no more than 50 words.

30. How significantly did Southlands shape your view of this doctrine and its outworking in the church you planted?

31. How, if at all, has your view of this doctrine and its outworking changed since planting your church?

32. How does your church intentionally equip people to discover and operate in the Gifts of the Spirit, both in the church's gatherings and in their daily lives? (1 Cor 12-14; Romans 12)

33. Which of these Gifts of the Spirit tend to be most commonly practised in which church contexts?

Sunday gatherings .....

Prayer meetings.....

Community groups.....

34. How many times per year, on average, do you make a clear call for people to receive prayer for the Baptism/infilling of the Spirit?

35. How have you sought to develop a philosophy of 'Spirit-empowered ministry' within your church that seeks to address perceived excesses and errors within Charismatic/Pentecostal culture without over-reacting to them?

36. What evidence is there in your church beyond pulpit preaching, that the empowerment of the Spirit is enabling your church to see people move towards genuine faith Christ?

37. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being 'highly unpredictable', and 10 being 'completely predictable,' how has your view of the 'empowerment of the Spirit' affected the planning and predictability of your Sunday gatherings?

38. How intentional are you about explaining and demystifying a Spirit-empowered approach to visitors, people from more conservative church backgrounds and seekers who come to your church?

39. How have you sought to develop a culture of dependence on the Spirit through personal and corporate prayer?

40. When looking at corporate worship through a Trinitarian lens, what percentage of your worship songs and hymns are directed primarily towards the Father, the Son and the Spirit?

Father %.....

Son%.....

Spirit%.....

## **E. Doctrine, Mission and Multiplication**

41. From your perspective, what is the primary reason that Christians join your church?

- a. Biblical and engaging preaching
- b. Inspiring worship
- c. Warm community
- d. Compelling vision and leadership
- e. Good programmes and ministries
- f. Leadership training
- g. Powerful Charismatic life
- h. Vibrant sense of mission

42. From your perspective, what is the primary reason that seekers are being saved and added to your church, or making a meaningful relational connection with your church?

- a. Relatable preaching
- b. Communal warmth and openness
- c. Transcendent atmosphere in prayer and worship
- d. Facilities and programmes
- e. Apologetics course
- f. Congregational engagement in your community.

43. How do the doctrines of Penal substitutionary atonement and Empowerment of the Spirit impact the growth and strength of your church?

44. Which of these two doctrines most require strengthening in your church, and how would you go about strengthening it?

45. From your perspective, how would the strengthening of these doctrines in the ministry and life of the church in turn strengthen the effectiveness of your church's mission?

46. How do you go about equipping leaders theologically, especially with reference to penal substitution and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, for future church plants from your church (multiplication from your church)?

*POSTSCRIPT: Kindly only answer these last two questions after you have answered all the previous questions. Please also do not change any of your answers to previous questions after answering these last two questions.*

47. In the Acts 2:23, 36-39, 3:12-20 and 10:36-44 the Apostle Peter makes repeated reference to the sinful human condition as the cause for Christ's crucifixion, the need for individuals to repent and be baptized, and the offer of forgiveness and new life through His death and resurrection. In your view, what do these passages tell us about the relevance of the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement in the planting of New Testament churches, and therefore, this doctrine's relevance to church planting today?

48. Jesus' promise to His disciples in Acts 1 that they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit, was fulfilled repeatedly throughout the Book of Acts. Acts 2:3-4, 4:8-12, 4:31, 10:44-47, 13:9, and 19:6 are all records of repeated baptisms or infillings of the Spirit. In your view, how foundational was this doctrine in the planting of New Testament churches and how foundational is it in the planting of churches today?

## Annexure B: Self-Assessment Questionnaire

### 1. Character

“Pay careful attention to yourselves” (Acts 20:28).

Character is so often sacrificed where a leader displays great competence or charisma. However, Paul always viewed it as the primary lens for assessing a leader. We ignore character at our peril. His most exhaustive character lens for an elder is in the Paul’s first epistle to Timothy.

“The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer<sup>1</sup> must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil” (1 Timothy 3: 1-7).

As an addendum, Paul includes some other helpful character qualifications from his own life and ministry in this chapter:

1.1 *Teachability* These men were being taught by a leader. They came when they were called, they listened, they prayed, they co-operated.

1.2 *Relational Capacity* “You yourselves know how I lived among you from the first day I set foot in Asia” (Acts 20:18).

1.3. *Perseverance* “Serving the Lord with humility, tears, and through trials even though I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews” (Acts 20:19).

1.4 *Hard Work* “These hands of mine have ministered to my necessity and those who were with me” (Acts 20:34).

1.5 *Contentment* “I have coveted no-one’s gold or silver” (Acts 20:33). While it should be the church’s aim to be generous to elders for their work, the call to eldership is enhanced by financial contentment and hindered by financial greed. This applies both to elders employed by the church who have a ceiling on their earning potential, and to market place elders who have a ceiling placed on their time to earn money in the market place. This is only possible when we are mindful that we will ultimately receive a heavenly reward from Christ for how we shepherd His sheep.

1.6 *Generosity* “Remembering the Lord Jesus words, “It is more blessed to give than receive” (Acts 20:35).

In a similar vein, leaders set a tone of generosity in the church, both in regular, sacrificial giving to the church, and in a lifestyle of hospitality, encouragement and care for others. They cannot be emotionally or financially needy. Is there any clear disqualification in their family, work or relational lives in terms of character?

Can they identify areas in which they need to grow?

## 2. Calling

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit made you overseer” (Acts 20:28).

2.1. Is there a desire to be an elder, and a deep conviction that this is something the Holy Spirit has called them to do?

2.2. Is there agreement from their wife about the impact of this on the intensity and margins of your life together? Does she qualify him? Is she willing to play team with him?

2.3. Is there current capacity within the tensions between family, work and ministry?

2.4. If the church did not employ them in the next 3 years, would they still say yes to this?

### 3. Competence

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer, to care for the church of God” (Acts 20:28).

3.1 Are they able to keep guard? GK. *presbuteros*: doctrine, discipline, decisions

3.2 Are they able to oversee? GK *episkopos*: stewardship, direction.

3.3 Are they able to care? GK *poimeino*: counsel, comfort, lead, feed.

3.4 Are they able to manage tensions? ‘I did not shrink back from declaring anything that was profitable to you, how I taught you publicly and from house to house, how I testified to both Jews and Greeks how I worked with my own hands, now I am going to Jerusalem.’

Paul managed the tensions of public and home ministry, community and city preaching, multicultural ministry, local and trans local ministry, market place and church work. He wasn’t married, so that gave him extra time, but I still don’t think many of us would have been able to manage what he managed. Still, all of us have need to manage tensions in some way.

### 4. Content

“I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are being saved” (Acts 20:32).

4.1 Are they able to preach the grace of God through the word of God?

4.2 Are they able to teach the whole counsel of God? “I am innocent of the blood of all men for I have not neglected to teach to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20: 26-27).

4.3 Are they able to refute unsound doctrine? “From among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things who will draw the disciples away” (Acts 20:30).

### 5. Charisma



“Now constrained by the Spirit I am going, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that prison and affliction await me” (Acts 20:22-23).

What is clear here is that Paul has fellowship with the Spirit. We know that he has written scripture, performed miracles, seen visions, and cast out demons by the power of the Spirit. But here he describes a life of keeping in step with the Spirit.

5.1 Within their competence, is their evidence that they rely on the empowering of the Spirit?

5.2 Do they seem to have a meaningful and regular prayer life?

5.3 Do they exhibit any of the gifts of the Spirit?

5.4 Is there spiritual boldness in evangelism?

## 6. Chemistry

“And when he had said these things he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all. They embraced Paul and kissed him. What grieved them most is that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him the ship” (Acts 20:36).

Although this is not just an eldership team, but also rather an eldership team interacting with an apostle, it does show a team that has great chemistry. Their relationship is tender, affectionate, and much deeper than mere business. The fact that they traveled to Miletus to meet him and accompanied him to the ship, shows genuine commitment to, and priority of, relationship.

6.1 Are they able to be vulnerable, show emotion and affection?

6.2 Are they willing to be inconvenienced to be together?

6.3 Do they value time spent apart from the task at hand?

6.4 Do they foster unity or threaten it?

6.5 Do they positively affect the morale of the team?

6.6 Are they able to relate to and work with the leader easily?

6.7 Is there a need for their personality/gift type at present?

## 7. Culture

“But I do not account my life of any value nor of precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, which is to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

The culture of a church might be described as its unique blend of history, theological distinctives, values, mission and vision. It might otherwise be referred to as the church’s DNA. Sometimes this is obvious and well-articulated, but often culture is more implicit than explicit. For instance, Paul articulates his mission very clearly. It is to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. This is his primary reason for existence, and he is encouraging the elders to have the same mission. However, he is also implicitly communicating a culture of sacrifice, which may in many contexts be construed as overly robust or too narrow in focus. “I do not account my life of any value...if only I may finish my course.” Nevertheless, any church planted by Paul would have had a very sacrificial, robust and keenly focused culture. It sometimes occurs that leaders who are high in character, calling, competence and content will not take seriously enough the unique culture of the church in which they lead, and can therefore cause conflict if they come onto the eldership team. This can become a serious problem, seeing that elders are called to be the primary culture-bearers in a church.

For instance, there would have been a culture clash if one of the elders at Ephesus had said, ‘I believe that our primary ministry is to pray for Israel and look after the environment.’ While both of these tasks may be valid, they were not primary in Paul’s mission. Or he might have protested, “To risk your life by going to preach the Gospel in foreign nations is irresponsible and unwise. We are called to take care of our families and our city.” This may have been a valid suggestion, but it would have been a clash with Paul’s sacrificial, pioneering culture. Culture is not about conformity. It is about sharing the same primary values, and we cannot

afford to take short cuts with it. While our culture is clearly articulated in our DNA booklet, there are some aspects of it that are more nuanced which need to be explained and experienced.

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