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THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LEADING  
ECCLESIAL CHANGE IN LUKE-ACTS

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A thesis  
Presented to  
the faculty of  
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by  
Justin Thorpe Mason  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LEADING  
ECCLESIAL CHANGE IN LUKE-ACTS

Justin Thorpe Mason

Read and Approved by:

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Shane W. Parker (Chair)

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Michael S. Wilder

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To my wife, Kendra, who strengthens me by her faith in Christ and her love for me, and  
to Jaxon, Knox, and Paxton, who teach me more about the Father's love every day!

Psalm 67

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## PREFACE

I have been given many opportunities in my life for which I will be forever grateful; the opportunity to learn and to be educated is foremost among them. Obtaining knowledge often leads to gaining wisdom, and, as a man, a husband, a father, and a pastor, I desire godly wisdom. I am thankful to learn and to grow in leadership and in theology. I would like to thank Dr. Shane Parker for his guidance throughout this project. Because of the wisdom that he has lent me, I have become a better leader and a better pastor. I am truly a blessed man as many others have also provided guidance and insight throughout this project; all truly deserve my gratitude.

Above all else, I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has been with me every step of the way, and it is only by his grace and mercy that I have been able to keep putting one foot in front of the other. I felt God's call on my life and surrendered to his ministry at a very young age, and during my ministry, I have been challenged in many different ways. I am thankful that his love for me has never changed and that his mercies truly have been new every single morning. He has never failed to provide for me and for my family in every area of our lives. I owe him my life for sustaining me daily and will spend each day he gives me giving him glory and praise for all he has done.

Second to Christ always, I want to thank my beautiful wife, Kendra. She has lived the past nine years of our marriage often in my shadow, but she has always cheering me on and encouraging me to follow God's plan. Kendra has spent countless hours

proofreading papers, listening to my discouragements and worries, praying for me and with me, encouraging me, and taking care of our three small children while I attended class or spent extra hours in the office completing projects for class. I know that Kendra is the mate that God had for me, and I am thankful to him for this gift every day.

I never knew what real joy was until someone called me “Dad.” Our children, Jaxon, Knox, and Paxton, are three of the biggest and most precious blessings in my life. I am truly in awe every day that God chose me to be the father of these amazingly beautiful children. Even though they are young, they have sacrificed time that has given me the opportunity to complete this degree. Seeing their smiling faces waiting for me to get home every night is all the motivation that I needed to press on.

Many other family members have supported me in numerous ways throughout this journey. My parents, my brother, and my in-laws have prayerfully supported me and helped repeatedly. I have also felt the prayers of many uncles, aunts, and cousins throughout this journey. I thank my parents for modeling hard work and determination to me as a young child. They are always ready to offer wisdom and advice and, because of their godly influence, I am the man, husband, father, and pastor that I am.

Two years ago, by God’s grace and mercy, I was led to shepherd one of the most serving group of God’s people on earth. I would like to thank the Rosebower Baptist Church family, who have given me the opportunity to serve them and worship alongside them. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity and ability to serve a church that has taught me the meaning of true service. We have endured unbelievable hardships together, and we have stood humbled at the foot of the cross, hand-in-hand, but



through it all, we have seen the glory of God displayed together, and for that I am truly grateful.

Justin Mason

Paducah, Kentucky

December 2015

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

“No matter what we do, change comes to all of us. In fact, you don’t have to do anything. Just sit there; change will find you.”<sup>1</sup> In this comment, Ed Stetzer defines humanity in the twenty-first century. This quote not only defines humanity, but it also defines organizations, and even churches. When there is, however, a need to transition within the church or for the church to change in some way, there is a long list of books from both the secular world and the church world on how to implement successful change. A recent work entitled *Influencer* says that organizational change must begin with changing human behavior, and when a person knows how to make use of the right influence tools, he or she can change anything.<sup>2</sup> This work goes on to display carefully the specific tools needed to change human behavior, which reveals what John Kotter speaks of in his book *Leading Change*.<sup>3</sup>

A great deal of what has been written on change focuses on the behavior as the key change element in leading organizational change. However, within a biblical-theological worldview, one must ask the question, “Is there a danger in leading organizational change by simply focusing on behavioral change?” The Christian can

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<sup>1</sup>Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 1.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Grenny, *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 289.

<sup>3</sup>John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

agree that organizational change begins within individuals. Nevertheless, that change does not begin with simple behavior modification or manipulation; true change begins within the heart. A biblical-theological examination of Luke-Acts demonstrates that it is the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that is foundational to leading ecclesial change.

### **Presentation of the Research Problem**

For over a decade now, much has been written on leading change in the church.<sup>4</sup> Yet, it is interesting to notice that much of what is said in the church change literature is very similar to what has been said in the secular change literature found in the business world. For example, one may notice that those ideas taught in the works *Leading Congregational Change* and *Change is Like a Slinky* rely heavily on John Kotter's 8-step process to leading change.<sup>5</sup> Also, in the work *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*, the author provides a 3-phase change model that is similar to Lewin's 3-phase model from the 1940s.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*; Hans Finzel, *Change Is Like a Slinky* (Chicago: Northfield, 2004); Ann Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church without Killing It* (Nashville: Word, 2000); Michael Anthony, *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries* (Nashville: B&H, 2005).

<sup>5</sup>Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*, 31. In figure 1, one can easily discern the steps that Herrington draws from Kotter in his change process for application within the church context. In exhibit 2, Kotter identifies clearly the eight steps involved in the change process. Herrington applies these principles and steps into the change process with the church. Finzel offers six parts to the loop of change: (1) accept, (2) aim, (3) anticipate, (4) attack, (5) adjust, and (6) align. This model is similar to John Kotter's 8-step process, however, Finzel offers five additional strategies to each part that are cycles that forever repeat. See Kotter, *Leading Change*, 21; and Hans Finzel, *Change Is Like a Slinky*, 19.

<sup>6</sup>Anthony, *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*, 207-9. The change is viewed in the light of Scripture. He then shares a 3-phase process for implementing change that is similar to Lewin's 3-stage model. Phase 1 is "thawing," phase 2 is "flowing," and phase 3 is "freezing."

Much can be said about all truth being God's truth, and the Christian world can learn a lot from what has already been developed from secular change authors and researchers. Nonetheless, many differences between the secular world and the Christian world can be found. The business world is out to gain a profit,<sup>7</sup> while the church is God's tool and instrument for his kingdom's agenda.<sup>8</sup> That said, even if what the secular world says is true and helpful, it must be understood that the beginning roots of change management on the secular side do not begin with a biblical-theological worldview. If it does not begin there, it most definitely will not end with a Christian model for leading change.

Therefore, since change is deemed a constant reality,<sup>9</sup> it is imperative to look to God's Word to develop a biblical-theological foundation for leading change. The research problem outlined in this paper is that the secular literature ignores both the power and presence of the Spirit, while the Christian literature uses much of what the secular literature has to offer, offering very little insight or research on the need of the Spirit while leading ecclesial change. Much of the work that has already been written on Christian change management can be helpful and useful within the church. Several biblical principles can be observed, however, one area that lacks attention or consideration is in the area of the foundational necessity of the Spirit in leading ecclesial change. Without this understanding, detrimental effects could occur when one leads ecclesial change by a process and not by the power of the Spirit. A biblical-theological

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<sup>7</sup>Anthony, *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*, 13.

<sup>8</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 1.

<sup>9</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 2.

examination of Luke-Acts demonstrates that the role of the Holy Spirit to empower, enable, and equip is fundamental to leading ecclesial change.

### **Current State of Research Problem**

The following study is designed to take an in-depth look into the foundational role of the Spirit's empowering presence in leading ecclesial change. Through careful research and study in selected texts within Luke-Acts, it will be proven that not only is the empowering presence needed for lasting successful change, but, without the Spirit, there can not be any lasting successful change.

Further, within the structure of this work, it will be evident that much research and information is available on leading ecclesial change, but little to no research has been dedicated to the foundational role of the Spirit's power and presence in leading ecclesial change. This research will be used as a springboard for others to continue the conversation of the foundational role of the Holy Spirit in leading ecclesial change, which will benefit Christian leaders within the church by helping them adopt a biblical-theological foundation for leading change.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to examine the biblical-theological foundations for leading ecclesial change and the foundational role of the empowering presence of the Spirit necessary to equip Christian leaders by exploring the two volumes of Luke-Acts.

### **Research Description**

A biblical-theological foundation for leading change begins with the overarching theme that humanity was originally created to be image bearers of God that

were to reign and rule as under shepherds over all creation and were created to multiply and fill the earth.<sup>10</sup> However, the fall of man into sin destroys man's ability to fulfill the plan of God and enmity has been placed between man and his Creator. Humanity now awaits one who will reverse the effects of the fall and bring enduring change to both man and creation.<sup>11</sup> In Luke, one sees Jesus come as the agent of change and fulfill what all the other prophets, priests, and kings could not. Jesus comes to bring true restoration and to redeem sinful men (Rom 5:12-21). The Father sent Jesus to inaugurate the kingdom of God and new creation. Jesus brings pervasive, lasting change through his life, death, and resurrection. As the Father sent Christ, so now he sends his disciples into the world for the advance of the kingdom of God. He also gives them the Spirit of God to equip, train, and empower them (Acts 1:8; John 14:12, 26). Luke-Acts is the account of God's unfolding plan in the life and ministry of Jesus and continued in his early church. As the church is empowered by the Holy Spirit, the news of the gospel of the kingdom spreads all over the world (Acts 1:8). The kingdom of God has come, but not in its fullness.<sup>12</sup> Christians now await the final fulfillment of the promises of God, which will bring eternal change to God's people and creation (Rev 21:1-8; Acts 3:19-21; 2 Cor 5:17).

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<sup>10</sup>Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O'Brein, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 26.

<sup>11</sup>Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 50. See Gen 3:15, Rom 16:20.

<sup>12</sup>Scripture points to the truth that the kingdom of God is both already here and not yet here. Passages that promise the presence of the kingdom are found in Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20; John 14:12; Luke 17:21; Col 1:13; Heb 12:28; Rev 1:16; and 1 Pet 2:9. Passages that point to the future reality of the kingdom include Dan 2:44; Luke 11:2; Matt 5:3; 7:21-23; Luke 19:11; and Matt 26:29.

## **Delimitations**

For the purpose of this study, the research is focused on the Lukan corpus. Luke-Acts provides a narrative account of the ministry of Jesus and life of the early church. It has a single-author with a single purpose. This two-volume work is unique in that Luke is the only New Testament author who records the life and ministry of Jesus the Messiah as well as the continuing work of Jesus through the Spirit in the life and development of the early church. Moreover, strong emphasis on the theology of the Holy Spirit is given in Luke-Acts. These New Testament books will help build a foundational understanding of the long-awaited fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus, who bestows the Spirit on his people and ushers in a new kingdom and new creation.

## **Research Questions**

The two research questions answered in this paper are as follows: (1) What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the prophetic fulfillment of the Messiah described in Luke-Acts? and (2) What is the role of the Holy Spirit in ecclesial change found in Luke-Acts?

## **Definition of Research Population**

The term "research population" in this study is defined as the biblical writings of Luke-Acts that directly or indirectly describe ecclesial change employed Jesus and the early church.

## **Research Sampling Method**

The research sampling method will be focused upon the two volumes Luke-Acts to gain a biblical understanding of the Spirit's role in leading ecclesial change. This

thesis was designed as a text-based thesis. Therefore, this study examines relevant books, studies, journals, and commentaries that relate to Luke-Acts.

### **Limitations**

Since the research is a biblical-theological examination of the narrative of Luke-Acts to discern theological underpinnings of ecclesial change, I argue that to the extent that the conclusions are grounded in Scripture and marked by a sound hermeneutic, there are no limitations to the research findings in their theological content. The findings are applied in a contextualized manner according to the ecclesial challenges faced by leaders as they seek to implement organizational change within the local church.

### **Methodology**

Given the nature of this study, this section provides an outline for the study rather than describe the instrumentation. This study examines the biblical/theological foundations found in the Holy Spirit for leading ecclesial change within the text of Luke-Acts. Chapter 1 describes the purpose, goals, rationale, and research methodology for the study. Chapter 2 is a literature review that examines secular, Christian, and biblical/theological models for leading ecclesial change. Chapter 3 examines the role of the Holy Spirit in the empowered Messiah and demonstrates how the same Spirit that empowered, enabled, and equipped the Messiah is the same Spirit that enables, empowers, and equips believers today. Chapter 4 displays the manifestation of the Spirit's work, not only in the believer, but inside the New Testament church. Chapter 5 offers conclusions of this study. Here the purpose and goals of the study are examined and biblical reflections, as well as recommendation for practices, are offered.



The basic methodology is to provide the biblical-theological background of Luke-Acts and give special attention to empowering role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciples as they led change in the early church. This analysis provides a biblical basis and practical foundation for Christian leaders to apply in the local churches they lead.

### **Research Competencies**

This study requires a theological understanding of the metanarrative of the Old and New Testaments, the socio-historical context of Luke-Acts, hermeneutical accuracy so as not to impose secular theories onto the text of Scripture, and a grasp of the current literature on leading organizational change. This study does *not* involve an in-depth exegetical examination of the selected texts involving the original languages, but it focuses on how individual texts fit within the metanarrative of Scripture and demonstrates the vital role of the Holy Spirit in leading ecclesial change.

### **Conclusion**

Individual personal change and practical principles for leading change have received ample attention in Christian literature. While the best evangelical literature grounds individual change in the Scriptures, organizational principles for leading change within the church are often adaptations of popular secular models used within the business world. There is, however, no considerable research focused on the biblical-theological rationale and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for leading change at the ecclesial level.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been said regarding organizational development and leading organizational change. Peter Drucker states that “every organization of today has to build into its very structure the management of change.”<sup>1</sup> When one delves into the literature regarding change in the church, one will find biblical and theological studies on personal change, most recently by Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane in their work, *How People Change*, and *You Can Change*, by Tim Chester.<sup>2</sup> Ample attention has also been given to organizational leadership principles from a Christian perspective, most of which are adaptations of popular secular models. No considerable research, however, has focused on the biblical-theological rationale for leading ecclesial change or the necessity of the empowering of the Holy Spirit for leading change in the church, as exemplified within the two-volume work of Luke-Acts. The objective within this literature review is to examine the current literature within secular and Christian approaches to organizational change management and develop a biblical-theological perspective on change at the ecclesial level.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York: Harper Business, 1993), 59.

<sup>2</sup>Tim Chester, *You Can Change* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); and Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008).

## Secular Literature

The foundation of organizational change derived originally from Kurt Lewin.<sup>3</sup> The beginnings of organizational change was founded in organizational development, which emerged out of human relations studies from the 1930s where psychologists realized that organizational structures and processes influenced worker behavior and motivation.<sup>4</sup> In 1961 Richard Beckherd described organization development as a planned, system-wide change program that used behavioral science knowledge to move organization to a new “state.”<sup>5</sup> A psychologist, Kurt Lewin, then developed a model that focused on three stages of change.<sup>6</sup> This easy-to-use model focused on the unfreeze stage, the transition stage, and the refreeze stage. Lewin emphasized behavior change, but his model has been criticized for overlooking people’s feelings, attitudes, and experiences.<sup>7</sup> Current scholar Edgar Schein has elaborated and refined this basic model for training and management development.<sup>8</sup>

Another popular change model known as the McKinsey’s 7-S was developed in late 1970s.<sup>9</sup> This model was a framework that focused on strategy, structure, systems,

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<sup>3</sup>Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 299.

<sup>4</sup>“Organizational Development Theory,” accessed April 15, 2004, <http://www.med.upenn.edu/hbhe4/part4-ch15-organizational-development-theory.html>.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Beckherd, *Agent of Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 75-76.

<sup>6</sup>Alicia Kritsonis, “Comparison of Change Theories,” *International Journal of Scholarly Academic Intellectual Diversity* 8, no. 1 (2004-2005): 1.

<sup>7</sup>Kritsonis, “Comparison of Change Theories,” 6.

<sup>8</sup>Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 299.

<sup>9</sup>Vector Study Group, “The 7-S Framework of McKinsey,” accessed June 11, <http://www.vectorstudy.com/management-theories/7s-framework>.

staff, style, skills, and superordinate goals.<sup>10</sup> This model, developed by consultants at McKinsey & Company, offered a systematic approach to improving organizations.

In 1985 Gordon Lippitt wrote *Implementing Organizational Change*, an example of a planned change that took place in the Administrative Department of the World Bank as the department attempted to implement strengthened services, moral, and productivity.<sup>11</sup> This change was systematic by nature and did not focus on one particular process. The whole idea was not to be confined to one school of thought but to borrow from several different schools of thought that were contingent to the problem at hand.<sup>12</sup> The premise was clear—change can succeed if effective management values and practices are applied.<sup>13</sup>

During this time, Donald Kirkpatrick analyzed the literature available concerning change management and wrote *How to Manage Change Effectively*.<sup>14</sup> He designed a 7-step process to manage change effectively from his research.<sup>15</sup> His 7-step process is a systematic approach that resembles a cycle. This model begins with a determination of need and ends with the implementation of the change. The objective is to implement the best possible change with the greatest degree of acceptance of those involved.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Vector Study Group, “The 7-S Framework of McKinsey.”

<sup>11</sup>Gordon Lippitt, *Implementing Organizational Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985).

<sup>12</sup>Lippitt, *Implementing Organizational Change*, xiii.

<sup>13</sup>Lippitt, *Implementing Organizational Change*, 143-45.

<sup>14</sup>Donald Kirkpatrick, *How to Manage Change Effectively* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985).

<sup>15</sup>Kirkpatrick, *How to Manage Change*, 101.

<sup>16</sup>Kirkpatrick, *How to Manage Change Effectively*, 111.

In the early 1990s, Rosabeth Kanter, Barry Stein, and Todd Dick introduced the “Big Three” model. In their book *The Challenge to Organizational Change*, they begin describing their model by pointing back to Lewin’s classic 3-stage model.<sup>17</sup> They emphasize how simple Lewin’s model was and the need to understand that organizations are never frozen or refrozen, but are instead fluid entities. They offer both a how-to model and, in some ways, a how-not-to model. The “Big Three” model outlines three kinds of motions, three kinds of change, and three roles in the change process.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, their argument is that no one person or one group can make change happen, but it must be a balance among key players in order for the change process to be a success.

For the last thirty years, a popular and well-known theory in organizational change has been John Kotter’s 8-step process to organizational change. Kotter introduced his 8-step change process in his book *Leading Change*, in 1995. However, he initiated the idea of this 8-step process in a 1994 article in which he articulated eight key mistakes that he had noticed after years of research.<sup>19</sup> After the article, he quickly developed the book *Leading Change*, which very carefully laid out each step and the process to successful organizational changes.<sup>20</sup> Kotter believes that leaders who

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<sup>17</sup>Barry Stein, Rosabeth Kanter, and Todd Dick, *The Challenge of Organizational Change* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 10.

<sup>18</sup>Stein, *The Challenge of Organizational Change*, 14-17.

<sup>19</sup>John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 9.

<sup>20</sup>Kotter, *Leading Change*, 21-24. Kotter lays out his steps to leading change: Step 1, establish a sense of urgency; Step 2, create a guiding coalition; Step 3, develop a vision and a strategy; Step 4, communicate the change vision; Step 5, empower employees for broad-base action; Step 6, generate short-term wins; Step 7, producing more change; Step 8, anchoring the new approach in the culture. John Kotter believes that leaders who transform businesses successfully do these 8 things right, and they do them in the right order. In his eight steps, Kotter focuses on changing people’s behavior rather than systems, processes, or structures.

successfully transform businesses do eight things right, and they do these eight things in the right order.<sup>21</sup> He makes it clear that the promise of major change for the better begins with leadership.<sup>22</sup>

In the mid 1990s, Harry Woodward published *Navigating through Change*.<sup>23</sup> In his work, he lays out what he called the growth curve, which was a three-stage model that described the cycle of growth and change. The three stages are the forming stage, the norming stage, and the transforming stage. He briefly describes each stage, but spent most of the time concentrating on developing the skills and strategies necessary to establish and sustain a change culture. He argues that the skills and strategies must be taught in order for successful change to take place. He also states that people undergoing change are looking for help and direction. If one can communicate that he knows what he is doing, and there is some skill being applied, then others will cooperate.<sup>24</sup>

Another change design surfaced shortly after Kotter's in a work called *You Don't Change a Company by Memo*.<sup>25</sup> The symbol of this model is a triangle based on the Greek symbol delta, representing change as a triangle. The three key issues found in the triangle are organization, groups, and individuals. Much like Kotter, Smye's model emphasizes teamwork, buy-in, and the importance of individual behaviors. Smye's threefold method of buy-in, beliefs, and commitment can be easily compared to Kotter's

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<sup>21</sup>Kotter, *Leading Change*, 23-24.

<sup>22</sup>John P. Kotter, *A Force for Change* (New York: Free, 1990), 32.

<sup>23</sup>Harry Woodward, *Navigating through Change* (Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin Professional, 1994), 11.

<sup>24</sup>Woodward, *Navigating through Change*, 187.

<sup>25</sup>Marti Smye, *You Don't Change a Company by Memo* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1994), 19.

see-feel-change.<sup>26</sup> However, in addition to the model, this work provides five stages of change to better understand if an organization is prepared for change in order to know what to expect during the implementation of change. The stages include ignoring, attending, planning, executing, and embedding.<sup>27</sup>

During this same time, James O'Toole promoted the idea of incorporating "value-based" leadership.<sup>28</sup> He used a painting by James Ensor, *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, to describe a method that he claimed to be unorthodox. This painting by Ensor depicts a crowded street in the nineteenth century, equivalent to a parade held in New York honoring a hero. It is like a chaotic party with no real beginning or end but a mass of people filling the streets. O'Toole then begins to explain how Christ is barely even noticed in the crowd of people, which is unlike any other piece of art in Western civilization. All other works of art place Christ at the center of attention, leading others, but, in this piece, Christ is situated, not in front, but in the middle.<sup>29</sup> With this image, O'Toole presents his case for value-based leadership. O'Toole makes it clear that his intention is not to offer a how-to-manual for leading change. He argues that the how-to approach has proved to be too impractical. He instead focuses on the leader's beliefs and attitudes. This value-based leadership appeals to the hearts and minds of one's followers.<sup>30</sup> He explains further that this style of leadership centers on respect, which is what all followers crave. He also states that leadership does not depend on circumstances

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<sup>26</sup>Smye, *You Don't Change a Company by Memo*, 19.

<sup>27</sup>Smye, *You Don't Change a Company by Memo*, 68-78.

<sup>28</sup>James O'Toole, *Leading Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 1.

<sup>29</sup>O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 1-2.

<sup>30</sup>O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 3.

but on the attitudes, values, and actions of leaders.<sup>31</sup> Effective leaders must focus on respect and the true needs of their followers, as well as include them and listen to them. Finally, he says that though there is nothing more difficult, when there is organizational necessity for change, nothing is more practical.<sup>32</sup> In summation, O'Toole uses Jesus' example to develop this value-based leadership method even though he states that he is not a practicing Christian.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding organizational change, most agree that change is not managed; it must be led. Leaders themselves are the agents of change and play a critical role in the transformation process.<sup>34</sup> The literature is clear that one does not really manage change. Change is more a matter of leadership ability than a management skill.<sup>35</sup> To ensure success of an organizational change effort, the leader in the organization must lead. Many things can be delegated, but, in the change process, leadership is not one of these things. The leader must lead with both commitment and skill.<sup>36</sup> Robert Bias of Georgetown University goes even further and identifies a few skills that are needed to

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<sup>31</sup>O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 11.

<sup>32</sup>O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 12.

<sup>33</sup>O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 11.

<sup>34</sup>Cheryk Francis-Nurse, "Managing Change the Leadership Challenge," *Business Analyst Times* (October 2007): insert page number(s).

<sup>35</sup>Fred Nickols, "Change Management 101: A Primer," *Change Management Learning Center*, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.nickols.us/change.htm>.

<sup>36</sup>Timothy Galpin, "Changing the Change Leader," *Employment Relations Today* (Autumn 1995): 3, 22, 83.



lead change: “Delivering bad news effectively, dealing with anger constructively, and rebuilding trust- these are skills needed to change successfully in today’s world.”<sup>37</sup>

In the secular world, it is becoming increasingly more important for organizations to gain a competitive advantage by being able to manage and survive change.<sup>38</sup> A more recent model on change management appears in the 2013 book *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, by Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler.<sup>39</sup> The authors, much like Kotter and Lewin, pay special attention to changing behavior, but they concentrate on changing behavior by influence. They focus on six key strategies—personal motivation, personal ability, social motivation, social ability, structural motivation, and structural ability. One must find a vital behavior, and with that vital behavior, one can influence lasting change.

*Winning through Innovation* suggests that when dealing with organizational change, the key to long-term success is understanding the importance of managing the streams of innovation.<sup>40</sup> The authors, O’Reily and Tushman, explain that managing streams of innovation is aligning strategy and the culture. Their argument is that in this fast paced, ever-changing world, the companies that fail are the ones that make decisions that lead to short-term success, but since they are decisions that are not in alignment with either the culture or their strategy, they eventually end up failing. The key must be to

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<sup>37</sup>Robert Bias, “Leading Change in the Era of Bad News” (a paper presented at the Prosci Global Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada, April 25, 2010).

<sup>38</sup>Francis Amagoh, “Perspectives on Organizational Change: Systems and Complexity Theories,” *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal* 13 (2008): 1.

<sup>39</sup>Joseph Grenny et al., *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 69-71.

<sup>40</sup>Charles O’Reily and Michael Tushman, *Winning through Innovation* (Boston: Harvard Business, 2013).

handle existing products and services while creating new ones. They emphasize that companies that remain aligned by managing both culture and strategy are the ones who succeed for the long haul.

Another work, *Making Sense of Change Management*, focuses on better understanding why change happens, how change happens, and what needs to be done to make change a more welcoming concept.<sup>41</sup> The authors outline clearly the different theories to change management from individual to organizational and explain the different approaches that many leaders use, including the behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, and humanistic approaches. This work was very helpful in gathering different approaches. It shows that more than one method exists when it comes to organizational change and that much that can be learned from these different theories. After learning the different theories, one can apply what has been learned to one's situation.

Christopher Laszlo adds to the conversation with his 10 principles to large-scale change. He states that the ten principles are not simple recipes or management tools, they address classic concerns such as strategy, organization, and execution. In addition, they emphasize the dynamics of sustainability, learning, and influence that provide an articulated approach that managers can use with their natural abilities and past work experiences.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Esther Cameron and Mike Green, *Making Sense of Change Management* (Philadelphia: Kogan Page, 2012), 2.

<sup>42</sup>Christopher Laszlo and Jean Francois Laugel, *Large-Scale Organizational Change* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 38.

## Christian Literature

The Christian approach and the secular approach to change do have some aspects in common when it comes to change management, but the main difference is that Christians see change as coming through the will and power of God, and the secular approach believes in the efficacy of change management theories and techniques to produce a brighter, better future.<sup>43</sup>

The literature dealing with change in the realm of the church world is a decade behind the literature concerning change in the secular world. Although literature can be found early on, this subject of change and leading change using a secular approach became very popular in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, within the church, it was not until the turn of the millennium that change became a popular subject in the literature. Some literature in the church world can be found, but, for the most part, literature before the 1990s was mainly on secular leadership. It is possible to find a chapter or section on leading change within this literature.

In 2000, leading change became a popular subject even within the church world. In the late 1980s, Kenneth Gangel offered a few basic principles concerning change. He states that change is a wholesome and biblical concept, citing Romans 8:28-30.<sup>44</sup> He also argues that growth causes change and that Christians should always be growing. Christians promote change, and Christian leaders are to initiate and nurture it. After offering a few words about understanding that proper change is in line with biblical standards, he then adds a few basic principles on change that center on the process. In his

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<sup>43</sup>Stephen Pattison, *The Faith of the Managers* (London: Cassell, 1997), 119.

<sup>44</sup>Kenneth Gangel, *Feeding & Leading* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 150.

principles, the only one offered from a biblical basis is principle 10, which states that change must be bathed in prayer and carried out with harmony.<sup>45</sup> From there, he offers a basic 3-stage model that begins with the planning stage, moves to the announcement stage, and ends with the implementing stage.<sup>46</sup> He concludes that the key to change is to change people and not things. This model appears, in many ways, to combine a few elements of Kotter (change people and not things) as well as Lewin's 3-stages of change. His insights are beneficial to the church, but, for the most part, he merely adds biblical texts that apply to the scenario he explains rather than using the text to drive the understanding of the process. When looking at the literature base on change management in the church, this use of Scripture reoccurs often.

Lyle Schaller argues that change is the issue in any institution and offers a 5-step sequence: (1) substantial degree of discontent with the status quo exists; (2) create an initiating group that will design a specific course of action; (3) build a support group for the proposed change; (4) find approval and implement it; (5) ask which changes will be institutionalized as permanent?<sup>47</sup>

David Young offers a 3-stage process that leads to growth and renewal. He outlines these stages as the organizing stage, the planning stage, and the implementing stage.<sup>48</sup> Along with his stages, he also produced a 17-step plan to walk through these 3 stages that will lead to renewal as a church.

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<sup>45</sup>Gangel, *Feeding & Leading*, 151.

<sup>46</sup>Gangel, *Feeding & Leading*, 151-54.

<sup>47</sup>Lyle Schaller, *Strategies for Change* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 92-100.

<sup>48</sup>David Young, *A New Heart and A New Spirit* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1994), xiv.

Another piece of literature was written in 1996 by Richard Higginson, which was entitled, *Transforming Leadership*.<sup>49</sup> This work was developed from the opposite angle than most of the church change management that was written. Most literature takes secular approaches and applies biblical principles within the church. Higginson argues for a Christian approach to managing, and his hope is for Christians to use a biblical approach to management in the world. He argues that modern business writers have much to teach us about the process of change, but valuable lessons can be gleaned within the pages of Scripture.<sup>50</sup>

A 1996 work, *Managing the Congregation*, focused on transforming people through the identification and maximization of an effective process.<sup>51</sup> It explores areas of potential transformation for the congregation: spiritual formation, relationships with people, and structures of ministry. It identifies systems and relationships within the congregation and enables pastors and other church leaders to be intentional and structured in their approach to change.<sup>52</sup>

Hans Finzel, in *Empowered Leaders*, points out that change will have many detractors for many different reasons, but the number one reason is fear. Fear of the unknown is a threat to people's comfort zones. He adds that much to do with leadership involves change, yet there is nothing more hazardous to the health of one's leadership.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Richard Higginson, *Transforming Leadership* (London: SPCK, 1996), 18-19.

<sup>50</sup>Higginson, *Transforming Leadership*, 105.

<sup>51</sup>Norman Shawchuck, *Managing the Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

<sup>52</sup>Shawchuck, *Managing the Congregation*, 11-16.

<sup>53</sup>Hans Finzel, *Empowered Leaders* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1998), 99.

Finzel outlines eight steps to effective change.<sup>54</sup> His steps are practical and easy to understand, but he does not make any biblical applications.

George Hunter, author of *Leading and Growing a Growing Church*, points out that the church is different than a worldly organization in at least five ways. However, he concludes that the church is still an organization and finds commonality with organizations in the world. He says that it reflects many of the same dynamics and it is managed by many of the same principles of organizations in the world.<sup>55</sup>

Ultimately, the literature base of church change management seeks to point out biblical application in the change process. *Leading Congregational Change* attempts to do this. This book integrates application from the business and organizational field with biblical principles for the local congregation. Herrington draws heavily on Kotter's work by applying his steps and principles to the context of the church,<sup>56</sup> but the authors conclude that understanding transformation in the church is a process of bringing the church into alignment with God's unique vision.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Finzel, *Empowered Leaders*, 115-16. Finzel's eight steps are as follows: (1) Prepare carefully; (2) learn from the past; (3) Gain ownership from the inside out; (4) count the cost; (5) anticipate resistance; (6) listen and learn; (7) use experts; and (8) take your time.

<sup>55</sup>George Hunter, *Leading & Managing a Growing Church*, Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 22-24. Hunter outlines five ways a church is different from a worldly organization: (1) it has a distinct source (Christ); (2) it has a distinct message (the gospel); (3) it has a distinct purpose (to reach people); (4) the Word gives ethical values to the church; and (5) nothing is likely to succeed without the power of God blessing the church's efforts.

<sup>56</sup>Kotter, *Leading Change*, 21. In exhibit 2, Kotter clearly identifies the eight steps involved in the change process. Herrington also applies these principles and steps into the change process with the church.

<sup>57</sup>Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, James Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 31. In figure 1, one can easily discern the steps that Herrington draws from Kotter in his change process for application within the church context.

In *Transitioning*, Dan Southerland creates a plan to lead a church through change by implementing a process that is developed through vision, which he derives from Nehemiah's building of the wall.<sup>58</sup> He identifies eight different steps: (1) prepare for vision; (2) define vision; (3) plant the vision; (4) share the vision; (5) implement the vision; (6) deal with opposition; (7) make course corrections; and (8) evaluate the results.<sup>59</sup> Southerland's model is very simplistic in nature and full of biblical application, but there is still cause for concern because even though there are biblical texts listed all throughout the process, it is possible to follow the process and not the Spirit.

In 2004, Hans Finzel released *Change Is Like a Slinky*, which is more focused on change than Finzel's other work cited earlier, which focused mainly on leadership. Here he declares that change happens repeatedly in a never-ending cycle.<sup>60</sup> He relates change to a slinky that loops around and continually regenerates itself as an ever-spiraling process. He concludes that there are six parts to this loop of change: (1) accept; (2) aim; (3) anticipate; (4) attack; (5) adjust; and (6) align, in addition to 30 strategies that are like forever repeating cycles.<sup>61</sup> Finzel, much like Herrington, draws from Kotter's original 8-step process, but Finzel offers very little, if any, biblical advice on leading organizational change. Even though he offers little biblical insights to organizational change he is included in this section because he is known as a Christian author and

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<sup>58</sup>Dan Southerland, *Transitioning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 17.

<sup>59</sup>Southerland, *Transitioning*, 17-19.

<sup>60</sup>Hans Finzel, *Change Is Like a Slinky* (Chicago: Northfield, 2004), 15.

<sup>61</sup>Finzel, *Change is Like a Slinky*, 19.

currently is a president of a mission organization,<sup>62</sup> but he offers little biblical application to the church context.

Thomas Bandy implores that a key for core leaders and a message that must be proclaimed is that the first step in addressing change in a church is to stop loving the church and start loving Christ more.<sup>63</sup> In *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*, he makes the argument that change is never neutral, but it is value-based and it must be assessed through the lens of Scripture and theology. He amplifies this thought by making clear that theology must not be confused with the status quo.<sup>64</sup> However, after the change is viewed in the light of Scripture, he then shares a 3-phase process for implementing change that seems similar to Lewin's 3-stage model. Phase 1 is thawing, phase 2 is flowing, and phase 3 is freezing. He draws from Herrington, Bonem, and Furr to identify four disciplines that aid a congregation during change in phase 2—generating and sustaining creative tension, harnessing the power of mental models, enabling team learning, and practicing systems thinking.<sup>65</sup>

Paul Borden offers his insights in a book called *Make or Break your Church in 365 Days: A Daily Guide to Leading Effective Change*.<sup>66</sup> His thoughts are practical in nature and he strategically lays out a day-by-day plan that a pastor should follow in order

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<sup>62</sup>Hans Finzel is president of CBInternational, a mission organization comprised of evangelism, church planting, and leadership development ministries.

<sup>63</sup>Thomas Bandy, *Coaching Change* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 88.

<sup>64</sup>Michael Anthony, *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries* (Nashville: B&H, 2005), 207.

<sup>65</sup>Anthony, *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*, 209-10.

<sup>66</sup>Paul Borden, *Make or Break Your Church in 365 Days: A Daily Guide to Leading Effective Change* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012).



to begin leading change from day one. This work is, in many ways, a how-to guide for church leaders who want to be effective leaders but are unsure where to begin.<sup>67</sup> He lays out a biblical call to leadership and then offers a process to follow.

Another recent practical approach has been developed by Peter Coutts in *Choosing Change: How to Motivate Churches to Face the Future*. He lays out a step-by-step practical guide for church leaders. His focus in this work is not the theological underpinnings for change, yet he does argue for a biblical framework for the change process.<sup>68</sup> His premise points to the motivation theory, which is slightly different from the behavior approach. He agrees that their needs to be a change in behavior, but he writes that a leader's primary role is to motivate people and make them want to change their behavior.

Most of the literature base addresses techniques, systems, and processes of change but another important piece that must be included in the literature base is the evaluation of the spiritual health of the church before, during, and after transition. As Lee Eclov states, "Leading a congregation through change is a delicate balancing act, and if we are to succeed, we must make the spiritual health of the congregation—not the change we are pursuing—our highest priority as the church passes through this time."<sup>69</sup>

A spiritual health checkup for change, as described by Lee Eclov, must address the question "Where is the Holy Spirit moving in our congregation this month?"<sup>70</sup> This reminder must be at the heart of every change process that is implored. Any change that

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<sup>67</sup>Borden, *Make or Break Your Church in 365 Days*, 4.

<sup>68</sup>Peter Coutts, *Choosing Change: How to Motivate the Church to Face the Future* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).

<sup>69</sup>Lee Eclov, *The Church Leader's Answer Book* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2006), 136.

takes place void of the Spirit is a change that is doomed for failure or a change that is unnecessary.

Although challenging and difficult, leading change is possible.<sup>71</sup> Ultimately, this change only comes through the power of the gospel and it is gospel change that has always led to broader change.<sup>72</sup> However, a majority of churches are struggling to make a transformational impact.<sup>73</sup> In his research, Stetzer lists spiritual practices that are rooted in Scripture. He offers what he terms a “transformational loop,” which is composed of three categories and seven elements. The categories in the loop are discern, embrace, and engage. Within the category of discernment is a missionary mentality. The category “embrace” contains the elements of vibrant leadership, relational intentionality, and prayerful dependence. The elements involved within the category of engagement are worship, community, and mission.<sup>74</sup> This transformational loop is meant to be a blueprint to help churches measure the right things and measure the right things properly in order to have a transformational impact on the church’s community with the power of the gospel.

Stetzer’s model is very close to the heart and purpose of this study. Stetzer does a wonderful job of outlining and detailing the need for change, or transformation as he calls it, as well as the call of God to churches for the transformation of communities that begins with the gospel. Stetzer and other recent literature will be used as a

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<sup>70</sup>Eclov, *The Church Leader’s Answer Book*, 137.

<sup>71</sup>Lovett H. Weems Jr., *Take the Next Step* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 17.

<sup>72</sup>Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 11.

<sup>73</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 9.

<sup>74</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 41.

springboard to do further research in leading ecclesial change. In the infancy stage of leading change in the church, well-intentioned pastors and leaders often just adopt a secular approach to leading change into the church. The very heart of change that must be understood, however, is that no matter how well the vision is cast and the reasons for change are enumerated and communicated, change is still very difficult.<sup>75</sup> Change is so difficult in fact that it takes the Spirit of God to produce meaningful and lasting change.

### **Biblical-Theological Perspective**

After analyzing the current literature for the secular approach as well as the Christian approach to ecclesial change, a clear need exists to begin with a biblical-theological perspective in order to understand what can be learned from the Word of God about ecclesial change. A biblical-theological perspective is the missing piece in much of the change literature. A biblical-theological perspective is needed for Christian leaders today to understand where ecclesial change fits into the metanarrative of Scripture.

For Christian leaders, Scripture should be the primary lens through which every prescription for the church is viewed, including organizational change. James Hamilton states that the goal of biblical theology is simply to learn a practice of interpretation from the biblical authors so that one can interpret the Bible and life in this world the way they did.<sup>76</sup> Biblical-theology is the theme that flows from the metanarrative of Scripture, and all of life flows from this same theme.<sup>77</sup> Peter Gentry and

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<sup>75</sup>Marshall Shelley, "Change is Constant . . . and Bittersweet," *Christianity Today*, March 2014, 1-2.

<sup>76</sup>James H. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 42.

<sup>77</sup>Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 51.

Stephen Wellum add that a biblical theology discerns the overall unity of God's revelation, from creation to the new creation.<sup>78</sup> A biblical-theological foundation for leading change begins with the storyline of Scripture. The overarching theme of Scripture starts with creation and the formation of humanity, who were originally created to be image bearers of God, to reign and rule as viceregents over all creation on behalf of their maker,<sup>79</sup> and to multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:1, 26, 28; 5:1; 9:6; Isa 37:16; Jer 32:17; Matt 19:4-6; John 1:1-3; Col 1:16; 2 Pet 3:5; Rev 4:11). God created the world and humanity distinct from himself and yet totally dependent on him.<sup>80</sup> God's creation of the entire universe communicates his sovereignty and lordship for the Creator of all is also the Lord of all.<sup>81</sup> Although Adam and Eve were created perfect, they quickly fell into sin (Gen 3:1-24; Eph 2:1; Rom 3:12-16, 23; Col 2:13). The fall of man into sin destroyed man's ability to fulfill the plan of God, and enmity was placed between man and his Creator. Since they disobeyed the divine word and eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man has been exiled from his geographical home, the throne room of the universe, to live east of Eden as disposed royalty.<sup>82</sup> Humanity now looks for one who will reverse the effects of the fall and bring enduring change to both man and creation (Gen 3:15; Rom 16:20).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 39.

<sup>79</sup>Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O'Brein, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 26.

<sup>80</sup>Kostenberger, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 26.

<sup>81</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 4.

<sup>82</sup>Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 67.

<sup>83</sup>Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 50.

From Genesis 3, the history of God's people can be described as a continual raising up prophets, priests, and kings, all of whom were intended to bring change to the situation of God's people but failed in their attempts.<sup>84</sup> Instead of being a story of gloom and doom, man's history is a story of hope because there is a new announcement. Since the old covenant was a failure, God rectified it with a new covenant.<sup>85</sup> One came from the seed of David who brings true change to the brokenness of God's people.

In the New Testament, the storyline of Scripture climaxes with the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, who is the long-awaited Messiah (Rom 5:8; 8:19-23, 30, 34; Acts 3:21; Col 1:20). With the coming of the promised One, one sees Jesus come as the agent of change and the one who fulfills what all the other prophets, priests, and kings could not. Jesus came to bring true redemption and change to sinful men (John 1:29; 1 Tim 2:5, 6). The Father sent Jesus to inaugurate the kingdom of God and new creation. It is through the work of Jesus Christ that sinful man can be redeemed and restored (Rom 5:12-21). Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus brings the restoration of all things, which is true lasting change to believers (1 Cor 15:20-28; Rev 21:1-8).

As the Father sent Christ, so now he sends his disciples into the world for the advancement of his kingdom (John 17:18). He also gives them the Spirit of God to equip, train, and empower them to do even greater works than he had done (John 14:12). Luke-Acts is the account of God's unfolding plan in the life and ministry of Jesus and his plan in the early church. The church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and the news of the gospel of the kingdom spreads all over his creation (Acts 1:8). The New

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<sup>84</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 184-88.

<sup>85</sup>Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 188.

Testament pictures Christ and the church as finally having done what Adam, Noah, and Israel had failed to do in extending the temple of God's presence throughout the world.<sup>86</sup> The kingdom of God has come, but Christians recognize that it is not in its fullness. They await the final fulfillment of the promises of God, which will bring eternal change to God's people and creation (Rev 21:1-8; Acts 3:19-21; 2 Cor 5:17).

### **Significance of Literature Review**

This literature review holds value in many ways. The literature base is clear that change and leadership is hard work and perceived to be impossible. However, change only becomes impossible when leaders attempt to lead in their own power and not from God's power and God's purpose.<sup>87</sup> A critical challenge that faces Christian leaders today when it comes to change management literature in the church world is that there exists a literature gap that leads many pastors and leaders look to the secular theories of change management. For example, there are many blogs that can be found discussing implementing changes in the church that simply lay out Kotter's 8-step process or Lewin's 3-stage process to change that are void of any type of biblical analysis.<sup>88</sup> While Kotter's process, as well as other processes can be useful and helpful to the church, they must first be analyzed from a biblical perspective. A danger arises if secular theories and approaches to change are merely baptized with biblical language and introduced to the church. It is clear that secular theories and processes do not address the Spirit in any

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<sup>86</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 169.

<sup>87</sup>Weems, *Take the Next Step*, 154.

<sup>88</sup>Two examples of pastors' blogs that can be found that lay out the 8-step process of change but offer little to no type of biblical analysis are as follows: <http://likeateam.com/8-step-process-for-leading-change/>, <http://lifefnotes.lifelettercafe.com/2013/08/leading-change/> and <http://stephenblandino.com/category/organizations/page/8>.

way, and if churches today simply implement these approaches, they will be ignoring the Spirit of God, the very source of true change. Alan Nelson argues that it is the Holy Spirit that empowers the church, and, if congregations gave the Spirit room to lead, they would undoubtedly see many things changed in churches across America.<sup>89</sup> Glenn Daman agrees:

A comparison of recent books written for secular leaders and books written for church leaders yields little difference in content. The leadership paradigms in the secular community and in the church reflect the same underlying perspectives. The only difference is that many in the church try to give biblical support to these secular principles, often through proof texting rather than [using] sound exegesis.<sup>90</sup>

Daman continues to drive home his point by adding that transformation is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a congregation and that prayer is foundational for change. Without prayer, any change will be superficial and temporary. Spiritual leaders must remain committed to prayer as well as to seeking God's empowerment and direction in transforming their congregations.<sup>91</sup>

The literature base is full of steps, stages, and systems to follow for lasting and meaningful change. However, no considerable research has been done at the foundational level of ecclesial change. The foundational level begins before the steps, processes, and systems are deployed. The foundational level must begin and end with the Spirit of God in God's people in God's church. The need for the Spirit of God in ecclesial change is made evident in the life and ministry of the Messiah as described in Luke-Acts. Jesus comes as the great agent of change and the gospels suggest that the whole of Jesus'

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<sup>89</sup>Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church without Killing It* (Nashville: Word, 2000), 46.

<sup>90</sup>Glenn Daman, *Leading the Small Church* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 19.

<sup>91</sup>Daman, *Leading the Small Church*, 136.

ministry was conducted in the Spirit's power.<sup>92</sup> Jesus came as the long awaited Spirit-anointed Messiah.<sup>93</sup> The Spirit of God rested upon His life and empowered Him for the work that His Father had purposed for Him. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). It is the Spirit that empowered, enabled and led Jesus in His ministry on this Earth and in a similar fashion that is the Spirit's work today in humanity, to empower, enable and equip. In Luke-Acts the central function of the Spirit in humanity is to reshape (transform or change) us from one degree of glory to another.<sup>94</sup> It is the Spirit of God that is foundational to leading ecclesial change and it is the Spirit of God that bridges the gap in the literature base and links together the secular approach, Christian approach, and the biblical-theological approach.

### **Definitions**

A definition that will be important to consider before this study moves forward is "organizational" or "ecclesial change." For the purpose of this study, it is important to understand that the terms "organizational change," "ecclesial change," and "change" will be used synonymously. A working definition for organizational change is as follows: a matter of being in state 1 at time 1 and at state 2 at time 2.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 53.

<sup>93</sup>Bruce Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 33.

<sup>94</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 56.

<sup>95</sup>Rosabeth Kanter, *The Challenge of Organizational Change* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 9.



Another understanding that must be clarified before going forward is a common understanding of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.<sup>96</sup> The Holy Spirit is a person and not an “it” or a lesser manifestation of God. The Holy Spirit is, in every way, God, just as Jesus and the Father are God.<sup>97</sup> This research does not intend to argue for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but the heart of this argument is that the Holy Spirit is the One who enables ecclesial change and to think of the Spirit as anything less than God Himself would be to miss the thrust of this argument.

Finally, the last phrase that must be understood in order to move forward in this study is the “empowering presence of the Spirit.” This phrase will be used synonymously with “being filled with the Spirit,” “indwelt with the Spirit,” and “empowered by the Spirit.” It is defined as the continuous blessing from God that the church experiences as a pledge of what is to come, and it is what enables the church and Christians to do the work of the ministry.<sup>98</sup>

### **Conclusion**

After reviewing the literature in church change management, there must be a caution to churches not to just use a popular change model such as John Kotter’s 8-step process or Lewin’s 3-stage model, which were developed for business organizations, without first viewing the models through a biblical-theological lens. Secular models, at their core, seek to change behavior, systems, or structures and are based on unbiblical worldviews, and churches must not simply seek behavior modification. People do not

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<sup>96</sup>Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 59.

<sup>97</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 59.

<sup>98</sup>James M. Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 188-97.

need new behaviors, they need new hearts.<sup>99</sup> In his book, *How People Change*, Timothy Lane does a wonderful job of laying out a biblical-theological perspective on individual change, but there is little to no research being done on a biblical-theology of ecclesial change. The empowering presence of the Spirit of God is necessary for true and meaningful change, and this change begins with the Spirit in the heart of believers.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Timothy Lane, *How People Change*, 25-26.

<sup>100</sup>Janice Stinnett, *Change: How to Remain a Strong Leader during Your Church's Transition* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2013), 3.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT OF THE EMPOWERED MESSIAH

#### **Introduction to Luke-Acts**

The Gospel of Luke is both the longest of the Gospels, with more than 1,100 verses, and the only one with a sequel—Acts.<sup>1</sup> In Luke, God reveals the role of Jesus in God's plan and promise as the Messiah who comes as the change agent to redeem a sinful humanity (19:10). It is through Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection that prophecies are fulfilled from the Old Testament (cf. Isa 53; Micah 5:2; Gen 12:3) and through His work He makes a way for sinful humanity to be redeemed (19:10). The ultimate goal of the Gospels is to magnify God, His son Jesus, and His faithful work to reconcile a fallen humanity (Rom 5:8). However, it is also through this work of Jesus that a theme must be noticed. Ultimately, believers are to imitate Jesus, who completely humbled Himself, became flesh, and dwelt on earth (John 1:14). He was fully man, fully God, and being empowered by the Spirit, He obeyed the Father, even unto death (Phil 2:8). In no way will believers ever be able to fully emulate Jesus in perfect obedience because He is perfect (2 Cor 5:21), and man is sinful (Rom 3:23). But believers are

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<sup>1</sup>Darrell Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 1.

called to follow His steps (2 Pet 2:21-22), and part of what it means to be a follower of Christ is to emulate the life of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

The Gospels deal with both the ministry and teaching of Jesus as well as His death and resurrection while Acts emphasizes the dominant role of the Holy Spirit in the expansion of the Gospel through the early church.<sup>3</sup> Jesus the Messiah commissions his disciples in Luke 24:44-48 and, in Acts, Jesus restates this mission for the apostles as he sends the Holy Spirit from on high to empower them for witness (1:8). At Pentecost (Acts 2), the church is born of the Spirit in a similar fashion way that Luke's Gospel shows how Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> As the church is born early in the book of Acts, Luke uses the rest of the book to describe how the Spirit-filled community was led to continue the teaching and ministry that Jesus began (1:1). The Spirit is poured out upon the apostles, giving them supernatural power to speak in the tongues of the native languages of those assembled (2:5-13). They spoke the bold truth of Jesus crucified and resurrected (vv. 14-39) and about three thousand souls believed (v. 41). It was during Peter's sermon (vv. 14-39) that he proclaimed that the prophecy of Joel (v. 38) had been fulfilled through the ministry and death of Jesus and now Jesus had been raised from the dead, making Him the eschatological Son of David, exalted by God, and Lord (v. 36).<sup>5</sup> For Peter to make the claim of "Jesus being Lord" would have provoked the Jewish

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<sup>2</sup>Bruce Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 28.

<sup>3</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 12-13.

<sup>4</sup>John Polhill, *Acts* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), 64.

<sup>5</sup>Eckhard Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Jesus and the Twelve*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 400.

listeners because, in their estimation, only God could pour out the Spirit in that the Spirit is the active presence of the one true God who reveals Himself personally to His creation. But Peter emphasizes the risen and exalted Jesus is the Lord who has poured out His Spirit.<sup>6</sup> Luke spends the rest of the book of Acts making it abundantly clear that every believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 38), which is the abiding presence of Jesus that transforms and changes believers to be empowered and equipped to accomplish the mission given to them by Christ.<sup>7</sup> It is this Spirit that is sent by Christ (Luke 24:49) that works in believers to sanctify them and lead the church to be restored. This restoration that will only be made perfectly complete at the time of consummation when Jesus returns (Rev 21).

### **A Biblical Theology of the Spirit**

A simple summation of a biblical theology of the Spirit will be imperative in order to see the essential need of the Spirit in leading ecclesial change. Accordingly, a biblical explanation must be given regarding the role the Holy Spirit played in the messianic hope that was promised by God in the Old Testament, fulfilled in the New Testament by Jesus, and continues today through the Holy Spirit. The empowering presence of the Spirit is not merely *helpful* in leading ecclesial change, it is essential. The Holy Spirit's person and foundational role as developed throughout the metanarrative of Scripture will be displayed going forward in this research, which will demonstrate the need for the Spirit in leading true and lasting change.

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<sup>6</sup>Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 401.

<sup>7</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 64.

In summary, the Spirit was present in creation (Gen 1:2) as a member of the Trinity and was an active agent in creation.<sup>8</sup> In the fall of man (Gen 3:6), the relationship between God and man was broken because of sin, and humanity was in need of a Savior. After the fall of man in Genesis 3, the triune God is on a mission to reclaim his creation.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the Old Testament, the activity of the Spirit is identified with the being of God.<sup>10</sup> The Old Testament points forward to, and records, prophesy about the Messiah, the anointed One, who was to come to earth as a suffering servant to be an offering for sin (Isa 42:13-53:12). The prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21; Jer 1:2; Isa 59:21; 2 Sam 23:2). The Lord's power and presence is revealed in his Spirit with a view to fulfill a variety of goals in redemptive history (Ezek 37, 39:29; Ps 104:29-30; Ps 139:7).<sup>11</sup> The Spirit leads Moses in the exodus of God's people from Egypt, and the Spirit was actively present as he guided the people in the wilderness (Isa 63:11).<sup>12</sup> The servant who was prophesied about "would be wounded for our transgressions, . . . bruised for our iniquities, . . . and by His stripes we [would be] healed" (Isa 53:5). Part of Israel's hope was found in the promise that at some future date the Spirit would be poured out upon all people as spoken about in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel.<sup>13</sup> Joel promises that the

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<sup>8</sup>Ferguson, Sinclair, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.), 21.

<sup>9</sup>Graham Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 117.

<sup>10</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 27.

<sup>11</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 21.

<sup>12</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 23.

<sup>13</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 138.

Spirit will dwell in believers personally and permanently (Joel 2).<sup>14</sup> In the New Testament, the promise of the Messiah is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. It is Jesus himself who teaches the following in John 15:5: “For without me you can do nothing.”<sup>15</sup> However, in John 14:28, Jesus says to the disciples, “I am going away. . . . I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.” Since Jesus was going away, he comforts his disciples by saying, “He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16). Within the context of John 14-16, Jesus identifies this “Helper” as the Holy Spirit. Jesus assures his disciples that “greater works than these He will do, because [he is going] to [his] Father” (John 14:12). This Spirit that the Father sends “will teach [them] things” and “[they] shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon [them]” (John 14:26; Acts 1:8). Finally, Jesus declares to his disciples, “Just as the Father sent me, I also now send you” (John 20:21).

In Luke 24:49, Jesus completes his promise: “Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with the power from on high.” Next, in Acts 2, the prophesy of Joel and the promise of Jesus is fulfilled and the Spirit is poured out on the people of God that they may be empowered for the mission and message that has been given to them from the Father. The early church depended on the Spirit and his presence. The church continues to do so even today in order to accomplish the mission. In addition, an understanding exists that a day is coming when Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, will return to call his children home (1 Cor 15:52; Matt 24:27; John 6:50-71).

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<sup>14</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 30.

<sup>15</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Bible references are taken from the New King James Version.

After a biblical-theological understanding of the messianic hope in the Spirit-empowered Messiah, next it is important to focus on Luke-Acts in order to examine the powerful work of the Spirit in both the believer and the church, which leads to ecclesial change. The Holy Spirit plays a major role in God's program in Luke-Acts.<sup>16</sup> The Spirit is mentioned directly 16 times in Luke's gospel and 57 times in Acts.<sup>17</sup> A careful examination of the role of the Spirit in the Messiah leads one to a deeper understanding of Jesus as the Spirit-anointed change agent.

### **The Role of the Spirit in the Messiah**

The purpose of this section is to examine the specific texts that display the Spirit leading and empowering Jesus in the book of Luke-Acts. An examination of these texts points forward in Luke-Acts and, in a much greater way, indicate how the Spirit worked in the church's leaders to spearhead ecclesial change. The following examination demonstrates that the New Testament church was enabled, equipped, and empowered by the Spirit of God.

The gospel is found in God's love and his plan to redeem humanity because man has fallen short of the glory of God and is sinful (Rom 3:23). But God, in his mercy and grace, while humanity was sinful, demonstrated his love for humanity by sending his son Jesus to die for the sins of mankind (Rom 5:8). Now, anyone who confesses with one's mouth and believes in one's heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead will be saved (Rom 10:9). With this belief, the Lord removes one's heart of stone and gives one

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<sup>16</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 211.

<sup>17</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 211.



a heart of flesh (Jer 32:39). The message of the gospel is that God changes lives by changing hearts.<sup>18</sup> When it comes to the gospel, change is the norm for everyone, and God is always at work to complete this process in believers, the church, and creation. This work that is performed by God through his Spirit enables his redemptive promise to be fulfilled in and through believers.<sup>19</sup>

The Spirit's work and ministry in Jesus, in many ways, has been neglected in the past.<sup>20</sup> Abraham Kuyper once wrote, "The church has never sufficiently confessed the influence the Holy Spirit exerted upon the work of Christ."<sup>21</sup> J. I. Packer agreed with Kuyper as well in his book, *Knowing God*, as he states that, the person and work of the Holy Spirit is largely ignored and the average Christian, deep down, is in a complete fog as to what work the Holy Spirit does.<sup>22</sup> However, it is apparent that the New Testament demonstrates clearly that the Spirit plays a major role in the life of Jesus and is present with Jesus from the time of his conception, to the garden tomb, and beyond.<sup>23</sup> Jesus came in the power of the Spirit and lived his life as a man, relying on the Spirit to provide the power, grace, and knowledge needed to fulfill the daily mission of his Father.<sup>24</sup> More specifically, the Gospels suggest that the whole of Jesus' ministry was conducted in the

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<sup>18</sup>Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 17.

<sup>19</sup>Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 7.

<sup>20</sup>Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 37.

<sup>21</sup>Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), 97.

<sup>22</sup>Packer, J. I. *Knowing God* (Downers grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 68.

<sup>23</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 38.

<sup>24</sup>Bruce Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: The Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 34.

Spirit's power.<sup>25</sup> One must see Jesus as coming in the power of the Spirit.<sup>26</sup> For instance, Sinclair Ferguson breaks down the Spirit's work and ministry in Jesus into three distinct stages: Stage 1 is his conception, birth, and growth; Stage 2 is his baptism, temptation, and ministry; and Stage 3 is his death, resurrection, and ascension.<sup>27</sup> This breakdown is helpful for the discussion of the Spirit's work in Luke-Acts.

## **God**

Jesus' divinity was prophesied (Isa 9:6) years before his birth, but it is made evident through his miraculous virgin birth (Luke 1:35; 2:1-20). He announces that he has been anointed by the Spirit in Luke 4:18 and, through the Spirit, he demonstrates his power and authority over sin (Luke 5:17-26), disease (Luke 7:1-10), demons (Luke 8:26-39), disasters (Luke 8:22-35), and death (Luke 8:40-56). It is through the Spirit that he makes clear that he is the promised One, the expected One, the anointed One, and the Son of God. Being the Son of God, Jesus was in fact God; he had all of God's divine powers, but he used them only in accordance with God's will. He did only what the Spirit empowered him to do.<sup>28</sup>

## **Man**

Not only is the divinity of Jesus displayed, but also his humanity. He demonstrates his humanity through his birth (Luke 2:1-20), his growth (Luke 2:40), his

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<sup>25</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 58.

<sup>26</sup>Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, 36.

<sup>27</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 58.

<sup>28</sup>John Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power: The Holy Spirit's Empowering Presence* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 69.

temptation (Luke 4:1-13), and his death (Luke 23:44-49). Jesus existed both as God and man as he walked the earth. Jesus, being God, chose to live a life of complete obedience and full dependence on the Spirit.<sup>29</sup>

### **Jesus and the Spirit**

The New Testament points to the Spirit's involvement throughout the life of Jesus—from his conception, to his death and resurrection, and beyond his ascension.<sup>30</sup> Luke traces the distinct work of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. It is important to highlight these stages to gain a better understanding of the Spirit, Jesus, and believers. The Spirit's role was to empower Jesus the Messiah and empower with knowledge and wisdom, so that Jesus would proclaim the message his Father gave him.<sup>31</sup> As John Harvey states, "The Spirit is the primary agent through whom the Father implements His purposes."<sup>32</sup>

### **Jesus' Conception, Birth, and Growth**

The story of the conception of Jesus begins with the angel Gabriel visiting Mary and announcing that she will conceive and bear a child and that his name will be Jesus (Luke 1:26). Mary, troubled with this announcement, asks the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" (v. 34). Mary's question does not imply disbelief, as did Zechariah's earlier in verse 18, but Mary's question is honest. She does not understand how she will conceive a child as an unmarried woman who has not had sexual

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<sup>29</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 69.

<sup>30</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 38.

<sup>31</sup>Bruce Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, 36.

<sup>32</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 64.

intercourse.<sup>33</sup> Gabriel answers, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (v. 35). In the phrase, “the power of the Highest will overshadow you,” Luke is stating that Mary would be overshadowed in a similar way that the divine cloud overshadowed the tabernacle in Exodus (cf. 40:35). When all the work was completed on the tabernacle, God overshadowed it and infused it with His presence and glory.<sup>34</sup> He chose to fill a place with His presence and glory, and now He will fill a person with His presence and glory, the living incarnate Jesus, the Son of God.<sup>35</sup> Hawthorne expounds on Gabriel’s response: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, that is, empower and enable you to conceive.”<sup>36</sup> Luke makes it evident beginning with the conception and the events surrounding the birth of Jesus that it is the Holy Spirit who plays an integral role in the life and ministry of Jesus.<sup>37</sup> Early in the life of Jesus, Luke declares, “The child grew and became strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him” (2:40). Being strong in the Spirit describes a steady, continuous, uninterrupted action of being increasingly filled with the Spirit.<sup>38</sup> In the Old Testament, a clear indication that the Spirit of God was resting on an individual was that

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<sup>33</sup>James Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 48-49.

<sup>34</sup>James, *Luke*, 49.

<sup>35</sup>James, *Luke*, 49.

<sup>36</sup>Gerald Hawthorne, *The Presence and the Power: The Significance of the Holy Spirit in the life and Ministry of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: WIPF and Stock Publishers, 2003), 73.

<sup>37</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 67.

<sup>38</sup>Hawthorne, *The Presence and Power*, 99.

they were filled with wisdom.<sup>39</sup> This passage makes it evident that Jesus was endowed with wisdom and that He was growing in wisdom.<sup>40</sup> John Harvey considers this passage to be another way of saying that Jesus was being filled with the Spirit. At the very least, it would be safe to conclude that the Spirit enabled Jesus or helped him develop the qualities that amazed the teachers in the temple (2:47).<sup>41</sup> Jesus lived His life as a man relying on the Spirit to do in and through Him what He could not do in His human nature and the Spirit empowered Him to live day by day in perfect obedience to the Father.<sup>42</sup> From the womb, the Spirit filled the Lord Jesus Christ and empowered and enabled him to keep “increasing in knowledge, wisdom, stature, and favor” (2:49-52).<sup>43</sup> There can be little doubt that the Spirit was active in Jesus’ earthly life from an early age.<sup>44</sup>

### **Jesus’ Baptism, Temptations, and Ministry**

As Jesus began his public ministry, the work of the Spirit moved from the background to the foreground. His baptism in the Jordan River commences his public ministry and the Spirit plays a significant role (Luke 3:21-22, 23-38).<sup>45</sup> The Holy Spirit descends in bodily form like a dove upon him (vv. 3:21-23). The symbolism of the heavens opening and the Spirit descending strongly suggests that a grand revelatory

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<sup>39</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 70.

<sup>40</sup>Darrell Bock, *Luke, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 268.

<sup>41</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 70.

<sup>42</sup>Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, 43.

<sup>43</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 75.

<sup>44</sup>Hawthorne, *The Presence and the Power*, 102.

<sup>45</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 75.

moment is taking place.<sup>46</sup> This act is the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit for his ministry (Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1).<sup>47</sup> God is preparing Jesus for a new phase in his life, a phase in which he will need power to engage in ministry and face the testing that follows his baptism (Luke 4:1-11). Immediately after the baptism of Jesus, Luke says he is filled with the Spirit, and it was the Spirit that leads him into the wilderness where Satan will tempt him (Luke 4:1). Luke's double reference to the Spirit (Luke 4:1) emphasizes the point that the spiritual impulse that guided Jesus was an internal, spiritual impulse from God.<sup>48</sup> It was only through the power of the Spirit that Jesus prevailed over the testing and tempting of Satan.<sup>49</sup> This testing account in the Gospels is a prime example of the Spirit's empowerment in the life of Jesus.

Immediately after the testing, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee where he was empowered to teach (Luke 4:13-19), proclaiming, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (v. 18). Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament here as He announces His anointment of the Spirit. The Spirit has been mentioned repeatedly since Luke 3:22, and his placement on Jesus points to a special anointing and a special task.<sup>50</sup> He quotes from Isaiah 61 and 58, which prophecies that this proclamation will be by an individual who receives the special

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<sup>46</sup>Cole, *He who Gives Life*, 157.

<sup>47</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 7.

<sup>48</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 369.

<sup>49</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 80.

<sup>50</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 407.

anointment by the Spirit who is sent by the Lord as a servant to lift up God's humiliated people by opening the eyes that are blind, releasing the captives and healing the broken hearted.<sup>51</sup> The people were astonished at his teaching for his word was with authority (v. 31). He had power to heal the sick and the unclean (vv. 38-40). Further, he declares, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent" (v. 43). Jesus was filled with the Spirit during conception, anointed by the Spirit at his baptism, and empowered by the Spirit to minister (vv. 14-44), teach (v. 31), heal (Luke 4:38-41, 5:12-16, 5:17-26), and cast out demons (Luke 8:26-39).<sup>52</sup>

### **Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension**

Luke, along with the other gospel writers, records that the Spirit plays an extraordinarily significant role in the life of Jesus from his conception to the cross, and this role is continued through his death.<sup>53</sup> From the cross, Jesus says, "Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit" (Luke 23:44-46).<sup>54</sup> Even in his death, Jesus was in complete control. His life was not taken from him. He did not die, but he instead voluntarily gave up his life to death.<sup>55</sup> Although these verses do not specifically point to the Spirit's work in the death of Jesus, these verses serve as a reminder of Jesus being dependent upon the

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<sup>51</sup>G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 288.

<sup>52</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 82.

<sup>53</sup>Hawthorne, *The Presence and Power*, 179.

<sup>54</sup>Jesus is quoting from Ps 31:5 depicting God's power and control made available to Him through the Spirit.

<sup>55</sup>Robert Stein, *Luke*, *The New American Commentary*, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 596.

Spirit. John Harvey points to five main verses that bear the Spirit's role in Jesus' death and resurrection.<sup>56</sup>

1. Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." It was through Jesus' dependence upon the Spirit, He found strength to endure the cross (12:2). Also, through the Spirit, He was able to live in perfect obedience to be the sacrifice that was without blemish.<sup>57</sup>

2. Romans 1:4: "And [He] declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:4). It was the Spirit's power that raised Jesus from the grave and made it possible for Him to receive the name that is above every name (Phil 2:9-11).<sup>58</sup>

3. 1 Timothy 3:16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." The resurrection of Jesus is His redemption as the Spirit vindicates Him.<sup>59</sup>

4. 1 Peter 3:18: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring to us God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit." Scripture is very clear that Jesus comes as the suffering servant (Isa 53:1-12) to suffer for the sins of humanity that He may bring mankind to God by His blood (v. 5), and in His death, God uses the Spirit to raise Him to life.

5. 1 Corinthians 15:45: "And so it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." Jesus depended on the Spirit to live a perfect sinless life and offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin.<sup>60</sup> Jesus' death secured the forgiveness of sins, and His resurrection secures a right standing before God. Jesus accomplishes what Adam could not and offers a life giving Spirit to all who would repent and believe.

The resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-12) does not point specifically to the Spirit or his role in the resurrection as mentioned above, but, post-resurrection, he tells

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<sup>56</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 102.

<sup>57</sup>Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, 38.

<sup>58</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 103.

<sup>59</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 250.

<sup>60</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 105.



his disciples to wait for the promise of the Father when they will be clothed with power from on high (vv. 44-49). In John's Gospel, Jesus commissions the disciples in a similar way but mentions specifically that he breathed on them the Holy Spirit so that they may be empowered to do his will (John 20:21, 22).<sup>61</sup> The Gospel of Luke ends with the ascension of Jesus (Luke 24:50-53), but Luke quickly mentions in Acts (Acts 1:1) that the ascension of Jesus is only the beginning of what Jesus intends to do and teach.<sup>62</sup> His point being that the work and words of Jesus continue throughout Acts in the ministries of the apostles and even today with the work of the church through the power of the Spirit.<sup>63</sup>

Luke links Luke and Acts by including the commissioning and ascension accounts at the end of Luke (Luke 24:44-53) and the beginning of Acts (Acts 1:4-11).<sup>64</sup> All of the Gospels agree that Jesus was dependent upon the Spirit for the completion of the Father's work, even unto his death and resurrection.<sup>65</sup> Luke-Acts provides a full picture of both the church's message and mission and makes it clear that it is the Spirit who will provide the empowerment for the church to pursue its mission.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>G. L. Borchert, *John*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25b (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 309.

<sup>62</sup>Luke is in no way saying that Jesus did not finish the work that was needed on the cross for salvation; instead he was pointing out that Jesus' finished work of salvation is only the beginning of the work the Spirit, and Jesus will continue to do even greater things through all believers for the mission and glory of his Father.

<sup>63</sup>John Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 79–80.

<sup>64</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 107.

<sup>65</sup>Hawthorne, *The Presence and Power*, 179.

<sup>66</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 109.

## Jesus, the Change Agent

Luke outlines clearly that the Spirit empowered Jesus and that Jesus was fully God and fully man. He came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10) and in doing so, Jesus crossed social, racial, and religious boundaries that had been built by the religious elite (Pharisees) and were thought not to be crossed. His entire ministry was spent as the Spirit empowered change agent sent to redeem humanity from its sin. Through his ministry, he changed the understanding of faith from a religion to a relationship that revolutionized the current teaching and practices of the day. He changed the whole concept of religion from a set of rules to follow out of obligation and duty to a relationship of obedience that was made possible by Jesus meeting the standard that mankind could never meet. For example, Jesus heals a man with leprosy (Luke 5:12-15). Lepers were considered unclean and were ostracized from cities and from interaction with others.<sup>67</sup> But here the man with leprosy approaches Jesus, falls on his face and says, “Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean” (Luke 5:12). Jesus answers this mans question with a gentle touch.<sup>68</sup> Jesus’ actions in this moment reveals His compassion for the man because for Jesus to even touch this man, would have made him unclean, but, it is evident that Jesus’ ministry involves meeting needs and being the Son of God, Jesus touched him, and says, “I am willing, be clean” and the leper was healed.<sup>69</sup> Jesus’ comes as fully God and fully man, defying the religious rulers and magnifying his Father. Jesus

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<sup>67</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 172.

<sup>68</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 474.

<sup>69</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 474.

does not heal under his own power, but by virtue of the power of Spirit at work within Him (Luke 5:17).<sup>70</sup>

At this time, it is important to clarify that there must be a healthy balance when it comes to understanding the Spirit's power at work in Jesus. It is abundantly clear the Spirit leads, directs, and empowers Jesus to minister and accomplish the mission that was given to Him by the Father (Luke 1:35, 4:4, 4:14, Matt. 12:28). At the same time there are specific times when Jesus acts with power and the Spirit is not specifically mentioned (Mark 2:1-12, Matt. 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36). To say that the Spirit empowered Jesus in every miracle that Jesus performed when the Spirit was not specifically mentioned would be a false assumption. However, the argument that is being made is not that the Spirit empowered Jesus on every sign and wonder performed by Jesus but the argument being made is that Scripture is abundantly clear that the Spirit of God played a significant role in the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ Jesus.

Looking again in Luke chapter 5 Jesus is eating with tax collectors (Luke 5:27-32, 7:34). The Pharisees were up in arms that Jesus would even dare to eat with such people. They felt it was inappropriate for any religious leader to have table fellowship that seeks out and welcomes these people.<sup>71</sup> The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain to the disciples about Jesus' actions and relationship with these outsiders, but Jesus answered them, saying, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners, to

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<sup>70</sup>Howard Marshall, Volker Rabens, and Cornelis Bennema, *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 277.

<sup>71</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 496.

repentance” (Luke 5:32). Jesus outlines His mission clearly in His response to the Pharisees, the sick and the sinners are those whom Jesus seeks to minister and the object of His mission is repentance.<sup>72</sup> The religious rulers of the day were to stay as far away from sinful people as they could, but Jesus here dispels that practice and teaches that believers are to engage and minister to sinful people.<sup>73</sup> His teaching and practice of ministry radically changed the comfortable religion of the day to a focused mission by engaging the lost and forsaking all for the cause of Christ (Luke 5:11; 9:57-62).<sup>74</sup>

Another noticeable change instituted in the ministry of Jesus is highlighted in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The story begins with an expert of the law asking Jesus how to inherit eternal life. Jesus responds with a question: “What is written in the law?” The expert answers, “Love the Lord your God . . . and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus replies, “You have answered correctly, do this and live” (Luke 10:28).

However, the expert, wanting to justify himself, asks, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answers him with a story about a good Samaritan. This story displays the inclusive gospel that Jesus taught, which was a dramatic change from most Jewish teachings. In Jesus’ day, a “neighbor” was interpreted as members of the same people and religious community—fellow Jews, not Samaritans or Gentiles. Samaritans and Gentiles were considered aliens or foreigners.<sup>75</sup> However, in this parable, the Samaritan cares for the Jew who had been beaten and left for dead. Even though it was not safe and even though

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<sup>72</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 498.

<sup>73</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 181.

<sup>74</sup>Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1978), 206.

it was very costly and not popular, the Samaritan cares for the beaten Jew. At the end of the story, Jesus looks to the expert and asks, “So which of these [men] . . . do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” The expert answers, “The one who showed mercy on him.”

Jesus responds, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:36, 37). He calls believers to love their Samaritan and Gentile neighbors. Jesus shares that the love of one’s neighbor must transcend all natural or human boundaries such as race, nationality, religion, economic, or educational status.<sup>76</sup> This is a radical teaching, namely to love an enemy as a neighbor, but Carson takes this parable one step further, arguing that this parable be read in light of the cross.<sup>77</sup> Jesus was on his way to the cross when he shares this teaching. In this light, Carson states that Jesus himself comes as the ultimate Good Samaritan. He comes to broken people, binds up their wounds, saves their lives, and frees them forever, paying for all their sins.<sup>78</sup> Carson once again points to the fact that Jesus comes as the ultimate agent of change, radically transforming hearts and lives from a worldly mindset to the mission of the Father (Luke 5:11).

Jesus confronted the religious elite with needed change, but he did not stop there. He even brought change to his disciples. In Luke 6:27-33, Jesus speaks to those who were already disciples, giving them four commands that were considerably different from their normal attitude toward their enemies.<sup>79</sup> His command is not to hate; instead he

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<sup>75</sup>Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 444.

<sup>76</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 319.

<sup>77</sup>Don Carson and Kathleen Nielson, *His Mission: Jesus in the Gospel of Luke* (Nashville: Crossway, 2015), 61-62.

<sup>78</sup>Carson and Nielson, *His Mission*, 65.

tells them to love, do good toward others, bless, and pray for their enemies.<sup>80</sup> Luke moves from an attitude of love (Luke 6:32) to the visible expression of love (Luke 6:33) and he articulates not just the emotion that God desires, but the clear expression of it as well.<sup>81</sup> He teaches them that love involves doing good, and he commands believers how to act toward their enemies. These commands are a sharp contrast from the common way of thinking.<sup>82</sup>

Jesus not only corrected the religious Pharisees, the teachers of the law, and his disciples, but he also corrected and changed the thinking of some of his closest friends. In Luke 9:46-50, Jesus overhears the disciples arguing over who was the greatest and who was most favored by God. This text displays the disciple's struggle with humanity, with their worldly attitudes, and their inability to comprehend the teachings of Jesus about self-sacrifice.<sup>83</sup> Jesus stops and shares that the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Jesus' illustration was a call for the disciples to change the way they perceived people. He tells them to be open to the lowly meaning, to be open to all.<sup>84</sup> He continues and says to receive people in the name of Jesus, meaning recognizing the value of that person as God's creature, beyond that to receive such a one is to receive Jesus Himself.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 206.

<sup>80</sup>Frederic Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* (New York: I. K. Funk & Co. 1881), 1:321-22.

<sup>81</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 600.

<sup>82</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 207.

<sup>83</sup>Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 394.

<sup>84</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 896.

<sup>85</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 896.

At the time this text was written, those with position, power and rank were viewed as great. According to Jesus' teaching, being great in God's eyes means being humble and willing to serve others.<sup>86</sup>

Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit empowered and enabled Jesus to do ministry. Empowered by the Spirit, Jesus performed many signs and wonders. He was the Messiah, the expected One, and the anointed One, who had been prophesied about. During his time on earth, he brought change to religion, the temple, and the hearts of believers. Next it is important to examine how the Spirit of God not only led Jesus to bring about change but also led early church leaders to bring about ecclesial change, showing again that the Spirit of God is essential to ecclesial change.

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<sup>86</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 293.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FOUNDATIONAL ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LEADING ECCLESIAL CHANGE IN LUKE-ACTS

#### **The Spirit's Work in Luke-Acts**

The foundational role of the Spirit in leading ecclesial change is most clearly demonstrated in the book of Acts. Luke picks up exactly where he finishes his Gospel, which is with the resurrection of Jesus. Through the life and ministry of Jesus, it is evident that Spirit empowerment is essential to ministry and the believer's effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> Since the Spirit is essential to every area of effective ministry, it is no less true that the Spirit is essential for ecclesial change. As displayed in the literature review, secular theories do not address the Spirit in any way. For churches to simply apply the methods and processes outlined by the secular theories would ignore the Spirit as well, which is very dangerous for the church. This chapter will carefully examine the book of Acts in order to argue that the Spirit not only is important for leading ecclesial change but is the foundation for leading true lasting change.

The beginning of Acts fulfills what Jesus had already promised the disciples in John 16. Jesus shared with them that His going away was actually a good thing because not only would He die and rise to redeem them from their sins, but He would also send them the Holy Spirit (John 16:7).<sup>2</sup> Although Jesus had been with His disciples for three

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<sup>1</sup>John Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 92.

<sup>2</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 92.



years, the Holy Spirit would now indwell every believer, and the believer would experience the Spirit's presence and power in a special way.<sup>3</sup>

In the opening chapter of Acts, the disciples are reminded by the Spirit about their commission (v. 2), including the reception of the Spirit, which will empower them for the mission they are given (v. 8).<sup>4</sup> Jesus then ascends to the right hand of the Father (v. 9), which gives Him the right to pour out the promised Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:33-35).<sup>5</sup> The Holy Spirit in Acts is constantly associated with the restoration purposes of God in fulfillment of the prophecy for a people to be restored to God by the work of Jesus.<sup>6</sup> It is by the death and resurrection of Jesus that brings about the restoration, and it is the Holy Spirit who brings about the new covenant change of heart that compels a restored people of God to display both fruit and characteristics that are found in Jesus, such as love one for another, wisdom, joy, faith and peace.<sup>7</sup> The first chapter of Acts is an introduction to the sending of the Spirit that leads to a Spirit-led and Spirit-filled Christian community.

### **The Sending of the Spirit**

In the Old Testament the Spirit was mainly tied to Jesus and His ministry as well as a source of inspiration for the writings of Scripture. At the coming of the Spirit to

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<sup>3</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 93.

<sup>4</sup>Darrel Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 220.

<sup>5</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 113.

<sup>6</sup>Alan Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 136.

<sup>7</sup>Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 137.

all believers at Pentecost, the Spirit reflects the promise of the Father and allows life to be lived as a result of the finished work of Jesus.<sup>8</sup> Pentecost (Acts 2) represents a crucial event in the flow of redemptive history as the exalted Christ pours out the Spirit of God on the people of God.<sup>9</sup> The Spirit of God will now continue in the lives of the believers what Christ began to do and teach (1:1-3). Through the Spirit prophecies are fulfilled (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8), promises are kept by God the Father, and the power from on high is given.<sup>10</sup> This event displays each member of the Trinity as God promises the Spirit will come, the risen Christ gives the Spirit, and the Spirit comes as the indwelling presence of the Holy One. The hope of Israel has indeed come, and He has now poured out His Spirit.<sup>11</sup> The coming of the Spirit fulfills God's promise and ushers in a new era, the last days (Joel 2:28). The fulfillment of the Spirit gives evidence that the Kingdom of God has been inaugurated by the coming of Jesus the Messiah empowered by the Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the presence of the Spirit not only gives evidence that the new era has come but it also points forward to the final consummation of God's purposes.<sup>13</sup> Luke emphatically and consistently concludes that the Spirit who ushers in a new era and

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<sup>8</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 226.

<sup>9</sup>Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 193.

<sup>10</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 193.

<sup>11</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 209.

<sup>12</sup>Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 129.

<sup>13</sup>Charles Scobie, *The Ways of our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 277.

points to the restoration is the same Spirit who is the source of power that enables God's servants to fulfill their divinely appointed task.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Spirit in the Believers**

This work of the Spirit is made evident in the believers of the early New Testament Church and its leaders. The Apostles were all filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4), and being filled with the Spirit, they began to preach Jesus, inviting all who would to repent, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38). In Acts 4:31, when Peter and John had been forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, they rejoined their friends, prayed for boldness, and were all filled with the Holy Spirit. This filling of the Holy Spirit granted power and sent the Apostles back out to proclaim the good news of the gospel.<sup>15</sup> Also, in Acts 6, when the Apostles needed help serving widows, they required that the seven chosen to serve be full of the Holy Spirit (6:3). Stephen, one of the men chosen to help serve, was full of the Spirit and was empowered by the Spirit even in the midst of martyrdom (7:55). Philip was led to the Ethiopian Eunuch to preach Jesus to him (8:29), and after his baptism it was the Spirit who led him away (8:39). Saul, who was present at the time of Stephen's execution (8:1), was filled with the Holy Spirit (9:17), and he immediately began to preach Christ in the synagogues (9:20). Peter even made it clear that Jesus Himself was anointed with the Holy Spirit (10:38), referring to when the Spirit descended on Jesus after His baptism, thereby linking the miracles of

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<sup>14</sup>Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 203.

<sup>15</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 100.

Jesus with the Spirit.<sup>16</sup> In chapter 11 both Barnabas and Agabus were led by the Spirit for the mission and purpose of God. Clearly, there are many examples of believers in the early church being filled with the Spirit to be empowered for the plans of God. This power that is available to believers is a greater power than any other power in the world.<sup>17</sup>

As the Spirit comes in power and boldness, He is poured out on those who believe for the empowerment to fulfill their mission (1:8). The Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost to equip and empower, and Peter clearly communicates that the Spirit is now available to those who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus (2:38).<sup>18</sup> The Spirit, among other things, convicts the world of sin (John 16:8), teaches the believer (John 14:26), and transforms the believer into the likeness of the Son.<sup>19</sup> With this Spirit comes new life, a holy life, and He reshapes, changes, and sanctifies the moral character of the new believer.<sup>20</sup> It is the Spirit who has the power to transform people to a new life in a community of believers.<sup>21</sup> While the flesh is in rebellion against God's will and way, the Spirit changes both a person's nature and attitude toward God.<sup>22</sup> The same Spirit who brings new life also brings sanctification to the believer (1 Pet 1:12). The Apostle Paul, who clearly outlines the powerful sanctifying work of the Spirit in his letter to the

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<sup>16</sup>John Polhill, *Acts*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 1992), 262.

<sup>17</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 222.

<sup>18</sup>James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006), 189.

<sup>19</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 158.

<sup>20</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 225.

<sup>21</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 219.

<sup>22</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 227.

Ephesians, makes it clear that the Spirit empowers the believers to crucify the flesh and cultivate the fruit of the Spirit.<sup>23</sup> This transformation is also exemplified in the life of Peter, who three times denied Christ in Luke 22, but is powerfully transformed by the Spirit and in Acts 2 boldly preaches Jesus after the Spirit has come.<sup>24</sup> Believers are in a process led by the Spirit to behold and reflect the glory of God.<sup>25</sup> Anthony Hoekema defines sanctification as “the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our responsible participation, by which He delivers us as justified sinners from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to him.”<sup>26</sup> The Holy Spirit is God’s presence actively equipping believers to fulfill God’s mission for them in the world, not to make them comfortable or rich.<sup>27</sup> The Spirit enables a change of direction in a believer and empowers the believer to overcome sin and live a life that is pleasing to God (Gal 5:16, 22-23).<sup>28</sup> This is the continued sanctifying work of the Spirit in the believer until the day when Jesus returns. The Spirit powerfully transforms believers into the image of God.

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<sup>23</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 168.

<sup>24</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 219.

<sup>25</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 229.

<sup>26</sup>Anthony Hoekema, “The Reformed Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification*, ed. Stanley Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 61.

<sup>27</sup>Gerald F. Hawthorne, *The Presence and the Power: The Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 243.

<sup>28</sup>Hoekema, “The Reformed Perspective,” 65.

## The Spirit and the Church

What cannot be overlooked is that the Spirit not only came upon every believer for sanctification, transformation, and power (Acts 1:8), but the Spirit also came upon the Church. Pentecost is the birth of the Body of Christ, and the Spirit is addressed first to the church and not the individual.<sup>29</sup> Luke portrays the Holy Spirit as both the director and enabler of the ministry of the church.<sup>30</sup> Corporately, the church makes up the temple of the Holy Spirit, and individually, believers are temples of the same Spirit.<sup>31</sup> In a similar way that the Spirit directs Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29), commands Paul and Barnabas to part ways to reach the Gentiles (13:1-13), and guides Paul on his missionary journey to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10), the Spirit directs, commands, and guides the church (2:38-47; 4:31-35). Further evidence can be found in the spiritual gifts given to believers. These gifts are given to the believers not for their individual benefit but that the church might be built up and edified.<sup>32</sup> Just as the Spirit dwells inside the believer, changing or sanctifying the believer to transform him or her more into the likeness of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 3:18), the Spirit dwells inside of the church in order to restore a people, a community, unto himself. A restored community is a result of the new covenant blessing of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus.<sup>33</sup> A picture of a community being restored is found in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37. Luke also says it was the Holy Spirit's work that was responsible for the community's growth and comfort in Acts

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<sup>29</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 210.

<sup>30</sup>James Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 125.

<sup>31</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 211.

<sup>32</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 221.

9:31.<sup>34</sup> It was the Spirit who was instrumental in the building up of the church resulting in new conversions.<sup>35</sup> The communities pictured in these passages are by no means portrayed as perfect, but they do display unity, passion, generosity, and devotion. This expression is only made possible by the work of the Spirit in the community as referenced in Acts 2:38; 4:31; and 9:31.

The Spirit of God works in both individual believers and the community to transform them into a restored people of God. This transforming work of the Spirit will only be made complete at the final consummation when Jesus comes and restores all things (Rev 21:5). Until that day, the Spirit continues to empower the church to live righteously, serve one another, love one another, and minister the gospel effectively.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Spirit-Led Community in Acts**

In the previous section above on the Spirit in the believer, it was evident how the Spirit empowered leaders such as Peter and the Apostles, the seven who were chosen by the church in Acts 6, as well as Saul, Barnabas, Agabus. Luke shares that even Jesus was anointed by the Spirit for His work completed on this earth (Acts 10:38). In this section it will be made clear that not only are leaders empowered for the work of the ministry, but it is the church that is empowered for ministry, being led by men who are filled with the Spirit. This empowerment of the Spirit will break man-made barriers and bring unity in the midst of division (8:17-18; 10:44; 11:15; 19:6). It is the presence of

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<sup>33</sup>Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 135.

<sup>34</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 222.

<sup>35</sup>Eckhard Schnabel, *Acts*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 467.

<sup>36</sup>Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power*, 168.

God and the work of the Spirit that leads these believers in unity on mission to fulfill the purpose of God.

A concept found within the Christian literature base known as “church revitalization” is very similar to this concept of ecclesial change. This concept of church revitalization refers to a church returning to and aligning with the mission and word of God to reach a lost and dying world.<sup>37</sup> The whole idea that drives this concept is the desire to focus on the transforming work of the Spirit in the church. Bill Henard writes, “without the Holy Spirit our efforts are frustrating and will be fruitless.”<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, for true, lasting, ecclesial change to happen, it must begin with the Spirit of God who has been given by God the Father. This Spirit-led community is beautifully exemplified in the book of Acts.

The blueprint for the church today is displayed even in its infancy (2:42-47). The New Testament church grew by three thousand souls in one day (2:41), and the Word of God says they were devoted to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers (2:42-47).<sup>39</sup> Luke continues, reporting that “all the believers were together and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity in their heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (2:44-47). Paul also continues to

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<sup>37</sup>Bill Henard, *Can These Bones Live?: A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 45.

<sup>38</sup>Henard, *Can These Bones Live*, 16.

<sup>39</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 119.



makes this point in Ephesians 5:18 when he is speaks to the church, saying, “But be filled with the Spirit.” This is a continual filling of the Spirit and a command to cry out to God to do for the believer what the believer cannot do for himself or herself.<sup>40</sup>

The early church modeled leadership (2:42-43), devotion (2:42), selfless love one for another (2:44-45), unity (2:46), and passion (2:47). These are all keys elements for the church as well as secular organizational change research even today<sup>41</sup>, but the passage that cannot be overlooked is Acts 2:38. At the end of the sermon, when Peter was asked how they must respond, he said, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” So these new believers repent, receive the Spirit, and they are transformed. The passage that follows (2:42-47) is a portrait of this restored community who had received the Spirit.<sup>42</sup> This portrait of a restored community is a result of the new covenant blessing of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus Himself.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, it is the power of God, the work of Christ, and the Spirit that led them.

In Acts 4:32-37, there is a similar display of the early church coming together in one accord, selling all that they have, giving to the church and to those in need. With a closer examination of the text, one would notice that Acts 4:31 states that as they prayed, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, which once again leads to unity, love, devotion,

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<sup>40</sup>Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 46.

<sup>41</sup>John Kotter, *Leading Change*. Boston (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002); Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); and Hans Finzel, *Change Is Like a Slinky* (Chicago: Northfield, 2004).

<sup>42</sup>Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 134.

<sup>43</sup>Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 135.

and passion. This filling of the Spirit is different from the filling that was received at Pentecost.<sup>44</sup> The filling of the Spirit at the time of Pentecost is known as the baptism of the Spirit, which indicates that the last days have begun (2:17).<sup>45</sup> The filling of the Spirit received at this time was not for salvation, but for boldness.<sup>46</sup> The believers were given all of the Spirit that was needed at Pentecost; this filling of the Spirit was to empower the believers for the ministry set before them.<sup>47</sup> The leaders prayed for boldness (4:31), and they were filled with the Spirit in such a way that the church was empowered and continued to grow (5:14).

As stated in the beginning of this section, it is the Spirit who empowers leaders, but it is also the Spirit who empowers the church in unity, growth, and ultimately restoring the people of God to a community of believers that will be made perfect in the consummation. The unity pictured in chapters 2 and 4 is similar to the unity that is found in chapter 6 when the church was growing so rapidly that the Hellenist widows were being neglected. A complaint arose because these widows were being neglected, but the church found unity when they agreed to choose seven men to minister to the neglected widows (Acts 6:5). It was important to the Apostles, moreover, to find seven men that

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<sup>44</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 100.

<sup>45</sup>Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 187.

<sup>46</sup>James Hamilton helpfully distinguishes the fundamental differences of the coming of the Spirit. He points out there are seven verbs that Luke uses to communicate the coming of the Spirit: baptize, pour out, come, come upon, fall upon, give, and receive. Baptism and outpourings are demonstrations that the eschatological gift of the Spirit has come. Being full of the Spirit refers to the permanent endowment that becomes a person's character. Being filled with the Spirit is a temporary burst of the Spirit power in which extraordinary things follow (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 9:17). See Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 187-203.

<sup>47</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 100.

were full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3).<sup>48</sup> So they laid hands on these men, and the word of God spread and disciples were multiplied (Acts 6:7).

However, beginning in chapter 8, the Spirit is given not only to the Jews but the Samaritans (Acts 8), Ethiopians (Acts 8), and the Gentiles (10:44; 11:15). This was a radical twist because there was much animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans. To the Jews, the Samaritans were neither Jew nor Gentile. They were half-breeds and heretics.<sup>49</sup> The Samaritans were descendants of the northern kingdom, but they were the ones who were not taken captive by Assyria; they stayed in the land and intermarried with the native Canaanite population.<sup>50</sup> Even in the midst of great animosity, Philip goes to Samaria because of persecution and preaches Christ (8:5), and they believe and are baptized (8:12).

The Spirit works in the life of Peter through a vision. A voice told him to “kill and eat,” speaking of all kinds of four-footed animals (Acts 10:12-13). Peter refuses to eat the animals because they are “unclean” (v. 14), but a voice spoke to him saying, “What God has cleansed you must not call common” (v. 15). So the Spirit says to Peter that Cornelius had sent three men, and he goes with them to Caesarea and shares with them what the Spirit had shared with him in this vision (v. 28). Peter then begins to preach that God shows no partiality (v. 34), the Spirit falls upon those who heard the word (v. 44), and the Spirit is poured out upon the Gentiles (v. 45). After the Spirit is

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<sup>48</sup>James Hamilton makes the point here that the way Luke uses the phrase “being full of the Spirit” in Acts 6:3 is similar to the command that Paul gives the Ephesians when he states, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18). Both occasions speak of a life that is lived and marked by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22; Eph. 5:19-21). See Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 203.

<sup>49</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 214.

<sup>50</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 214.

poured out on the Gentiles, a conflict arises at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). Some Pharisees who had come to faith in Christ demanded that the Gentile converts be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law. This conflict is present both in the church at Antioch (Acts 15:1) and the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:5) and there is a heated debate (Acts 15:2). So a meeting is set up with church leaders to discuss these issues (Acts 15).<sup>51</sup> Peter, speaking in his role as a missionary among the Gentiles, admonishes the council that the Spirit makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile (v. 9). He reminds them that the Gentiles are saved just like the Jews by the grace of the Lord Jesus (Acts 15:11).<sup>52</sup> This message, in turn, pleased the apostles, elders and the whole church (v. 22). The pouring out of the Spirit at Cornelius' house (Acts 10:45) is likened to Pentecost in Acts 11:17.<sup>53</sup> Peter clearly communicates that the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit promised by Joel was now available to the Jew first (Acts 2) but also the Gentile (Acts 10).<sup>54</sup>

The church, in an unexplainable way, is empowered and unified even when the only commonality that they had was Christ. It was the Spirit who united them in Acts 8:15 and the people of Samaria believed the preaching of the gospel and they were baptized, both men and women (Acts 8:9,12).<sup>55</sup> Also, in Acts 8:26-40 the gospel is taken and believed by the Ethiopians and the Gentiles (Acts 10:44). When dealing with any

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<sup>51</sup>Schnabel, Eckhard. *Early Christian Mission: Paul and the Early Church*. Vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 1007.

<sup>52</sup>Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Paul and the Early Church*, 1012.

<sup>53</sup>Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 201.

<sup>54</sup>Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 189.

<sup>55</sup>Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 189.

organization there must be unity in leading change, and when it comes to the church it is no less true. Only the Spirit can bring so many diverse people into unity.

For true ecclesial change to take place, it must begin with God's people being full of God's Spirit. The Spirit of God will direct leaders and the church where to go and where not to go (16:6-7). The Spirit, on two different occasions, forced Paul to change his plan, but Paul allowed the Spirit to direct him in his mission (Acts 16:6 & 7).<sup>56</sup> It is the Spirit who will command and guide the leaders of the church (20:28). Furthermore, it is the same Spirit who spoke through the prophet Isaiah who speaks to the believers and the church today (28:25). All of the methods, processes, and systems that the secular world comes up with seem to try to foster or bottle up what is naturally evident in the New Testament church (unity, devotion, love, and passion) when led by the Spirit. In addition believers must understand that the Spirit continues to come in power. Pentecost was the coming of the Spirit, but even today the Spirit comes upon believers and churches with power to fulfill the mission of God.<sup>57</sup> It is imperative that the church not resist the Spirit of God, but that the church hear and respond to His leading, guiding, and directing.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Schnabel, *Acts*, 667.

<sup>57</sup>Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 91.

<sup>58</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, 543.

## Conclusion

In summation, the key role of the Spirit is to herald a new era and give life that empowers, equips, and directs a community.<sup>59</sup> What is more, the Spirit transforms a believer through the process of sanctification. The Spirit of God is in the process of restoring and transforming the Body of Christ. He is constantly at work restoring (changing) the church until He returns. Until that day, the Spirit directs the new community in the new life as He clothes it with power from on high (Luke 24:49).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 225.

<sup>60</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 226.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The study sought to examine the role of the Holy Spirit in leading ecclesial change. This chapter will offer conclusions for the research, provide recommendations for practices, and outline specific areas for further research. Early in this study, it was clear that individual personal change and practical principles for leading change have received much attention in Christian literature. In most cases, organizational principles for leading ecclesial change are adaptations of popular secular models used within the business world. There is, however, no considerable research focused on a biblical-theological rationale and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for leading ecclesial change.

Furthermore, according to John MacArthur, the literature base also declares that, “the culture today is crying for pragmatic solutions, easy formulas, three-step, four-step, or twelve-step programs to answer every human need.”<sup>1</sup> This thought proves also to be true in the subject of leading ecclesial change. In the secular literature base, one can find models such as John Kotter’s 8-Step Process to Lead Change and Lewin’s 3 Phases

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<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, *The Book on Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), ix.

of Changes.<sup>2</sup> As far as the Christian model is concerned, in most cases, these secular models were adapted with biblical principles.<sup>3</sup>

While current secular and Christian models can be helpful to the church, they must first be analyzed from a biblical-theological perspective. A danger arises that can be detrimental to the church if secular theories and approaches to ecclesial change are merely baptized with biblical principles. It is clear that secular theories and models do not address the Spirit in any way, and, if churches today simply implement these approaches, they will be ignoring, or at very least, assuming the Spirit of God, the very source of true change. The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a congregation is foundational for change.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Spirit-filled Messiah**

The intention of this study was to fill the void in the literature and study the biblical-theological foundation for ecclesial change. The foundational level begins before the steps, processes, and systems are deployed. The foundational level must begin and end with the Spirit of God, in God's people. The need for the Spirit of God in ecclesial change is made evident in the life and ministry of the Messiah as described in Luke-Acts. Jesus comes as the great agent of change and the gospels suggest that the

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<sup>2</sup>John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996); Alicia Kritsonis, "Comparison of Change Theories," *International Journal of Scholarly Academic Intellectual Diversity* 8, no. 1 (2004-2005).

<sup>3</sup>An example of these Christian models can be found in Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); Hans Finzel, *Change Is Like a Slinky* (Chicago: Northfield, 2004); and Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005).

<sup>4</sup>Glenn Daman, *Leading the Small Church* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 136.



whole of Jesus' ministry was conducted in the Spirit's power.<sup>5</sup> It is the Spirit that empowered, enabled, and led Jesus in his ministry on this earth and, in a similar fashion, that is the Spirit's work today in humanity—to empower, enable and equip. In Luke-Acts the central function of the Spirit in humanity is to reshape (transform or change) believers from one degree of glory to another.<sup>6</sup> The empowering presence of the Spirit of God is necessary for true and meaningful change, and this change begins with the Spirit in the heart of believers.<sup>7</sup> It is the Spirit of God that is foundational to leading ecclesial change and to ignore the Spirit as secular models often do, or assume the Spirit as some Christian models do, is both dangerous and detrimental to the church.

Luke-Acts teaches clearly that the Holy Spirit empowered, enabled, and led Jesus to do ministry (Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38). Empowered by the Spirit, Jesus performed many signs and wonders (Luke 4:16-5:16). He was the Messiah, the expected One, and the anointed One who had been prophesied about (Isa 9:6). During his time on earth, he was indeed the agent of change as he transformed the current understanding of religion from a works-based rules system to a grace-based relationship with the Father (Luke 10:25-37). His teachings taught that the presence of God was no longer found in the temple but that the people of God would be the temple that the Spirit indwelt in the hearts of believers (Acts 1:5, 8; Eph 2:22; 1 Cor 3:16). The Spirit of God who led Jesus to bring about change in his ministry is the same Spirit that led early church leaders to bring about ecclesial change, and it is the same Spirit that indwells believers today,

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<sup>5</sup>Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 53.

<sup>6</sup>Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 56.

<sup>7</sup>Janice Stinnett, *Change: How to Remain a Strong Leader during Your Church's Transition* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2013), 3.

showing again that it is the Spirit of God who is the foundation of biblical-theological ecclesial change.

### **The Essential Role of the Holy Spirit in Leading Ecclesial Change**

Throughout Luke-Acts the believers and the church are filled with the Spirit of God.<sup>8</sup> They are empowered to speak the name of Jesus (Acts 1:8), to minister, and to serve (Acts 6:5). They are also directed and guided to certain locations by the Spirit (Acts 16:6-10). From there, Paul gives great insight into the Spirit and the church in his letter to the Ephesians, commanding them to be filled with the Spirit (5:18), which is to be filled continuously with the Spirit, more than the initial baptism of the Spirit at the time of salvation.<sup>9</sup> Paul is not thinking of the individual in this command but the congregation.<sup>10</sup> This command speaks to the corporate life of God's people as the church, made up of both Jew and Gentile, as the new temple indwelt by the Spirit of God (Eph 2:11-22). The nature of the church is found in the Holy Spirit working among the believers so that they will love and care for others.<sup>11</sup> The point here is that God does not offer a 12-step program for the individual but challenges the believer to rethink ecclesiology (Eph 5:18-21).<sup>12</sup> Ecclesiology, rather than individual sanctification, is the priority in this command, but many believers often want first to digest the Bible

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<sup>8</sup>Graham Cole, *Engaging with the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 103.

<sup>9</sup>Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians*, in vol. 2 of *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books), 640.

<sup>10</sup>Cole, *Engaging with the Holy Spirit*, 106.

<sup>11</sup>Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 250.

<sup>12</sup>Cole, *Engaging the Holy Spirit*, 112.

individually when, in many cases, the author is speaking corporately to the body of Christ.<sup>13</sup> When it comes to a Spirit-filled church, it is both about its vertical direction—God and his work—as well as about the horizontal direction—serving and loving others.<sup>14</sup> Only when the Body of Christ is perceived in these terms can the biblical-theological foundation of leading ecclesial change be understood.

Scripture teaches that the end goal must always be for the believer to grow in sanctification, not to simply change. All growth brings change or sanctification, but all change does not bring growth or sanctification and great danger is possible when Christian leaders just implement a series of steps or methods to change a ministry or a church rather than focus on the spiritual growth of the church, which only comes by the Spirit of God. If a church changes but does not grow spiritually, then the church is no better off than it was before the change was implemented.

An interesting portion of this study is the comparison between the secular model of how to lead change and the biblical-theological model of leading change. In the secular model, for example, Kotter's 8-Steps to Leading Change, he places great emphasis on developing a sense of urgency, building a guiding team, getting the vision right, empowering for action, and not letting up.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly enough, some of these same ideas are found in Scripture, but they are taught much differently. In the early church, it was evident that unity (the guiding team), devotion (having urgency, not letting up), compassion (building vision), and generosity (empowering for action) were

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<sup>13</sup>Cole, *Engaging with the Holy Spirit*, 112-13.

<sup>14</sup>Cole, *Engaging with the Holy Spirit*, 110.

<sup>15</sup>John Kotter, *The Heart of Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 7.

displayed (Acts 4:32-37). The difference that is found in Scripture is that these actions cannot be created or manufactured by a series of steps or methods. These actions can only be produced by the Spirit of God (Acts 4:31). It is only when the Spirit of God fills the believers and works through the believers that the church will act in unity and with compassion, generosity, and devotion. Paul makes it clear in Galatians that the flesh (man) can only produce selfishness, jealousy, division, and a whole list of sins (Gal 5:19-21), but the Spirit of God produces love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). If it is up to leaders to create or produce an environment of unity and devotion, that simply is not possible because the very nature of man is sinful (Rom 3:23), and it is only the Spirit of God who can produce these desired attributes by working in men in both organizations and churches. In conclusion, it was interesting to see how similar the secular model and the biblical-theological model are, but at the same time notice how different they are. On the one hand, the secular models looks for desired actions such as unity, devotion, teamwork and vision, which are the very actions one will notice in Scripture (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35). However, on the other hand, the secular model looks for leaders to create or produce these certain actions while the biblical-theological model looks not for man to manufacture these actions but the Spirit of God to produce these actions.

It is clear through the examination of Luke-Acts that the Spirit is not only a sign of the new era, but the giver of life that enables, empowers, and directs the community.<sup>16</sup> In a similar way, the Spirit transforms a believer in the process of sanctification, the Spirit of God is at work restoring the Body of Christ. He is constantly

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<sup>16</sup>Darrell Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 225.

at work restoring or sanctifying/changing the church until he returns. Until the return of Christ, the Spirit's power directs the new community in the new life (Luke 24:49).<sup>17</sup>

### **Contribution to Precedent Literature**

This study offers several contributions to the current literature base. This study demonstrates a biblical-theological foundation for leading ecclesial change. Until now the literature base was filled mainly with research from the secular change literature that would altogether ignore the Holy Spirit and, concerning church change management literature, there were many models and methods that in many cases were adopted from the secular change management literature and implemented in the church. In the current literature base, very little is stated about the role the Spirit plays in leading ecclesial change. This research strives to fill this void in the church change management literature at the foundation of leading ecclesial change. This study, by no means, argues that the church change management literature that offers methods and procedures is not helpful. The argument that this study makes is that even if a church has the best leader and the greatest methods available, if the Spirit of God is not involved, then meaningful lasting change will not happen.

Ultimately, the biblical-theological foundation for leading ecclesial change that is demonstrated in Luke-Acts begins and ends with the Spirit of God. In a similar way that the Spirit filled Jesus (Luke 1:35) and led Jesus (Luke 4:1) and empowered Jesus (Acts 10:48), the Spirit of God fills believers (Acts 2:38), leads believers (Acts 16:6-10), and empowers believers (Acts 1:8). It is the Spirit of God who is in the business of changing hearts and lives (John 3:5-17; 6:63), and it is the Spirit of God that is in the

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<sup>17</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 226.

business of transforming the people of God into a restored community (Acts 2:38-47) that will only be made complete at the return of Christ (Rev 21). The bulk of the significant contributions of this study come from specific texts and examples within Luke-Acts. The Spirit's work was exemplified in Jesus and demonstrated through the New Testament church.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Recommendations for practice from this study are mainly directed to the implementation within the local church. There are three primary ways that this study serves the local church. First, this study serves the local church as a caution. In a day with a multitude of ministry and how-to methods, this study of the foundational role of the Spirit cautions the church to not just simply implement the latest and greatest method and assume that the Spirit is the focus.

After careful analysis and a biblical-theological examination, there must be a warning given to the church. An obvious danger exists when Christians just take secular models, add biblical principles, and implement them within the context of the church. These models often manipulate a person's emotions to influence a desired change. The church cannot be characterized by manipulation, but transformation. And this transformation can only happen through the Spirit of God, one soul at a time. Radical transformation is the heart of the Christian message. It is the gospel that changes lives, churches, and communities.<sup>18</sup> This study can help church leaders understand that lasting change is more than a process and that it must be driven and led by the Holy Spirit. No doubt, there are many great methods within Christian literature that help leaders navigate

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<sup>18</sup>Ed Stetzer, *Transformational Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010), 1.

ecclesial change, but this study is a caution that even with the greatest leader and the greatest methods, without the power and the presence of the Spirit of God, true, lasting, and meaningful change will not take place.

Secondly, this study serves as a reminder to the local church. Many Christian leaders will look at this study and possibly think that this thesis is elementary, and this belief could be the very reason why there is not any considerable research in this field. However, this study can serve as healthy reminder to the church that the greatest believer and the greatest church is still completely and totally dependent on the Spirit of God to work in and through them for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12; 5:18).

This study reminds leaders today that all growth brings change, but not all change brings growth. Ecclesial change must do more than simply change a person's behavior. The heart of ecclesial change has to be in seeing God's people grow in Christian maturity because when God's people grow, they change or transform. The truest form of change exemplified in the Bible begins in man's heart, when God takes out his heart of stone and gives him a heart of flesh (Jer 32:39). May this study be a reminder that ministry cannot be reduced to a simple set of procedures and methods but that it must be dependent upon the Spirit of God. Without the Spirit of God, believers cannot witness with power (Acts 1:8), understand Scripture (John 16:13), pray in the will of God (Rom 8:26-27), or develop Christian character (Gal 5:22-23). Power for life and godliness is only found in the Spirit of God (2 Pet 1:3). It is a sincere desire that this study will be used to remind Christian leaders of the power of the Spirit of God that lives and dwells inside them (1 John 4:13).

Finally, this study can serve as an encouragement to the local church. There are many statistics on church revitalization today that reveal that only a minimal number of revitalization efforts succeed.<sup>19</sup> As stated earlier church revitalization and ecclesial change is very similar, if not synonymous. The hope is to make changes in a church that is driven by the Spirit. Many young Christian leaders can easily grow discouraged in revitalization efforts, but when one is reminded that ecclesial change is not based upon methods, leaders or statistics, and that it is solely based upon the power of God found in the Spirit of God that leads believers in ecclesial change, one can be encouraged.

The hope for ecclesial change comes from the empowerment of the Spirit, which should encourage believers, knowing that change occurs because of the Holy Spirit, not because of human effort.<sup>20</sup> The emphasis must not be on methodology because methods change. Only the Spirit stays the same. Whatever the focus of ministry, Spirit empowerment is essential to its effectiveness.<sup>21</sup>

Christians can be encouraged today by this study by coming to the understanding that true, meaningful, lasting change will come by and through the Spirit of God, not by methods or plans. It is the hope and prayer that this study can be used to serve as a caution, reminder, and encouragement to the local church.

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<sup>19</sup>Thom Rainer, "Three Types of Church Revitalization: Introducing Church Answers Monthly," accessed August 11, 2015, <http://www.thomrainer.com>.

<sup>20</sup>Bill Henard, *Can These Bones Live?: A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 16-19.



## Further Study

Further study could be conducted in several areas on the idea of leading ecclesial change. Much is written on methods and procedures when it comes to leading change, but an area for future contribution could be a biblical-theological study of the role that prayer plays in leading ecclesial change. Even in this study there were texts such as Acts 4:31 where the believers gathered together to pray and then they were filled with the Spirit of God, which led to more unity, devotion, compassion and the spread of the gospel. It would be interesting to see the connection between prayer and the Spirit that leads to change.

Another area of future contribution could come from looking at the connection between teamwork in Scripture that equipped the church for change. An in-depth study examining Jesus equipping and preparing the disciples to be empowered to lead change in difficult circumstances (Acts 17:6) would certainly be helpful.

A final approach to develop future studies would be to perform a biblical-theological critique on current change models such as Jim Herrington's *Leading Congregational Change*, or the six phases of change offered by Hans Finzel. It would be a way to demonstrate the usefulness of such models as well as caution the church to the dangers of just adding biblical principals to secular models and introducing them into the church.

Overall, this study adds to the corpus of literature on leading change by looking at the biblical-theological foundation for leading change in the church. The literature base has much to offer when it comes to leading change, but most studies either ignore the

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<sup>21</sup>John Harvey, *Anointed with the Spirit and Power* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 92.

work of the Spirit of God all together or assume the work of the Spirit. This study demonstrates clearly that the Spirit of God is not only needed while leading change in the church, but it is absolutely essential. Without the Spirit of God no true lasting change will happen within the church. It is the Spirit that empowers, equips, and enables the church to the work that is given by God. The Spirit of God is constantly at work transforming the people of God by directing them in new life with power from on high into a restored community that will only be made complete at the return of Christ.<sup>22</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a biblical-theological foundation for leading change begins with the overarching theme that humanity was originally created to be image bearers of God who were to reign and rule as under-shepherds over all creation and that they were created to multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:38). However, the fall of man into sin destroys man's ability to fulfill the plan of God, and enmity is placed between man and his Creator (Gen 3:1-24). Humanity now awaits One who will reverse the effects of the fall and bring enduring change to both man and creation (Gen 3:15; Rom 16:20). In Luke, one sees Jesus come as the agent of change and fulfill what all the other prophets, priests, and kings could not—true restoration and redemption to sinful men (John 1:29). The story continues as the Father sends Jesus to inaugurate the kingdom of God and new creation. He brings pervasive, lasting change through his finished work in his life, death, and resurrection (Rom 5:12-21). Just as the Father sent Christ, so now he sends his disciples into the world for the advancement of his Kingdom.

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<sup>22</sup>Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 226.

He also gives them the Spirit of God to equip, enable, and empower them (Acts 1:8). Luke-Acts is the account of God's unfolding plan in the life and ministry of Jesus and continued by the Holy Spirit in the early church. As the church is empowered by the Holy Spirit, the news of the gospel of the kingdom spreads all over the world. The kingdom of God has come, but not in its fullness. Believers now await the final fulfillment of the promises of God, which will bring eternal change to God's people and creation (Rev. 21:1-8; 2 Cor 5:17). Until the ultimate day of the Lord (Joel 2:28), the Spirit of God is at work sanctifying the people of God (Rom 15:16; 1 Peter 1:2) and restoring the community (Acts 2:40-47) by leading, guarding, and governing the people of God to accomplish the purposes of God.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LEADING ECCLESIAL CHANGE IN LUKE-ACTS

Justin Thorpe Mason, Ed.D.  
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This study examined the biblical/theological foundations found in the Holy Spirit for leading ecclesial change within the text of Luke-Acts. Chapter 1 describes the purpose, goals, rationale, and research methodology for the study. Chapter 2 is a literature review that examines secular, Christian, and biblical/theological models for leading ecclesial change. Chapter 3 examines the role of the Holy Spirit in the empowered Messiah and demonstrates how the same Spirit that empowered, enabled, and equipped the Messiah is the same Spirit that enables, empowers, and equips believers today. Chapter 4 displays the manifestation of the Spirit's work not only in the believer but inside the New Testament church. Chapter 5 offers conclusions of this study. Here the purpose and goals of the study are examined and biblical reflections as well as recommendation for practices are offered.

## VITA

Justin Thorpe Mason

### EDUCATIONAL

B.S., Mid-Continent University, 2006

M.B.A., Murray State University, 2009

M.A., Church Ministry, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

### MINISTERIAL

Associate Pastor, New Hope Baptist Church, Mayfield, Kentucky, 2005-07

Associate Pastor, Liberty Baptist Church, Hickory, Kentucky, 2007-13

Senior Pastor, Rosebower Baptist Church, Paducah, Kentucky, 2013-