

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **BAPTISTS TODAY**

As has been presented within this thesis, South African Baptist history is both rich and diverse and continues to play an important role within the church scene in South Africa. Baptists exist in South Africa with a number of 'denominational coverings'; the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA), the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) and the Baptist Association of South Africa (BASA). Each of these, operating independently, and adding uniqueness to the diverse Baptist witness in South Africa.

BUSA, however, is the main focus of this thesis and will be the sole focus of this chapter of my thesis in which I hope to expound on some of the macro-trends operating within BUSA in the present day and share some common micro-trends observed at grass-roots level. Research within this chapter is primarily quantitative and encompasses results from the national Missional Church Survey and from historical records. I have broken this research up into segments, which will give both broad strokes and finer details that may be of help in interpreting BUSA trends, and assist in aligning BUSA's focus within the next wave of Baptist history in the making. The Missional Church Survey was completed online by pastors of BUSA utilizing Google docs as a platform for data collection and analysis. The researcher has had no control over the actual data collected and graphs found within this dissertation relating to the survey above have been generated through Google's reporting system, thus, ensuring accurate analysis without contamination.

In consultation with various resources found within the Baptist Union Archives, located at the Baptist Theological College in Randburg, I will unpack some of the denominational trends since the inception of our Rainbow Nation in 1994. Following this stage I will share the results of the 'Missional Church Survey', which have been collated to give 'impressions' or 'snapshots' of local churches and where they see themselves presently. This survey was distributed among pastors and leaders of BUSA churches listed in the BUSA Handbook. This is helpful in identifying micro-trends at the grass-roots and represents the bulk of my quantitative research approach. Lastly, an important part of my mixed-methods methodology includes qualitative research, which has come from the following sources:

- Structured interviews with BUSA staff;
- Informal interviews with leaders involved with BUSA mission (past and present);
- Informal interviews with our BUSA seminary staff and principals;
- Informal interviews with local church pastors representing a reasonable segment of most of our provinces and racial divides;
- Informal interviews with church members and leaders representing a reasonable segmentation of most of our provinces and racial and economic divides.

This qualitative research is what ties all other components together and holds the mosaic of what represents a growing challenge for the continuation and further growth of BUSA witness in South Africa and the rest of Africa. This will

be dealt with exclusively in chapter 11 and serves as an important conclusion and summary of where BUSA is on the missional spectrum.

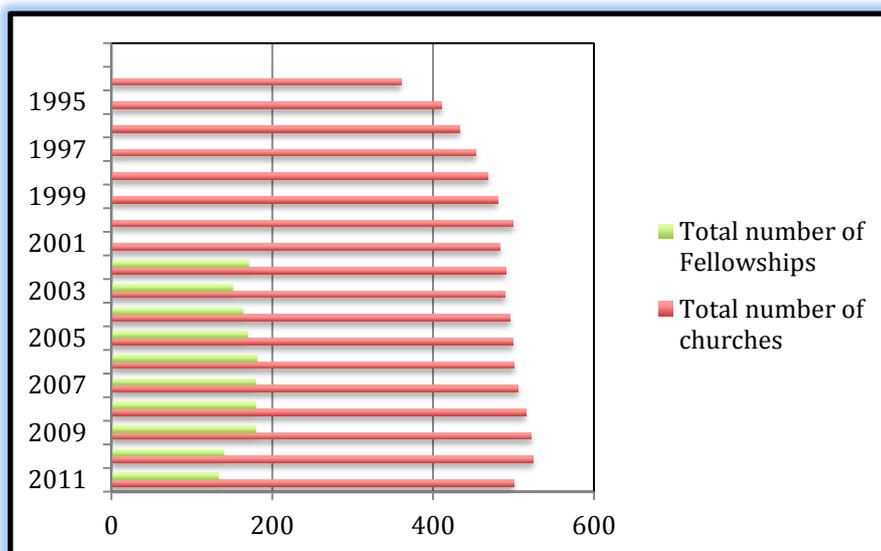
### **10.1 DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS SINCE 1994**

The limitations of my research are quite clear with regards to both the *availability* and *accuracy* of statistical data sourced from the SABH. The annual return rate on statistical data from a local church level is sporadic and inconsistent, and no clear overall picture can be drawn from this data in effectively tracing trends within our union of churches due to a continuous low rate of response from local churches. This trend is quite discernible within the Fellowships of BUSA. As a result of a number of changes made to regional Associations, effective comparison of data within our new operational paradigm becomes incoherent when compared to data from earlier dates and regional Associations. Another challenge arises from the descriptions of ‘youth’ and ‘children’ within the statistical reports. Note that when it comes to ‘youth’ and ‘children’, prior to 2002, what was described as ‘youth’ was inclusive of the numbers of children within the ministry scope of BUSA. These figures are recorded separately in the current format of reporting statistics.

Given the limited data at my disposal, we will deal with the following categories in this section; number of churches, national BUSA membership figures, fellowships and extensions, regional trends with respect to both numbers of churches and membership, national BUSA adherents, number of baptisms, children, youth and young adults, along with those that minister to/ teach our children and youth. Peter Christofides (2008) undertook a similar study entitled; ‘The Rediscovery of

the Role of the Laity in the Mission of the church’, where similar field research was conducted with the aim of rediscovering the role and importance of the laity in local BUSA churches. In some respects, this dissertation has taken Christofides to the ‘next level’ as far as missional church proposals within BUSA are concerned, and the denominational trends since 1994 reveal some of the areas BUSA need to focus on as a whole in its mission.

Figure 30 (below) indicates the numerical growth of churches within BUSA from 1994 to the most current available/ accurate data found within the SABH. Inclusive in the figures are the growth of Fellowships within the same period of time (starting in 2002). From Figure 25, one can see that there has been a steady growth in the number of new churches since 1994; with a slight drop in 2001 and 2003, with a slower rate of progress reported in 2006 and 2007 respectively. 2011 reveals a sharper decline in growth rate to -5% overall, with almost 25 churches leaving the membership of BUSA (cf. SABH 2012:115, 116).



**Figure 30 Comparison of BUSA Member churches and Fellowships**

Table 1 (see below) is an excerpt from the 2012 Assembly Handbook statistical report indicating the Associational numbers of new churches:

<u>CHURCHES</u>	BANC	BNA	BBA	EPBA	FSBA	KZNBA	WPBA	BUSA
No of Churches 2010	15	170	74	42	27	96	100	524
No of Churches 2011	14	158	72	42	24	91	99	500
% change in No of Churches	-7%	-7%	-3%	0%	-11%	-5%	-1%	-5%

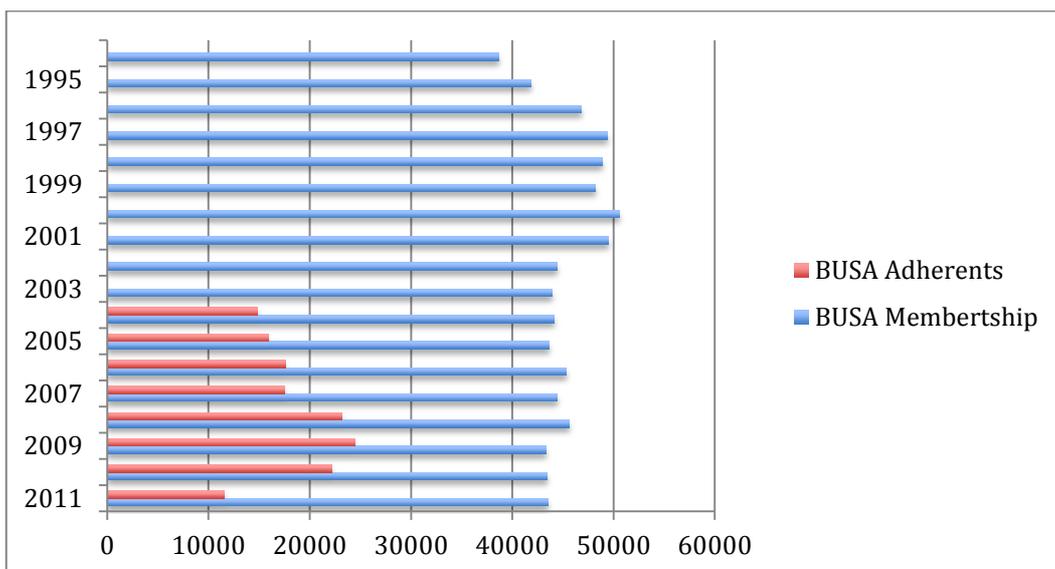
**Table 1 Associational breakdown of BUSA churches**

The 2012 figures are quite troublesome and reveal that it would be in the interest of BUSA Executive Committee and the General Secretary to take time to understand our current crisis of existence, and engage its leaders across the spectrum again on proposals for the way forward for BUSA. It appears that the majority of growth within BUSA comes from the addition of Fellowships to BUSA membership rolls (e.g. Riverside Community Church 2012 etc.), very few churches apply for full membership status. The statistics reveal the dire state of BUSA, and if the trend continues, BUSA would be non-existent within almost a decade! BUSA is in crisis; therefore BUSA must change, or cease to exist in its current form! Any constructive growth for the future success of BUSA has to come from the bold recognition that if it is to succeed and fully partake in the *missio Dei*, 'everything must change' (cf. McLaren 2007). There is need for continuity and discontinuity; however, change is not negotiable! The Church is called to be both *confessional* and *missional*; the Church should always be forming (*ecclesia semper formanda*), and reforming (*ecclesia semper reformanda*) (cf. van Gelder 2007:54). It is BUSA's season for *forming* and *reforming*!

To reinforce the above view, national BUSA membership figures reveal the declining trend in BUSA membership. If it were not for the growth/ inclusion of the numbers of adherents of BUSA, the numbers would be dramatically less (cf. Figure 31 below). However, what is of concern, is the sudden decrease in adherents in the 2011/2012 Assembly Report, which represents a 50% decrease from the 2011/2010 Assembly Report (cf. table 2 below for highlighted figures) (cf. SABH 2012:115).

Adherents 2010	371	5861	2941	1085	3319	3258	5378	22213
Adherents 2011	200	4013	1163	640	207	2858	2474	11555
Adherents as % of 2011 Membership	33%	36%	18%	22%	5%	45%	21%	27%

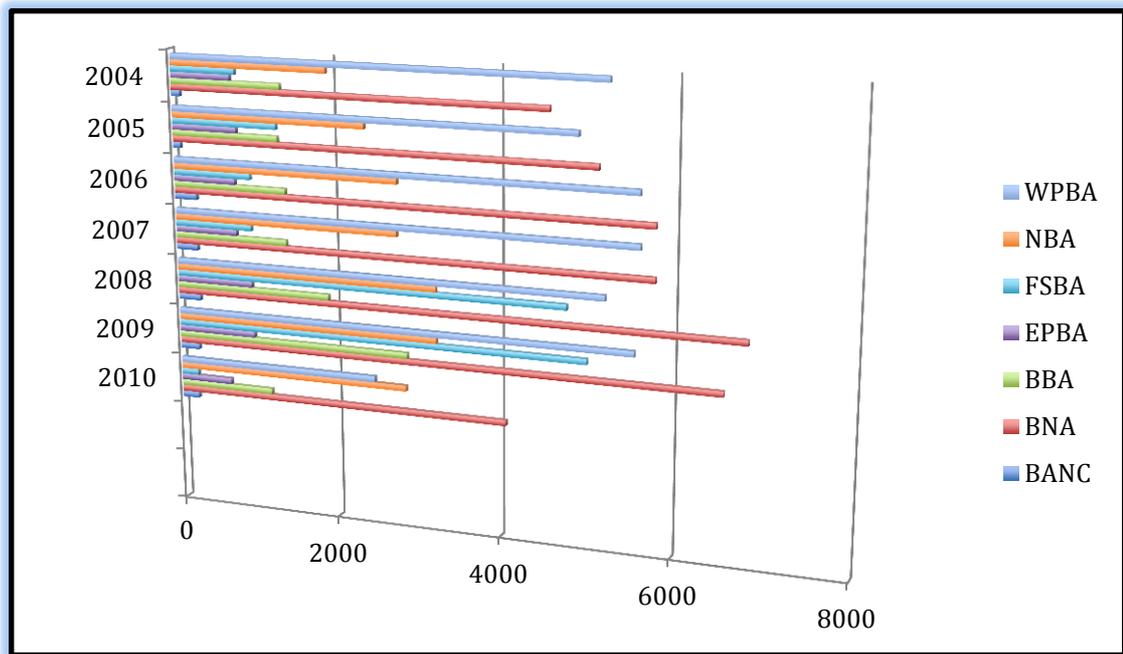
**Table 2 BUSA adherents**



**Figure 31 Comparison between BUSA membership and adherence (Trends)**

The graphs below (figures 32 & 33) represent the Associational (regional) growth of BUSA with respect to membership and BUSA Fellowships, which is important to note as it pertains to the urban migration of South Africans; highlighted in Statistics South Africa's 2012 mid-year report.

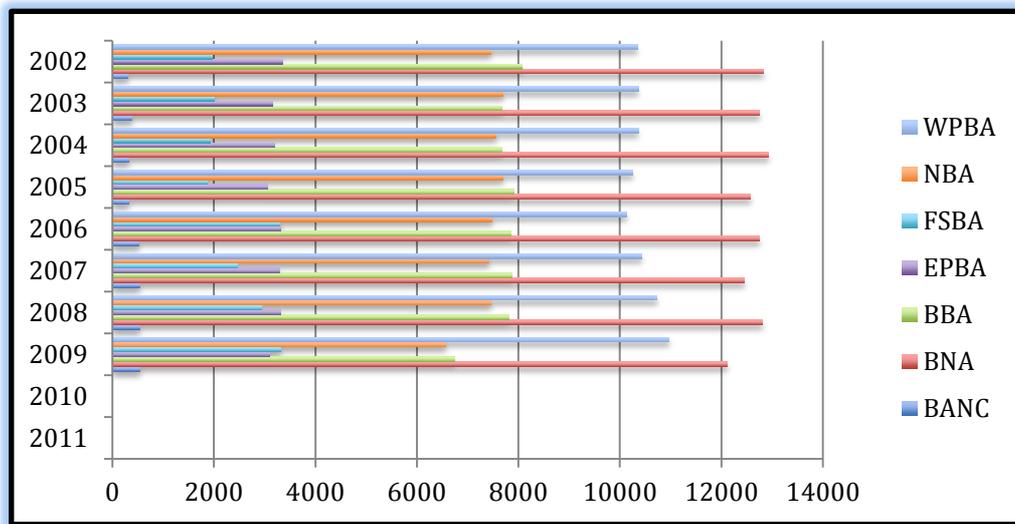
Figure 32 (see below) refers to Fellowships and extensions of BUSA as they are represented on a national level. The BNA and WPBA (along with the FSBA in 2008/2009 respectively) represent the bulk of the growth of BUSA Fellowship numbers nationally. However, in 2010, there was a sharp decline, and as compared with figures elsewhere (cf. Figure 31), this decline in growth is only accentuated in 2011/2012.



**Figure 32 Growth areas within BUSA's Fellowships**

With regards to the national BUSA church membership figures, these do not appear to have as much dramatic change as the Fellowships and Extensions, with the BNA and WPBA taking a leading role in membership percentages, with all regions being 'stable' in their annual growth contribution (cf. figure 33 below). The problem, however, with this 'stability' comes into consideration when compared to the general South African population growth rate, currently at 1.10% PA (Statistics South Africa mid-Year Report Estimates 2011:7). BUSA's 'stability', is actually an ever-declining growth rate, which, if not addressed systemically, will lead to

exponentially diminishing numbers on all BUSA fronts (as is firmly illustrated in the 2011/ 2012 statistics and the 5 year statistical overview).



**Figure 33 Growth areas in BUSA's church membership**

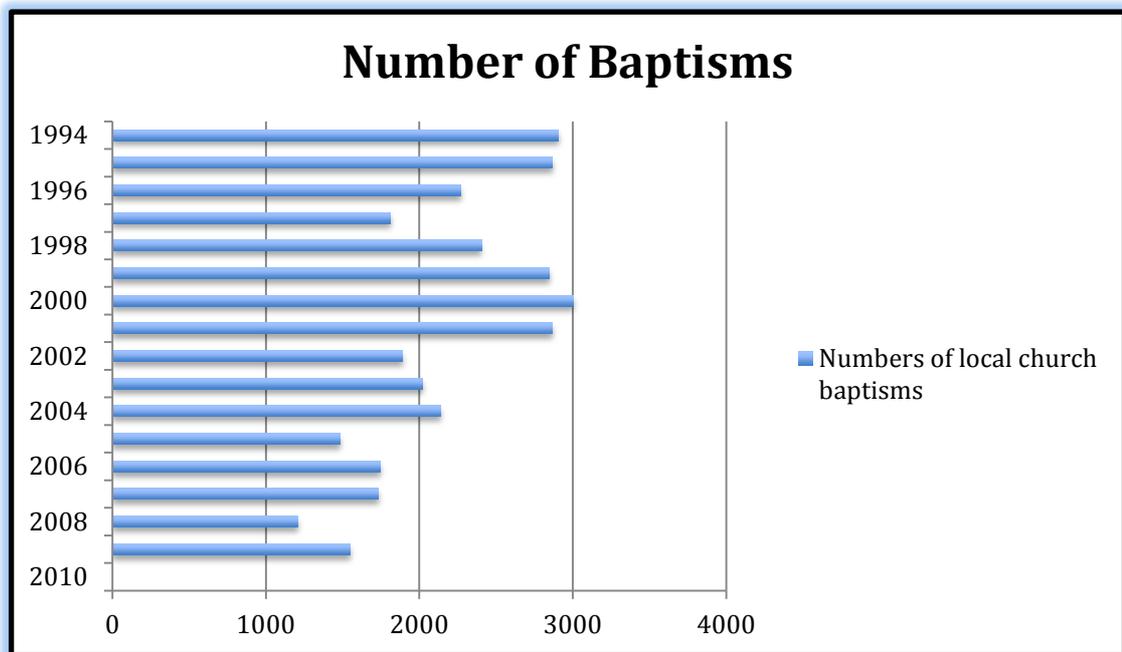
What has led to this massive national decline in growth? One can look at it subjectively from many angles; failure of BUSA leadership, inadequate structures and poor leadership accountability, lack of continued training for BUSA pastors, outdated approach to ministry within a dynamic South African context, lack of focus on youth and children, little ministry to families and an admin/ survival focus/ orientation. However, what has become clear in this research is that BUSA's current pragmatic approach is not working, and if any constructive growth should take place in the future, we will need a new approach - one that addresses issues *systemically* rather than *pragmatically*, for the medium to long-term rather than the immediate or short-term.

One of the indicators of BUSA churches taking their ministry within local communities seriously is their rate of baptisms, which are submitted to the annual

report. Given that the SABH's return rate was 29% in 2011, the number of baptisms has decreased significantly since 1994 (cf. figure 34 below). There may be several reasons for our contemporary state, one being that BUSA churches have not adequately responded to the annual returns since 2002, which in itself is a serious indictment on BUSA leaders and pastors. Perhaps, baptism by full immersion is no longer only a BUSA distinctive, where other churches now perform baptisms by full immersion. However, I prefer looking at Baptism figures as a key indicator of churches engaged in local community outreach/witness/evangelism or mission. Thus, numbers of baptisms can represent converts won to the Christian faith in any given year. If this approach is applied, then it can be assumed that BUSA are seeing some 1500 converts every year (using the 2011 figures as a basis). If this is the case, then it means that every BUSA church has only reached 3 people on average this last year with the transformative gospel it claims to bear and witness to. If the average church membership in BUSA is 100 members (50000 members /500 churches = 100 member average), it would take on average 33.3 members to reach 1 new convert. Compared to Acts 2, where 3000 (an opposite ratio of almost 300 new converts per disciple of Christ, of those gathered in together at the time) people were added to the church in one day, it seems indicative of a more serious problem - BUSA churches no longer take their missionary calling seriously and have settled into being 'mission-minded' and complacent. This can be further substantiated when considering the rate of numbers of people being baptized as compared to those taken into BUSA membership. Christofides includes this component in his research and indicates the following (cf. 2008: 185, 186):

- There is a major shortfall in the rate of people who stay on in church and become fully participatory members.

- Not since 1997 have there been more people joining BUSA than people being baptized.
- The problem lies in the discipleship process within our churches- people are leaving BUSA churches without being grown and discipled in the Christian faith.

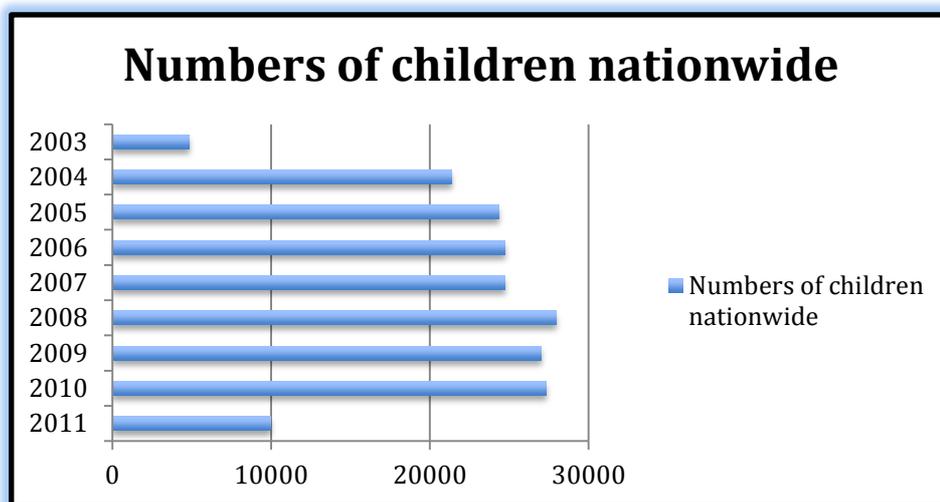


**Figure 34 Trends in local church baptisms**

When looking toward the future, one often looks to the next generation; to children, youth and young adults. What are the growth trends within BUSA among its ministry and outreach to children, youth and young adults? Are there any great changes in trends that can be noted here that are of any great importance for BUSA mission and ministry?

Statistics South Africa in their mid-Year Population Estimates report (2011:12) indicate that nearly one-third (32,3%) of the South African population is younger than 15 years; approximately 7,7% (3.9 million) is 60 years or older. Additionally, of the 32.3% under the age of 15, 3.6 million (23%) live in KwaZulu Natal, and 3.07 million (19.4%) live in Gauteng. Additionally, the Northern Cape, the province

with the smallest population, has nearly one-third (30%) of its population aged younger than 15 years (cf. Statistics South Africa mid-Year Population Estimates Report 2011:12). Figure 35 (below) indicates a general growing trend in children’s ministry from 2003- 2010, which is confirmed by Christofides (2008:186) in his study on the numbers of Sunday school children in BUSA since 1993. However, 2011 depicts a tragic departure from this trend, as is evident within all spheres of ministry to the ‘next-generation’ in BUSA.



**Figure 35 Number of Children on the national front**

The 2012 SABH Handbook (2012:115) reports of the Associational change in children’s ministry figures between 2010 and 2011 (cf. table 3 below):

	BANC	BNA	BBA	EPBA	FSBA	KZNBA	WPBA	BUSA
Children 2010	277	6319	5105	1552	1411	4587	8069	27320
Children 2011	100	2643	1729	699	135	2360	2301	9967
% change in number of Children	-177%	-139%	-195%	-122%	-945%	-94%	-251%	-174%

**Table 3 Children’s ministry changes (Associational)**

There may be a simple explanation for the drastic decrease in numbers; the statistical return rate differentiation between 2010 and 2011. Table 4 below indicates the difference on a regional basis (SABH 2012:115):

	<b>BANC</b>	<b>BNA</b>	<b>BBA</b>	<b>EPBA</b>	<b>FSBA</b>	<b>KZNBA</b>	<b>WPBA</b>	<b>BUSA</b>
Statistical Returns 2010	10	48	17	23	20	25	53	196
Statistical Returns 2011	2	43	16	14	7	28	35	145
Returns as a % of Churches 2011	14%	27%	22%	33%	29%	31%	35%	29%

**Table 4 Statistical rate of return**

This may explain some of the overall decline by simple deduction. However, KwaZulu Natal records an increase in the rate of returns from 2010 to 2011 (from 25 returns in 2010 to 28 returns in 2011); however, the result is a net decrease in children from 4587 recorded in 2010 to 2360 in 2011. This seems to go against the grain of simple deduction as far as the overall correlation between the rate of return and growth or decline in numbers. The BBA's difference in rate of returns between 2010 and 2011 was one church, yet, the rate of decline in children's attendance in 2011 was -195%. What happened to nearly 3500 children? Another example of this is the BNA's rate of return difference between 2010 and 2011 is 5 churches, which could hardly account for the difference between 6319 children attending in 2010 to 2643 in 2011- even if these 5 churches were the largest Baptist churches in the country! So it seems reasonable to conclude, from the data above, that we did not heed Christofides' warning in 2008:

These children will need to be developed in areas of the church where there are needs and people will need to model a way of life to them that will keep them in the church and encourage to participate in activities and programmes in the church. Goals and objectives will need to be set up in order for the children to get a good grasp of the Biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers. as well as empowering children to think "missionally" and eventually grow up to be effective leaders who will train others to do the same (Christofides 2008: 186).

What has led to this downward spiral? I am sure that there are a number of factors, however, the most obvious relates to the decrease in children’s workers over the same period. Figures 36 and 37 (below) graphically illustrates this trend. Christofides (2008:188) confirmed that the steady flow and involvement of teachers in children’s ministry within our BUSA churches contributed to the overall ‘stability’ of this growth among our churches.

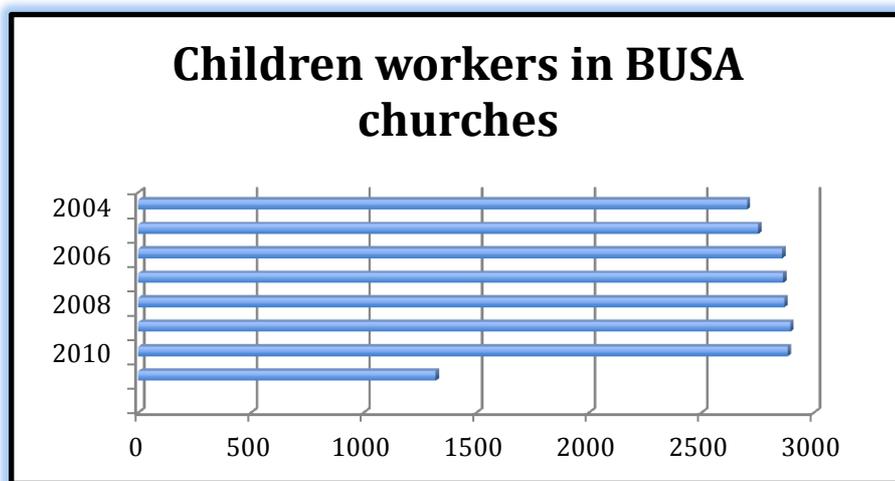


Figure 36 Numbers of Children's workers in BUSA

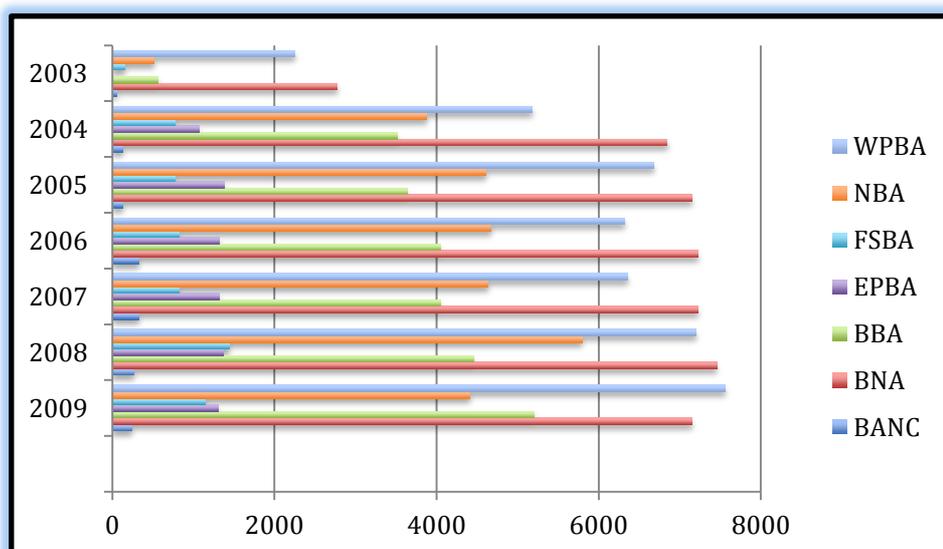


Figure 37 BUSA regional child distribution and growth

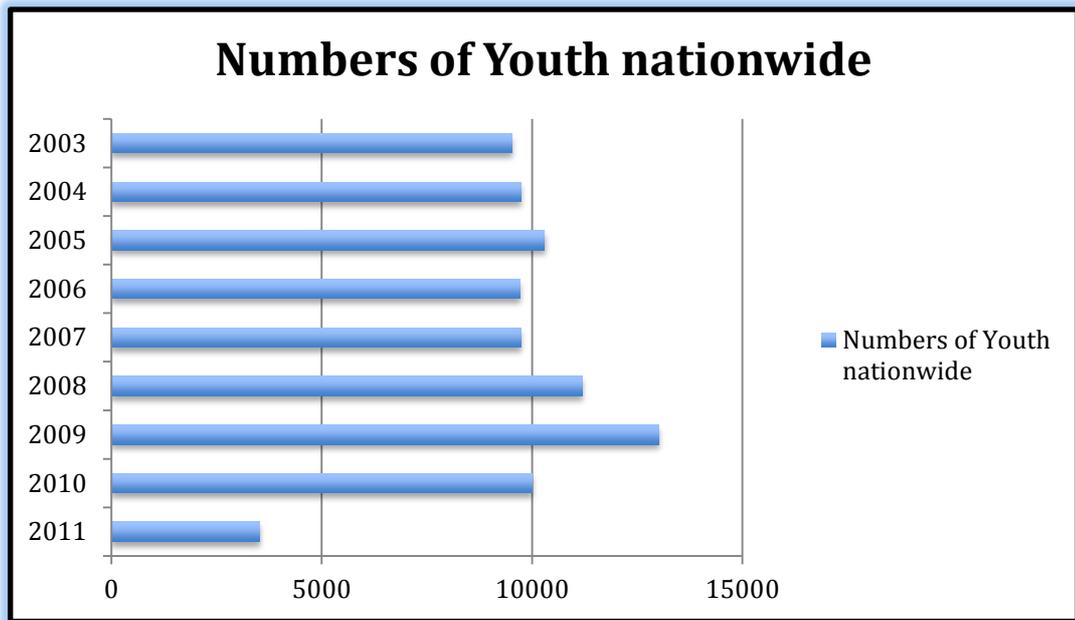


Figure 38 Numbers of youth nationwide

Figure 39 (below) illustrates the Associational/ regional figures for consideration which detail the trends in youth ministry since 2002.

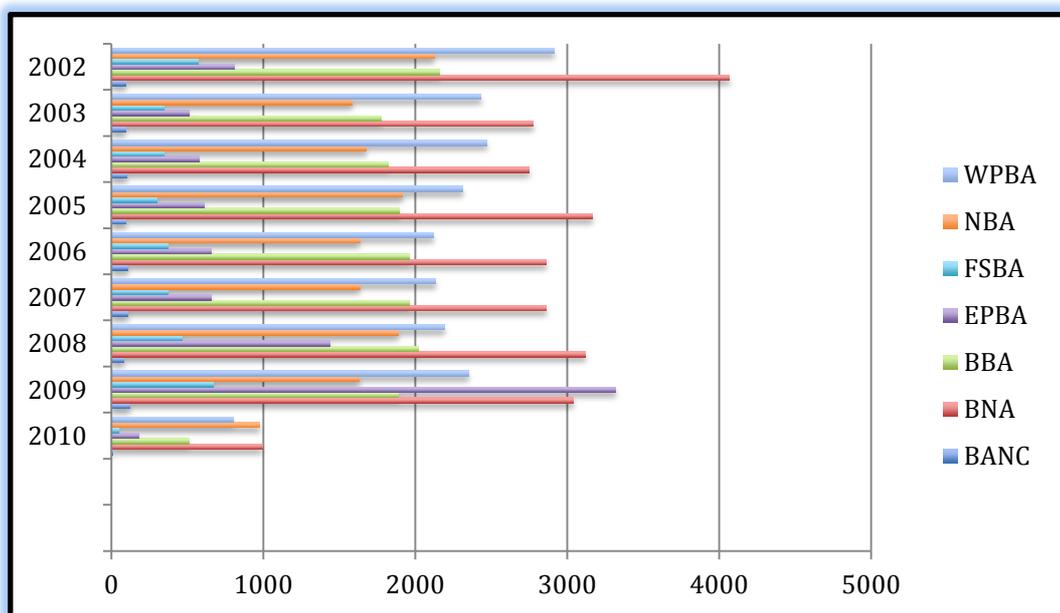
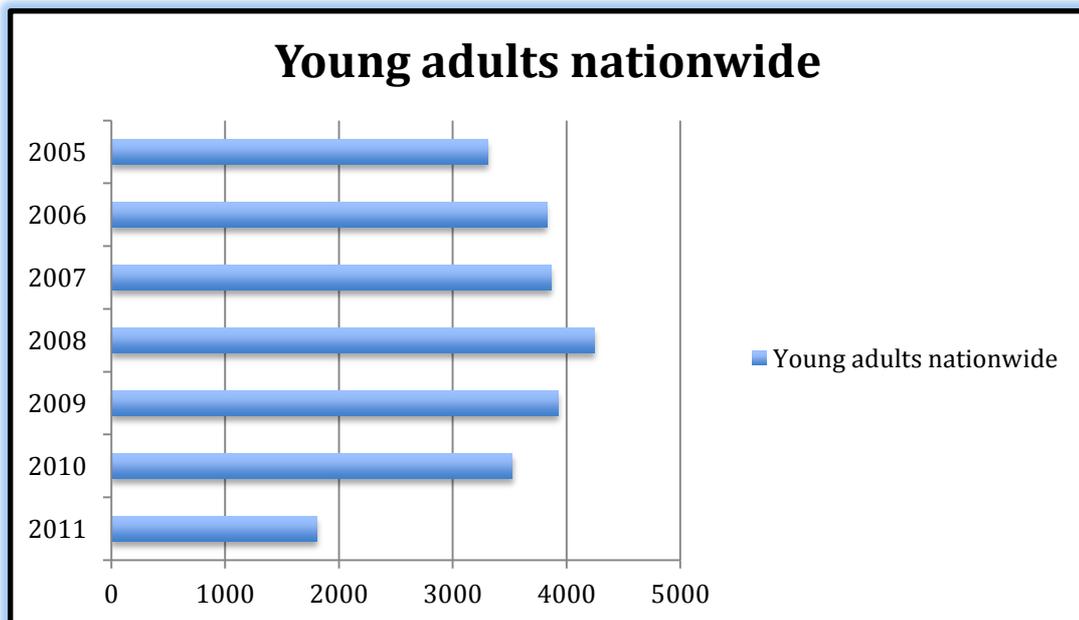


Figure 39 BUSA regional distribution of youth

Despite the focus of BUSA's vision 2010 to double local church membership; double BU member churches, double the number of children and youth being

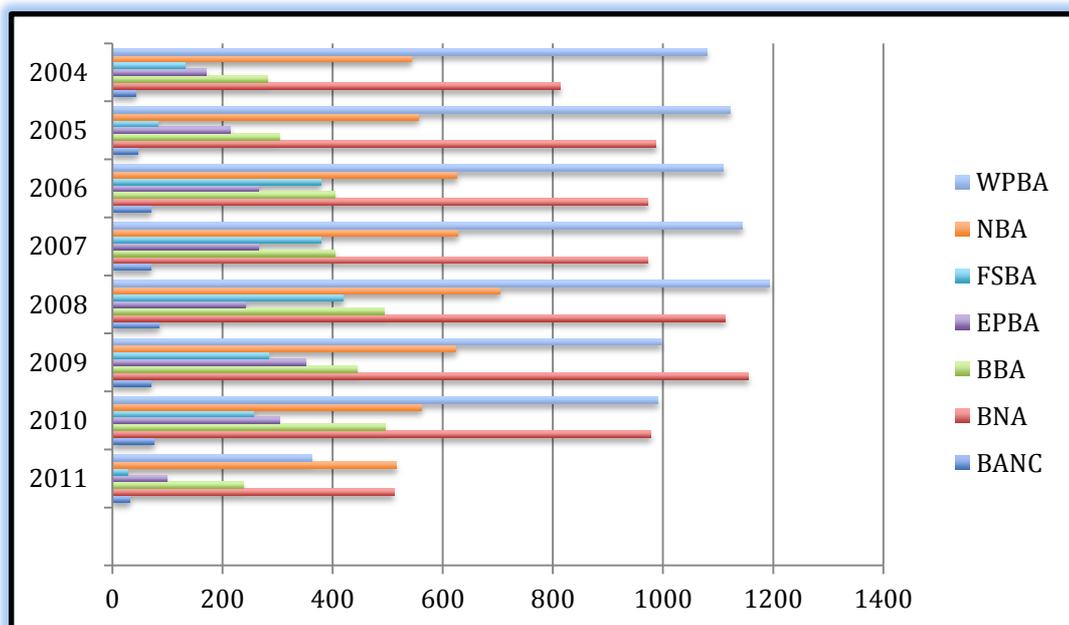
reached, 300 churches with youth/ young adult ministries, doubling the number of children’s workers/ teachers, 300 churches being ‘mission involved’, it seems that the exact opposite has been the net result. A similar trend to children and youth can be found within the young adult segment of BUSA. The only difference between children, youth and young adults is that the downward spiral for young adults started nationally from around 2008 (cf. figure 40 below). This trend specifically is of great significance as it shows an evident weakness of BUSA churches to engage a generation of South Africans meaningfully with the gospel, disciple them adequately in the faith and deploy them responsibly in the mission of the church as it follows the *mission Dei* in its teleological orientation.



**Figure 40 BUSA young adults nationwide**

Figure 41 (below) depicts the Associational breakdown of young adults nationwide. The WPBA has experienced the greatest decline in young adult membership and participation since 2004, alongside the BNA and BBA. The only

region to maintain a reasonable young adult segment in churches is the NBA, which incidentally, according to the Statistics South Africa's 2011 mid-Year report (2011:14), has the greatest population of young adults in South Africa (aged 20-24), and the second largest population of young adults in South Africa (aged 25-29) by a small margin against Gauteng. The same report (2011:13) records KwaZulu Natal as having the lowest numbers of people migrating outward (-10174) in the years 2001-2006, in the period between 2006-2011, this trend changes somewhat with KwaZulu Natal currently the third largest region in terms of immigration figures in South Africa. Thus, despite the NBA's steady growth in the young adult segment, it is not nearly as significant as the overall growth trend within the NBA region.



**Figure 41 Associational young adult breakdowns**

## 10.2 IMPLICATIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE TRENDS IN BUSA

### STATISTICAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2006 TO 2011

<b>CHURCHES</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>percentage change</b>
No of Churches	501	505	515	524	<b>500</b>	2006 to 2011 0%
Statistics submitted	261	194	202	196	<b>145</b>	5 yr. Average 200
Members	45329	44626	45270	43431	<b>43545</b>	2006 to 2011 -4%
Adherents	17559	21409	23174	22213	<b>11555</b>	2006 to 2011 -34%
Members & Adherents	62888	66035	68444	65644	<b>55100</b>	2006 to 2011 -12%
Teachers	2863	2825	2868	2883	<b>1319</b>	2006 to 2011 -54%
Children	24720	25520	27983	27320	<b>9967</b>	2006 to 2011 -60%
Youth	9732	10441	12842	9999	<b>3524</b>	2006 to 2011 -64%
Young Adults	3861	4077	4247	3661	<b>1785</b>	2006 to 2011 -54%
People Trained					<b>421</b>	2006 to 2011
Baptisms	1732	1382	1406	1337	<b>884</b>	2006 to 2011 -49%
Churches/Fellowships Planted	42	43	54	56	<b>34</b>	2006 to 2011 -19%
Churches Assisted	293	364	371	438	<b>128</b>	2006 to 2011 -56%
Missionaries supported	876	873	1032	936	<b>568</b>	2006 to 2011 -35%

<b>As a % of Membership</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Children</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Youth</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Young Adults</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>

*Figure 42 Summary of BUSA trends 2006-2011*

What can one deduce from the data collected and analyzed in this chapter? The highlighted portion of figure 42 (above) is indicative of the contemporary BUSA scene, which is characterized by pastoral indifference, church inefficiency, member apathy and overall denominational decline. This conclusion has not been reached independently and subjectively; rather, it is based on personal observations and personal conversations with BUSA's leaders at almost every

level; national, regional and local and in most positions (pastors, Area Coordinators, staff at Baptist House, theologians etc.). It is also confirmed by data collected from both qualitative and quantitative research conducted nationwide.

Given the data above in relation to the decrease in BUSA membership and the lack of leadership involvement in children, youth and young adult ministry, is it reasonable to deduce that those who are leaving BUSA churches are many of the leaders, who in previous years have been pillars of stability and support, who no longer have confidence in the general direction of BUSA churches and structures within the new South Africa? Given the data above, perhaps this is more than reasonable; it is highly probable! It seems to me that it should be the urgent undertaking of BUSA's current Executive to address the issues outlined in this dissertation, however, the problem lies with the fact that decisions are made by leaders who are not really representative of the segments of people BUSA has lost recently, and the Executive have little knowledge of how to rectify this situation independently of BUSA's youth and young adults and their respective leaders.

The situation we face in BUSA today is unlike any other we have faced before, and we are unable to quantify the current prospects, suffice to say, that if these trends continue, BUSA's irrelevancy will be made relevant. This decade is therefore of great significance to BUSA and is the era of *reaction* and *rediscovery* - reaction against the status quo in BUSA leadership, and a rediscovery of the missional nature of God and His church! In the proceeding section qualitative data will confirm the data collected and analyzed from the SABH since 1994 and quantify what implications this may have at grass-roots level for BUSA churches.

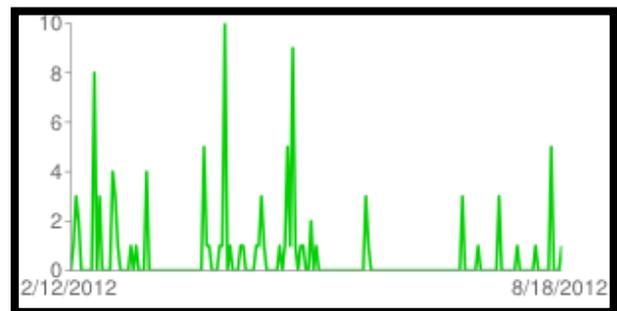
## 10.3 CURRENT TRENDS IN BUSA CHURCHES

### 10.3.1 Delimitations of my study

BUSA is a multi-cultural, diverse denomination. I am not sure what defines us as a denomination in our current context, except a shared history and similar core beliefs (Baptist Principles). Any study dealing with such a broad spectrum of individuals can easily be adapted to one specific grouping; however, as I will prove, my study (although limited) has covered a wide spectrum of individuals, churches, cultures and contexts.

Over a period of around 7 months qualitative research was conducted among churches within BUSA. Emails with direct links to the online 'Missional Church Survey' were distributed to each Baptist church that had an email address published in the 2011/2012 BUSA Directory. Respondents completed the survey

on-line and the results were recorded accordingly. Figure 43 (to the right) is a representation of the numbers of respondents recorded



*Figure 43 Online respondent timeline*

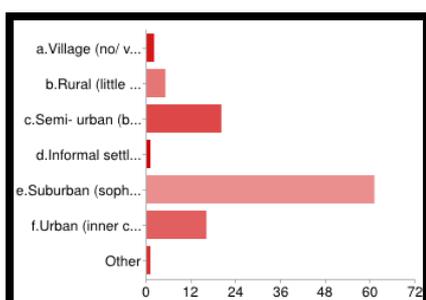
on a daily basis from 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012 to the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Out of

all the surveys sent, 110 responses were recorded for further research, reflection and analysis as per the researcher's initial proposal and design.

One of the immediate questions that come to mind relates to whether the research into missional ecclesiology within BUSA is limited to a specific group of individuals within BUSA with a certain ‘agenda’ (e.g. Isaiah 58 network etc.). The Missional Church Survey covered a wide field of respondents from within numerous geographical, cultural and ideological/ theological settings. From the geographical perspective, respondents came from varied settings within South Africa, that in many respects reflect our own population trends, with the bulk of the populace centred within urban contexts. The values in figure 44 (below) indicate the broadness in terms of inclusivity within the scope of this study. The only section that did not receive much response is from those ministering in informal settlements. The reason this is lower is that many respondents would classify their informal settlements within the context of ‘semi-urban’ in the South African setting. However, there are not a large number of BUSA churches engaged in ministry in informal settlements (as a proportion to the whole).

a. Village (no/ very little basic infrastructure & sparse population)	<b>2</b>	2%
b. Rural (little basic infrastructure & medium-sized sparse population)	<b>5</b>	5%
c. Semi- urban (basic infrastructure in place with medium-sized population)	<b>20</b>	20%
d. Informal settlement (on urban/ semi-urban fringe with higher density population)	<b>1</b>	1%
e. Suburban (sophisticated infrastructure with denser population)	<b>61</b>	62%
f. Urban (inner city with high density population)	<b>16</b>	16%
Other	<b>1</b>	1%

**Figure 44 Distribution of BUSA churches**

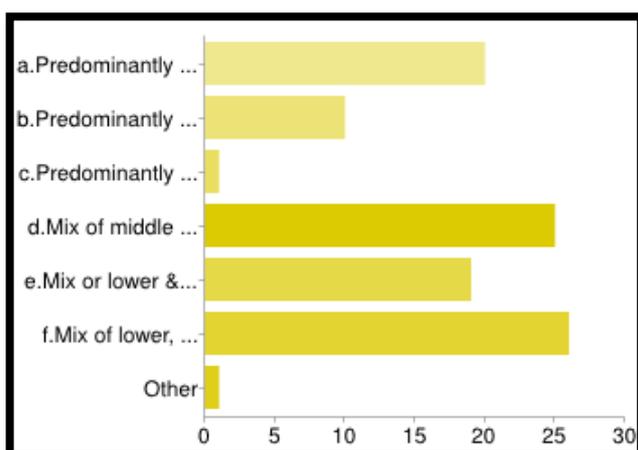


**Figure 45 Graphic depiction of the distribution of BUSA churches**

This spread of respondents is further reinforced by the socio-economic data collected from the survey. As can be seen in figures 46 & 47 (below), there is great diversity within the socio-economic standing of member churches within BUSA. What is significant to note here is our innate ‘comfort’ in ministering to those in the middle-class segment, which represents the vast majority of churches in BUSA. Our constituencies are weak in reaching the higher-income groups and are not really scratching the surface of reaching those within the lower-income groups of South Africa.

a. Predominantly middle-class congregants	<b>20</b>	20%
b. Predominantly lower-income congregants	<b>10</b>	10%
c. Predominantly higher-income congregants	<b>1</b>	1%
d. Mix of middle & upper income earners	<b>25</b>	25%
e. Mix or lower & middle income earners	<b>19</b>	19%
f. Mix of lower, middle and upper- income earners	<b>26</b>	26%
Other	<b>1</b>	1%

**Figure 46 Economic breakdown of BUSA reach**



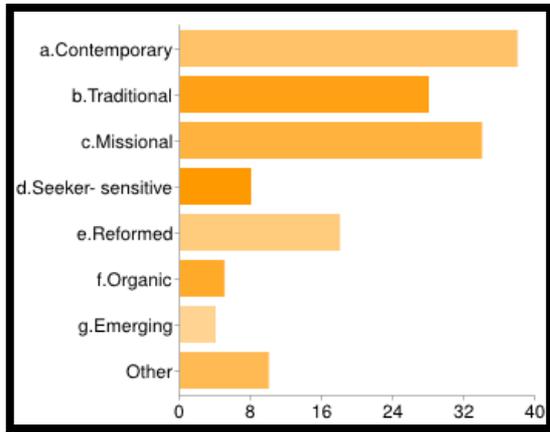
**Figure 47 Graphic depiction of the economic breakdown of BUSA**

What is the relevance of this study within the context of BUSA? Is there a place to talk about the concept of missional church? It seems clear from the grass-roots up that the missional conversation is highly relevant to the future of our denomination; in fact I would argue that without a focus on missional church, we will not speak of a BUSA in years to come. Figure 48 (below) indicates the broader understanding of the term ‘missional’ among the leaders in our Union. Given the great diversity of respondents, it seems that a vast majority of BUSA leaders see the missional conversation as a challenge toward the renewing of the mission of the Church.

a. Just another ‘fad’ that will eventually pass	<b>2</b>	2%
b. A challenge towards renewing the mission of the Church	<b>93</b>	95%
c. A radical movement that must be avoided at all costs	<b>0</b>	0%
d. I am unsure of what this means	<b>3</b>	3%
Other	<b>1</b>	1%

**Figure 48 Understanding of ‘missional’**

However, what makes this conversation even more relevant to BUSA is the self-understanding of churches within BUSA. Notwithstanding the fact that respondents may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%, it seems significant to me that 34% of our churches see themselves as missional (cf. figure 49 & 50 below). This, in conjunction with Chang’s ‘Faith-based Youth’ urban tribe, makes the missional conversation even more essential to BUSA’s future.



**Figure 49 Self-identity of BUSA churches**

Another key indicator of the missional change that is emerging at grass-roots level within BUSA churches nationwide relates to how the church views and practices missions. In many BUSA churches there exists a dichotomy between what can be termed ‘missions’ and ‘evangelism’. Missions is seen as crossing frontiers (culture, geographical etc.) and is the task of those specially called and trained as missionaries, supported from the local church and denominational base. Evangelism is seen as a local enterprise involving those within the congregation with an inclination toward this. Both of these concepts have been concretized into programmes and ministries run by lay leaders, often without the full knowledge of those attending a church, and with little feedback to members about work done and results (perhaps only at an annual AGM). As the missional church concept gains ground in our Baptist praxis, churches within our denomination will move away from what has been tabled in the first line below (‘40% only support local/ foreign missionaries financially and through prayer’), toward more *personal involvement* in the mission/vision of a Baptist Community of Faith. Many churches, though, are working toward this becoming a reality but do not have a national forum/ platform to gauge what others within our family of churches are doing in relation to their context and community.

We only support local/ foreign missionaries financially and through prayer	<b>40</b>	40%
We support local mission projects (e.g.: Feeding scheme, HIV/AIDS etc.)	<b>57</b>	57%
We have taken members/ leaders on short term mission trips	<b>47</b>	47%
We are in the process of working towards greater mission involvement	<b>35</b>	35%
We have two committees overseeing missions and evangelism independently	<b>6</b>	6%
We see each member as a missionary and encourage personal involvement	<b>45</b>	45%
Other	<b>1</b>	19%

*Figure 50 current missions involvement of BUSA churches*

### **10.3.2 THREATS BUSA NEEDS TO ADDRESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the threats to Christianity in Africa that were discussed in detail in Chapter 7 of this dissertation, it is imperative that BUSA sees its ministry within this new (global) context in Africa, and adapt its ministry to deal with issues that impact the South African scene, and respond in appropriate ways within this new era.

Some of the greatest challenges to BUSA's continued ministry lie in the areas of leadership, critical contemporary scholarship, youth and children's ministry, ministry to young adults, spiritual growth in terms of discipleship processes, and the nature of the church (being missional).

### 10.3.1.1 Leadership and Critical, Contemporary Scholarship

The fact that we are in the midst of a massive crisis within BUSA today illustrates the fact that there has not been an intentional focus on understanding our times (context) and adapting ministry and leadership styles toward achieving the mission of the church. The Missional Church Survey, used to collect information regarding current BUSA church realities recorded pastor's responses to personal leadership styles/ preferences. Figure 51 (below) reflects the reality that 7% of BUSA pastors are unable to make decisions without previous approval by a board. Furthermore, 20% of BUSA pastors find themselves multi-tasking where leadership delegation is almost non-existent as church members and leaders are busy and feel it is the responsibility of the pastor to take care of the many details that arise in the ministry of the local church (he is paid to do the work by the members and a certain level of work ethic is expected!). However, the vast majority of BUSA pastors find themselves between directing and empowering others in the life of the church to do the work of ministry with pastoral support and guidance.

a. I serve others tirelessly as Christ did and often find myself multi-tasking	19	20%
b. I empower others to serve alongside me and delegate authority to them	74	76%
c. I direct people to do the work and support where needed	16	16%
d. I make the decisions and other on staff follow through	0	0%
e. All my decisions are taken to a board for approval or ratification	7	7%
Other	4	4%

**Figure 51 BUSA pastors personal leadership styles**

The significance of the above data may only be ascertained in conjunction with additional data secured from the Missional Church Survey. It would be wise to

view data on time management and devotional integrity to further assist in the analysis of leadership styles within BUSA. The tables below are a summary of the data collected in the abovementioned survey, which reveals that 14% (cf. table 3) of BUSA pastors are currently in unhealthy environments that are not sustainable in the long term. This unhealthy environment is perhaps perpetuated by the spiritual walk and devotional integrity of many BUSA pastors; of which 18% who completed the Missional Church Survey indicated that they find it difficult to have devotional times most days (cf. table 6).

a. Church ministry consumes all my time and I find it hard to fulfill family and recreational needs	<b>14</b>	14%
b. Family comes before ministry and my Church supports this view	<b>27</b>	27%
c. Busyness is seasonal and I manage to balance my time well between all my requirements	<b>46</b>	46%
d. I have sufficient time to satisfy most of my needs most of the time	<b>18</b>	18%

**Table 5 BUSA Pastors and time management**

a. I spend at least one morning a week in prayer and reflection	<b>14</b>	14%
b. I spend time daily in prayer and study	<b>68</b>	68%
c. I find it hard to have devotional time most days	<b>18</b>	18%
d. I do not have a regular time of devotion	<b>6</b>	6%

**Table 6 BUSA Pastors devotional integrity**

There seems to be a direct correlation between pastors whose lives are ‘consumed’ by ministry (not taking seriously the priesthood of all Believers and full giftedness of Christ’s body), and a spiritual disconnect in pastoral service, which has far-reaching implications for BUSA leadership.

To break this down further, according to BUSA pastor's self-identification, it appears that of the six Pastors who do not have a regular time of devotion, two identify themselves as part of a contemporary church, three pastors as part of a reformed church and one pastor from a traditional church setting. Of those pastors who find it difficult to have devotions most days, eight are from contemporary churches, three from reformed churches, two from a traditional church, and one from a missional setting. The others did not identify a particular type of church setting. Of the 68 pastors that have a daily time of prayer and study, nineteen are from contemporary churches, eight are from reformed churches, eighteen are from traditional forms of church, thirteen are from missional ones, two are organic churches and three are identified as seeker-sensitive churches.

This means that 23% of pastors in contemporary churches find it hard to have quiet times most days; and 14.7% of pastors serving in contemporary BUSA churches have quiet times only once a week. 5.8% of BUSA pastors serving in contemporary church settings do not have regular quiet times at all. Only 55.8% of BUSA pastors serving in contemporary settings have devotions daily!

Further analysis of data reveals that 16.6% of pastors in reformed churches find it hard to have quiet times most days; and 11.1% of pastors serving in reformed BUSA churches have quiet times only once a week. 11.1% do not have regular quiet times at all. Only 44.4% of BUSA pastors serving in reformed settings have devotions daily!

Compared to the above, 7.14% of pastors serving traditional churches find it hard to have quiet times most days; and 17.85% of pastors serving in traditional BUSA churches have quiet times only once a week. Only 3.5% do not have regular quiet times at all. 71.42% of BUSA pastors serving in traditional BUSA settings have devotions daily!

In missional settings within BUSA, there seems to be a different picture with regards to those who claim to be missional (while still working within reformed, contemporary or traditional BUSA churches). In the missional survey, 34 churches identified themselves as missional in some way. This is significant. However, of these churches, only fourteen churches are independent of another BUSA descriptor (traditional, contemporary or reformed etc.), twelve respondent churches claimed to be a blend of contemporary and missional, six claimed to be a blend between traditional and missional, and only three claimed to be a blend of reformed and missional. What remains significant here is the spiritual commitment levels of leaders who claim some or other affiliation to the concept of being missional.

Of those in contemporary missional BUSA church settings, 66% of respondents claimed to have daily devotions (as opposed to the 55.8% recorded in the contemporary setting above; this is a slight improvement over the whole); 8.3% of pastors in contemporary missional BUSA churches indicated that they had devotional times once weekly, with 25% of pastors in the contemporary missional setting within BUSA churches indicating that they find it hard to have a regular

devotional time (as opposed to 23% above, which represents a slightly lower level, but records perhaps a greater level of honesty on the part of pastors committed to the spiritual growth process). Of pastors in traditional missional churches in BUSA, 66.6% of respondents recorded they have daily devotions (as opposed to 71.42% recorded above). 33.3% indicated that they have difficulty having a quiet time most days, which is almost double the figure in the traditional setting recorded above.

Of pastors in the reformed missional setting, 66.6% of pastors indicate that they have a daily time of devotions (as opposed to the 44.4% recorded among reformed pastors above, this is a significant improvement). 33.3% of pastors in reformed missional churches indicate that they do not have a regular time of devotion, which is significantly greater than the 3.5% recorded above.

However, of pastors in the missional setting, *85.7% indicated they have daily devotions. This is by far the highest percentage recorded of all fields in this study.* 7.14% of pastors in missional settings in BUSA have devotional time once weekly, with an additional 7.14% indicating they find it hard to have devotional times most days. This has to say something for the role that missional ecclesiology can play in the continuous spiritual formation of BUSA pastors serving in churches that are missional, or that see themselves as moving toward a more missional focus.

BUSA exists as a denomination as a custodian of Baptist beliefs and principles, and for functional/practical purposes (in the terminology employed by van Gelder it is *missional* and *confessional*); as it carries out its mission in the world. BUSA

pastors are a part of this mission vision, and are, in many respects, responsible at grass-roots level for the dissemination of Baptist beliefs and praxis. As a denomination, BUSA is under serious threat and needs to be critical, contemporary and intentional in leadership in the medium-term if BUSA is to transition into a more positive phase of ministry. What has become evident during the course of this study is that BUSA leaders (in national positions) have not listened (and heeded) to researchers (like Christofides), and taken their work seriously. Ministry in this era has been dominated by a pragmatic approach to vision and ministry that has not adequately captured the imagination of most BUSA pastors, nor church members (especially youth and young adults). This, in part, has led to the formation of Sola 5 and Isaiah 58 as relational networks within BUSA (both holding to the 1689 Confession of Faith). Du Plessis (2012: 169) reminds us that BUSA stands right in the middle of these groups as far as epistemology is concerned; neither taking a very strong stance on its theology (yet not compromising on the essentials of the gospel), nor being postmodern and 'emergent'. The focus of BUSA ministry has been on maintaining a post-apartheid representation at leadership level (understandably so!), without being too critical regarding the actual content and long-term vision of the union including leaders or all backgrounds and ages at every level of leadership. "...BUSA seems to focus more on the pragmatic functions as an administrative organisation and less on the assertion and dissemination of doctrinal truth" (du Plessis 2012: 169).

## **Recommendations:**

It would be beneficial for BUSA Executive to mandate an *intentional* focus on research within BUSA to illuminate our current crisis and provide suitable solutions toward rectifying the situation. This research should be coordinated independently of the national BUSA office to avoid interference, and BUSA staff should do everything in their ability to assist the research process and ensure a favourable outcome.

Perhaps BUSA should initiate the following:

- A national 'listening team' that will focus on 'hearing' the concerns of BUSA pastors in churches around the country. This missional era should commence with a 'season of listening'.
- A national research fund to enable specialized research into critical areas of BUSA ministry needing evaluation.
- A research co-ordinating team inclusive of theological students and post-graduates within BUSA, as well as select staff members from BTC and CTBTS who will coordinate and steer the focus and outcomes of such focus.
- Research should be divided into segments (leadership, next generation, mission etc.), which should be coordinated by independent research leaders with teams that meet fairly regularly.
- The outcome of this intentional focus on extensive research into BUSA would be change in vision, mission and ministry focus within the next 3-5

years that should set BUSA on the right course for effective ministry within the Rainbow Nation.

- Part of this should be the initiation of a national, mandatory continuous education curriculum for all pastors on BUSA ministry lists without exception. This function should be coordinated independently by the BTC and CTBTS as a joint, co-operative effort, which should set in motion a plan to grow the capacity and ministry competency of BUSA pastors moving ahead. At the bare minimum, it should be a requirement for any new applicant for BUSA ministerial recognition. Du Plessis (2012:207-210) comments on the importance of the continuing development of pastors and leaders:

Whilst the requirement to grow... in the BUSA code of pastoral ethics does exist, there is no formal programme to firstly monitor compliance and secondly to ensure that pastors obtain the kind of training required to keep them up to date in terms of the latest developments with respect to areas in which they minister (Du Plessis 2012:207-210).

Du Plessis (ibid.) importantly draws lines of correlation to the DRC who adopted a system of compulsory continual development in 2007 in line with most of the large and classical professions. The DRC implemented this over a period of five years ending in 2011. Their core values were as follows:

- 1 The continued development of knowledge, insight and faith in the gospel;
- 2 The advancement of spiritual growth and personal development;
- 3 The development of ministry skills that are relevant for the minister's environment;
- 4 To remain true to denominational tradition and to improve ability to discern theological truths accurately; and
- 5 The retention and improvement of the joy and courage of ministry

(cf. Erasmus 2009:n.p.).

Proposed research areas:

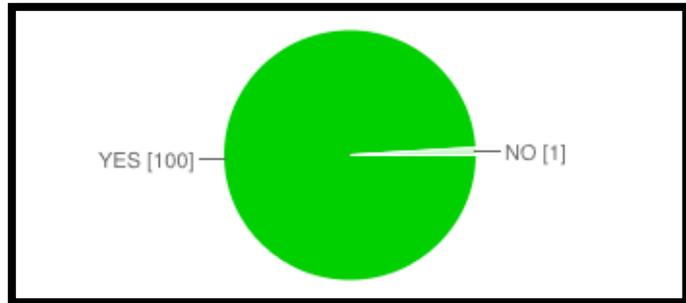
- Leadership structures within BUSA churches in post-colonial/ post-modern South Africa.
- Church planting among South African Baptists (multi-site approach?).
- Religious freedom and BUSA local church autonomy.
- Missional church - a rediscovery of BUSA identity and mission.
- The nature and ministry of the BMD.
- Ministry to the next generation (transmission of the faith).
- Leadership succession in congregational church government.
- BUSA's national structures and policies in the twenty-first century
- Intergenerational ministry in BUSA churches.
- Theological education for BUSA pastors (preparatory and mandatory continuous education).
- Worship styles and structure in BUSA churches.
- The role of pastoral spiritual formation in BUSA churches.

### 10.3.1.2 Youth and Children's ministry

At first glance, it may seem to be arrogant of me to ask; 'where have we gone wrong' in youth and children's ministry in BUSA? In reality, I am not 'qualified' to answer this question in full, apart from my missiological observations, but the crisis is evident at national, regional and local church level across the spectrum in BUSA. At national level, there has not been a coherent vision and effective leadership and ministry since BYSA Teams closed down (under Selwyn Coetzee), this is primarily evident in the national youth budget and staffing structure at Baptist House. The 2011 expenditure at national level for BYSA was R52,000 against a budget of R69,972 with an expected increase in 2012 to R89,143 (BUSA Assembly Report 2012:61). Sam Ndogo, Chairman of BYSA, confirmed in his report to BUSA Assembly, the many challenges they have, not least of which is a replacement for the national youth director position, given Tony Christian's recent resignation as National Youth Director. The Youth Executive Committee Report to the BUSA annual Assembly adequately sums up the current state of our youth ministry (and ministry to the next generation, including children and young adults):

The Baptist Union of South Africa has an undeterminable future if youth ministry is not highly prioritized forthwith. The resignation of Tony Christian this year leaving only Mohau Radebe in our national office perhaps registers the state of affairs at denominational level, not only to mention comparable concerns at local church levels. From our observation of the delegates at the Port Elizabeth Assembly (2011), we noted among the delegates a dwindling representation of youth. We would like to register that if the Baptist Union exists for its current membership of adults and has no serious consideration for the next generation, then our Union is an endangered species. In leadership it is a given that an organization that exists for itself will not grow. This invariably means our future lies in establishing interventions that will ensure the perpetuity of this denomination until the Lord comes (Youth Executive Committee Report to the 2012 BUSA Assembly).

The missional church survey indicated that 99% of respondent churches had youth ministries. However, figure 52 (to the right) indicates the health and status of youth ministries at local church level in BUSA.



**Figure 52 youth ministry in BUSA**

Table 7 (below) indicates that only 41% of respondent BUSA churches indicated youth ministry was growing steadily, with an additional 20% indicating balanced growth and maturity in their church youth group. What should be of concern, in the light of previous data is that some 17% record average growth and maturity, with a further 22% indicating their youth ministry is an area of great concern. Similar trends are observable within the children and young adult segment within respondent BUSA churches.

Growing steadily	<b>41</b>	41%
Healthy (balanced growth and maturity)	<b>20</b>	20%
Average growth and maturity	<b>17</b>	17%
An area of concern	<b>22</b>	22%
Not of great importance	<b>1</b>	1%

**Table 7 Youth ministry in BUSA**

### 10.3.1.2 Spiritual growth (discipleship)

The growth and success of BUSA ministry is largely dependant on its leaders. It seems to be quoted *ad nauseam* these days, but is true; everything rises and falls on leadership. Therefore, the spiritual growth aspect of BUSA pastors is of primary importance if BUSA churches are to succeed in ministry in this new milieu (this has been discussed under leadership challenges previously).

One of BUSA's evident weaknesses is in its discipleship process, which is indicative of the lack of numerical growth indicated by the large exodus of youth and young adults from our churches toward other churches that offer a more intentional and contemporary approach. Whilst conducting field research, I often heard criticism on the side of BUSA pastors, leaders and members of BUSA Executive directed towards churches that 'steal their young people'. Whatever theological and practical concerns remain as dividers between BUSA churches and 'the competition', there needs to be recognition of intentionality on the part of many churches to which our young people are flocking in large numbers (assuming they still go to church after leaving a BUSA church!). It is no surprise to me that many of the younger generations are leaving BUSA churches for alternatives, as it has become obvious that our churches are not where they need to be with respect to Christian discipleship processes (cf. table 9 below).

As Jesus Christ illustrated for us, transformative discipleship happens best in a smaller group contexts, where it is more focused and opportunities for authenticity and gift expression more evident. However, my research indicates that BUSA has

a long way to go still in dealing with the concept of a small group and creativity in reaching and growing individuals in the context of the local church. The table below indicates the overall importance BUSA churches ascribe to cell groups in their process of discipleship (cf. table 8 below).

a. Sporadic and unplanned	<b>8</b>	8%
b. Cell- based	<b>65</b>	65%
c. Solely through Sunday preaching/ teaching	<b>14</b>	14%
d. Intentional events and seminars/ courses	<b>26</b>	26%
e. Mentorship & coaching relationships	<b>33</b>	33%
Other	<b>3</b>	3%

**Table 8 BUSA churches and discipleship**

However, Figure 47 (below) indicates the level of effectiveness BUSA churches are experiencing with regards to cell group/ small group ministry across the spectrum at local church level.

a. An effective ministry with a majority in attendance	<b>54</b>	57%
b. A new concept that has not been fully explored yet	<b>13</b>	14%
c. Reserved for a specific groups within the church (women and men's ministry)	<b>8</b>	8%
d. Ineffective and not well attended	<b>14</b>	15%
Other	<b>16</b>	17%

**Table 9 Effectiveness of BUSA cell groups**

The survey reveals that only 57% of respondent churches reflected a majority attendance in small group participation within churches. 14% of churches admit that cell groups are a new concept that has not yet been explored, with 17% of respondent churches indicating cell groups are ineffective and poorly attended on

the whole. With 65% of BUSA churches being reliant on cell structures as a major discipleship component, their effectiveness in this area represents a serious threat to the sustainability of BUSA's ministry into the future.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Part Four is to be seen as the climax of the dissertation, under-scoring the importance of Part One (Baptist history and mission development); Part Two (The importance of Africa and threats that impact BUSA ministry on a macro level) and Part Three (the need for, and overall importance of, an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology). This section, however, needs to be interpreted alongside the current realities of ministry within South Africa from a cultural, political, geographical and religious perspective; a multi-disciplinary approach will be the most helpful in apply the 'text' within our 'context' in order to fulfill God's mission. The incorporation of Chang's Urban Tribes of South Africa assists in understanding an important reality: ministry in urban areas/ cities; which have already been established as important to the continued spread and growth of Christianity in Africa. BUSA needs to pay special attention to this aspect as BUSA does not have a good track record in this area specifically.

In line with the above, within this section, BUSA was placed within the context of South Africa as a Rainbow Nation, post-1994.

Additionally, a number of pertinent questions were dealt with in the areas of denominational trends since the inception of democracy and our Rainbow Nation in 1994, against the backdrop of early BUSA growth and development. There are a number of important questions that have been tackled in this section: How should one see South African society today? What are important trends for consideration (e.g. growth in membership, ministries of BUSA, Baptist and church life)? How do these trends impact upon the ministry of BUSA churches? What are the critical areas for further theological and ministry engagement?

An equally important aspect of this section pertains to the current trends within BUSA churches that were drawn from quantitative research (deduced from the researcher's national Missional Church Survey, and from a nationwide research and listening tour, representing qualitative data). Together with this quantitative data, qualitative data has been added, to further analyze and interpret the current trends and their impact at grass-roots level, giving priority to qualitative research findings as per the original research design. There were three threats that stood out from my findings that need to be addressed:

1. Leadership and Critical, Contemporary Scholarship
2. Youth and Children's ministry
3. Spiritual growth (discipleship)

## CHAPTER 11

### PHASES OF MISSIONAL TRANSITION (PERSONAL CASE STUDY)

In November 2009 Lara (my wife) and I were travelling from Johannesburg to vacation with family in a mountain resort area known as the Drakensburg. We left Johannesburg at around 4am and it was not long before a thick fog that seemed impenetrable enveloped us. I remember struggling to see ten metres in front of our vehicle praying that God would protect us from harm. At some point in the journey I remember asking myself, “Where are we?” We had planned to stop for breakfast and I discovered, after some time that I had missed our turnoff for breakfast as visibility was low. I did not enjoy that experience as I, like many others, like to know where I am and that I am on track to my preferred destination. I don’t like the feeling of the unknown, nor being lost.

Every journey has a starting point and a goal in mind. However, you cannot start with the future as no one starts a journey from where you wish you were or where you hoped you would be. This analogy is true of ministry and is true of the missional journey too. Roxburgh (2009) states that the missional journey begins where people are, not from some vision of where we would like them to be. What is needed is to *look* and *listen*. We need to open our eyes to perceive the ways that the Spirit of God is working in the lives of people in our church. We need to open our ears to discern the ways that God is shaping the lives of people around us. One of the most important things to do is to take time to listen to the stories of people and the ways in which they perceive that God is moving or perhaps not working in their lives. I know that it seems easy enough, but it is perhaps the

toughest thing to do, as usually the pastor is expected to come up with some vision that the people buy into that mobilizes lay leaders to achieve desired goals and objectives lead to further growth and multiplication (especially in a typical BUSA setup).

When I first accepted a call to Open Baptist Church (a large multinational, independent Baptist church located in Gaborone, Botswana) I was asked to present a vision of what I intended to do and accomplish in my ministry area. At the time I expected my leaders to simply buy into my vision and work towards what I perceived to be the common goal (even though I had little prior knowledge of the needs of people in that church or culture). There was no time for consultation, and little concern for communal participation or consensus regarding the destination of our journey, simply a futile attempt to picture a preferred future. This approach, I soon learnt, did not work, and led to frustration on my part because my leaders were being shaped by the directions in which God was leading them; and that was not in line with my goals or strategic plan. In fact, having looked (later on) at my original vision plan for the church, I realized that I had accomplished very little of what I originally intended to do in our tenure there. I have, in many ways, exceeded my plans and have been surprised by God's grace and leading. This, I am sure, is the cry of many ministry leaders, but it need not be, as wherever you find yourself in ministry is your starting point on the missional journey; it is never too late to re-orientate your ministry towards the *missio Dei*. That may not just save it, it may save you!

This chapter represents my interpretation of the realities experienced within BUSA churches in our era, based on selection criterion from the Missional Church Survey. I unashamedly approach this chapter in my capacity as participant observer- I am very much a part of the BUSA story in the present and have a role to play in its future. In my mixed methods research I have tried to complement qualitative and quantitative data forms, however, in my specific approach I have given greater priority to qualitative research as interpreter and illuminator of quantitative data. I have done this due to the evident gaps in data and accuracy which I was afraid would taint my research. This chapter is my interpretation and analysis of the missional journey among BUSA churches in South Africa, with personal examples taken from my own ministry which are woven into the larger fabric of BUSA ecclesiology. In my approach I have used multiple sources of information to formulate what I hope to be valuable insight. I have utilized the following sources:

- Structured interviews with BUSA staff;
- Informal interviews with leaders involved with BUSA mission (past and present);
- Informal interviews with our BUSA seminary staff and principals;
- Informal interviews with local church pastors representing a reasonable segment of most of our provinces and racial divides;
- Informal interviews with church members and leaders representing a reasonable segmentation of most of our provinces and racial and economic divides (as substantiated in Chapter 10). I travelled 8000 km around South Africa in around a month gathering information first hand from BUSA

pastors and leaders which adds great value to my own understanding relating to what is happening within a moderate segment of our denomination. My impressions and analysis from this trip are foundational to this chapter and to an understanding of where BUSA churches stand with regards to a missional praxis.

However, we begin our missional journey with the assertion that the Holy Spirit is among the people of God; with the affirmation that the people of God are priests and that the Church is made up of spiritually transformed people who are called to participate with God in His mission in the world as imperfect agents of the Kingdom of God. Much of the importance of a missional ecclesiology has already been established; however, it is important to recognize the mission of God is Trinitarian in nature and involves the collective efforts of the God-head (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). This point has already been established in this thesis, but what is of importance is that we live in the era where the work of the Holy Spirit is predominant. In fact, the Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to enable us to continue the work of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the *Paraclete*; the word comes from a Greek term meaning 'called to the side of' and hence 'advocate' (cf. 1 Jn. 2:1). Its importance derives from its particular usage in the John's Gospel (see Jn.14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11; cf. 16:13-15), where Jesus promises his disciples that when He departs He will send them another *Paraclete* (RSV and NIV 'counsellor'; KJV: 'comforter') to remain with them. As John's Gospel makes clear, the *Paraclete* is the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Truth (14:17, 26). In fact, the Fourth Gospel's teaching about the Holy Spirit is set forth in terms of the *Paraclete*, who continues the work of Jesus Himself (14:16-17), recalling things the earthly Jesus taught or revealing things he

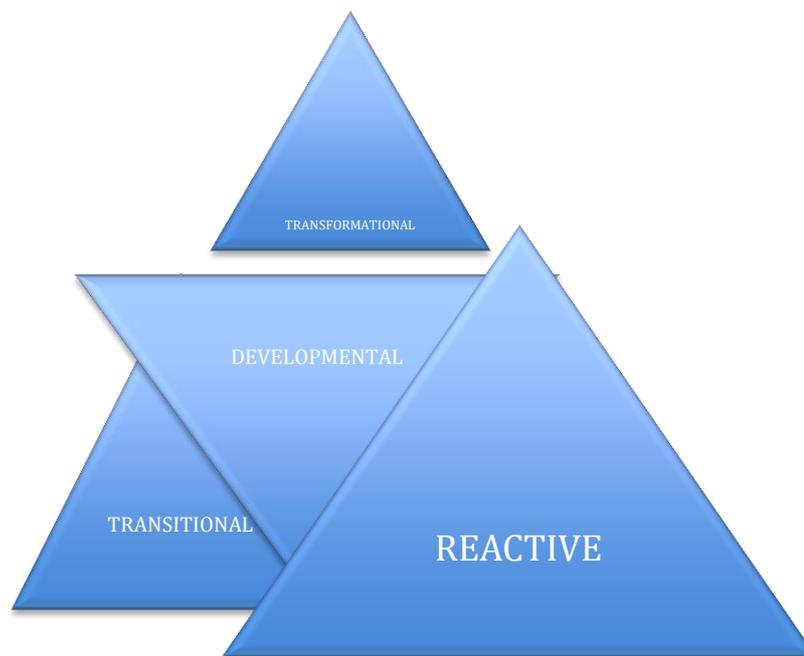
was unable to convey (14:26; 16:12-14). In John's view, this spiritual knowledge or insight, unavailable until after Jesus' death and resurrection, makes Christian faith and understanding fully possible for the first time.

The New Testament consistently teaches us that all Christians are priests (see 1 Pt. 2:9; Rev. 1:4-6; 5:6-10). Most Protestants today recognise only one mediator between them and God the Father, and that is God the Son, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). The Epistle to the Hebrews calls Jesus the supreme 'high priest', who offered himself as an unblemished sacrifice for sin (Heb. 7:23-28). Protestants generally believe that through Jesus Christ they have been given direct access to God, just like a priest under the Old Covenant; thus the doctrine is called the priesthood of all believers. God is equally accessible to all believers, and every Christian has equal potential to minister for God utilizing their unique spiritual gifting. This doctrine, however, stands in opposition to the concept of a spiritual aristocracy or hierarchy within Christianity and should encourage participation by all members of the Body of Christ in our consumer-driven, performance-managed church society.

Roxburgh (2009) suggests that there are four starting points on the missional journey. These are: reactive, developmental, transitional and transformational. I agree; however, in reality, no church is simply only one of these four; it is in most cases a mixture of two or more elements. This is certainly true of many BUSA churches interviewed. For the purposes of clarity, I have adopted Roxburgh's missional classification in my analysis as it is a helpful way of understanding where we are as churches.

### ***Reactive phase***

Many churches within BUSA form part of the reactive phase. In fact, I would say that the bulk of BUSA churches would fit into my description of this phenomenon (some on opposite sides of the coin). This is graphically illustrated in the pyramid below showing that there is a progression in the missional journey, and that some areas are representative of the majority churches in BUSA (reactional), whereas, fewer churches are seen as transformational.



The church I grew up in was started with a great amount of energy and expectation, by a number of people with a common vision working hard to achieve what they had set out to accomplish in their newly established church. There was a sense of excitement, a feeling of community and a sense of fulfilment and significance. However, as time passed by, this church tended to focus more on internal structures and on life within the Body of Christ. They built a new sanctuary, new children's classrooms and also grew exciting programmes, engaged in

evangelism, followed up on visitors, visited with the sick and engaged in many ministries as they saw the church grow and take shape. However, as they did this, life outside the confines of the church began to change and the neighbourhood within which the church found itself experienced significant demographic changes. Many of the people who were founding members of the congregation moved to newer suburban areas and commuted to church each Sunday. The membership of the church and the local community grew more and more dissimilar. Where once there was a sense of purpose and continuity between the church and community, this now was replaced with a sense of discontinuity, alienation and distance. Leaders wondered if they should perhaps sell the church property and relocate, but instead, they decided to plant another church in a nearby suburban area where some church members stayed, with the hope that this would grow and develop a significant ministry for dissatisfied members of the mother church. There was no significant conversation about engaging the local community and very little action in that regard. In churches like this, members know that everything has changed in their communities, but church members no longer know what to do with the 'foreign' people who have moved into their community. Roxburgh (2009) aptly confirms that the fears and anxieties of the church members are often reflected in the church building and social/ministry structures. Fences are erected, burglar bars are fitted, and security is beefed up. Church gates are locked 15 minutes into the service preventing others from entering for fear of security risks (although, to be fair, this may be a valid concern in many churches). This is often masked in some communities by a prevailing attitude of 'excellence in ministry' which requires one to be punctual at church services so that others' worship experience is not disturbed. This, unfortunately, reveals so much of our society's individualistic

attitude that does not look out for the interests of others in the way that Paul speaks of in the Christological hymn of Philippians 2. I often ask myself; what if someone in the community going through a crisis in their lives, searching for answers, hope, life, happens to walk or drive past our church on a Sunday morning during a service and feels led to attend, but is too late to gain entry to hear God's word? I am not trying to be difficult or controversial when I say this, but what happens if that same man goes home and shoots his wife and two children before committing suicide himself? Which crime is worse? Churches depriving people of the opportunity to enter the church or being late for a church service? The bulk of BUSA churches, particular those located in urban contexts are facing similar issues to which they are to react and work through in time. Also, many churches in urban areas throughout Southern Africa find themselves in a similar situation; however, we need to be shaped by the *missio Dei* as opposed to meeting individual needs within the church, which can often lead to pettiness and injustice (centripetal versus centrifugal).

Thus, being reactive describes a church that knows much has changed but decides it will turn inward and protect itself from what is going on outside the confines of the church building. Driscoll in his book "*Radical Reformation*" (2004) illustrates this position in the following way: Gospel + Culture - Church = Para-church (E.g.; Young life and Campus Crusade for Christ); Culture + Church - Gospel = Liberalism (Some mainline churches); Church + Gospel - Culture = Fundamentalism. Many BUSA churches in urban centres find themselves unable to navigate the times and keep up with the many changes in their communities. This is perfectly illustrated in racial integration among BUSA churches. We are not

where we need to be. From research discussed in Chapter 10, one can see that over 50% of BUSA churches are not adequately racially integrated, despite the fact that most churches (76%) are located in communities with multiple racial grouping, which were revealed in the survey (only 24% located in homogenous communities). Furthermore, 83% of leadership make-up in BUSA churches is shared between homogenous and slightly mixed segments with only 20% of churches surveyed indicated they are fully integrated with representation on boards, teams and committees, with 40% desiring further integration, and 10% claiming full integration is not possible presently. Sadly, many of BUSA's churches are located within a reactive phase of ministry where mission is preservation and solace is found in familiar traditions and fellowship. Within churches in this segment, there is no vibrant children's, youth or young adult ministry, with very few of the younger generation attending church services or participating within the life of the church. The lack of importance of this ministry is perpetuated through the inadequate financing channelled toward these ministries. Youth pastor turnover is high and discipleship is sporadic and overall inadequate. Typical Baptist structures of leadership are most often evident with the Senior pastor working in conjunction with the Board of Elders and leading the Deacon committee. Most decisions are made by these boards and the job description of the senior Pastor is often full of expectancies on the part of congregants which leave little time or energy for mission into the community as the concern of the church is strictly directed toward its members and missionaries. There is no Kingdom vision. If evangelism takes place, it is typically in a crusade at the local church and rarely happens outside a Sunday service context. The church can be described as a

cruise liner in turbulent waters- it is unconcerned with its surroundings and pays no attention anything in the waters within which it navigates.

### ***Developmental***

Roxburgh (2009) states that a developmental church believes that it can grow and reach people in the new space by improving on what it is already doing. This is known as attractional ministry and focuses on building better (excellent) facilities, producing effective (fun) programmes, and (relevant) content that *attract people to church*. The prevailing attitude within a developmental church states that what they are doing is right but is perhaps not marketed well enough, or is not up to standard. It sees no need to question or adjust its assumptions and ways of functioning. “The developmental church believes the issues of mission and ministry are solved by improving and building on the basic paradigm out of which it already operates and doesn’t even recognize its assumptions until they are pointed out” (Roxburgh 2009:57). What most developmental churches within BUSA do is focus on improving facilities to attract a particular type of market, hire a new pastor to drive the vision and implement agreed-upon plans to reach a predetermined goal, add relevant services using the latest technologies, with a live worship band singing the latest in popular Christian songs, hoping to attract a certain segment of society. Developmental churches are a part of a growing segment within BUSA and are often highly successful in attracting other Christians to church, thus giving the impression of growth without any great mission endeavour locally. My research shows that many Baptist churches have moved

beyond their traditional church service and often have two morning services; the first one catering for an older generation with another for families. Evening services, where successful, focus on youth and young adults and this is seen as their service and their youth pastor often arranges and preaches at this without great participation from the older generation. Some BUSA churches have adopted specific models of ministry that have redefined their function, and in some ways their mission (cell church, seeker sensible etc.). BUSA churches with sufficient financial backing attempt social justice ministries engaging a cause- from a distance and without much congregational involvement.

In these churches within BUSA, the preaching often changes from expository preaching alone and leans towards topical/expository and even motivational speaking that caters to the needs of the market they are trying to reach. Programs are often added to cater for people and the church re-brands its image, re-visits its vision, simplifies its operations and grows numerically for a time. The amount of time, energy and money spent in this re-adjustment process within these churches is significant and in many cases quite phenomenal. I am currently part of such a church and I sometimes wonder; “will it ever be enough? Will our building be large enough? Will we have enough office space for staff? When will we build the youth centre, pave the parking, construct the sports fields?” Is it ever enough? In many churches like this we often justify the developmental mentality by stating that the aim of our building programme (in the future) is to use it to reach the community (provided they come to us) and impact lives. The truth, in developmental churches, is that we will never be satisfied with what we have and will always desire an improvement. We will always need the latest audio-visual equipment, more air

conditioning to make people comfortable, a more informative or interactive website, better advertising and glossy leaflets. The list goes on and on.

These changes often cause quite a stir within the region, members of other churches often visit to experience the difference, the changes are often applauded when talked about in pastors' fraternals, featured in Christian magazines, and copied as the latest trends when numerical growth occurs. However, as Roxburgh rightly states, while growth in these churches is often the norm, in reality the new people attending church now are seldom new converts from the immediate community, but represent transfer growth from other churches in the surrounding areas whose members move because of a more relevant music style, to take advantage of a better children's programme or better preaching etc. These churches are in many cases applauded as being highly effective, whereas, in reality, the people from the local community spend their Sundays sleeping-in late, shopping, or hiking, and are never impacted by the Gospel of Christ. "Developmental churches attract people, but they usually are not engaging the neighbourhoods or the changed realities of their contexts" (Roxburgh 2009:77). Their focus needs realignment, but it seems impossible for these churches to change their mentality and will require great conviction and strong, visionary leadership to change direction. The change is possible, with good leadership, and there are good examples of churches that have experienced a comeback (borrowing a term coined by Ed Stetzer).

I have grouped the reactive and developmental churches together as they represent a similar perspective regarding how the church should function. However, the two types of churches are not the same; reactive churches are usually smaller, in the midst of a downward spiral, living off past experiences and the 'old glory days': developmental churches can be very large, well run by multiple staff with lots of energy and new ideas. These two groupings represent the vast majority of churches within BUSA currently. Roxburgh (2009) states that despite their differences they both operate out of the same set of assumptions: (1) The way the church operates is fundamentally correct and only needs minor adjustments to improve; (2) The church's energy is directed towards continually developing ways of attracting people to its centre. Both approaches, although upheld in many evangelical churches I know well, are incompatible with biblical standards and reflect irrelevant approaches to ministry within our current setting. This may sound harsh, but as you will see, it is a fair assessment of the above-mentioned approaches.

**Qualities of BUSA churches in reactive and developmental phases:**

1. Often a form of spiritual arrogance.
2. Unteachable and unaccountable (often under the guise of being autonomous).
3. Attractional focus in ministry; church is structured for centripetal influence.
4. Preservation trumps mission.
5. Community trumps Kingdom.
6. 'Sight' trumps faith (measureable results and relative risks).
7. Unsustainable in its current form.
8. Geared primarily for believers in structure and ministry.
9. Traditional structures are unquestionable.

10. Ministry is largely inflexible and based on past success or failure.
11. Discipleship is sporadic and unplanned.
12. Missions is primarily seen as the support of missionaries with some larger and wealthier developmental churches being more creative in mission across frontiers.
13. Membership is the ultimate aim and transfer growth is predominant.
14. In some developmental churches there is a growing interest in church planting and even campus church models that perpetuate their model of ministry in a setting that seems more conducive to their related market niche.
15. Leadership generally more traditional in approach to decisions and care within the church context.

### ***Transitional***

“A church in the transitional phase recognizes that no matter how much it improves what it is doing, no matter how attractive it becomes, the context has changed so much that people won’t (easily) come anymore” (Roxburgh 2009:83). A transitional church is one that recognizes the need and value of reaching beyond its four walls. It does not necessarily involve too much change in the structure or organization of the church; however, rather than asking, ‘how do we attract people to what we are doing?’, the transitional church asks, ‘what is God up to in this local community, and how do we need to change in order to engage the people who no longer consider church a part of their lives?’ (Roxburgh 2009:85). This represents a radically different perspective and way of thinking regarding the life and ministry of the church. Thus, a smaller percentage of BUSA churches can be located within this phase along the missional journey, however, there are a growing number of churches illustrating the practical efficiency found within this liberating model of

ministry. There are, however, very few mentors within BUSA to help guide pastors, leaders and congregations through the number of changes and issues to be faced leaving many BUSA leaders turning outside the Union for mentorship, advice and help along the missional journey as the perception is that BUSA national leaders do not have the capacity to guide churches in this phase of ministry as it is often seen as exercising an administrative function among many churches within reactive and developmental models which are more comfortable and predictable to work within.

In November 2004 Lara (my wife) and I accepted a call to the Grace Community Church located in Fourways, Johannesburg. The church was around 10 years old when we arrived on the scene and had undergone a series of conflicts, which had begun to define its essence as a church. The church is located in an affluent suburb and was planted by one of South Africa's greatest evangelists, Richard Baker. Many who knew him flocked to be a part of this exciting new venture. In the beginning, Grace Community Church was completely white and was largely made up of a wealthy élite, many of whom had ties with the pastor stretching over 30 years to when he planted an Assemblies of God church near Randburg. Through a series of events and a subsequent church split, God led the church towards a large property located within an emerging suburban area in Fourways. Not too much had changed in the church up to this point; the faces were still all white and the church's future vision of reaching the white élite in Fourways was still evident. However, as they were to learn, God's plans are greater than ours! Before long a few young black children started to arrive at the front gate of the church and they were quickly assimilated into the small children's ministry. The children came from

an informal settlement (squatter camp) known as 'Sevefontein' located opposite an opulent housing estate known as Dainfern. The attendance of the few black children from this squatter camp did not raise too many questions at first, however, before long the numbers of black children from the squatter camp started increasing. First three, then ten, then twenty, then fifty and before the church knew what to do there were over 100 children from the squatter camp attending church.

When Lara and I arrived the church had just experienced its second split, which arose from the 'problem' of having these black children from the local squatter camp attend church services. Congregation members complained that the children were stealing pencils from the seats and making the sanctuary dirty with their bare feet etc. Now it may be easy to judge the church and certain members unless one has prior knowledge of life in Apartheid South Africa. Blacks were not easily accepted in white society and the previous government fostered this separation, which became part of life for many South Africans on both sides of the spectrum. There were separate schools for whites and blacks (in fact a separate educational system for blacks, known as 'Bantu Education'), separate public toilets, beaches, buses etc. Most South Africans reading this know what it entailed and could perhaps relate, in some way, to the stir that those innocent black children created when they started to attend their local church. During that time though, God had placed the squatter camp children on the hearts of the leaders of the church and once the dissenters finally left to attend other ministries, the church began to realise that God had a mission for them to impact and transform the lives of the children God brought into the life of the church.. It was not an easy transition from being centred on the needs of the affluent whites, to being what every church

should be; an inter-national, inter-cultural, multi-socio-economic microcosm of the immediate and surrounding community. Where before there were only white faces in the congregation and BMW's and Mercedes Benzes' in the parking lot, there was now a mixture of races, white, black and coloured, with rich and poor gathered to worship their King. For my wife and me this represented a wonderful mosaic of what it meant for us to be God's people at a time of national transformation in South Africa.

We, perhaps, did not fully understand then what it meant to be God's missional people; we did not even fully understand what it meant to live as God's people within our community. We did not have all the answers, nor any model for other churches to emulate. We were simply a community on a journey; transitioning in our community to embrace and reflect the fullness of the Kingdom of God. The ministry grew beyond our imagination and we had an average of 180 children each week in our Sunday school. This was amazing to see and we had named our children's ministry 'Jericho Roads' and eventually had to meet after regular church services as we could not fit everyone into our church building. 90% of the church members were actively involved in the ministry of the church; especially Jericho Roads and this ministry (initially unwanted) began to define our sole mission and purpose.

Grace Community Church was started nearly a decade earlier and within a relatively short period of time had around 300 people in attendance. When the congregation split from the mother church and moved to their new property in

Fourways, they had around 200 people attending weekly meetings with a larger than usual budget for most churches that size - due in part to the affluence of the people attending. Once the children from the squatter camp began to come, attendance dropped to around 80 people each week. Finances dropped significantly too.

However, looking back, we never lacked for anything and God provided all of our needs in amazing ways. We were sad to see the members go, but were glad that we were able to do what God laid on our hearts without any hampering from unwilling parties. We were able to give each child a balanced meal after the Sunday service; and provide groceries to some families weekly. Each year-end we provided stationery, clothes and a host of other goods to each of the children involved in our ministry. One year we even provided over 200 pairs of shoes to the children so that they did not have to walk to school bare-foot and would be able to have some dignity. KFC often sponsored meals annually for our Christmas party and local businesses generously donated goods. We learnt that we could not out-give God and He provided in amazing ways beyond our understanding. We did not know what the future held but we experimented, took risks, failed and tried again. There was no formula, no model, only a sense of journeying to a new and far-off land. Like Abraham in Genesis 12, all we knew was that we were journeying with God to a land that He would show us. Admittedly, there were times of anxiety (because it feels out of control), lack of security (because some 'big giver' members still wanted their needs catered for and threatened to leave if they were not heard). However, we learnt what Roxburgh (2009:96) now affirms: "... a

transitional Church is on a journey in a new space where it will continually be learning rather than simply improving on what it has always done.”

Since we left over 7 years ago, this ministry has continued and has grown and been shaped in many respects. We are grateful to God for that opportunity and eagerly wait to see the fruit from our labour in the years to come as the children grow up, go to university and begin their adult lives.

### ***Transformational***

Roxburgh (2009) affirms that a transitional church discovers in its learning and experimenting and that effective ministry and transformation only happens when churches continually engage the ever-changing contexts of their communities with the never-changing Gospel message. Driscoll in his book *“Radical Reformation”* (2004) illustrates this model mathematically in the following way: Church + Gospel + Culture = missional. In being transformational, churches recognize that it is not about being trendy, nor about the latest tool, ministry resource, model or grand idea, “but about being missionaries in their neighbourhoods, shaping the Gospel in the forms and language of the local people, and remaking church structures and social systems around the context rather than abstract notions of church drawn from a previous point in history” (Roxburgh 2009:100). This journey, one from a highly attractational form of ministry (best seen in reactive and developmental phases) to a missional church, is a huge challenge as many people within existing attractational ministries have a gathering mind-set, thinking that they can bring others in without necessarily changing or challenging who they are and the

structures by which they operate. Also, people do not like change, even though it is something no one can effectively resist. The result of the radical change is that many within society worldwide are moving away from any desire to have a church as part of their daily lives. The truth is that the church is continually being marginalised within African societies, especially as the world becomes 'smaller' (globalisation) and as other nationalities move into previously homogenous Christian communities. Attractional church models, though, will remain with us for some time and will continue to appear effective as it reaches Christians looking for a better place to have their needs met. In the transitional and transformational phase, churches recognize that being missional is attractional, and that attractional is the other half of the coin. Thus, Roxburgh contends that we have entered into a new space, an exciting place where a new imagination for the church in the twenty-first century will be welcomed by many, both within and outside the contemporary church. A church that seeks transformation in the lives of people in its community, where window-dressing is not enough and where structures, buildings and mission remain flexible and adaptive to the real needs of people. In BUSA, there are few churches that can be described as transformational, and although it may seem to be an ideal perspective, is not without limitations in itself.

Within many BUSA churches in the developmental phase specifically, there are many churches that have misunderstood what it means to be missional, and although they claim to be missional in nature, they really do not do much different from traditional attractional models. Many churches mistake creativity in ministry for being missional, but lack full transformation, or at least partial transition from one phase of ministry to another. As before, I have grouped the concerns of

transitional and transformational churches together as they, in many respects, reflect a similar concern for a re-balance in church life and leadership; being rooted in missional thought (church as attractional and missional).

### **Qualities of transitional and transformational churches within BUSA:**

1. Increase in the participation and effectiveness of prayer ministry in both Phases with lay leaders taking greater initiative than paid staff.
2. Re-thinking and restructuring of traditional Baptist models of leadership and governance with a move away from church as institution toward church as a living organism.
3. Gift-based ministry involvement trumps service for the sake of getting the job done is seen as a significant shift toward a missional empowering serving model in BUSA churches.
4. Elder-led approach dominates with the Pastor/ pastoral team given greater freedom with accountability (within reason).
5. Many BUSA churches have signalled this move from Baptist traditions by changing their name to being a 'community church' (e.g.: Bulwer Road Baptist became Glenwood Community Church etc.).
6. Inclusive leadership is key in both transitional and transformational churches drawing leaders from a wider pool.
7. A Kingdom vision is an underlying factor of importance and is a driving force behind missional orientated churches in BUSA.
8. Family oriented approach to ministry (Alpha marriage course, divorce care).
9. Priority of ministry to the next generation (seen as an investment rather than a liability). In both transitional and transformational churches, leadership transition and training is more intentional and leaders tend to be raised from within the church more than called from outside sources, which adds to overall church stability and continuity in vision and leadership.
10. Ministry, mission and function of the church is set as much by the community as it is by the members of the church illustrating the importance of those not yet saved.
11. Open-mindedness and teachability are common leadership characteristics.

12. Willingness to network (within and outside of BUSA circles).
13. Less focus on buildings and more on people is a value in both phases.
14. Members seen as missionaries in local context and are encouraged, equipped and sent into the world. Ministries of mercy are common in wealthier congregations as they engage their wider context.
15. Visionary and empowering leadership is common. Mission and vision is exhibited by paid staff as they lead by example and do not wait for a committee to set the agenda. Congregants respond to leadership commitment and are seen to follow suit in BUSA churches where visionary and gift-based leadership is encouraged.
16. Structures more easily able to adjust to context and ministry. The greatest Success stories in BUSA churches in these phases of engagement (transitional and transformational) show pastoral continuity for between 12-25 years. Typically, churches in the reactive phase that have pastors leading for longer periods experience steady decline, and developmental churches tend to have a pastoral turnover every 4-8 years.
17. Greater congregational involvement in the mission of the church as well as traditional means of supporting missions (missionary support, short term trips etc.). A revival of the practice of the Baptist doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers is evident.
18. Leaders/ pastors that are not insecure in themselves, but who understand the times and who take calculated risks.
19. General greater awareness of the role of the Holy Spirit in our witnessing (Acts 1:8).
20. In many BUSA churches within this phase of their journey, there is often a willingness to think differently about reaching people and serving their community. This can be reflected in alternate church planting models employed and in the way churches think about ministry in post-1994 South Africa.

BUSA churches are certainly of great diversity, which is what makes unity, vision and leadership challenging within our denomination. This is indeed a great strength, but has proven to be our great weakness in that we as a Union of

churches have been unable to envisage corporately what ministry within our family of churches would look like in post-1994 settings taking the missional calling of God into consideration.

I conclude with the words I recall having heard or read regarding John R. Mott's conclusion of the 1910 Edinburgh conference: *"The end of the conference is the beginning of the conquest. The end of the planning is the beginning of the doing"*. BUSA as a whole needs to own their conquest and become more active in attaining a vision that is both inspirational and aspirational; one that unifies, and encourages our churches to live up to their respective callings within the greater diversity among Baptists in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This thesis has shown the importance of leading toward missional change in BUSA. However, unless BUSA leaders 'hear' the concerns, challenges and threats described in this research; incorporating Afro-centric missional perspectives on the history of South African Baptists, its future will be undeterminable!

This study utilised the South African Baptist faith heritage as an important interlocutor with a view to *retrospective* and *prospective* Baptist ecclesiology in post-1994 South African society. Special recognition has been given to the

unique contribution of what can be seen as an emerging Afro-centric missional ecclesiology within the current South African/ African context. This study has sought to be *leadership-oriented, biblically-based* and *Afro-centric* in its approach to *missional change* with South African Baptist Union churches.

A number of research questions were engaged along the way:

- What is the overall significance/ importance of an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology, taking into consideration both local and global trends and conversations?
- What is the present- day impact of historical BUSA ecclesiology?
- What relevance does the history and present-day context have for BUSA churches?
- What denominational trends have occurred within BUSA since 1994?
- How have the trends of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries differed from the trends experienced within the late nineteenth and mid- twentieth centuries of BUSA's history?
- Which number of BUSA churches stand-out as having experienced significant, holistic growth, through a missional renaissance since the end of the twentieth century to the present day?
- What hope does a missional ecclesiology offer local churches?
- What can be done towards equipping local church leaders for missional change?

- What does it look like to lead towards missional change- what is required from a pastoral perspective?
- Which Trends within BUSA are constructive, and which are destructive.

In Part one, a foundation was laid with regards to the establishment and growth of the Baptist movement and denomination within South Africa and Southern Africa. This section is important to the development of the thesis as it describes the context within which the South African Baptist faith heritage has taken shape. This section was divided into three distinct chapters dealing with various components of the Baptist heritage. Chapter 1 commenced with a brief historical overview of the Cape of Good Hope. Chapter 2 dealt with unique aspects relating to the formation of BUSA and events that led up to this occasion. The events recorded within this chapter will serve as an overview stretching into contemporary times. Chapter 3 utilized the concept of 'waves of mission' (borrowed from Willem Saayman) to describe the events detailed in Chapter 2 in a more systematized manner with historical observations listed in point form.

In Part two, serious thought has been given to an afro-centric missional ecclesiology for Africa, by African theologians and interlocutors. This is important because too much of Africa's history has been written by those from outside of the continent, which often leads to a Western-centered survey of historical accounts. This section engaged the overall importance of Africa globally and showcases the growth, beauty and potential of possibly the world's greatest powerhouse. As the research shows, the perception of Africa as the 'dark continent' is no longer

relevant and research engaged the overall global importance of Africa and the many ways its progress has been hindered in the past. Africa is indeed the world's powerhouse and, as my research indicates, has a prominent role to play in the shaping of things to come.

Part three dealt with, and substantiates the role and importance of what can be termed missional ecclesiology, taking both local and global trends and conversations into consideration. The argument within this section objectified the necessity for a missional ecclesiology and defined what this would mean for Africa specifically. Being missional in our day and age is more than simply a passing 'fad'. Being missional, as stated above, is part of a rediscovery of the nature of God, His Church and His mission in the world. This concern for the church and mission is correctly reflected by BUSA pastors who completed the survey part of the quantitative research approach. A vast majority of participants in the survey saw being missional as the quintessence of Christianity, and being missional as a rediscovery of the eternal, Triune God's purpose in, for and with the world.

However, despite the importance *being* missional has for BUSA, its *definition* needs to be clearly understood to avoid confusion and irrelevance. After all, if everything is missional, nothing is missional. Both mission and definition are important components to unleashing the mission potential of churches within BUSA's sphere of influence. There is an evident need for a missional ecclesiology that is centered on South Africa (and Africa!). This concept is relevant in Africa within the twenty-first century, and is needed as the church in Africa participates in the continuation of the work of Christ until He comes.

Part four is seen as the climax of the dissertation, under-scoring the importance of Part One (Baptist history and mission development); Part Two (The importance of Africa and threats that impact BUSA ministry on a macro level) and Part Three (the need for, and overall importance of, an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology). Important recommendations were made in order to overcome some of the challenges that BUSA faces.

Erre makes an important point, which can easily apply to BUSA:

We live in a time unlike any other time that any living person has known. It's not merely that things are changing. Change itself has changed, thereby changing the rules by which we live... there is more to this change than simply a linear extrapolation of rapid change and complexity. Quantum leaps are happening that are nothing like evolution. They remove us almost totally from our previous context. Simply learning to do old chores faster or to be able to adapt old forms to more complex situations no longer produces the desired results... running harder and harder in ministry will not work in this new world... (Erre 2009:19).

BUSA churches are becoming increasingly ineffective in mission because our past has not prepared us fully for ministry in the future. The discontinuity we have experienced because of these quantum leaps is comparable to the experience of the residents of East Berlin when the Berlin Wall came down. Nothing in their past prepared them for life without the wall. Very little in BUSA's past has prepared us for ministry in today's world. This is certainly true of BUSA's experiences in the 1990's and beyond. To speak truthfully, we have often not done justice to the biblical narrative in our attempts to 'do church' and pastor in this new era. Therefore, we must begin with a radical assertion that the trends within BUSA, although seen as successful yesterday, will not suffice for today and tomorrow. We

humbly recognize the need for a new map in this new world, to navigate effectively and to go boldly where few have been - certainly in Africa.

I conclude with the all-important words of the Lausanne 2010 Cape Town commitment:

Cape Town 2010 must call Evangelicals to recognise afresh the biblical affirmation of God's redemptive purpose for creation itself. Integral mission means discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the Gospel is God's good news, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for persons, and for society, and for creation. All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people (Lausanne 2011, The Cape Town Commitment).

Although Christian mission is always anchored, in fidelity to the past it remains challenged to fidelity in the present. It must *preserve, defend* and *proclaim* the constants of the church's traditions; at the same time it must *respond creatively and boldly* to the contexts in which it finds itself. BUSA needs to preserve, defend and proclaim the constants of its traditions in an era of discontinuous change and respond creatively and boldly as it engages the Rainbow Nation, taking seriously post-1994 contexts.

## **FURTHER RESREACH INTERESTS**

- Leadership structures within BUSA churches in post-colonial/ post-modern South Africa (importance of Castell's network theory).
- Effective church planting among South African Baptists (multi-site approach?).
- Religious freedom and BUSA local church autonomy. Do these hamper the overall long-term effectiveness of BUSA ministry?
- Preaching 'missionally' in BUSA churches.
- Missional church - a rediscovery of BUSA identity and mission as it relates to the nature and ministry of the BMD specifically.
- Missional discipleship processes for BUSA churches (transmission of the faith inter-generationally).
- Leadership succession in congregational church government.
- BUSA's national structures and policies in the twenty-first century
- The future of inter-generational ministry in BUSA churches. Moving beyond a multi-generational, multi-racial, multi-national, multi-lingual approach.
- Theological education for BUSA pastors (preparatory and mandatory continuous education).
- Worship styles and structure in BUSA churches in the light of the African Diaspora phenomenon.
- The role of pastoral spiritual formation in BUSA churches.